

REVITALIZING ADULT EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The importance of revitalizing adult education in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. This paper is advocating for revitalizing and restructuring adult education to become effectively functional for the achievement of rapid sustainable security and economic development in Nigeria. The paper identified different dimensions of sustainable security and economic development and points to the fact that it is only with well informed and adequately empowered adults that the present security and development challenges facing Nigeria can be eventually overcome. The paper went further to examine the relevance of adult education and various problems it faces in Nigeria which, if not solved, constitutes a hindrance to successful sustainable security and economic development in Nigeria. The paper recommended a review of adult education curriculum and practice to suit the learning objectives of the learners and make them economically productive and active citizens with required knowledge, attitudes, skills and commitment needed for sustainable security and economic development.

Keywords: Adult Education, Sustainable Security, Economic Development

Introduction

Nigeria is presently grappling with gross underdevelopment, killings, kidnappings, murder, poverty, inequality, hunger, banditry and gross insecurity, violence, ethnic conflicts and crisis. For instance, the activities of Boko Haram, Fulani Herdsmen, fake prophets and other secret gangs have created undue hardship, confusion, loss of control, lack of trust all gearing to mean insecurity. Generally, education plays a key role in overall human development. It is the backbone of any country's sustainable national development be it security or economic. Education is usually associated in most countries of the world with formal learning, just the education of children and the young ones alone leaving out the adult members of the communities and cities, the vulnerable and all other marginalized groups. United Nations declaration 2030 stated that the right

to education is a human right that must be enjoyed by all irrespective of age and where you are located. Education should be for all as it is deemed a universal thing and that it must be inclusive and equitable and of good quality and one that promotes lifelong learning for all. The essence of education is further established that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for achieving, for guaranteeing the realization of other rights (United Nation 2015). The above implies that for any type of development to be sustainable, security and economic in this case, education must reach all, ignorance must be wiped out and illiteracy must be subsided.

The research is more interested in Adult education as an integral part of education in this paper. Adult education plays a key role in sustainable development and promotes economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and creates favourable conditions for empowering global active citizens (Faradova, 2020). Onyenemezu (2012) defined Adult Education as a learning process whether formal, informal and non-formal which the adult engages in for better information and development. Adult Education can generally be taken as any form of learning undertaken by men and women in the formal or non formal school system. The main targets of adult education are specifically (girls and boys over 15 years of age, the migrants, drop out, less privileged, physically challenged, professionals, workers, educationally disadvantage etc . Although literacy continues to be emphasised, adult education also includes computation of figures, problem-solving, acquisition of skills and numerous forms of knowledge impartation. Adult Education emphasizes all forms of functional education programmes for youths and adults outside the formal school system. Such education programmes include basic literacy programme, post literacy programme, continuing education programme, and vocational education programme (FRN Blue Print 2008). These adult education programmes are geared towards human and national development which encompasses security and economic development. Nzeneri (2010), quoting a UNESCO working document, defines adult education in a more encompassing way 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 and universities as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two fold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. The above definition is broad and

encompassing in the sense that it does not only define adult education but it also defines its content and scope. Adult education provides employers in different sectors of the economy with qualified and sustainable skills and manpower which service the economy and provide basis for rewarding the adult members. Farhey (2010) observes that: “people who are more educated know why they are not supposed to make prejudice comments and consequently disguise their prejudices”. Adult education, by solving the problem of injustice, deprivation and oppression brings peace and harmony among adult members of the country and hence ensures sustainable security and economic development. It will solve the current problems of kidnapping, youth restiveness and insurgency in the country. Fasokun (2006) observes that: adult education is concerned not with preparing people for life, but rather with helping/assigning people (adults) to live more successfully as useful and acceptable members of their societies and contribute meaningfully to the development of those societies. The benefits of adult education both to the nation and individuals cannot be over-emphasized.

Sustainable Security and Economic Development

Sustainable security is a prerequisite for economic development. Sustainable security is one that endures and lasts, one that will not roll back or recede, even in the face of threatening reversal waves. It is a kind of development which can assure the security and protection of the environment and its resources presently and subsequently. When the security of any nation is threatened, the economic development of such a place is grossly affected.

Sustainable development is an amalgam of two component words; namely “sustainable” and “development”. A clearer understanding of each of these two component words is necessary to make this discourse more meaningful. The literary meaning of ‘sustainable’ is that which can continue or be continued for a long time; capable of being maintained at a set level, keep up assumed role competently (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2000; The 21st Chambers Dictionary, 2001; Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2003; Hornby, 2005) in Abraham (2012). Establishing relationship between adult education and security for sustainable economic development, require peace and harmony to function. Sustainable security and economic development through education foster healthy and safe environment where people can thrive and function in a sustainable way.

