

## ANDRAGOGY: SINEWS TO TSANGAYA EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

***Temitope G. Adelalu***  
*Facilitator of King's Literacy Centre,  
Jalingo, Taraba State.*

And

***Ako Besongngem***  
*Department of Business Education,  
College of Education,  
Zing, Taraba State.*

### Abstract

As Nigeria craves for greatness, social reforms and political stability, it is now clear that essential to national development and sustenance of democracy, is the development of the mind of the citizenry. This is seen in the prompt movement of the federal Government to establish tsangaya (Alimajiri) education programme designed to absorb the children "on the street". Towards tsangaya education, this paper is of the opinion that, there exist a large vacuum in the life of the Alimajiris and tsangaya education. In attempt to evaluate the impact of andragogy and the progress of mass literacy campaign in Taraba State, findings have shown that, the andragogy education if fortified could be sinews to the tsangaya education and consequent removal of psychological wounds in the mind of the youths paving way to self reliance and the envisage national sustainable development. This study uses Taraba State to showcase and content analysis to reveal the level of societal alienation to the nature's gift to the Nation.

Andragogy (adult education) has been since time immemorial where elders deliberately organize and or modeling necessary skills for other junior members of the community with the primary purpose of orientation that will produce an individual who is honest, respectable, killed, cooperative and conforms to the societal order of the day Fafunwa (1962). The objectives of the learning experience were clear. Deliberate organization and modeling of such were put in place by the elder who desired society inhabited by people that will conform and be of use not

only to themselves but to the society as a whole. Deliberate effort was put in place to arrest and model the man. The better a man is, the better equipped he is too constructively to direct the general course of society.

Quest for survival can make an unenlightened mind in the nation to become agents of evil perpetrators. Estimate of the money spent on the hospital bill, life and properties destroyed has not been told since the recent insurgence in northern Nigeria. Thousands of lives have been claimed and properties worth millions of dollars have been destroyed. If what we really want is a new Nigeria, then education must take as its aim the development of the hidden possibilities- the mind. Man, according to Obafemi (1981), must be kept as fit as possible. His subjective mind, which distinguishing him from the lower animals and which is the seat of deductive and inductive reasoning, the seat of prejudices and partial affections, this mind must be thoroughly polished, enlightened, and educated .

What is in the mind of the Federal government before the establishment of the alimajiri schools is the picture of the "below average" children or wards in the northern communities of Nigeria. Why concern for the alimajiri now? What is the motive and intention of the government for the Alimajiri? Is nomadic in demise? These and some more are the questions which this paper proffer answers. The scheme is meant for over 10 million children who are out of the formal

education system: those who lack education opportunities or missed out the UPE. Because of peculiarity of these children, and the type of background and orientation they have, there is need of selecting, categorizing, and separating the sheep from the goat to know the kind of food to give, less the food becomes poison or get them bored.

### **The Background of the Tsangayas (Alimajiri)**

Olusegun (2009) in his write up "the street children of Nigeria" has identified two sets of alimajiri in the country. Truly there are those who live and work on the street (children of the street), there are those who work on the streets full or part time, but return to their homes each night (children in the street). Majority of these are boys. There are those that are girls in their early teens moving in group of tens, hundred along the road in the villages, you see them early in the morning with some set of trays in search of "guruka" corn peels or packing the left over of threshed grains. For example, some people like to do "surufe" first before grinding their maize. If care is not taken, they are like partner in progress with some of these machine boys who grinds. Before you know it half of your maize is gone! At another instance, you see them on the field of rice gleaning. Biodun, (2012) noted that sizeable number of them have grown into adulthood. No education, no vocation, no home, no mentor and absolutely no hope. The most decisive period of human life for these children have been un- nurtured, uncultured, un- gathered. They are left or

abandoned during their formative period! We know according to Maria (1988), “how to find pearls in the shells of oysters, gold in the mountains and coals in the bowels of the earth, but we are unaware of the spiritual germs, the creative nebulae, that the child hides in himself, when he enters this world to renew (help) mankind”.

Today we are beginning to see the value of these “un gathered” fruits more precious than petroleum, in the hand of the scavenger of blood. According to Olusegun (2009) separated from love, separated from discipline, separated from themselves sometime walking, sometime running, sometime cursing, sometime crying, sometimes found dead under the bridge. He added that they represent the face of hunger, insecurity and social neglect and that they are in crisis, is an underestimated social problem whose magnitude is reflected by the sheer number of youths involve. These social ills have brought some disequilibrium in attainment in many spheres of life.

### **Bridging the Gap**

There is no doubt that there exist gap between the alimajiri and their counterparts friends in the communities and among themselves. The existing gap in status, level, age and understanding coupled with the nature of their upbringing call for caution in the designing of their learning experience. Is like African man, who have never tasted salad before. It will be a nauseating breakfast.

