
Tandemity of Nigerian Educational System and Postmodernism (Adult Education, A Prerequisite)

Aromolaran, Adedayo.B.Odunaro, Samuel .K.Adebisi, Rahmatallahi .O. Ajana, Omolara

ABSTRACT

The dynamism of education, intra and inter-cultural relations that exist within and among individuals, groups and nations of the world in the areas of exchange of educational ideas which could culminate or brings about overall socio-economic development, as well as the need for a paradigm shift and the conformity of the Nigeria contemporary environment is what this paper seeks to explore. It further examine the introduction of adult education as it is done in Nigeria and assessment of the benefits which would in no small measure reposition and make her education postmodernism compliance.

Key words: Tandemity, Intra and inter-cultural relations, Conformity, Compliance, socio-economic

INTRODUCTION

Education is the most powerful instrument for imparting positive knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and beliefs to the learner to be accepted member of the society. Esu, Enuokoha & Umoven (2006) asserts that education is the process of shaping individuals' behaviour for adequate adjustment in the society. It performs the role of shaping the individual to conform with the accepted positive values that enhance all round development in the society such as disposition of good moral attitude, love of the nation, respect for cultural heritage, respect for labour and productivity, truthfulness and honesty.

Education in all its forms seeks not only to transform the natural forces and resources to good for the benefit of man, but also to generate innovations, skills, services, and techniques towards the solution of the problems of man and his environment. It is also meant for socio-economic and cultural transformations of individuals and the society at large (Haralambos & Holborns, 2004). The need for existence brought about the need for education, and whoever refuses to learn ceases to exist, even though he may be living.

According to Freire (1974) to 'exist' is more than to 'live' because it means being in the world and at the same time with the world. Therefore, one who exists has attributes of transcending, discerning, communicating and participating with others whereas one who is merely living does not possess those attributes. Hence, one whose development of knowledge ceases has also stopped to exist, he or she is merely living. Education is conceived as an enabling factor that opens up many visas of personal, community, and national development; it is generally seen as a necessary investment.

Education is essentially regarded as a social process for capacity building, socialization, social integration, development and the maintenance of the society. In order to meet up with the modern challenges of life and globalization, education is a weapon which is capable of equipping people with knowledge and skills so as to be able to survive in the modern world of science, technology and globalization. Aromolaran & Okedeyi (2011) asserts that education is a systematic socialization of an individual in belief, collective opinion, feelings of nationality from one generation to another.

Education is the process of becoming critically aware of one's reality in a manner that leads to effective action on it. An educated man or woman understands his or her world well enough to deal with it effectively. In the opinion of Edukugho (2002) cited in Imogie (2002), the prosperity of a country depends not on the abundance of its revenue, nor the strength of its fortifications, but on the number of its cultivated citizens, men (and women) of education, enlightenment and character.

The Federal government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument per excellence for effecting national development (NPE, 1998.5). The implication is that government realizes the

**Address for correspondence:*

aromolaranadedayo@yahoo.com

importance of education as a veritable tool for national development. Thus, the policy guidance of the NPE asserts that:

education will continue to be highly rated in the national development plans, because education is the most important instrument of change, as any fundamental change in the intellectual social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution (NPE, 1998; P.8).

Furthermore, Nigeria government expressly states in section 18 of the 1999 constitution that:

- Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.
- Government shall promote science and technology
- Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this end shall when practicable provide:
 - Free compulsory and universal primary education;
 - Free secondary education
 - Free university education; and
 - Free adult literacy programme

It can be said therefore, that the main focus of government education agenda is to bring about optimal development of its human resources, which, put in another word, is a viable source of human capital. This investment however will not be complete without adult education. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to examine the conformity of Nigeria as regards educational revolution that had being experienced in all nations of the world with emphasis on her adult education programme in the context of the future of Nigeria from psychological and sociological viewpoint.

CONCEPT OF ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education incorporates anything that enlarges men's understanding, activates them, helps them to make their own decisions, and to implement those decisions for themselves. It includes training, but is much more than training. It includes what is generally called 'agitation', but is much more than that. It includes organization and mobilization, but it goes beyond them to make them purposeful and resourceful.

Nyerere (1973) sees adult education as learning about anything at all which can help one to understand the environment he live in, and the manner in which one can use this environment in order to improve. Adult education can cover many subjects for those who did not get an opportunity to be at school when they were young; it can be applied to every one without any exception. It was linked to the policy for rural development in some countries such as Tanzania and Nigeria.

The programme of adult education is meant to make virtually every adult citizen of any country to be a useful individual not only for himself but for the generality, most especially in the areas of political and socio-economic development of a given country.

CONCEPTUALIZING ADULT EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Adult education could be said to be a process through which deficiencies in human being in the areas of skill, communication (such as illiteracy), and of attitude (such as low self-esteem and sense of powerlessness) are reduced or removed. Adult education is a reality that is perceived and structured differently by the various actors according to their specific contexts and historical circumstances. The concept of adult education also varies according to who request it and who proposes programme.

In Africa and the Arab States, in the light of the urgency of basic training needs, adult education is perceived first and foremost as literacy training. If training and adult education are simply equated, this tends to hide other very important needs for and possibilities from adult education.

