

Effectiveness of Non-Formal Education Programmes in the Provision of Educational Needs Among the People of Niger State

Muhammed Usman,

Department of Continuing Education,
and Community Development,
Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State.

Abstract

The call for non-formal education is becoming passionate due to the fact that the formal educational system adapts too slowly in the socio - economic and cultural changes of the world. Non-formal education complements the formal education and only together lead to the reduction of unemployment, to the increase of self-confidence, to a world we can enjoy every day. Non formal education among students brings "motivation", which is not taught in universities, brings the experience of trainers in various fields they worked. Essentially any organized learning or educational activity outside the structure of the formal education system that is consciously aimed at meeting the specific learning needs of people who are considered to be adults in the community or their society constitutes adult and non-formal education. As such, the paper examined the objectives of non-formal education, programmes provided by non-formal education and its relevance to the national educational demands. The paper recommended that non-formal education should be prioritized if not more than the formal education system, to enable the attainment of any educational needs.

Introduction

Education with reference to recent changes in educational policies around the world, education functions as a means of socialization and social control. It helps to encourage the young to develop into good and responsible citizens and prepares people for employment and productive contributions to society. While it can be a way of reducing or reproducing social inequalities, when executed with excellence, it benefits the individual, society and the economy (Ololube, 2012). The current structure of the formal school system in the country is in itself excludes some children. This phenomenon does not exclude Niger State. To bridge these gaps of exclusion there is the need to look beyond the formal school system and the non-formal education is surely the way. The non-formal education is characterized by a high degree of flexibility and openness, pedagogy and methods of delivery. The non-formal education can take care of the diverse learning needs of children, young people and adults alike. Non-formal education evolved out of the necessity to meet the ever changing educational and developmental needs of society and the crises bedeviling the formal school system (Coombs,1968). Adult education aims at improving the situation of people by increasing their skills, knowledge and awareness (kwapong, 2005).

Non-formal education tends to comprise small scale, short-term programmes with limited funding, which limits its impact and sustainability and raises the question of quality, efficiency and effectiveness. It comprises such programmes as basic literacy, post literacy, continuing education and vocational education among others. In today's dynamic world ruled by the challenges of communications technology, education has moved beyond the levels of just acquiring the skills of reading and writing. With lifelong learning dominating the education space, and the need to be part of the global quest for the internationally agreed goals of Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the importance of non-formal education cannot be over emphasized. Non-formal education is now globally recognized to have the capacity to accommodate the multiple learning needs of the various

individuals in different conditions and locations. While formal education remains an important means of providing basic education, non-formal education can reach learners who are excluded by such factors as location, socio-economic, cultural/traditional factors.

For a successful use of non-formal education to compliment the current efforts of the formal school system in national, state and local education systems, there is the need for an implementation framework where non-formal education's position in the national education sector will be strengthened to include such areas as management, monitoring and evaluation, a reliable and credible data base, yearly adequate financial budgetary provision, strengthening of institutional capacities of the Ministry, Agencies and Departments relevant to teachers and other personnel among others to enable the attainment of the Education For All. This calls for the discussion of the concept of non-formal education.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework which this paper is anchored is on Andragogy Theory.

Andragogy Theory:

Andragogy as a study of adult learning originated in Europe in 1950's and was then pioneered as a theory and model of adult learning from the 1970's by Malcolm Knowles an American practitioner and theorist of adult education, who defined andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" Andragogy and the name of Malcom Knowles have become inextricably linked. The term was originally coined by German educator Alexander Kapp in 1833. Andragogy was originally propounded by Alexander and consisted of learning strategies focused on adults. The theory holds a set of assumptions about how adults learn. Andragogy emphasizes the value of the process of learning. It uses approaches to learning that are problem-based and collaborative rather than didactic, and also emphasizes more equality between the teacher and learner, for Knowles, andragogy is premised on at least

five crucial assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from the assumptions about child learners on which traditional pedagogy is premised. These characteristics are:

1. Self-concept: As a person matures his self concept moves from one being dependent toward one of being a self-directed human being.
2. Experience: As a person matures he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.
3. Readiness to learn. As a person matures his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental task of his social roles.
4. Orientation to learning. As a person, matures his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation towards learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem centeredness.
5. Motivation to learn: As a person matures the motivation to learn is internal (NMEC 2014)