Viewed from this perspective, security is one of the most basic needs of people no matter the age bracket or status and also the territorial environment. In Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, it is ranked second to physiological needs that is

security and safety. People want to experience order, peace predictability and be in control of their lives (Mcleod 2020). Therefore security is also a political issue on account of the key decisions that need to be made by country's authorities to regard a particular issue as a priority. Ensuring security is regarded as one of the most fundamental objectives and functions of country. Generally it depicts protection against military attacks, but it include security from terrorism, economic security, food security, cyber security, and territorial/environmental security, maintenance of independence and sovereignty of the nation and security for natural disaster. Security becomes the core fulcrum on which revolves all other developmental indices of a state or nation. The economic, social, political and indeed every other dimension of development are all anchored on security. In realization of this fact the Nigerian constitution regards security as the fundamental objective of state policy. It is also observable that the government adopt some measures which include political, economic, military, civil, diplomacy, dialogue and other intelligent tactic to safeguard the security of the nation. In all, adult education provides the skills, information, education, debate forum, knowledge, sensitization and creativity to develop new approaches that are necessary for sustainable security and economic development. A paradigm shift is only possible through critical, conscious and innovative citizens.

Overview of Adult Education in Nigeria

Adult education in Nigeria dates back to pre-colonial Nigeria as a result of the missionary activities of the Muslim and Christian missionaries. The Islamic missionaries in the northern part of Nigeria, as far back as the 14th century, taught Arabic to the infidels through the reading of the Qur'an to know the way of Allah. The Christian missionaries, who set foot into Nigeria as from 1842, introduced literacy education in the southern part of Nigeria with the aim of helping their converts read the Bible, prayer books and other religious pamphlets. The British government that colonized Nigeria did not have a clear provision for adult education in Nigeria till 1925 when the Phelps-Stokes Commission Report recommended the implementation of adult education in Nigeria. There was no official government policy on adult education till 1977 when the National Policy on Education (NPE); revised 1981, 1988 and 2004; assigned a chapter to adult education (Fasokun, 2006). The NPE (2004) identifies mass literacy, remedial, continuing, vocational, aesthetic, cultural, and civic education for youths and adults outside the formal school system as components of adult education in Nigeria. The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) established in 1991

coordinates and controls adult education programmes, trains the required manpower for the state agencies, ensures the implementation of the mass literacy programmes and conduct researches for the development of adult education in Nigeria (NPE, 2004; Nnazor, 2005). Other government ministries at the state and local government levels, universities, non-governmental organisations, mosques, churches, political organisations, trade unions provide various forms of adult and non-formal education programmes (Mbalisi, 2006; Aderinoye, 2007). Some of the programmes generally offered, as expounded by Aderinoye (2007) are: basic literacy, post literacy, women education, functional literacy, nomadic education, continuing education, quranic integrated education, literacy for the blind, workers' education, vocational education, literacy for the disabled and prison, peace education etc. Despite the importance given to adult education by government which led to its provision in the NPE and the establishment of NMEC, adult education has, over the years, suffered much neglect and has not been given the attention it deserves as a policy provision for national development. This neglect is largely due to the lack of commitment, lackadaisical and lip-service paid by government and stakeholders in the country to the cause of adult education. Nnazor (2005) aptly described adult education programmes in Nigeria "to operate mainly as disparate, piecemeal activities that are not integrated into a coherent, purposeful strategy in pursuit of a national development vision". This neglect is also evident in national policy formulation in which adult education is not always explicitly mentioned and integrated into. For instance, in the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) Standard Action Plan, there is no distinct action plan for adult education. The scope and vision of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) has been narrowed down to early childhood, primary and secondary education, while adult education plays second fiddles to them. Corroborating this fact, Aderinoye (2007) observed that the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), which is saddled with the responsibility of implementing the UBE at the state level, has only primary schooling as its responsibility.

Another factor which has hampered the development of adult education in Nigeria has been funding. This is not typical to Nigeria only, but is common to most African countries (Nnazor, 2005). In support of the above, Ononeze (2018) discovered that education in Nigeria is poorly funded and fallen short of the UNESCO's recommendation that 20% of every nation's annual budget should be dedicated to education and global campaign for education recommends that not less than 3% of every nation's annual budget for education should be for adult education. The author explained that in 2012, the allocation for education was 10%, in the year 2017 budget, education was

allocated 7%. A comparison of adult education with other educational sectors shows that the government undermines the developmental strength of this all important sector of education.

