

Achieving the Goals of Adult Education in Nigeria through Social Studies

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Abstract: This paper examined the nature of adult education as an important avenue through which people desirous of receiving education might do so, no matter their age or qualification. It noted the peculiar problem of age and time on the part of the adult and the excessive emphasis on vocational skill acquisition in adult education to the neglect of value orientation and citizenship education. It recommends the introduction of social studies as part of the contents of adult education given its dual concern on skill acquisition and value/citizen education.

Keywords: *Social Studies, citizenship education adult education.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Adult Education as a concept or educational discipline connote various meaning to different people or scholars due to its broad nature (Adesanya 2006). However the general by agreed notion of Adult Education is that education received outside the formal school system. Hence it is also interchangeably referred to as “non formal education.” It draws its clientele from those who were not opportune to attend school within the formal school system. In most cases they may be adults who did not have formal education in their younger years. Such person’s conscious of the importance of education for personal and societal development may want to be educated no matter their current social status or constraints. Such constrains may include old age, lack of time due to pressures of attending school and working and diminishing physical strength. Thus, Adult Education curriculum needs contents or subjects that are integrated with multidisciplinary approach towards the study of man, society; and acquisition of skills, attitudes necessary for individual and societal improvement. Such is the nature of social studies.

Social Studies is a course that studies man and his environment. It is an integrated study of man in all fields of human endeavour. It inculcates the necessary facts of the social science, arts and science into one fused and distinct discipline. It sifts out the relevant knowledge from these disciplines for better understanding of man and his interaction with his complex environment. This paper will thus look at the nature of adult education and the need to make social studies an important part of adult education curriculum

The concept and Scope of Adult Education:

Adult Education can be defined as education given to adult based on their social, economic, political and cultural needs to enable them adjust fully to change and challenges in their lives and society (Nzeneri, 2002). This definition sees adult education as the training geared towards socioeconomic and cultural peculiarities of adults. It is designed to help them cope with the callings of modern day society. It is an opportunity given to persons to continue their education in various forms or levels in order to meet up with the callings of ever changing society of today no matter their status or knowledge. Anyanwu (1999) states that it is a lifelong education needed for adjustment, personal development and integration into today’s society. Man by nature is an economic animal. He must engage in one form of economic activity to fend for himself But gains from his economic activity is dependent on his level of skills knowledge he has for gainful employment. Therefore man finds it necessary to upgrade his skill through the never ending process of education.

Liveright and Hayford (1968) sees Adult Education as a process whereby a person who no longer attends school on a regular or full time basis undertakes sequentially organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, undertakings or skill appreciation and attitudes for the purpose of identifying and solving personal and community problems. This view of adult education points out the issue of acquiring knowledge and attitudes to solve problems that confront man and the society. It also looks at adult education as being open to all who has the desire of receiving education, not only formal school dropouts or old people. Old people may have been deprived of schooling in their early years in life due to many factors. They could be socio-economic, political and cultural. Inability to pay school fees, absence of school in a given community or cultural beliefs against girls' child education for example could deprive one of educational opportunity. Eheazu (1998) noted that Adult Education can play a role in addressing injustice, deprivation and repression.

Although such injustice may not affect the adult alone it is pertinent to critically examine the word "adult". Nzeneri (2002) defines Adult as one who is physically and psychologically matured with social economic and political responsibility. Such position entails the ability to contribute sound and logical ideas to family, societal and national issues. The issue of maturity either physical or psychological could differ from society to society. Adesanya (2006) concluded that the issue of adulthood depends on society, time and age. It could also depend on actions, activities and responsibilities, thus adult could cover the ages of 14 to 65 years or more (Nzeneri 2006). Therefore the notion of Adult may refer to young able bodied men or old people who are illiterates in need of basic literacy skills, educated or uneducated persons in need of acquiring new skill or competences or educated people in need of education at higher level or acquiring remedial education to meet with the need of work place. This is the essence of adult education.

UNESCO (1997) defines Adult Education as any kind of education for people who are old enough to work, vote, fight, marry and who have completed the cycle of continuous education if any.... They may want to make up for limited schooling, learn basic skills of trade or profession or master new working processes. They may turn to it to understand themselves and their world better and to act in the light of their understanding or they go to classes for the pleasure they can get from developing talents and skills intellectual aesthetic, physical or practical.

