

Planning and Financing Continuing and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

Literacy is a major component of human capital formation and fundamental to any programme of social and economic progress. While the importance of having a proper education is continually stressed by various governments and the society, yet the level of literacy still remains low in Nigeria. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in a paper 'Education for all' presented in Delhi on December 1993 suggests an 80% access to basic education in order to achieve a sustainable level of learning skills by the larger population. This set the human development landmark of the decade in Nigeria. An optimum level of education can only be sustained when there is a complete removal of illiteracy from among a country's citizens. This will require a major emphasis on character-building.

In recent times, there has been an increasing realisation of the critical importance of adult education. Yet the determination and political will to promoting it has been hardly inadequate when compared to the immense enormity and urgency of the task. Despite the commendable work done by educational bodies, government and non-governmental organisations in Nigeria to bring education closer to its citizen, there are still troubling inefficiencies and problems in planning and implementation of policies. However, this paper seeks ways to improve on the situation and suggest ways of attaining optimum education and development for Nigeria.

Keywords: Planning, Financing, Continuing, Non-Formal Education

Introduction

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In the world today, education and development are inseparable. It is a known fact that quality education enhances socio-economic development, while less emphasis and interest in education brings set-backs to the development of any nation. To this end, technological advancement and knowledge continue to be on the increase and become valued concepts, especially in Nigeria.

Indigenous education in Nigerian co-exists with Western orientated education. As a result, this creates a need to bridge the gap between the literate and the illiterate in the Western sense of literacy. There are several factors that operate as barriers to achieving greater levels of literacy in Nigeria. To change this will a general modification of educational system. According to Reginald Nnazor (2005), Nigeria's inadequate commitment over the years to pursue the development of adult education as a strategic objective, as well as an instrument of national development has been one of the major drawbacks of the country's efforts to pull itself out of poverty.

In recent times, government and NGO's have been trying to create a national identity that will eradicate regional inequities, and eliminate parochial and inefficient indigenous educational practices. Several plans are being put in place to regulate indigenous private educational institutions and craft apprenticeship in order to achieve an optimum level of employment consistent with the number of persons searching for a good and quality education in Nigerian (Akinpelu, 2001)

The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has organized various campaigns so as to reach rural dwellers in a bid to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged groups and promote continuous and non-formal education. Continuing education is defined as any type of post-secondary education used to either obtain additional certificates to strengthen one's professionalism. This must be distinguished from continuous education which is a structured educational activity designed or intended to support the continuing development of individual or a group of individuals to maintain and enhance their competence. It promotes problem-solving and critical thinking.

On the other hand, according to Reginald Nnazor (2005) and for the purposes of this paper, non-formal education "encompasses all education and training activities undertaken by adults for professional or personal reasons. It includes general, vocational and enterprise based training within a lifelong perspective" (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2003, p4)

It is important to point out that continuing education is essentially a part time rather than a full-time learning activity (Akinpelu, 1988, p24). The vast majority of continuing education services are organized for clients/learners who have some pre-occupation or jobs other than studying, either in the evening, weekend or summer-vacation classes or even study on their own in their various homesteads. In contrast, non-formal education could be referred to as education that is carried out without structured formal setting. Thus, this type of education is spelt out in the National Policy on Education (NPE) as that form of education that encompasses all forms of functional education given to youth and adults outside the formal school system, such as functional literacy, continuing and vocational education. Akinpelu, (2001, p11; and Fabunmi 2004, p95) points out that continuing education is an educational programme designed to educate an individual or group of individuals and give them further skill and knowledge to be applied in their activities or area of expertise.

Despite the fact that continuing and non-formal education training programmes are designed for adults, they also enable young men and women in rural and semi-urban areas use their skills in contributing towards the development of the nation's economy. Whether in the form of seminars, home-study, on-line programmes, conferences, workshops, on-the-job etc, it is intended to educate persons on new advancement or to improve a person's expertise in a particular field of endeavour. Programmes under continuing education include non-degree career training, formal personal enrichment courses, workforce training, experimental learning and self-directed learning among others.

In Nigerian, some universities like – Nigerian Open Universities, University of Ibadan, University of Lagos among others have started offering courses where adult learners have the option of in-class learning and apprenticeship programmes.