Examining the objectives behind the conception of the idea of establishment of

the alimajiri schools, one is to bring forth a child that will have an independent mind of his own and to be able to fend for himself. Secondly, the school is out to mould characters. For any meaningful outcome of these objectives is to create enabling, special environment and learning experiences that will center and address the soul in the light of our present situation and in relation to the wider society in which Nigerians have to operate. Consequently, a fruitful footing in administration of Alimajiri School is expedient to the sustainable development of these youths and our nation at large. So that it will not be, according to Sani (2012) a breeding ground for religious radicalization

### **Engaging the Disengaged**

There are many laudable program in the time past targeted to directly or indirectly address the problem of poverty in the nation by both the federal and at the state level. But the fire goeth out soon when there is no wood. For example, Olusegun (2009) submitted that ex-governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State designed a scheme aimed at ridding the city off the area boy’s scourge. He set up a skilled training centre at ITA OKO, a disused island prison in Lagos. The aim was to rehabilitate these street boys by teaching them artisan skills and trades. But it is surprising to belief that insufficient attention, lack of commitment to its implementation rid off the programme. Not only that, General Ibrahim Babangida, Nigeria military ruler from 1985-1993, established a people’s bank, which

extended micro-credit to many street boys and girls to help them start businesses. However, the programme suffered from insufficient funding and many of those who benefited from the handouts simply returned to the street when the bank collapsed in the late 1990s. It is where carcass is, that the vulture gathered. More so, Shawulu et al (2008) recount of the ordeal of the national poverty eradication programme in Taraba State that 71.4% of the benefactors had a political angle. Yes, that is why Shehu (2012) boldly declared that Jonathan's Alimajiri project will fade into irrelevance like the nomadic education programme of the Ibrahim Babangida era as it amounted to superficial intervention in a decadent and menacing deeply rooted in peculiar belief and customs. These programmes of course, are bridgeable steps but void of careful planning, political will, necessary resources, commitment from the authority as well as cooperative and support from stakeholders and communities at large. To him, the problem is not solved by creating new schools, but concretizing of the existing ones. To curb the menace, the monster that bedevils our nation, is to put the right strategy handy with right resources with people of right skills, right attitude, with good intention, makes the difference. The question is where are the beautiful ones? Truly the beautiful ones are not yet born and the ugly ones are being used as object of destruction and hindrance from the birth of the beautiful ones.

Though nomadic education is not a total failure, its downward trends had been attributed to gross misappropriation. For

example, as an administrator and a facilitator of adult literacy in one of the centers in Taraba, I was able to fault some killer syndromes in the administration of nomadic school in the state. For instance, apart from the general set backs common to all the northern states, like difficulty of ascertaining the statistic of available schools, enrolment, staff strength and the problem of shifting base when the weather becomes odd, the schools are characterized by local stifling administrative diseases. Number one on the list is the unjustifiable politically motivated citing of the centre. For example, the nomadic school located in Guru Moddibo in Ardo-Kola local government is a wrong footing. How can you locate nomadic school that is meant for Fulani in Junjun dominated community where their major business and interest is fishing? Or a director locates a nomadic school in an area where it is not needed just because he was once a student of one (Alarama) tutor for his makaranta Allo! Not only that, the orientation giving to some Fulani nomads was that the governments supply everything: uniform, teaching materials, school fees. e.t.c. and when the in charge drives for school fees, the reply has always been the government said that "..... What do you say of the situation where promotion of these hardworking teachers, always on the tail of these nomads, just to give their best, being denied of promotion? Nomadic teachers are nobody, because they are not stereo type in a particular location or in a particular building. Their salary are often hooked and always a monthly boost to one big "Oga's business on the offence that

they are on the move with their students! The few available teachers, one or two in the various school that were interrogated will tell you “at this my age and my grade with this number of years” be running after these children in the bush? All these attitudes are not developmental but cankerworms. It is unfortunate that after 50years of independence, ignorance and illiteracy are still cankerworms to our economic development.

The concept of mass literacy campaign was launched by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1982, (Akinde et, al 2004). The writer, in an attempt to evaluate the impact of mass literacy campaign on literacy education in Taraba state, after 30 years of its conception, found out that, poverty is not the major hindrance to the in ability of 402 respondents in the Jalingo local government area of Taraba State, Nigeria to read and write. Using simple random sampling techniques, 6 centers out of 19 adult literacy centers in Jalingo were selected. All the respondents are between age 15 and 30. 75 questionnaires were administered to each centre to elucidate needed information from all groups of respondents. A focus group discussion (FGD) was also used to access expert opinion on the impact of the programme.

For easy assessment, the writer went with interpreter of hausa and Fulfulde and at stipulated time by the facilitators.