Unfortunately, the trend became even worse in the recent 2021 budget, where education was allocated a meagre 5.6 percent of the budget. Adult education should be given proper attention by the three tiers of government – federal, state and local, in line with the global concern for sustainable development. The three tiers of government should allocate adequate funds to adult education programmes especially the literacy and continuing education programmes because we cannot achieve sustainable development where we have a nation where majority of the adults are illiterates. Also, the issue of lack of instructional materials and qualified personnel to handle adult education programmes should be addressed. Adult education programmes therefore should in still harmony, love and discipline in the psyche of adults which in turn will subdue unnecessary strife and insecurity in our communities. We can see from the above discussions that well-managed adult education programmes are the most veritable tool for achieving over all sustainable security and economic development in Nigeria.

Revitalized Adult Education as a tool for sustainable Security and Economic Development

Adult education being lifelong and life wide provide programmes that address any particular issue. With peace education sustainable development is achieved which invariable lead to economic development. The goal of peace education is to stop violence by resolving conflicts in a non-violent manner to share limited resources equitably and live within the limits of sustainability (Surendra, 2013). When people develop right sound attitude, there will be harmony tranquillity, peace, accord and acceptability without fear. Farmers can go to farm, fisher men go to rivers, traders go to markets, students go to school, workers work and come back home free movement and transportation of goods and services, value of life is restored and economic is invariably developed.

Emphasis on peace education in our various education system helps the recipients to live in peace within themselves, with other people and among groups in societies and countries, when such peace is in place, development and in particular sustainable economic development is imperative (Ememe, 2018).

Several literatures are replete with the fact that education in general and adult education in particular facilitates development. Adult education is an integral part of the right to education and lifelong learning, and comprises ‘all forms of education and learning that aim to ensure that all adults participate in their

societies and the world of work. It denotes the entire body of learning processes, formal, non-formal and informal, whereby those regarded as adults by the society in which they live, develop and enrich their capabilities for living and working, both in their own interests and those of their communities, organisations and societies' (UNESCO, 2015). Nigeria's philosophy of education affirms that education is an instrument for national development by fostering the worth and development of an individual for the individual's sake and the general development of his society (NPE, 2004). Recognizing education as a liberating agent, Ayeni (2012) asserted that education has the focus and the target of addressing the disparity and dichotomy created through gender inequality, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, thereby reducing to a reasonable level gender imbalances in the country's socio-political terrain.

Education inputs knowledge into Man, raises the consciousness of Man, builds the self-confidence of Man, and enables Man to understand his /her society in order to make useful contributions to the society. Education, also, exposes man to understanding his/her limitations and take action towards remedying the situations (Osuji, 2006). Therefore, any country that wants to achieve meaningful development must have a well-developed education system in which the adults are not left out but accommodated through adult education. It should be so because adults constitute the available force for national development. An individual who participates in adult learning may differ from the one who does not in terms of prior attitude. It was found according to Feinstein, Hammond, Woods, Preston and Bynner (2003) that adult learning is associated with more "open-minded" perspectives on race and authority, greater understanding of people from different backgrounds, challenging previously held beliefs and with a sustaining effect on non-extremist views. Adult Education is an integral part of the right to education and lifelong learning, and comprises 'all forms of education and learning that aim to ensure that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work. It denotes the entire body of learning processes, formal, non-formal and informal, whereby those regarded as adults by the society in which they live, develop and enrich their capabilities for living and working, both in their own interests and those of their communities, organisations and societies' (UNESCO, 2015). Osuji (2006) opined that adult education plays a complementary role by providing constant refinement of knowledge and skills to stabilize the educational attainment of people; and a supplementary role by continuing from where the formal system stops. The acquisition of knowledge through adult education brings about a change in attitude, orientation, and values in adults who in turn are able to

discharge their duties as leaders in the society. The enormous social problems, such as diseases, lack of access to safe water and sanitation, protection of rights of vulnerable children, maternal mortality, child mortality and extreme poverty confronting the human race requires the active participation of people to reduce or eradicate these problems. Thus, adult education, to a large extent, can trigger the participation of people, at both individual and community levels, by raising their consciousness and arming them with knowledge and information to apply preventive and curative measures against debilitating diseases, for instance, which have ravaged the poor and developing societies and the reduction in incidence of maternal and child mortality. Furthermore, adult education liberates people from the shackles of poverty through skills acquisition programmes to make a livelihood, enlightens and enables them to explore benefits of programmes and services geared towards reducing the number of people without access to safe water, protecting and asserting the rights of vulnerable children and orphans (Seya, 2005).

