

IMPROVING NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY, SECURITY AND NATIONAL UNITY THROUGH FUNCTIONAL ADULT EDUCATION

Inibehe Asuquo Essienette, Ubong Weston Dennis and Unyime Nsini Obot

Abstract

This paper examines improving Nigeria's democracy, security and national unity through functional adult education. It is obvious that Nigeria's democracy, security and national unity is in a terrible state of quagmire. This is evident in the fact that Nigeria still witnesses widespread electoral violence, human right abuse, government rascality, Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, herdsmen attack, kidnapping, armed robbery, hate speech, religious intolerance, community clashes etc. The above imbroglio indicates that Nigeria is still struggling as a developing nation. Consequently, there is need to put up measures that will help reduce the above listed social menace. Since education has been widely accepted to bring about overall national development in most countries of the world, hence the need for functional adult education that will educate the adult population of the Nigerian society to enable them conform to changes and to overcome challenges facing them. It is therefore in the light of the above that this paper discusses the concept of functional adult education and how to improve Nigeria's democracy, security and national unity through functional adult education.

Keywords: Functional Adult Education, Democracy, Security, National Unity

Introduction

Nigeria's democracy, security and national unity has had some concerns over a period of time. For instance, Nigeria's nascent democracy has been marked with lots of electoral malpractices, ranging from vote buying, electoral violence, ballot box snatching as well as voter apathy to mention but a few. Similarly, Nigeria for some years now has been battling with the issue of insecurity, especially in the Northern part of the country where we have the Boko Haram terrorist group, herdsmen attack, banditry as well as kidnapping who have significantly contributed to insecurity in the country. (Adewole, 2021). Similarly, the southern part of the country is still struggling with kidnapping, oil theft, armed robbery and so on that has affected not just the security architecture of the country but has also led to economic loss to the country due to the activities of oil theft. More so, the issue of religious intolerance, communal crisis regarding land issues and boundaries constitute those imbroglios that have punctuated Nigeria's national development as seen in states like Kaduna and Benue. Wikipedia (2021).

A cursory look into Nigeria's democracy clearly shows that most Nigerians are yet to be aware of the need to guard Nigeria's democracy with jealousy. This is as a result of the fact that most Nigerian adults who are qualified to vote in election, deliberately stay away from participating in the electoral process, believing that the process will not and can never be credible. Other excuses they give include; trying to avoid the violence always associated

with polling units as well as the late arrival of electoral materials at the polling unit which delays the electoral process.

Another fundamental problem facing the Nigerian nation today is the issue of insecurity as a result of Boko Haram activities, kidnapping by herdsmen and bandits, especially in the Northern part of the country, this situation has made not just investors to run away from the country but has also made Nigerians to be afraid to move from one region of the country to another.

Again, the issue of religious intolerance is also a serious concern because a lot of persons have lost their lives as a result of religious intolerance. For instance, the recent one which happened at the Alhaji Shehu Shagari College of Education in Sokoto State, where Miss Deborah was accused of blasphemy, which led to her being mopped up to death Michael (2022). This needless killing would have been averted if these set of people that committed the murder were educated on the essence of religious tolerance.

Considering this sad situation, it is therefore necessary that measures be taken to bring about a change so that Nigeria can reclaim back its position as the giant of Africa. For this reason, functional adult education becomes an option to reduce the widespread electoral malpractice, human right violation, kidnapping, terrorism, armed robbery, killings, religious intolerance and so on, which has been abane on Nigeria's national development. Functional adult education according to Ihejirika (2013) is that education that covers training and instructions outside the formal education system and ranges from individualized apprenticeship to nationwide literacy. It may be vocational, as in the case of craft training centres in Nigeria designed to provide employment opportunities for young school leavers and for other unemployed persons. To Onyenemezu and Aduvo (2014), functional adult education is concerned with preparing people for life, but rather with helping or assigning people (adults) to live more successfully as useful and acceptable members of their societies and contribute meaningfully to the development of these societies. It is against this background that this literature will critically x-ray how functional adult education can help improve Nigeria's democracy, security and national security.

Functional Adult Education

Functional adult education is a collective name for all forms of learning programmes in which adults participate in order to develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge and improve their technical or professional qualifications to enable them meet their needs and those of their societies. It is a transmission process of general, technical or vocational knowledge, as well as acquisition of skills, values and attitudes which takes place in and out of the formal education system with the view to catering for early education deficiencies of mature people and enhancing their self-fulfillment and active participation in the socio-economic and political life of their society.

Functional adult education, according to Papen (2015), is the acquisition and use of reading, writing and numeracy to learn practical knowledge and skills, useful for other aspects of life, such as agriculture, health, civic and cultural education, primary healthcare, prevention of diseases (such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, etc.), family planning, environmental protection, gender equality and so on. Sandhaas (2019), asserted that functional adult education builds on indigenous knowledge and seeks to link reading, writing and numeracy skills to livelihoods and skills training in the areas such as agriculture, health, environmental protection, civic and cultural education and so on.