The answers to all the 52 questions were giving in the class just in the normal way class is being conducted. Using

simple percentage score, the result obtained shows that there are still cases of child neglect and abandonment, despite the mass literacy campaign 30 years ago. More than 60% traced their illiteracy to parental neglect. 22% of the respondents attested that they know 114 people abandoned and 17% of the respondents have been victims. 63% of the respondents however declared that they have no regret learning now and that the program had brought meaning to their life. More than half of the populations under study strongly agree that even if there is possibility of rebirth, they will still prefer andragogy education. This is incredible but true. See table 1

### **Bridgeable Steps in Administration of Alimajiri Schools**

Nordic countries have long understood the benefit of investing in life long learning. Government in the region invests highly in adult education programmes and their economics and citizen are reaping the benefits. Sweden and Norway used adult education as a way to solve developmental challenges such as unemployment. Both countries are implementing competence reforms intended to upgrade skills of the workforce to meet the needs of the fast changing labour market. Not only that, in Tanzania the government recognized that adult education was an important tool for salvation from debilitating ignorance, poverty and disease and so huge investment was allocated for the sector.

Investment from Thiophilous Yakubu Danjunma foundation seems to be having some positive effect on interest and

attitude of the respondents in two of the centres assessed toward adult literacy education See Table 1. Nyabukaka and Madarsatul Ihyaussunna are two of the centres that have integrated basic education with tsangya in Taraba State. 68% in Nyabukaka and 72% in Madarsatul Ihyaussunna declared that they have no regret schooling now and even if there is opportunity of rebirth they will strongly accept and embrace the program. They attested that the program had enlightened and broadening their reasoning. The foundation (T Y Danjuma) operates more as a philanthropic. It seeks to alleviate poverty in communities by providing basic amenities, partnering with NGO to provide education for children and young adults.

Grant to deserving ones and free medical care for indigent people. In a similar development, great achievement in women's empowerment program was recorded in Kastina state. According to State commissioner of education Kastina State, the Joint project of Federal Government of Nigeria, the department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom and the United Nations Children' Fund (UNICEF) has empowered NFE. NFE classes teach the women literacy, numeracy, tailoring and knitting. This has empowered women and has created a demand in the GEP communities for literacy and numeracy as well as diversification of vocational skills. Men in some of the communities have been inspired to start literacy classes for men in 20 GEP communities of Ingawa and 2 communities in Sabuwa LGA. 102 Quranic

Centres in GEP LGAs have accepted the integration of basic education into the Quranic School curriculum thereby providing education for more children as envisaged under EFA and UBE.

### **Recommendations**

In addressing the issue of the alimajiri, it is glaring that there is disequilibrium in attainment in many sphere of life of these children. There exist vacuum in their lives which needed urgent attention. Something is missing. There are visible lapses. Specific learning experience needed at a particular time is missing. However, information removes deformation. To be informed is to be reformed. Reformation removes ignorance and is best abolished by the development of our mind. To move out of ignorance one needs to truly want to know.

**Integration is the Answer.** Successes recorded in many areas outside the country and parts of the northern states where basic education and functional skills integrated to tsangaya are commendable and developmental. Likewise this will make positive impacts in the lives of alimajiri especially those from age 15 and above if fully adopted in all centres in the northern states. Consequently our dream of new Nigeria, where peace and justice shall reign will emerge.

For any meaningful outcome from this program aim to re-directing the life of the future generation of these Nation in this part of this country, the following are suggested:

- i Unrelenting in campaign to break the cycle of abandonment in Nigeria which has been identified to be one of the sources of the problem should be intensified by the governments in the media, using various known avenues.
- ii It is generally accepted that the language men ever speak perfectly well is the one they learn in babyhood when no one can teach them anything. The early stage (of nature) which has safeguard from the influence of adult reasoning which has only priority to the inner teacher who animates the children( alimajiri) has been distorted as a result of parental alienation, so
  - a) Call for special design of curriculum that will cater for the gap.
  - b) Learning experience that helps the individual to understand the trend in the changing society and in making good choice.
  - c) Content tailored to objectives that bring to realization that campaign against education is poverty inducing attitude. Illiteracy bench one behind. One hardly aspires for more in life; think for oneself neither becomes entrepreneur nor self- reliant.
- iii The children are on the streets, “the qualification”/admission requirement should be “on the street” and/ or in the house of the Alarama (tutor) This is where the real people targeted could be reached.
- iv The low figure in the admission number of students in the model alimajiri in Sokoto and Jigawa showed the level of deprivation of sub consciousness. Time will come

when law will be meted out to checkmate the low turn out and this action will be corrected. In Kastina state, a district head of Kurfi, Alhaji (Dr.) Ahmadu Kurfi had threatened and even carried some parents to court when they withdrew their pupils from GEP.

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