The human capital value of a nation determines its economic growth (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization, and carry forward national development (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). This is also supported by Seya (2005) who opined that for a broad-based economic growth, human capital formation is required. In formation of human capital, the Human Capital Theory espouses that education is relevant in building the workforce of a nation by improving the skills and productive capacity of workers (Nnazor, 2005; Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). The role of adult education in human capital formation cannot be underestimated because as Seya (2005) reasoned, it “is crucial for developing a labour force and managerial know-how, able to compete in today’s global economy.” With the growing complexities in information and communications technology, the challenges posed by the world which is gradually migrating into an era that is dominated by knowledge-based economic structures, and increased competitiveness among countries, there is need for the active population of a nation to constantly update their knowledge and skills to be able to compete in today’s global economy. These can be achieved through the multi-dimensional role of adult education.

The consolidation of democracy and democratic processes, and also the promotion of a culture of peace and security have been of much a concern to countries and the international community, giving the incidences of failing democracy in countries, the exclusion of minorities and women, and various

conflicts in certain parts of the world which have cultural, economic and religious undertones with Nigeria being a very good example due to her numerous ethnic groups with different cultures, religion and values. Democracy requires the participation of all and hence the need to promote values that will enhance it. The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) which took place in Belem, Brazil in 2009 established the relevance of adult learning to the consolidation of democracy and promotion of peace. The conference recommended strategies that will promote the elimination of discrimination based on gender, race, language, religion, or any other form; promote the participation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs); and promote conflict resolutions among people. The strategies are all clearly geared towards promotion of sustainable security and economic development of any country that applies them. Adult education provides a forum for a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world and helps individual to contribute to social, economic, cultural progress, tolerance and international cooperation. It is the key to personal and societal sustainability (Mauch & Papen 2018). Hence, adult education is important to inculcate into citizens the right attitudes, raise their awareness to their rights and responsibilities as citizens to participate in the building of democracy and ultimately provides sustainable security and economic development.

Suggested ways to revitalize Adult Education in Nigeria

To revitalize adult education and make it a tool for achieving sustainable security and economic development in Nigeria, the following suggestions are made:

1. Adequate allocation should be made for education in the national budget to meet the UNESCO international benchmark of 15-20 percent to make more funds available for education and ultimately for adult education.
2. Adult education practice should be reviewed constantly organized and systematized in order to develop a more coherent and useful agenda for adult education to give it the needed respect among other disciplines.
3. There should be more awareness through mobilization and advocacy because many interested learners are not aware of the existence of the adult education centres and even the programmes they are supposed to enrol in.
4. There should be establishment of more centres of adult education in the country so that every individual will have easy access to education and not have to travel long distances to acquire it.

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5. Basic and Post literacy programmes should be free at all the states of the Federation and the programmes should be based on the learners' needs and aspirations.
6. Upward review of facilitators' remuneration should be in 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 allowances.
7. Only qualified persons with Nigeria Certificate in Education and specialization in adult education should be employed as facilitators in the Non-Formal Education centres.
8. 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.
9. There should be regular and effective monitoring of programmes at all levels and there should be capacity building for monitoring and evaluation of officers through short, medium and long term training programmes, workshops, conferences amongst others.
10. People will have good perception of adult education programmes, if they are timely, relevant and innovative and if these programmes reflect practical/real life situation. The negative perception will change to positive one, when there is effective management and administration of adult education programmes.
11. The introduction of peace education as an integral part of the adult at this critical period of Nigeria's nation-hood is quite imperative and if properly designed and developed, it will help to control the rising cases of insecurity and armed conflicts in some parts of Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper shows that a revitalized Adult education is a tool that could be used in achieving human capacity for sustainable security and economic development in Nigeria. Through Adult Education programmes, the much needed technical and vocational knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed by the adult populace for sustainable development are achieved. In addition, it enables people to become well-informed, capable of thinking critically and owning their destiny through active participation. Successful and sustainable development cannot be achieved when the majority of the populace is illiterate. The political will to encourage adult education especially in areas of funding would only be achieved through a deliberate and sustained effort by the government to ensure that the percentage allocated to education in the yearly

national budgets meet the international bench-mark of 15-20 per cent as recommended by UNESCO in 2018 among several other measures discussed to revitalize Adult Education.

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