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Adult Education Programmes in Nigeria: Constraints towards the Implementation

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Abstract

Adult education is an important foundation which development is built. It embraces all educational experiences needed by men, women and youths. Inadequate implementation of adult education programmes accounts for inability of the government to achieve its adult education objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education. This inadequate implementation is as a result of constraints that hinder the success of the programmes. These constraints are inadequate finance, lack of trained personnel, poor infrastructure and equipment and poor communication to create awareness about Adult education programmes. Based on these, it was recommended that adequate human, material and financial resources should be provided and effective communication strategies used to create awareness on the existence of adult education programmes in Nigeria.

Keyword: Constraint, Implementation, Adult education and Programmes.

Introduction

Adult education is a developmental education which embraces all forms of educational experiences needed by men and women according to their varying interest and needs. Adult education is as old as the creation of the first man Adam and it existed before the advent of the Europeans.

Traditional education which was rooted in child, youth and adult education was the main means of education before the coming of the Europeans. Such traditional education constitutes the

process of acculturation and the development of national character. It facilitated the transfer of societal rules, regulations, customs, traditions and culture from one generation to the other. It also enhanced the development of societal attitude and optional development of the individual. Fafunwa (1974) maintains that the history of education in Africa is not complete without adequate knowledge of the traditional or indigenous education which was with us before the arrival of Islam and Christianity. He contended that every society has its own way of training, educating children, youths and adults.

This is to say that adult education is the offshoot of traditional education. In essence adult education has limitless scope, it covers almost all educational and developmental activities for the improvement of man and his environment. In line with the above submission the 1976 UNESCO recommendation on adult education as noted by Anowor, Ezema and Umezulike (2001) states that the term adult education denotes the entire body of organized educational processes whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship.

Adult education in Nigeria remains one of the most important foundations on which development can be built. There is need for efficient implementation of adult education programmes for rapid expansion in adult learning and national development. The implementation of adult education programmes should be addressed if the national objectives of adult education will be achieved. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) National Policy on Education highlighted these objectives as provision of functional literacy for adults who have never had advantage of any formal education and to the people who prematurely dropped out of school. Other objectives include, provision of further education, in service on the job, vocational and professional training. Also to give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment. There are so many adult education programmes meant to upgrade Nigerians into higher academic, cultural, social, economic and moral levels.

These programmes include, mass literacy programmes, functional literacy, extramural programmes, correspondence courses, open university, distance education, lifelong education, remedial education, women education, pre-retirement education, internship programmes, etc. Fashokun (2008) noted that adult education programmes and activities covers almost all the areas of human endeavour but it appears that there are indecisive policies, structure and management of adult education for effective implementation of these programmes, as a result, the writer deemed it right to ex-ray some of these constraints to effective implementation of adult education programmes in Nigeria.

Impediments to the Implementation of Adult Education Programmes

There are so many impediments to effective implementation of adult education programmes, Nzeneri (2008) noted that adequate facilities have not been provided despite the efforts of government, individuals, governmental and non-governmental agencies and the communities.

The survey of the material resources available for the implementation and administration of adult education programmes revealed that problems exist in the provision of facilities.

Administration of adult education programme are sometimes neglected by the government and non-governmental organizations. Nzeneri & Adekola (2006) noted that adult education cannot operate effectively without adequate provision of amenities. There are inadequate quality and quantity of personnel available for adult education programmes. The federal government recognizes that educational system has a problem of insufficient number and quality personnel especially in the adult education system. Nzeneri (2008) noted that one of the major impediments to effective adult education programmes is non-availability of qualified educators with adequate training. He said that there are not enough qualified educators who will manage adult education programmes. Personnel from other educational system are often deployed to handle adult education activities. Most of the time they use untrained personnel.

Dike & Ndokwo (2007) in Obiozor & Obidiegwu (2013) argued that for good learning outcome to be achieved there is need for competent educators. Non-qualified personnel in our educational systems can do much havoc to the system. The status of facilitators of adult learning and the incentives attached to it had in the past not been such as to attract the best candidate to seek for employment as a facilitator in the field. Even in these modern days, the situation is not much different since the condition of the service and lack of adequate infrastructures have made the teaching facilitation largely unattractive to those who see it as sure way of securing a job. Due to negligence on the part of the government to identify with the professionals in adult education who are also called adult educators, employers often use anybody as an adult educator. This group involves the largest number of people working in the field of adult education. There is job insecurity factor which has hampered the agonizing experiences of the adult educators who have to teach without salaries for months.

Uche (2007) stressed that many supervisors who are used in executing adult education programmes do not possess the necessary competence or skills in educating the learners. They also lack in developing valid assessments instruments for evaluating behavioural outcomes in the three domains. A good number of adult educators lack training on how best adults can be taught. Therefore one can attribute lack of qualified personnel in adult educational system to poor implementation of the programmes. Fashokin (2008) added that most adult educators lack the technical expertise and this is unfortunate because it can go a long way in hindering the achievements of adult educational objectives. Adult educators are meant to be persons who consciously and systematically administer the teaching learning activities, programmes and the processes with the primary aim of assisting others to learn. Fafunwa (1974) noted that no significant change in educational system will take place unless trained educators are produced. Every educational system deserve good facilitators so as to have desired outcome.