This definition clearly underlines the nature and scope and content of Adult Education. Adult Education traces its origin to the beginning of the industrial revolution when machines were introduced into the work place. Anyanwu (1999) declared that adult education has its birth in the realities of the industrial revolution and nationalism in the eighteenth century. This period brought the need for skilled and reformed adult population needed for economic and social development as well as promotion of national internal unity. The introduction of machine into the work place necessitated the training of workers on how to use the machine for increased productivity. People needed to be trained to fit into the new industrial age. The realities of the industrial age are still very much with us today. As a third world country Nigeria has a sizeable population that is still illiterate. They require knowledge to fit into the callings of today's society and rid Nigeria of the shame of ignorance, poverty, disease and undemocratic culture. For the already educated ones, the ever changing nature of the society brings in new ideas, inventions that call for continuous education. Anyanwu (1999) maintained that adult education is concerned with the internal dynamics of balance of the individual, his behaviour in external situations and ability to take membership in his societal units Nzeneri (2006) quoting Coles (1998) classified Adult Education into following areas of criteria

1. Remedial course-this makes for deficiency through non-acquisition of certain level of formal education.
2. Vocational Technical and professional courses- This prepares people for work or people already working for refresher or updating in service training.
3. Health welfare training and family life education
4. Civic political and community education including instruction about national and international matters.
5. Self-fulfillment embracing all aspect of education undertaking for the purpose of the enjoyment of the individual.

Adult education could be divided into three broad areas Formal Education, non-formal education and informal education. Formal education employs the systematically structure format of the formal school program. Its features are irregular lectures, test exams leading to the award of certificates. Weekend Degree and Sandwich program of some universities are good examples of formal Adult Education. The non-formal education is that acquired out of school. Their staff contents are adapted to suit individual needs of the learner. Basic literacy program and vocational skill acquisition training are

good examples of non-formal education. Social and political education like citizenship training is another form of non-formal education. The last category of Adult Education is informal education. Okedara (1981) noted that this kind of adult education lacks formal planning, specific objectives and is lifelong. From these objectives it is clear that Adult Education is designed as a lifelong process that will make people adapt to the dynamics of modern day living.

The lifelong nature of adult education makes it more responsive to practical needs of the society, daily. Knowledge got through adult education is immediately used. The products of formal system spend between 20- 35 years acquiring knowledge some of which may become obsolete due to changes in information technology and occupation (Nzeneri 2006) Adult Education is thus a veritable tool for organizational effectiveness, increase output, personal growth, social improvement and societal development. I

Okeke (2002) agreed that adult education is a vital facet of the national education enterprise and important part of social economic and political development of a nation. Recognizing the importance of adult education, the national policy of education (2004) states that the objectives of adult education shall be to:

- i. Provide functional and remedial education for those young people who pre-maturely drop out of formal school system.
- ii. Provides further education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skill.
- iii. To give adult citizen of the country necessary aesthetic cultural and civic education.

Adult and the Stress of Academic Work:

Imhabekhai and Onyeosu (2006) noted the constraints on the part of adult learners. They include the problem of age, time and finance. Due to their elderly nature they may not want to acquire skills that may not be of immediate utility or mentally cumbersome given their age. They have limited time for study. This is due to the fact that they may combine work with study. They may not have finance as exorbitant school fees may be responsible for emlier case of school dropout. School dropout could also be as a result of the inability to cope with the mental stress of academic work. If hey thus need courses with an all-embracing approach to the study of man 4id his environment. This will enable them to cope with the limited number courses possible.

In addition to the skill of knowledge acquisition a corse content packaged with value education needed by adults or even youths who may have diehard values towards life. Such values may be negative to the overall interest of the society. They thus need courses content that can help shapes values for individual improvement and societal development. Bashan (1991) observed that people are the subjects of development. Development of human attitude is as important as that of technological skill. The values of the Nigerians adult leave room for much concern. Corruption, greed, fraudulent tendency now pervades the society. IICD (2000) noted that adult education for (youth adults) should comprise not only literacy skill but problem solving skill with content such values and attitudinal learning. This is required to participate fully in the development of the individual and society. Adult education today in Nigeria lay more emphasis on the literacy skill and acquisition of vocational skills to the detriment of moral instruction.

Moral instruction, value education and citizenship education are part of social studies education that will be of great help to adult learners. It is an integrated study of man behavoiur in his social, economic political and technological environment. Obeamata (1981) asserted that man influence his environment and is in turn influenced by the environment socially, economically, politically and technologically

Social Studies Content and Adult Education:

Social Studies man behavoiur in his environment. It is concerned with how man can solve its problem in the environment. Nwalado (2009) regretted that societal problems are multidimensional. They could be illiteracy, economic, cultural, political ideological and technological. Due to this multiplicity of human problems, Social Studies undertake an integrated wholistic study of man in his environment. It borrows concepts from the social sciences, arts and science and dissolves them into one distinctive discipline. Okobia (1999) noted that while the basic interest of the discipline of Social Science, Arts and Sciences and liberal are scholarship, Social Studies interest is basically instructional and social utility.

