Scope of Adult Education in Nigeria: A Conceptual Approach

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Abstract
Adult education discipline is a special area of study, its client principles and methodology remains distinct across the globe. This paper highlights the activity areas of the practice. An attempt was also made to conceptually present the component of the discipline as it applies to the education, and skill development of recipient.

1. Introduction

Nigerian educational philosophy since after independence, has always focused on ways of educating the citizenry. Certain compulsory school ages and periods are stated in the National on Education Policy to aid school children within those age brackets to be educated. Despite the efforts and policies of government, there are still those who out grow the school ages and tend to become a burden to themselves and those around them. There are those that did not complete their primary education; others need to complete secondary education. Besides, adult citizens of a country need to be enlightened in their culture and civic responsibilities. Those in the industries need to be trained to meet the changing tide of development. All these and many other related challenges can no longer take place in the formal school setting. The appropriate and most suitable way is through adult education. Adult education therefore covers all activities of adults in their quest to adjust themselves in the society.

Adult education is for adult citizens of a country, therefore a better understanding of who an adult is will be of benefit.

2. Concept of adulthood

The term adult attracts some degree of respect when mentioned in my societies. It refers to persons who are 18 years of age and above. In some nations an adult is one who has attained the voting age of his nation. For instance, in Nigeria the voting age is 18 years, while in some other countries the voting age is 21 years or more. An adult to Nzeneri (2002) is one who is physically and mature, socially, economically and politically responsible psychologically.

UNESCO (1976) quoted in Nzeneri (2010) recommended that an adult is a person regarded as an adult by the society he belongs, be it western or African society Ani (2008) indentified certain yard sticks to measure adulthood as follows:
i.   An adult must be physically matured. This refers to the full development of the organs of the individual.
ii.   Economic yardstick. An adult must posses the ability to work, (i.e) employed in a paid job or be an employer of labour himself.
iii.   Responsibility yardstick: An adult should be responsible and should perform his duties and obligations as at when due. E.g payment of taxes and levies.
An adult is expected to contribute to the society intellectually.

Harvinghurst (1955) in Oyibamiji (2012) defined an adult as a person who is a working man or woman and who is responsible for himself or herself. Verner (1964) in Oyibamiji (2012) saw an adult as a person who has come into that stage of life in which he has assumed responsibility for himself and usually for others and who has concomitantly accepted a functional productive role in his community.

3. Division of Adulthood.

According to Nzeneri (2002) adulthood is divided into three stages.
i.   **Early Adulthood:** This is the first stage of adulthood. It covers the period from the end of adolescence, which is 18 to about 30 years. This age range is very delicate, as the young adult attempts to do every thing that comes his or her way, whether they are right or wrong.
ii.   **Middle adulthood:** This spans from age 30-55 or 60. The middle adults are looked upon as the most creative and productive segment of the society. They are at the head of operations of all the affairs of a nation and in the world of work.
iii.   **Late adulthood:** This stage is the last of the stages a person need to pass through before death. At this stage people generally tend to feel that there is little to do more before they exit. Those who have not made significant achievements see themselves as having failed, resulting to a loss of faith in themselves and others.
But at this age range, there is loss of vital organs of the body.

4. Concept of Adult Education

The term adult education is seen by many people in my ways and varying periods. Across different societies and nations, the concept seem to be perceived in different ways, hence the difficulty in arriving at a unified definition.

Okedara (1981) in Ihejirika (2012) reporting the outcome of the first conference on comparative study of adult education presented it as

> *A process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and full time basics (unless fulltime programmes designed for adults) undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge and undertaking or skills appreciation and attitudes or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems.*

According to Rogers (1992), adult education embraces

> all planned and purposeful learning opportunities offered to those who are recognized and recognize themselves as adults in their own society and who left the formal (initial educational system or who have passed beyond the possible state of initial education if they were not in it), whether such learning opportunities are inside or outside the formal system as long as such learning opportunities treat the learners as adults in decision-making, use of appropriate adult learning methodology and style and purpose and to meet their own need.

As pointed out earlier, the use and meaning of this concept tend to be applied in line with the needs of the people of a given society. In developing nations, with associated political problems, poor economy and high rate of illiteracy, the concept is used and defined to meet their varying needs. Hence the definition by Town Send-Cole (1977) in Onyebamiji and Hassan (2012) that adult education embraces all forms of educative experiences needed by men and women according to their varying interests and requirements and their different levels of comprehension and ability and in their changing roles and responsibilities through out life. This definition may have informed the definition of adult education in Nzeneri (1996) as "any education given to adults based on their society economic, political and cultural needs or problems to enable them adjust fully to changes and challenges in their lives and society".

