



## POLITICS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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### **Abstract:**

Politics in Adult Education involves ways in which knowledge is acquired, the dispensing of the knowledge and how to make use of it under different situations. Oni (2017) acknowledged the centrality of knowledge to education. Besides the sponsorship of diverse information, knowledge helps to check wastages, conservativeness in one hand, and on the other hand, promotes the ability to function better. As a field of education concerned with serving the populace with education this paper considers politics in Adult Education in the light of the potentials of positive transformational ability of education. This is exemplified under different sub-headings like, the historical and contemporary adult education, political aspects of adult education, suitable adult education programmes for a community what could promote political stability, and the place of distance learning.

**Keywords:** adult education, contemporary world, education programmes

### **1. Introduction**

The ultimate end of education cannot be overestimated. Among these are self-improvement, self-discovery and the ability to priorities and look for resources that are needed for one self.

The primary concern of education is the seeking of knowledge and showing how best to maximise such knowledge for personal benefits, family improvement, community development and the general benefit of humanity and other living beneficiaries. This is to say that, education has a direct and indirect influence on character modification. Every potential in a person is prompted to its optimal level of performance (Oni, 2003). Politics in adult education involves interactive ways in

knowledge acquisition, the dispersing of the knowledge gained and how to make use of it. That is why as educated people, our approach to issues is based on knowledge. This knowledge helps to check wastages in human efforts, money and other resources. That is why literacy is important to knowledge while ignorance slows down and in some cases even prevents progress. Literacy promotes increase in knowledge at a more rapid way than illiteracy. Illiteracy is very dogmatic, extremely conservative and does not easily adapt to changes even when such changes are necessary. Illiteracy often includes inability to read, write or compute in any known language. Even though illiteracy is not synonymous to stupidity, nevertheless it limits its victims to a world of ignorance and incapacitates them from discovering and developing their potentials to full capacity.

Reading and writing helps those so endowed to improve on their mental acuity and other natural and acquirable endowments. One functions better as a social being as a result of the ability to read coded information and to express oneself via writing. These promote confidentiality, better and refined self-expression. Similarly, where the people are literate and could read, it will be difficult to manipulate or cheat them. Adult education tries to balance the system by ensuring that people have what to do and engage them whether literate or illiterate: vocational, sport and other activities that will make individual to relevantly get involved in one's community. All activities at the disposal of the people in the community are meant to have them meaningfully engaged: active at work-place, preservation of public properties, and social involvement in places such as swimming, sport, watching activities displayed, payment of levies and others. All these activities make for social interaction, and the more interaction with one another, the better for unity and team work towards progress. Perhaps, a good illustration is football leagues where a homogenous group has to face a heterogeneous group. As good as individual might be, the team that share the game will perform than the one – man- show opponents. The National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) in Nigeria where all graduates of the tertiary institutions are deployed to serve the nation in communities (states) other than theirs has so far proved to unite Nigeria more than State and Local Government Areas (LGA) creation. Adult education is all out to ensure everybody is carried along irrespective of age. So age is no barrier.

Economically, politically, adult education helps to stabilize the community. This it does through the sensitization and exposure of community members to different trainings like vocational activities, extra mural, thereby helping to remove boredom, idleness and irresponsibility that causes crime and community hazards. Meaningful engagement of peoples will always lead to less of armed robbery, less of youth frustration and the like. If different vocations have been made available, more people would have been engaged and so less crime, less death and less corruption.

Another impute of adult education to the community is that it helps to make for checks and balances. When the leaders know that the people (the led) know their rights, there will be less cheating, manipulation and the like. The citizens will demand for explanations for every action and the leaders will not only offer the explanation but they will also be able to provide for their needs. This is why Paulo Ferro, a Brazilian advocated for mass education of people, he was not liked and this put his life in danger. Education is freedom for the masses.

## **2. Historical and Contemporary Adult Education**

Adult education is not new to man. Many scholars such as Omolewa, Anyanwu and Akinpelu believe that adult education is as old as man. This is because it provides the basic education needed by man to function. In the traditional setting, it promotes the education that will equip every individual with certain skills that will enable them to function in the society. This largely explains why farmers will bring up their children as farmers, hunters as hunters and whatever profession other parents are into. The horizontal education which has to do with picking up a profession that is different from the family has to do with parental consent. The ultimate goal of traditional education was to ensure that at the adult age, everyone is empowered for purposes of self-actualisation and the ability to feed one's family. It was also to empower every member of the community with the potential to contribute to the development of the community.

Apprenticeship system was the dominant means by which teaching and learning took place. It was very informal. In other words, it is unlike the present school system where education is compartmentalised and expressed in professionalism. In other words, the traditional education embraced all forms of education; learning took place both deliberately and accidentally. Learning was by more of observation and imitation. By these, from the early age a child observed the parents and the elderly ones around him. He was to do what he saw others practice. Clarification for approvals was made by the elderly ones where he had problems to imitate accurately. Deliberate teaching often arose at relaxation time and they are often presented in form of storytelling particularly those that border on moral etiquette/issues like morality. Practical teachings took place while imitating/cum practicing. This is where the elders will watch the younger ones to see how they will demonstrate what they have learnt. Where they got it right, they were commended and where they missed it, they were corrected.