Concept and History of Non-Formal Education in Nigeria

The term of non-formal education could be traced back to the work of Malcolm Knowles in 1950 and Josephine Macalister Brew in 1946, Knowles was searching for a 'coherent and comprehensive theory of adult learning' and the closest he could come to an organizing theme was 'informal' (Knowles 1989, p76). An educational system that provides a friendly and informal climate for adult learning situation, the flexibility of the process, the use of experience and the enthusiasm and commitment of participants (including the teachers).

Non-formal system of education in Nigeria could be traced back to the need to formulate a policy in 1922 to cover adult literacy in the then British colony. Phelps-Stoke commission as noted by Fafunwa (1974) recommends the need for a high literacy rate taking cognizance of the needs of the adult population. Due to the failure of the commission, in 1951, the Central Board of Education endorsed a policy to organize a remedial primary education for adults. Basic adult literacy and craft-making and the importance of women's participation in adult education were stressed. As a result of the introduction of free primary educations scheme of 1955 and 1957, enthusiasm for continuing and non-formal education including government funding began to decline. Thus, the first serious attempt at adult education lost steam and even collapsed.

In 1977, Nigerian education system, adopted the Nigerian National Policy on Education (modified in 1981, 1984, and 2004 respectively). Adult and non-formal education occupies a place of pride in the National Policy of Education. The policy provides for equal access to education, including continuing and further education and commits to the eradication of illiteracy and promotion of lifelong learning. UNESCO (2004) proposed an 80% literacy rate, so far, there has been no reduction in either male or female illiteracy as established by findings from UNICEF study of 2002. For women, the rate declined from 44% to 41% (FGN/UNICEF, 2001) the DHS Ed Data shows an adult literacy rate of 55% and 60% for the South West and South East respectively 74% in both zones for (males) while the North West and North East record values of 21:22 percent for females band 40-42 percent for males (NPC/FME/USAID/ORC Macro 2004). Information from the Federal Ministry of Education though without empirical support put the literacy rate at 57% of the 140million population based on the 2006 national census figure, while the illiterate rate was put at 41% translating to about 57 million of the total population (FGN/UNESCO/UNDP/UNICEF, 2001, p6-7)

However, many government sponsored adult education activities have been chronically anaemic due to inadequate funding and poor implementation owing largely to a historical lack of passion and vision for adult education as both a strategic goal and an instrument for national development. Adult education curricula are hardly forward-looking or responsible to the strategic needs of the economy or to the personal, social and political development needs of the vast majority of Nigerian adults.

Planning and Financing Continuing and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria

Education contributes to the growth of national economy by improving the skills and productive capacity. There is hardly any industrialized country without a well-developed education and training system – a system that not only provides a rich variety of programs or courses that respond to both personal and national development needs, but also seeks to remove barriers to adult participation.

The concept: adult is a very controversial one. An individual could be physically matured but below the age of adulthood. To provide greater clarity for the purpose of policy implementation, Akinpelu (1988) argued that those to be regarded as adults must meet two criteria – quantitative

(chronologically, biologically and physically qualified) and qualitative criteria (morally, and emotionally fit). These qualities are a reflection of maturity of the individual and are an essential attribute of adulthood. Therefore, continuing education is an adult education. The programme is flexible and adaptable to meet specific needs and requirements; hence it is relevant and problem-solving.

Adult education can be in form of non-formal education, literacy education and continuing education among others. Adult or non-formal education emphasizes on knowledge, skills and technology and the acquisition of continual update of knowledge and skills is imperative (Denison, 1962 p6; Shultz 1961, p1-17). However, the International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP) in 1965 in her studies highlighted problems confronted by educational planners in the developing country, Nigeria inclusive. In her research, planning and financing are major setbacks on continuing education. Dr. Archibald Callaway and Dr. Alighiero Musone (1968, p10) linked financial crisis to the expansion of enrolment and expenditure over the years. UNESCO says the rise in education's 'share' of national resources cannot go on indefinitely due to the pressing demands of other important public services and investments needed in nation. However, financial requirements on educational systems will keep on rising as a result of exploding youth population, increasing school participation rates, high drop-out and repeater rates, extra costs for improving quality. Together these factors guarantee an upward march of costs per student at every educational level.