> *While the definition of adult education in developing countries tend to be broad to accommodate all the educational needs of the people in this region, the concept seem to be narrowed to those specific needs of people in developed countries. According to Nzeneri (2002) adult education in developed countries is defined as that education undertaken by adults who need to make up for what they lost in the formal school system or for those who desire to use their leisure more meaningfully or people who need to acquire new and improved skill in order to adjust to changes and challenges in technology and or occupation.*

Though certain aspects of the concept appears to be common in the definitions in both the developed and developing countries, it is clear that the educational need of people in the areas are not the same, hence the difference.

However, an all-embracing definition of adult education was contained in UNESCO's report of (1996). Adult education was presented as:

> The entire body of organized educational process, 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 whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their ability, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two fold perspective of full participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

5. Forms of Adult Education

The education of adults whether in developed or developing countries comes in three forms (i.e) Formal, Non-formal and Informal.

5.1 Formal Adult Education: This is a form of adult education which shares some kinds of characteristics,

within the formal school system. Here the programmes are organized and planned in schools or colleges and tertiary institution with laid down conditions, and stipulated time and periods of classes and reward in form of certificates to those found wharthy on completion of some prescribed examinations.

5.2 Non-Formal Education:

Non-formal education is the direct opposite of the formal adult education in terms of structure. While the formal can take place within the walls of a school, college or university, the non-formal takes place out of school. Though organized, its entry requirement, learning content and time are planned to suit the learners so as to avert constraints and maximize objectives.

5.3 Informal Adult Educational

This form of education takes place informally. It is not pre-planned, but unorganized and accidental. It is gained through the reading of books, magazines and other printed materials, watching of television and other day-to-day life activities.

6. Activities and Programmes of Adult and Non-formal Education

From the definitions of adult and non-formal education as advanced by authors and professionals in the field, the scope is limitless, as broad as life (Nzeneri, 2002). It spans through all the activities of man in all aspects of life.

A critical examination of all the definition of adult and non-formal education classifies the scope under four areas or programme of activities:

i.   **Education for personal development and libration:** The programmes or activities here, are those that appear personal to the client but librates the learner from ignorance. They include such programmes as adult basic education, functional literacy, political education, environmental education, women education, citizenship education, preventive education, consumer education, prison and liberal education.

ii.   **Education for skills development and competence:** Under this activity area comes all programmes for skill acquisition and training which result to ability to handle and manipulate tools efficiently. Such programmes as apprenticeship education, vocational education post basic education, workers' education, aesthetic education, internship education and labour education are good examples.

iii.   **Education for adjustment and sustainability:** One of the major roles of adult and non-formal education is to help the citizenry to adjust to changing realities of life and unlearn certain practices which are found to be counter productive to the society. Programme for adjustment and sustainability includes: peace education, population education, family planning education, health education reproductive education, fundamental education, community education and co-operative education.

iv.   **Education for continuation and awareness:** Adult and non-formal education for continuation, remedial and awareness includes continuing education extension education, distance education, second chance education and intermittent education.

Having presented the scope of this concept diagrammatically, there is need to examine each of them for better understanding.

6.1 Adult-Basic Education: Adult basic education was formally known as adult basic literacy. It is the acquisition of the skills of reading, writing and numeracy. These skills are fundamental and are required for someone to break off from the chains of illiteracy.

6.2 Functional Education: Functional literacy education is the amalgamation of literacy programme with other needs of the society. It is a special programme designed for those with common interest, such as traders and farmers. Here participants are taught socio-economic activities.

6.3 Political Education: Political education is that form of education that creates and raises the political consciousness of adults to participate in the democratic process of the society.

6.4 Environmental Adult Education: This is a form of adult education which enables adults to understand their surroundings. The adult acquires the knowledge of environmental pollution and degradation.

6.5 Women Education: This is the type of education given to women that will liberate them from the subjugation of tradition and society and promote gender equity.

6.6 Citizenship Education: Citizenship education, otherwise known as civic education refers to all

programmes of education designed to enlighten individuals in the society to understand and realize the need to discharge one's civic obligation, such as payment of taxes and participation in votings.

6.7 Consumer Education: This is a form of adult education that educates the adults on the nature of the goods and services they consume. It helps the consumer to be aware of the available goods and services, the place to obtain them and warnings against substandard products or dangers attached to the excessive use of some products.

6.8 Liberal Education: Liberal education is that form of adult education acquired for leisure. It is a personal development programme that helps an individual to update his skills, knowledge and values about certain aspect of life.