In the traditional setting, learners were allowed to ask questions for purposes of clarification while learning was going on at the non-formal level whereas in the formal setting, specified times are carved out for questions and answers usually at the end of a

module, programme or class session. However, the formal school system now has great influence on the traditional education. The formal education insist on deliberate teaching through reading and writing. It is more of alphabetic education. That is the education that is expressed in reading and writing. Programmes are packed with the intension of producing individuals who would have specialised in a particular skill.

### 3. Political Aspects of Adult Education

One of the ways the government influences her people and the economy is adult education. Many people however often get confused when adult education is mentioned as to what it really stands for. Most writers agree that it is the education geared to the adult. Dave (1976) however sees it as that education that seeks to redress the imbalance of education received during childhood and youth. To him, adult education is needed to save oneself from professional as well as cultural obsolescence during the later period of life. This later period of life is that period of adulthood when the individual is under the governance of a particular government. Adult education is however sometimes defined using the programmes as the basis for an operational definition, yet some of these like adult literacy education, exclude the body of knowledge accumulated in literate and non-literate societies. It is however known that such societies provided some knowledge and skills covering most facts of human endeavour like religion, politics, work, play, language, health and morals. To accept programmes aimed at the adult population as adult education is reasonable. The politics of adult education therefore involves the relationship between adult education and the political system, particularly as it affects making adequate education available to all the citizenry.

Meanwhile the political system decides which of the types of adult education programme is to be provided or to promote. Questions such as: what are the adult education programmes suitable to the politics of our country need be asked and answers proffered. To consider this, there is need to x-ray the types of community being considered versus its political system. Considering communities in the Nigerian society which depend so much on communal efforts, the following adult education programmes will be suitable.

- **Non-Formal Education/Out of School Education:** - this type includes agricultural extension, political education, self-help and external support community development which involves solving communality problems through social education which include family and health programmes.
- **Liberal Humanist Model/Education:** - this includes programmes based on the cultural ethics, recreational activities to bring about games and pleasure.

- **Technical – Vocational Needs:** - the programmes under this should be such that are able to cope with modern changing technology that will make members of the community qualify and eligible for employment in the contemporary.
- **Socio-Economic Needs:** - the established agencies like the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) should identify and satisfy socio-economic needs of the citizens. This will enable the citizens participate effectively. Activities that will meet and satisfy the needs of the citizens include: women development programmes; and poverty alleviation programmes.
- **Ideological - Political Education Needs:** there are specific agencies designated for such programmes. This is basically done by the National Orientation Agency (NOA). Their activities include: vocational education, mobilization, enlightenment for political and social change among others.
- Adult education is used to address national development problems like human rights, inequality, gender issues, unemployment, poverty, child rights, cultural obstacles and the like. To address issues, such as mentioned above, there is direct bearing on the community's symbioses and, therefore, on the political stability of the society.

#### 4. Adult Education and Fundamental Changes

Any set of instructions given to the adult would constitute adult education. If this view is accepted as adult education, then adult education can bring about fundamental changes. Again, this is made possible in creating awareness through interactions and the given of instructions in adult education:

- Encourage learners understand and debate injustices;
- Promote greater opportunities for women and the minorities;
- Help the people overcome biases and discriminatory practices; and
- Promotes understanding of different cultures and economies.

#### 5. Distance Learning and Politics in Adult Education

The distance learning, also called open learning education, has now become part of the education system globally. It has become an inseparable part of the education system and imparts education to a larger number of people. This type of education is beneficial to those who for one reason or the other are unable to attend the regular school programme. Distance/open learning is an integral part of adult education.

Distance learning reflects the fact that all or most of the time and space from the teaching is conducted by someone removed in time and space from the learner; that the

learning aims to include greater dimensions of openness and flexibility, whether in terms of access, curriculum or other elements of structure (UNESCO, 2002). Adult educators view the society as the privileged sphere of learning and social change. More radically inclined adult educators view the civil society as the site of radical learning and political struggle. Knowledge is power and to the adult educator, it is treated as the valued commodity in global economy. Since education is so much valued as the instrument for the proper development of the society in the modern world, also as a political tool for proper governance, therefore, all modern communities follow the concept of the right to education for all. It prevents the marginalisation of the less powerful sectors be they based on race, ethnicity, gender or social class. Distance learning affords every sector of the community old or young a place for participation whether in politics or economies. It offers the political realization of freedom to learn without manipulation or bias. Globalization of education is natural as the uniformity in education becomes essential and the need of hours to cope up in the knowledge-based economy and technology-driven economy. Distance learning is one of the latest trends of education system and service influenced by globalization which makes it possible to deliver education to anyone, at anytime and anywhere.

## 6. Conclusion

It is not possible to detach the exposure that people get by being literate or by going to school from political enlightenment. Politicians often exploit the ignorance of the masses by manipulating and often cheating them. Adult education is a vehicle to accord the general populace the opportunity to have ignorance removed and active participation in political activities that are neat, honest and beneficiary. Distance learning even brings it closer the community. It provides a place of radical learning and political struggle. Adult education helps to stabilise the community economically and politically. Distance Learning is an arm of Adult Education which is primarily concerned with meeting the educational needs of those who could not cope or continue with the formal school system.

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