After more than a decade of unprecedented expansion in education, Nigeria has come to a period of review and re-assessment. A few years ago, the main problem being faced was 'how to get it on the ground' and-throughout the nation – primary schools, secondary schools, technical centres, as well as universities, were being built. Now, Nigeria operates an extensive system of modern formal education, requiring for its yearly development and running costs a significant proportion of the nation's available resources (UNESCO, 1993, p2).

In its widest sense, the purpose of such a formal education system is to help bring about and respond to the desired directions and rates of change in the society and economy. By providing both general education and training in specific skills, this system encourages social change and helps to raise output in all sectors of the growing economy. At its higher levels it generates engineers, doctors, veterinarians, teachers, while at its lower levels it creates literate youth ready to take up new vocations or to help initiate improved techniques in the traditional ways of making a living. The achievements of this system should be judged not only by the number of students who pass each year through its various stages, but also by the quality and vigour of their performance in class-rooms and in later life and by the extent to which these results are obtained in as economic manner as possible. And only an appropriately organized system of formal education can turn out the numbers and quality required at lowest cost to individual families and to the nation.

Financing Continuing and Non-Formal Education In Nigeria: The Problems

A number of problems or difficulties were involved in having access to information on financing of adult education in Nigeria. One of the difficulties is on having access to adult and non-formal education programmes which may be due to the complexity of activities that constitute adult education (Hasaan, 2009; Okech, 2004). The diversity of provision, without focus or co-ordination, complicated the effort to identify the budgets or expenditure dedicated to adult education. In many cases, budgets that serve adult education are not in budget line explicitly designed as adult education. Not until recent years, for example, that local government council in Nigeria now has votes for community development programmes; this makes department of community development become functional in the local government administration.

Also, the Federal and States Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Commerce, Industry and Cooperative carry out adult and non-formal education activities. The budget in these Ministries is not clearly dedicated to adult education. Even some civil society organizations involved in adult education often have adult education as part of other activities and may not necessarily have a distinct budget for it. When these organizations do have distinct budget for adult education, it is often more specifically for adult literacy.

One other difficulty is that both government and non-governmental organizations are usually reluctant to reveal information on their finances. The consequence of this problem is that there may be the lack of researched information on the economics and financing of adult education and related activities.

Financing Adult and Non-formal Education: The Way Out

Financing education programmes presupposes that there are benefits that can be obtained either by the individual or by the community. Thus, financing adult education programmes is based on certain consideration, as identified by Ubeku (1975), Akilaiya (1999), Obanewa (2000) and stressed by Hassan (2009).

These include:

- i) Whether the money spent on educational programme is producing the results needed by the individuals and organizations.
- ii) What improvements can be made to the training/educational procedures in order to reduce the costs and improve efficiency?
- iii) Whether the type of training given or educational programme provided is necessary to improve individual and organizational effectiveness, whether the money, if spent on another activity, will lead to the attainment of individual and organizational goals.

Mechanisms for comparing costs of a function or programme with its outcomes have been described by a variety of terms, such as cost-benefit analysis, cost utility analysis operation research, operation analysis, cost quality analysis and cost effectiveness analysis (Hassan, 1994). The terms that appear to have achieved popularity and widest acceptance however, are cost-benefit analysis and cost effectiveness analysis. Meanile, cost benefit analysis according to Akilaiya (1999), implies a systematic comparison of the magnitude of the cost and benefits of some form of investment in order to assess its economic profitability; it is used in education because of its investment nature which yields returns.

The uses of cost benefits analysis identified by this scholar include:

- i) To point the way for allocation of resources, especially financial and human resources available for education.
- ii) To provide answer to the question as to who or which body should finance education.
- iii) To help find a way of increasing the cost of education so as to increase rate of returns or decrease the cost and increase rate of returns.

Cost-effectiveness analysis is different from cost-benefit analysis, according to Hassan (1994) citing Okedara (1979). For benefit is measurable in money unit called a return. However, effectiveness may not be measurable in money unit except in some objective criteria of the programme. As such using cost-effectiveness strategy for evaluation of educational programmes involves paying attention to the following elements of analysis: the area of study; the objectives of the educational programmes stated in behavioural terms; both the cost and alternative costs of

the programme must be known; and valid and reliable measures of the attainment of the objectives must be available.