6.9 Apprenticeship Education: Apprenticeship education is a form of adult education which involves the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes. In apprenticeship education. The trainee agrees with the trainer of the period and nature of the training to be undertaken. This form of adult education is predominant in developing countries.

figure.1 Diagrammatic illustration of the educational activities within the scope of Adult and Non-formal Education
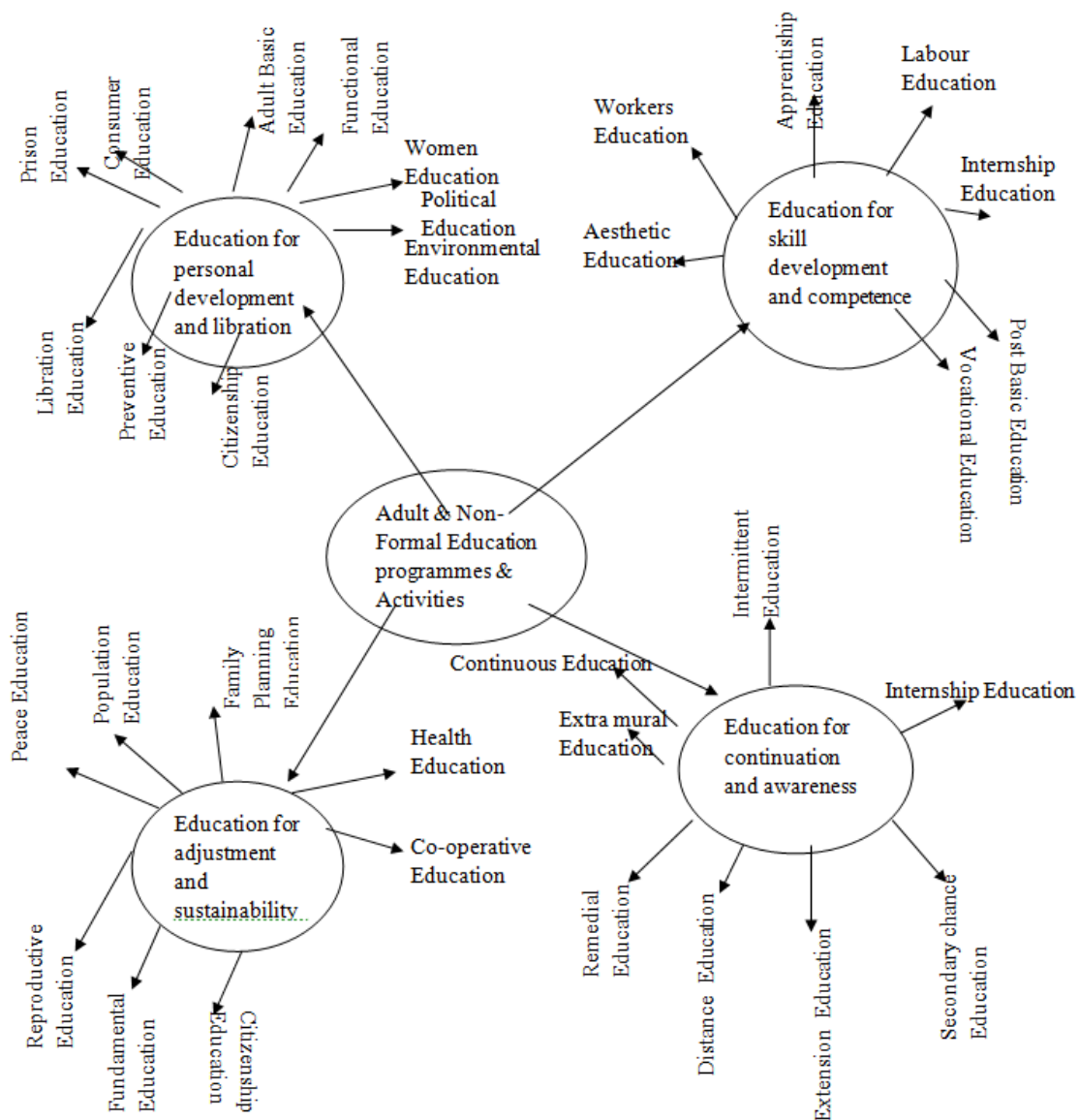
6.10 Vocational Education: To keep fit and meet technological changes, adults in the world of work need to update their knowledge and skill. Vocational training provides this required update on the job. It comes in the form of professional training, etc.

6.11 Post-Basic Education: Post-Basic education is a form of adult education which helps to develop the adults on the basic education already acquired. In post basic education, the participants are made to use their basic skills more competently.