Adults need to know why they should learn something before they undertake to learn it, conceive of themselves as responsible for their lives and need to be treated by others as such, come to the learning centres with a range of life experiences and are ready to learn how to cope with real life situations effectively. Adult learners are task or problem centred (unlike children in school who are subject oriented) and responds to extrinsic motivation e for example (better jobs, promotions, and salary increases) but even more to intrinsic motivation (for example increased self esteem, quality of life, responsibility and job satisfaction). These understanding of adult learners are important. They point to the significance of participatory and learner centred adult teaching and learning methods.

The andragogical theory includes both the traditional and contemporary method of teaching adult learners. According to Dighe (2004) the traditional methods includes drama, games,

stories, proverbs, and songs, among others; while the contemporary methods includes regenerated Freirian literacy for empowering community technique (REFLECT), Real Literacy resources materials (RLM), learner generated materials (LGM), Work Based Literacy (WBL) among others. The importance of this theory is that it enhances participatory approach to learning, advocates for the treatment of adult learners with respect and patience among and promotes the utilization of the wealth of experience of the adult learners in teaching and learning among others.

This theory is related to the study as it pointed to the significance of participatory learning methods. This theory is desirable in adult literacy considering the effectiveness of participatory learning method, which could lead to meeting educational needs. However, its success depends much on the skills and abilities of the Facilitators. Okechi (2004) noted that a chosen learning theory that is not within the reach of the facilitators will not work. Thus for there to be effective adult literacy delivery, the capacity of literacy workers must be built in line with this theory.

Conceptual Framework

Non-Formal Education

Non-Formal Education (NFE) is defined as any organized, systematic educational activity, undertaken outside the framework of formal school system, for the purpose of providing specialized types of learning to a particular sub-group in the population including children, Coombs and Omolewa, (1972). In the same vein also cited in Aderionye (2004) defines NFE as an integral part of the entire system of education, lying institutionally and significantly outside the formal system, serving as a supplement as well as a complement to it. Also, Kleis (1974), defines Non-Formal Education as any intentional and systematic enterprise usually undertaken outside of the traditional schooling in which contents, media, time, units, admission criteria, staff, facilities and other system components are selected and/adapted for particular learners, population or situations in order to maximize, maintain and to contend with

the constraints of the system. Again, Ngwu (2003), in his own contribution defined it as an array of organized educational activities operating outside the regular structure and routes of the formal education system, aimed at serving a great variety of needs of different subgroups in the population, including the young and the old. In a further contribution, Bhola (1994), sees Non-Formal Education as any organized educational training activity for school drop-outs (early leavers), for non-literate rural adults, youths, women or industrial workers, aimed at improving on their employment and income earning potential, or giving them general education, which in some cases, as desired, so as to help them re-enter the formal education streams.

Scope of Non-Formal Education

Given its scope, non-formal education is comprised of an ample diversity of educational situations, many of which have played a significant role in the renewal of educational systems. The paper shall now analyze three educative processes, namely: “**correspondence learning**”, “**distance learning**” and “**open systems**”, which, because of their features fall within the scope of non-formal education.

Correspondence Learning: organized, structured correspondence schools date from more than one century. Several works mention that in 1856, in Berlin, Toussaint and Langenscheidt founded a correspondence languages course. In 1886, in England, a graduate studies correspondence course was introduced. A “Society to Encourage Study at Home” was organized in 1873, in Boston, and the first formal experience took place in 1883, in New York, the “Correspondence University”. Nowadays, there is a large number of correspondence schools all over the World, encompassing studies that range from basic education to university studies, including a wide variety of subjects in the professional area. Correspondence course participants are found in all age brackets and economic-social classes. But, which are the main features of correspondence learning? It is a planned and