Adult learners need to be spared the stress of knowledge for knowledge sake. What they need is applicable skill. Osakwe and Itedjere (2005) noted that the scope of Social Studies covers knowledge skill attitude and value education with the

ultimate aim of producing people who are socio-civically competent. Depending on the level of the learner social studies content is presented in a spiral manner Social studies objective covers three broad areas of

- i. Information learning
- ii. Attitude and value learning
- iii. Ability and skill learning

Information learning is concerned with knowledge acquisition of the environment, resources and societal institutions. Attitude and value learning is concerned with the knowledge of the common values of our society ability to make decisions, developing loyalty to the nation, feeling of kinship no matter the ethnic or racial affiliation and sympathetic appreciation of our diversity and inter dependence of all members of the local community and the wider national and international community.

These objectives are in line with the objectives of adult education that seeks to improve basic knowledge and functional education and give adult citizens necessary aesthetic cultural and civic education for enlightenment. The issue of culture and civic education is of great concern to Social Studies. It studies human behaviour with the aim of establishing behavioural attitude and value necessary for societal development (Osah 2008). Citizen education content is aimed at producing patriotic citizen conscious of the national interest Akinlaye (2003). Given the nature of the Nigerian society today, there is dire need of inculcation of the spirit of national consciousness, unity and patriotism. This is in line with the general aim and objectives of the national policy of education.

Social studies approach to the study of man is compact and all embracing. It is a short hand for the study of the utility values of the social sciences, art, and social science courses. Its citizen education and value orientation content can be used to relieve adult of diehard attitudes and value detrimental to national education objectives. Given its rather new nature in Nigerians' education curriculum, most adult learners may not have been opportune to study it as a subject in their normal schooling days. They should thus be given the chance to study the course as an important part of their curriculum. This is so as adult education curriculum today has little or no place for value orientation. David (1962) indicated that adult education must be used as a means to improve insufficient education received during compulsory school period. This is the essence of the remedial nature of adult education. Adult education in Nigeria today lays too much emphasis on skill and vocational education to the detriment of character moulding. The character of man determines the values he holds. If the adult learners have to fight the myriad of Nigerians' problem such as illiteracy, poverty, crime and participate in modern day democratic governance, then his values have to be reoriented. Aiyanwu (1999) argued that the

“Essence of reeducating adults is to adapt to contemporary practice which can change their emotions, attitude and value for over all community development Education is nothing unless it changes behaviour. Education must itself be changing as adult education changes or as attitudes and knowledge evolves. The relative importance of different aspects of adult education will also be varying like national priorities with time. An aspect of the practice may be vocational interest; it may be value in another. It is the duty of the adult educator to be aware of the varying interest and to seek to meet them in every area possible.”

The lack of right types of value in the Nigerian society is the problem militating against Nigeria development and not necessarily lack of vocational skills. If adult education must meet up with Nigeria's educational objectives then its curriculum need to be adjusted to embrace social studies where it is not taught. Social studies is not only concerned with skill acquisition but with that of value orientation and citizenship education. It will afford adult learners a comprehensive study of man's behaviour and environmental opportunities. It removes the boring scholarship and emphasizes utility of knowledge needed by adult learners to solve problems. It thus saves time for the adult learner. Its curriculum content is flexible and adaptable to the realities of our ever changing world that the adult learner needs to fit into. The spirally arranged course content presentation build on the familiar and develops in a context where new knowledge is learned and applied as in adult education (Tehi 2006).

Given the large number of uneducated people in the country who are increasingly becoming aware of the need to be educated, in order to fit into this computer age, adult education need to be repackaged with social studies as an important course content. This is the only way adult education can meet the overall objectives of the goal of the national policy of education.

2. CONCLUSION

This paper looked into the nature of adult education as a means of educating the masses who may or may not have gone through the formal education process. It noted the problems of the adult learners in terms of age, time and dwindling mental capabilities. It also observed that the curriculum of adult education tends to lay emphasis on vocational skill acquisition and the need for value and attitude training. Given the nature of social studies that study man and the environment in an integrated manner it recommends its introduction as an important part of the adult education course content in areas where it is not already being studied.

It will afford adult learners a comprehensive study of man and the environment. It will save valuable time as it emphasizes utility rather than mere scholarship. Social studies interest on value orientation and character moulding will also go a long way in instilling worthy values in adult learners. This will make them contribute positively towards national development.

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