Most developing countries of the world inherited a negative attitude towards adult education from the former colonial powers. This was as a result of the little regard the colonial masters had for any form of education that fell outside the formal education system. They embraced the formal education system, (hierarchically structured, chronologically graded, credential based and running from primary school through the University) for a long time at the expense of any other form of education. The colonial masters did not intend to slight adult education that they knew embraced all forms of educative experiences needed by men and women according to their varying interests and

requirements. Rather, it was simply a reflection of the prevailing attitudes at that time to any form of education not directed towards children and youths. There is no doubt that rising populations have necessitated accelerated school programmes. All but a few countries, however, have been able to keep pace with the demand for schools by children and youths. Each year, there are more children in school, but each year also, there are more children out of school than in the previous year. Such a situation clearly calls for fresh thinking as to whether the continuing provision for more places in schools as conventionally conceived is both wise and within the financial competence of a country.

The fact remain that what can be learn at school is but an introduction to life; that knowledge in every sphere is accumulating and changing so rapidly that learning must of necessity be a continuing activity. There is therefore, the necessity to establish another form of education that is equally effective, possibly less costly, and which reaches out to a mass audience rather than to smaller narrowly defined groups within the community. This in essence will assist government, organizations or institutions to be able to tackle the challenges of rising number of young adults who have missed out altogether of formal schooling.

It is to be noted however, that government, organizations or institutions alone cannot meet the challenges for the provision of adult education in the twenty-first century. The energy imagination and genius of people as well as their full, free and vigorous participation in every aspect of life are also needed.

There is the need for continuous updating of skills which is indispensable and which now makes up part of the curriculum. This must be adapted to form a programme of life-long education. Both old and young now have to face the reality of changing jobs especially traditional jobs which must give way to service-oriented activities that call for a higher level of qualification. The challenge is immense; therefore, methods of education must be reformed to include new information technologies and environmental issues. Foreign cultures and languages must be introduced, and the need to formalize adult education and insist that it be accorded due recognition and standing.

Teachers and those who train them are also concerned and must be mobilized. They must re-think teaching techniques and upgrade their own skills continuously, working with new methods or programmes which reflect state of the art innovations

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ADULT EDUCATION

There are various aims and objectives which the concept of adult education seeks to achieve as fundamental among these are:

- Promotion of changes in men as well as in society at large: Ability of man to be fully involved and contribute meaningfully towards political and socio-economic development not only of himself but, also to the larger society.
- Enhancing men to control both the change which they may induce, and that which is forced upon them by the decisions of other men or the cataclysm of nature: Education has to increase man's physical and mental freedom, and to increase control over themselves, their own lives and the environment in which they live. Liberation presupposes a constraint whose removal enables man to do certain things. It may also refer to either physical or mental constraints being removed; while from the ethical point of view, liberation has to do with the ethical worth or value attached to the state or processes of liberation (Njoroge, 1990).
- Establishing the fact that adult education encompasses the whole of life, and must build upon what already exists: Adult education reposition the state of mind of beneficiary, and further equip such individual in order to withstand future challenges.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF ADULT EDUCATION TO THE SOCIETY

Contributions of adult education towards the development of any given society vis-à-vis political and socio-economic cannot be underestimated and undervalued. Some of the identified contributions are:

- Opportunities for acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills, and possibly proceed further through extension programmes and continuing education such as distance learning, evening studies, part time and vocational training

- It contributes to capacity building through skills development, technology transfer, community leadership development and information dissemination
- Empowerment process in terms of acquiring skills and increasing knowledge of social, political, environmental and economic issues that impact on individual and collective living
- It provides human capabilities necessary to enable one to avoid or graduate from poverty
- It is also a means towards enhancing human welfare.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sociological paradigms or perspectives are theories used by sociologists as well as sociologists of education in attempting to understand the problems of human society. These problems could be those of education, nutrition, population, gender, life chances, majority, minority, conflict and so on.

However, for the purpose of this paper, post-modernism which emphasized on human liberation from ignorance and backwardness was adopted to examine the various contributions of adult education programme in Nigeria to the participants and the larger society.

Usher & Edward (1994) asserts that education is very much the dutiful child of the enlightenment and, as such, tends to uncritically accept a set of assumptions deriving from the enlightenment. Education is seen as a tool or instrument that would help to spread the rational and scientific beliefs that would free people from the grip of tradition and superstition. In other word, individuals are made to understand the necessity for dynamism, and realization as well as display of their potentials in any given society, which could only be made possible through acquisition of education that would disconnect their minds from the said superstitious beliefs but rather make them useful contributors in so many ways to societal development.

The issue of educational revolution and adult education in the context of future of individuals who are to benefits from the programme and Nigeria as a country is stressed under the postmodernism. In this view, every member are made to be parts of the functioning system, having being exposed to education that is all involving where no one is left out in the areas of policy formulation, execution and, implementation; in essence, general participation of every members in order to achieve the desire goal of a formidable society.