systematized activity, based on the preparation of printed educational materials which are forwarded to students who are physically separated from the teachers who can give but a limited assistance to them. Correspondence learning is an individualized learning system that allows students to proceed at their own pace, according to their interests. The institutional materials are for the most part printed and are generally prepared by a teacher who has not enough didactic and technical knowledge to prepare top quality educational material. Although a number of correspondence courses currently offer other types of instructional material - audio-tapes and videotapes, kits, etc. - we shall for classification purposes solely consider the printed materials offered by correspondence courses. We shall reserve the name "distance learning" to the courses prepared on a high technical level, by a multidisciplinary team, administered by a relatively large institution, comprising a wide variety of educational materials. Correspondence courses generally establish a bi-directional communication by mail, supported by the teacher who corrects the paperwork, offers guidance and the requested explanations. A degree may or may not be obtained and there is no pressure - the student's motivation is the basic factor for the program's success. It is not difficult to see that correspondence courses do not incorporate several features of the formal education and are thus classified in the field of non-formal education.

Distance Learning: According to Holmberg⁶ "Distance study is learning supported by those teaching methods in which, because of the physical separateness of learners and teachers, the interactive, as well as the preactive phase of teaching is conducted through print, mechanical or electronic devices."⁷ Distance learning is based on non-contiguous communication, that is, "the learner is at a distance from the teacher for much, most or even all the time during the teaching-learning process". Based on this definition, we may infer that the concept of distance learning is wider than that of correspondence learning, with which it is sometimes confused. Thus, Butts remarks that "the rapid adoption, over the past 10 years, of the phrase

'distance learning' to replace 'correspondence courses' would seem to reflect the incorporation of media other than print (and particularly the medium of broadcasting); the fresh impetus coming from research into individualized learning and self-instructional methods; the broadening of the social base for open learning systems; and the development of courses and qualifications designed specifically to meet the needs of distance learning students." The concept of open learning systems used by Butts is wider than that of distance learning, as below analyzed.

In summary, according to Holmber, the three universally accepted features of distance learning are as follows:

1. - Typical of the whole distance study is that it is based on **non-contiguous communication**, i.e., the learner is at a distance from the teacher for much, most or even all of the time during the teaching-learning process.
2. - A **pre-produced course, as self-instructional** as possible, printed and/or consisting of presentation brought about by other means than print (audio or video-tapes, radio or TV programmes, etc.) guides the study.
3. - Organized non-contiguous two-way communication is a constitutive element of distance study. It is in most cases principally brought about by assignments for submission for the students to solve and answer and for the tutors to comment on (in writing or on audio-tape), but freer forms of communication also occur.

The organization and administration of distance learning significantly differs from those of formal education. Thus, for instance, no students attend classes at the institution, except for occasional visitors. There are no classrooms; instead there are places where multidisciplinary teams comprised of redactors, authors, audio-visual experts, and so on, plan and compose the materials that will be used. In distance learning we find no "academic semesters". The students may at will discontinue studies whenever he needs or wants to do so.

Open Systems: The third instance of non-formal education corresponds to **open systems** or **open learning**, which have drifted much farther apart from the features of formal education, creating a wide, deep rift. As remarked by Butts, “open learning systems are defined as those which offer students a measure of flexibility and autonomy, to study the programmes of their choice when and where they wish, and at a pace to suit their circumstances. “The features ascribed to open systems, by this author, necessarily set them up as non-formal education instances, jointly with correspondence learning and distance study.

Goals of Non-Formal Education

The goals of ANFE according to (FRN, 2004) National Policy on Education includes:

1. To provide functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who has never had the advantage of formal education or who did not complete their primary education;
2. To provide functional remedial education for those young people who did not complete secondary education;
3. To provide education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills;
4. To provide in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills; and
5. To give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetics, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment (FRN, 2004).

To successfully achieve these goals, adequate attention and efforts must be channeled towards quality assurance mechanisms which are imperative as spring board to develop, assess and improve ANFE programmes for its effective management and administration. This must take cognizance of such mechanisms like quality of facilitators, quality of facilities, quality of instruction/curriculum, quality of evaluation

procedures, quality of morale and quality of administration and management. This stage is followed by the objectives and characteristics of non formal education.

Objectives of Non-Formal Education:

- To increase access to education for the less privileged in order to make them functional members of the society;
- To equip the less privileged with literacy and other necessary skills that would make them more effective in their daily socio-economic and political activities; and
- To inculcate in the target groups, the aesthetic value of education.