In practical terms, financing adult and non-formal education in Nigeria according to Hassan (2009) takes into account the following cost categories:

- i) The personnel costs incurred at different levels.
- ii) The instructors/ facilitators' costs.
- iii) Course fees (tuition, examination, instructional materials, etc).
- iv) Equipment and materials.
- v) Building and facilities used for classes.
- vi) Administration, especially fuel, subsistence and other transport costs.
- vii) Learners cost (opportunity costs /earning forgone).

Importance of Continuing and Non-Formal Education

1. Ensure a productive future: Adult literacy promises a good future as it provides a good character to a person. It enables one to make best use of one's skills and talent and help in fetching the most competitive jobs. Importance of continuing education can be realized in the height achieved by great and famous personalities in different fields of education.
2. Opens New Vistas: The magnitude of education lies in its ability to broaden the mental scope and open new vistas that are inaccessible otherwise. It enables one to understand different dimensions of a particular point-of-view, which an uneducated person cannot. It helps in making a person tolerant and humble, and at the same time removes the darkness of ignorance. This is the ultimate goal of education
3. Helps in Decision-making: Education broadens the framework of the mind and enables us to take the right decisions at right times. In every sphere of life, we are supposed to take right decisions that might be very wrong and thereby preventing grave losses.
4. Bolsters Confidence: Self-brief is the most important trait in making a good human being and education helps in augmenting the self-confidence, fostering positive outlook and allowing us to rely on ourselves.
5. Spreads Awareness: Education spreads awareness about right and wrong. It informs us about our rights and the services we can access; at the same time emphasizing on the duties entrusted upon us by the society
6. Makes Better Citizens: Education that opens our mind and expands our horizons, which plays a crucial role in shaping us to be good and responsible citizens. Education helps us to learn about our culture and our history, and subsequently imbibe those values to become better (Aderinoye, 1997, 9)

Problems Associated With Continuing and Non-Formal Education

1. Awareness: The intending population in need of adult education is usually not captured, and in some cases, are aware of the programme existence when it is no longer needed.

2. Unavailability of Fund: Funds allocated to adult literacy are usually diverted to cover other projects. Sometimes, allocated fund is not even enough; or is not even seen.
3. Lack of Clarity: The frameworks for organizing and delivering programs are hardly innovative or forward-looking. Objectives attached to the programme tend to be ambiguous, thus main objectives are usually not met.
4. Lack of Commitment: Inadequacy of physical and instructional facilities in government-owned adult education training centres is indicative of the neglect and marginal status of adult education (Aderinoye, 2002)
5. Misconducts: Pronouncement of Adult literacy is usually an avenue for misappropriation of fund and results to huge debt.
6. The programme lacks continuity. It is characterized by gender and language disparity (Knowes. 1995, p4-5)

Improper planning among others is one of the problems associated to adult education in Nigeria. At times, details are skipped during the plan exercise. The issue of visibility studies before the invention of a programme has become increasingly difficult as such programmes fail before a projected time frame. Age, the number of people required to undertake a program, duration and area of concentration are not properly spelt-out. Adult programme should be closely linked with needs, interests and aspirations of adult learners in order for them to neutralize their goals to economic development.

However, continuing and non-formal education cannot be successful without government and voluntary organizations effort. To UNESCO (1993), basic learning needs are complex and diverse; meeting them requires multi-sectorial strategies and action which are integral to overall development efforts. That is, it is the responsibility of every society to see to education development.

Conclusion

Continuing and non-formal system of education is multi-dimensional. It is a form of education that starts where literacy education ends. It includes all forms of education received by adults (or youths) after foundation education. It is education on continuous basis which lasts till death. The non-formal education programmes are supposed to offer a flexible opportunity of receiving basic education to disadvantaged children, youths and adults who could not participate in formal schooling either due to poverty, cultural or other or other social barriers. The non-formal education approach permits mainstreaming of learners into the formal system at different levels. The integration of the non-formal education as a component of the basic education system therefore requires that quality standards must be maintained at all levels of the literacy programmes to mainstreaming of learners possible.

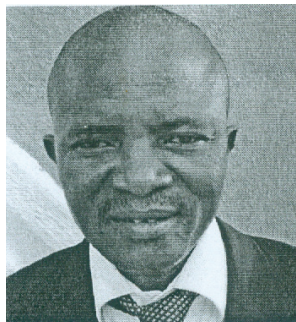
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