The theory also agreed to the autonomous of every individual as regards decision making on personal related issue without the interference of external organs; in essence, total freedom and liberation of minds which is in consonance with the type of education that the apostles of postmodernism clamoured for.

Adult education therefore, is seen as a necessity and, an alternative to liberate several citizens that to some extent are in minority and, whose contributions in whatever form seems not contemporary environment compliance in the areas of political and socio-economic development. Revolutionizing education and making the educational programme all inclusive with a strong consideration for adult education would in no small measures improve the standard and, as such pave ways for sustainable development, personal growth, social integration and cohesion in the society.

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

An adult education programme for Nigeria would entail and involve the development as well as implementation of a systemic adult education policy. The policy would be guided both in conception and implementation by a philosophy of continuing education or lifelong learning. A responsively comprehensive adult education policy should seek to institute and sustain a culture of learning that will lead to the emergence of a learning society (Edward, 1977). As Nigerian adults grapple with the problems and opportunities in their personal lives, they are simultaneously challenged to contribute to the development of their communities and society. Hence, lifelong learning becomes imperative, not only for the effective functioning of individuals at the workplace and in their communities, but also for the renewal of the society itself. Adult education is offered by a broad range of providers to highly heterogeneous audiences; this therefore, introduces a number of variables that must be taken into account in economic studies of adult education, which may range from public basic education provided in the formal system to informal learning in the work place and continuing education of

highly skilled professionals. The broad-scope of adult education includes the wide range of learning modes outside of the normal age-graded school system.

A systemic and comprehensive adult education policy in Nigeria would pursue among others, the following objectives:

PROVISION OF INCENTIVES FOR ADULT PARTICIPATION

Adults are generally saddled with occupational and familial concerns. In a country like Nigeria, where poverty is highly pervasive, people are preoccupied with how to eke out aliving. Consequently, motivating adult to participate in education and training programmes that are not employer- sponsored would require a variety of incentives. Such as subsidized child care services especially in the cities, flexible scheduling, and career and personal guidance service.

COMPREHENSIVENESS OF OFFERINGS

There is tendency in developing countries to concentrate efforts in adult education on literacy or basic education. If the talents and abilities of the adult population are to be developed, mobilized, and optimally utilized in national development, there must be comprehensive education and training opportunities for adults. A variety of professional, vocational and general education programme and courses must be available and affordable. Programme could be developed along the following broad themes or topics and could be offered both in cities and rural areas.

➤ Personal Development and Family Management

Responsive adult education should aim at helping adults to make informed decisions and choices in managing their personal and familial concerns. Adult education for personal development would provide learners guidance on how to access information regarding issues such as health, nutrition, family planning, career opportunity for self and children.

➤ Civic and Peace Education

Citizens need to know how government functions, and what their responsibilities and rights are. They should know the procedures they can utilize to constrain or influence their leaders. Gartforth (1980) stressed the needs for an educated populace if democracy is to succeed: 'without an educated electorate, democracy is impossible, for it require of its citizens alert, informed, critical interest and as far as possible, participation in the process of government.

➤ Community Development Education

Community development is another area adult education can play a vital role in Nigeria. It has shown that about 64 per cent of Nigerians live in rural areas or communities (United Nations Development Programme, 2004b), responsive adult education programme can be utilize to raise and awakening their consciousness and make them aware of their circumstances as well as their opportunities.

➤ Entrepreneurship Education

It aims at equipping learners with skills, knowledge and dispositions that can help them develop or implement innovative social or business plans.

➤ Literacy

Nigeria cannot develop in any significant way if the majority of Nigerians are not first considerably developed. Literacy is critical to the development of individual Nigerians and the country.

PROBLEMS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Adult education programme obviously is faced with myriads of problems which has greatly affects its stated aims and objectives as stipulated in the National Policy on Education. Some of the problems are stated as follows:

- **The Challenge of Poor Funding:** The idea of poor funding has persistently remained a serious challenge to education in general as well as adult and non-formal education. The money in adult and non-formal education is provided by adult learners in form of payment of tuition fees.
- **Inadequate Information and Poor Publicity:** This is also seen as major challenge and obstacle militating against effective implementation of adult education programme

- The Challenge of Poor Motivation of Workers: The workers welfare is another challenge which were not adequately paid attention to by the relevant agency in charge of adult education programme.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusively, the prospects of adult education in innovations in Nigerian educational system cannot be jettisoned, but the poor funding of the educational sector in general and adult education in particular as well as other challenges that confront the sector should be carefully addressed by relevant stakeholders in the educational sector of Nigeria. This will in no small measure help to widen people's access to opportunities to develop their potentials as well as contributing remarkably to the growth of the economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the problems associated with adult education programme as discussed above, the following recommendations are suggested as measures that could be taken in order for the programme's objectives to be fully achieved:

- Provision of adequate funding and proper monitoring of the fund given to avoid diversion for irrelevant usage
- Attention should be given to more result oriented approach towards the implementation of adult education programme
- The departments of adult education in all Nigerian universities that offer courses in the concerned areas of study should establish part-time learning programmes for various categories of workers in the country. This will encourage teachers, adult educators, community development practitioners and others to take relevant courses in order to broaden the scope of their knowledge.

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