Characteristics of Non-Formal Education

The achievement of the above objectives of Non-Formal Education is premised on its major characteristics. Generally, Non-Formal Education is essentially learner centered, participatory, flexible, democratic, and functionally oriented. It covers a broad spectrum of activities which manifest in its attributes of focusing on a specific knowledge or skill which is needed, and dealing with modular units of learning designed for identified problems/needs. For these reasons, it is not necessarily for certificate acquisition because it is essentially practical and involves a process of learning by doing.

Furthermore, Non-Formal Education processes are flexible and will normally be available on a part-time and spare-time basis as and when the clientele is available, and for as long and as often as may be required. Non-Formal Education may be a direct learning experience adopting whatever methodology that may be suitable to the client's needs whether literate or not. Many Non-Formal Education activities are located close to the home and the work place of the clientele. In this way, the education provided is often closely related to the recipient's daily socio-economic activities. The focus is for the immediate application of the skills acquired and not necessarily to prepare the recipient for the future.

In Non-Formal Education, it is possible to bring in three important factors – skills, motivation, and practice or employment opportunity – into close relationship. The skills which are learnt will be selected according to their immediate application in the daily life and circumstances of the client. There is an opportunity to assess the value of the skills acquired in some tangible forms, almost immediately and based on the popular demand of the developmental activities required in the community or by the clientele. Roles of non formal education follow immediately.

Roles of Non-Formal Education

The characteristics of Non-Formal Education help it to play vital roles in the lives of the individual. It can be used for manpower development through functional skill acquisition which the recipients require for their daily socio-economic and political activities. The skills acquired through Non-Formal Education also facilitate access to more gainful employment and more meaningful life as the education so provided meets the need of those whom formal schooling is not a legalistic alternative. Non-Formal Education provides new skills and attitudes to the rural poor and thus reduces the cost of educating the citizens by the government. The above roles when put into practice translate into structural dimension of improvement of the well-being of the people and the society by addressing individual needs, affording people the opportunity to participate in the activities of the society and making them learn at their own pace and time through a structured non-formal setting of education.

Structure of Non-Formal Education

Getting to realize the goals and objectives of Non-Formal Education requires an application of its objectives through implementation strategies. This can be achieved by categorizing Non-Formal Education into types and levels of learning so as to truly and meaningfully address identified problems. In this regard, the types and levels of Non-Formal Education as

presented in the National Benchmark for NFE in Nigeria are as follows:-

Expand Early Children Care and Education

The goal calls for better and more possibilities to support young children, and their families and communities, in all the areas where the child is growing – physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. It also lays special emphasis on children who suffer disadvantage or who are particularly vulnerable, for example those living in poverty, AIDS orphans, rural and minority children, and in some situations girls as a whole (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009).

Provision of Free and Compulsory Primary Education for All

Primary schooling must be entirely free of charge and be compulsory for every child. Some groups of children need special attention, for instance those who belong to minority groups and those whose circumstances are particularly difficult (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2009).

Promoting Learning Skills for Young People and Adults

This goal places emphasis on the learning needs of young people and adults in the context of lifelong learning. It calls for equitable access to learning programmes that are appropriate, and mentions life skills particularly. We should note too that EFA Goal 6 also refers to essential life skills as a desirable outcome of quality basic education (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2009). Various strategies could also promote non-formal education if properly adopted by the stakeholders.

Strategies for Promoting Non-Formal Education

Since the birth of adult and non-formal education in the country, a good number of strategies have been put in force to enable the country to reduce the shameful level of illiteracy in her geometrically growing population. Such strategies include conferences, workshops, use of facilitators in adult education