Invariably, in educating the adults, the adult educators however are expected to demonstrate the following characteristics and qualities. A well qualified adult educator is expected to inspire in the learners the desire to learn. He should be able to motivate, raise learners consciousness and enthusiasm to learn by making his teaching and learning transaction interesting and to make

learners task pleasurable (Anowor, Ezema and Umezulike, 2001). In adult learning process, the educator control inputs (human and material processes, methods, techniques and devices) and output (performance or competence inductors) these function of adult educators involve instituting and supervising those procedure that are required for effective operation of a programme. A good, adult educator must possess the above mentioned qualities. On the contrary, they lack the technical and professional expertise which hinders the effectiveness of adult education programmes. Adequate finance is needed to update the knowledge of the educators.

Omolewa (1981) explained that under-funding caused some adult education programmes to collapse and the introduction of fees in adult education centres. It is very pertinent to point out here that no matter the organizational structure of the educational system, the personnel available, the motivational level of the workers therein, the implementation of programmes cannot be effective if adequate finance is not available to bring about services, finance projects, infrastructures and maintain the material and human resources.

Government does not allocate much fund to adult education programmes which leads to their collapse. Programmes like Operation Feed the Nation, MAMSER, Women Empowerment Programmes, Better Life Programme for Rural Women, Poverty Alleviation Programmes etc were not effectively implemented because of poor funding, for instance, National Directorate of Employment was phased out because of finance. The Nigerian government has not seen the need to allocate much finance to adult education programmes. Consequently, many adult education programmes collapsed. Sources of finance in adult education were indicated to be from grants, donations, fees, direct allocation from federal and state government, grant from non-governmental agencies, international agencies (Anyanwu, 1987) and other internally generated fund. These are ways in which funds are made available in adult education programmes. Financing of education therefore is joint responsibility of various groups and organizations but government allocation of fund constitutes good portion of adult education revenue allocation.

Oyedeki (1979) noted that state and federal government allocated little or nothing to adult education programmes which cause great problem in the administration of the programmes. Adult education programmes should have greater allocation for its maintenance and provision of infrastructures in Nigerian educational system. He further pointed out that good publicity creates awareness of a particular programme or venture. Vans and vehicles which supposed to be used in programme coverage are not provided by the government. In the same vane Okafor, (2006) stated that there is high level mass communication in Nigeria despite its developing nature. To him it is easy to publicize issues in Nigeria even to the grassroots. Television has added advantage of combining sound with visual qualities, but it is a very expensive medium and this has limited its range in developing countries where poverty is probably the greatest hindrance to communication through television. The price of television set is more than what most Nigeria families can afford. In essence government has done little or nothing in show casing adult education programmes. As a result, adult education has low publicity in Nigeria. To a great extent, the mass media are not doing justice to adult education programmes. There is very need

to use appropriate communication strategies so that the information will reach the masses even at the grassroots. This will improve the implementation of adult education programmes.

Furthermore, adult education connotes positive change for the masses and national development. Ijeolu (1990), pointed out that adult education is meant to use effective resources, typified both by the increasing number of classes in what may be termed consumer education and to the grouping need for adult education. He continues that adult education should foster a pluralist society which accommodates large numbers of groups with various interests, sometimes complementary and sometime conflicting. In this regard, adult education emphasizes education for citizenship and the need for peaceful co-existence. Adult education should strengthen education for change. In this connection it becomes the duty of educators and educationists and the government to help people determine the need for change or the direction it should take as well as the characteristics and pace of desirable change.

The Implication of Ineffective Implementation

Adult education programmes are designed for the youth and adult citizens of the country. The poor implementation of the adult education programmes will also lead to under-development and low progress in the society. The inadequate materials resources for the programmes will lead to non-acquisition of the necessary knowledge needed by the citizens for their work. The poor training of the adult educators will make them to lack the technical expertise which will help the citizens to grow intellectually, socially, politically and economically. In other words the adult educator cannot be able to raise the consciousness or conscientize the citizens. The poor financial allocation for the programmes will lead to their collapse thereby depriving the youths and adult citizens opportunity to develop themselves. When the awareness of the programmes is poor, citizens will not see the need to engage in such activities. Adult education programmes should bring about changes in the society. When this is not achieved, the felt needs of the people will not be tackled. There will be high illiteracy rate in the society. Besides the aim of adult education will not be achieved and the effective implementation of adult education will be marred.

In line with the above submission Nzeneri (2008) agreed that adult education programmes cannot be effective if the educators lack the techniques needed in the field of adult education. As a result, the success of the programme will be hindered. In the same vane Obiozor and Obidiegwu noted that poor financial allocation to adult education led to the collapse of almost all the adult education programmes. This could be traced to the extinction of all the previous literacy campaigns in the country. If these constraints are not tackled, Nigerian Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) vision of 2015 will not be achieved. In respect of these, there is urgent need for effective implementation of adult education programmes in Nigeria.

Conclusion

There are many impediments that are hindering successful implementation of adult education in Nigeria. These are lack of adequate structures, faulty infrastructures, equipments, lack of trained personnel, lack of finance, inability of mass-media to show case adult education programmes. As a result, there is poor implementation of adult education programmes in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the issues raised in this paper, the following recommendations were made.

1. Adequate human materials and financial resources be provided for effective implementation of adult education programmes.
2. Professionals and trained educators should be used in running all adult education programmes.
3. The mass media should embark on adequate communication strategies to create awareness on the existence of adult education programmes.

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