6.12 Workers' Education: This is a form of adult education programme provided by employers or establishments to equip their employees with new skills and knowledge to keep them relevant in their work place. It is sometimes called work place education. When the workers are trained while performing their duties, it is called in-service or on the job training. When the workers are permitted to be trained outside the work place, either sponsored by the employer or otherwise, it is called off-the-job training.

6.13 Aesthetic Education: This form of education is more in developing areas where the people are still very close to their culture and uphold it's value in the society. This form of education is expressed or demonstrated through music, art, drama and dance.

6.14 Internship Education: Internship is a form of adult education which has the features of mentorship. Here a trainee is exposed to the practical use of learning equipments under the supervision of a superior in that field.

6.15 Labour Education: Labour education is another work related education, but it is only directed to trade unions, officials or leaders of sections in the work place. Its main focus is to make the officials or leaders acquire basic knowledge of the principles and practices of trade unionism, policy procedures, dispute resolution and bargaining formats to avoid industrial conflicts.

6.16 Peace Education: Peace education is another form of adult education. Peace according to Nzeneri and Adekola (2006) citing Onyebamiji (2002) is a state of quiet, calm, public tranquility from war and concord of ideas among citizens, living according to the laws of a country.

Peace education therefore involves conscientizing the adult citizens to develop co-operative attitude, and non violent approach to communal life.

6.17 Population Education: This form of education has to do with sensitizing the adults of the danger of living in overcrowded places, providing them with coping strategies on how to prevent attendant problems.

6.18 Family Planning Education: Adult education through seminars and public health talks, enlightens the adult population of the available ways or methods of family planning. In to space children and the danger inherent in raising up children more than the family can care for.

6.19 Reproductive Education: Reproductive education is similar to family planning education, but they are two different things. Here expectant mothers are taught how to take care of the foetus to produce healthy children. It involves a series of lecturers on the dos and don'ts by pregnant women, to avoid complications during child birth.

6.20 Health Education: Health education is another form of education given to adults. In health education, emphasis is laid on how to live and maintain a hygienic life. To keep ones self and surrounding clean to reduce the risk of diseases so as to ensure a healthy life.

6.21 Fundamental Education: To Wordu (2006) fundamental education is concerned with the day-to-day living of the people, which includes nutrition, agriculture, governance and co-operative organizations. It is sometimes called social education.

6.22 Co-operative Education: This form of adult education is given to members of co-operatives to enable them understand the principles and the practices in co-operation. It involves learning how co-operatives are formed, its structures, conduct of meetings, laws governing co-operatives and functions of officers.

6.23 Community Education: Community education is another adult form that enlightens adults of their roles and responsibility in the community.

Minezey and Le-Tarte (2012) in Hanachor (2011) perceived community education as:

A philosophical concept which serves the entire community providing for all

the educational needs of all of its community members. It uses the local school to serve as the catalyst for bringing community resources to bear on community problems in an effort to develop a positive sense of community, improve community living and develop the community process towards the end of self-actualization.

It helps the members of a community to learn how to work together, to identify problems and seek for solution. Community education is used to educate citizens to be useful members of the community and contribute to its development.

6.24 Remedial Education: This is one of the forms of adult education programmes for continuation. It provides opportunity for those who had not completed their education no matter the level. It is designed to remedy all educational deficiencies be it at primary, secondary or tertiary level.

6.25 Extension Education

Extension education is an adult education method which extends the knowledge and skill of professionals in the main stream to the outskirts of the community. When health workers and agricultural consultants leave the cities or urban centers to the rural communities they are carrying out extension services.

Akinpelu (1975) in Ihejirika (2012) saw extension education as the reaching out programme of some central or agency whether it be a government department of agriculture, a library, a museum or university. It tends to be based on social and active participation of the public.

This form of education is always used to bring learning opportunities through extension to persons, groups or communities in order to assist them to improve their lives.

6.26 Distance Education: Distance education, which in the past was referred to as correspondence study, is a form of adult education provided for adults who have need to complete their education or professional skills. It involves the use of information communcations technologies (computer, e-learning, e-mail, teleconferencing). In modern time, learners stay in the comfort of their homes and receive guides from facilitators to aid their learning. It is more of a self-study or self-directed learning.

7. Conclusion: The changing educational climate in Nigeria calls for the sustenance of the scope, structure, methods and application of the concept of adult education. As a distinct discipline, there is need to establish these concepts in Nigeria, in line with current global practice. To sustain the discipline these concepts and activities need to be projected and infused into modern trend. The paper therefore provides a basis for advancement of the practice and application of these concepts.

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