centres, Non Governmental Agencies (NGOS), Mass Media, among others

- (i) Non-Governmental Agencies: The efforts of the government in the promotion of Adult Education in Nigeria have been complemented by Non-Governmental Organization (NGOS). However, we all know that we hardly invest where we will not maximize profit. This is why the action of the Non-Governmental Agencies has not made outstanding impact on adult education development in Nigeria.
- (ii) Universal Basic Education (UBE): This is a big weapon in the hands of the federal government to drastically reduce the level of illiterate adults in the population. It is primarily for school age citizens but if the youth will not be allowed to grow into adult as illiterates then; the population of illiterate adults will go down to below 20% in no long time.
- (iii) The Mass Media: The role of the press in the dissemination of information in general and in the administration of adult education cannot be overemphasized. That was why Jones Babatunde wrote in 1975 saying that the press has the high ability to be used to keep people informed adequately of the world in which they live and can therefore be used as a direct instrument of education. The mass media can stimulate a nation's capacity to create future wealth enlightening the "human" factor, such as improved skill and better education. Take the Daily Times Group of Companies for instance, they print and publish several newspapers and magazines. The company continues to explore the Nigeria's. Newspapers market not merely because of its desire as a mass communication medium to inform, entertain and enlighten the public.

The television serves as a wonderful strategy in adult education programme in Nigeria. They are used to feature programmes aimed at educating men, women, youth and children in domestic services. Agricultural extension workers used it to educate millions of people on agricultural production. On health, it is used to educate the public on the implications

of refuse dump near residential homes, among others. This stage leads the paper to make statement of conclusion.

Conclusions

Non-formal education is now globally recognized to have the capacity to accommodate the multiple learning needs of the various individuals in different conditions and locations. It is the adult and non formal that could transform the nation not only the children. The development of any nation depends on the quality of adults that the nation has. Adult education brings a great sense of dignity and self-esteem, enhanced respect of others, an ability to take control of one's life and a greater desire to participate in society. Non formal education should be vigorously pursued as through it, there would be an all round development. While formal education remains an important means of providing basic education, non-formal education can reach learners who are excluded by such factors as location, socio-economic, cultural/traditional factors.

This therefore leaves one to conclude that non-formal education should be re-positioned to meet the ever increasing demand of its time and to enable the nation to achieve the Millennium Development and Education For All goals.

Recommendations

In view of the above discussion, the following recommendations are made.

1. Adequate non formal education centres should be provided all round the State and the country at large to encourage it various clients in terms of having access to participate in the programmes.
2. Non formal education facilitators' honoraria should be given high consideration, to be in line with the formal school teachers in order to encourage work effectiveness.
3. The Universal Basic Education act should be reviewed to prioritize non-formal education as it would changes the practice of non formal education for better.
4. Capacity building programmes should be organized and made regularly to the non formal education facilitators to

- enable them gain the knowledge of facing the arising challenges of this century.
5. Adequate and qualified personnel should be recruited in terms of instructors and administrators so as to employ best ways of managing non-formal education programmes.
 6. Public awareness should be considered a major tool for calling the attention of both government and Non-Governmental Organizations to invest in non-formal education programmes
 7. Non-formal education should be prioritized if not more than the formal education system, to enable the attainment of any educational needs.

References:

- Aderinoye, R.A. (2004). *Adult and non-formal education and 4th global challenges issues and perspectives*. Ibadan, Department of adult education.
- Bhola, H.S. (1994). *Source Book for Literacy Work Perspective from the Grass roots*. Paris, Jessica Kingsley Publisher- UNESCO Publishing.
- Coombs, P.H. (1968). *World Education Crisis: a systems approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Coombs, P.H. and Ahmed, M. (1973). *Attacking rural poverty: how non-formal education can help*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Dighe, (2004). Pedagogical approaches to literacy acquisition and effective programme design. *Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report*.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National policy on education*. Abuja. federal ministry of education
- Kwapong, O.T.F. (2005). Using adult education for empowerment of rural women. *Adult education and development*
- Ngwu, P. N. C. (2003). *Non-Formal Education Concepts and Practices*. Enugu: Fulladu Publishing Company.
- NMEC (2017). *Policy Guidelines for mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education in Nigeria*. Yaliam Press Ltd. Abuja.
- Okech, A. (2004). *Adult education in Uganda Growth Development, prospects and Challenges*. Kampala Fountain Publishers.
- Ololube, N. (2013). *The Problems and Approaches to Educational Planning in Nigeria: A theoretical Observations in Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Italy, MCSER Publishing.