According to Abo (2020), functional adult education is not solely the acquisition of the skills of reading, writing and numeracy, rather, it is an approach, process and activity whereby adults begin discussing their individual or community needs, problems and

difficulties; read words, numbers, phrases and/or sentences reflecting these and finally begin to write, read and calculate around them.

Functional adult education, according to Ihejirika and Onyenemezu (2012), is any educational programme aimed at improving the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of people who are recognized by their societies as adult. According to them, adult education permeates all levels of education and concerns itself with everything that affects the wellbeing of the entire citizens and the societies.

To Nzeneri (2011), functional adult education is an indispensable tool for adjustment, for need identification, need meeting and for problem solving. Thus, adult education is development-oriented; a process that is geared towards making an adult to be more useful to himself and his society. In a nutshell, adult education is a process of removing obstacles and impediments that reduce the full realization of each adult's potentialities as well as overall national development.

From the foregoing, it can be observed that functional adult education if properly harnessed can help conscientize Nigerians towards national development in the areas of democracy, security and national unity. This is in view of the fact that functional adult education helps adults to adapt to changes and conform to challenges. Hence, it is in my opinion that effective functional adult education will help improve Nigeria's democracy, security and national development. This is because Ojokheta (2020), while discussing the scope of adult education stated that the scope of adult education includes; civic, political, mass, peace education and so on. The above education programme is aimed at improving democracy, security and national unity.

Improving Nigeria's Democracy through Functional Adult Education

Democracy is generally believed to have originated from Greece. This is supported by the fact that the concept "democracy" derives its name from two Greek words "demos" meaning people and "kratien" which means "rule" or "power." In a simple way and following from the translation of the Greek words "demos" and "kratien" democracy means "The rule of (by) the people" (Ezeani, 2014).

Democracy is a system of Government in which all qualified citizens share the absolute power to rule via electing their representatives. Abraham Lincoln defined Democracy as the Government of the people by the people and for the people. This means that the people (masses) through periodic election change the Government. Ugwuanyi (2011), submits that democracy is a system of Government which allows freedom of the individuals in various aspects of political life, Government, and the participation of the people in choosing those in Government. However, Nigeria's democracy has been marked by widespread electoral violence, human right abuse and so on. This situation is as a result of the fact that most Nigerians lack the political consciousness to participate in elections due to the fact that they do not understand the importance of participating in elections. Similarly, some adults, even educated ones, do not understand the workings of the fundamental human rights which then gives birth to the ever-occurring human right abuse by other Government to citizens or citizen to citizen. The situation therefore means that Nigerians need to be educated on the need to participate in democracy as well as the need to be educated on issues surrounding fundamental human rights. Consequently, political education which is a form of functional adult education therefore becomes handy.

Political education refers to any educational intervention programme designed to make a man live a useful life. This is because citizens are at the heart of a functioning democracy. They give life and meaning to the principles, processes and institutions of democracy. Hence, for democracy to develop and endure, citizens need to exercise their rights and responsibilities. Without the involvement of citizens in political life, Government

power can be abused and the basic rights and freedoms of democracy can go unrealized, because a successful democracy requires informed participation, citizens must first understand ideas about citizenship, politics and Government. Political education is therefore a critical and effective empowerment tool for promoting citizen-participation in democratic process. Some of the objective of political education include, developing confidence to be able to participate in the political process; and an understanding of the rights and responsibilities associated with democratic systems.

Improving Nigeria's Security through Functional Adult Education

The word security can be viewed from various angles depending on the situation with reference to specific cases (Olawale & Yemisi, 2012). The reason being that by nature, the concept is imprecise. For instance, security is a state of safety from danger or anxiety. Accordingly, to Olawale & Yemisi (2012), security refers to something valuable or quality that is the condition of being freed from exposure to danger, protection, feeling or assurance of safety, freedom from anxiety or doubt. Security is invulnerability and defensive capacity. The issue of insecurity could result from injustice, where people resort to violence because they feel they do not get justice. This happened in Nigeria during the Civil War (1967-1970). Security is the state or feeling of being secured, protected from espionage, theft, herdsmen attacks and so on.

Security as the protection of persons and property against a range of hazards including crime, fire and attendant risks such as explosion, accidents, disasters, sabotage, subversion, civil disturbances, bombings (both actual and threatened) and in some systems, attacks by external enemies (Olawale & Yemisi, 2012).

From the above, one can conclude that security is not just military protection or repulsion of external aggression and internal upheaval or any act that could threaten the peace and security of a nation. It also includes environmental stability, economic wellbeing, demographic issues, good governance and so on (Olawale & Yemisi, 2012). However, in this literature, peace will be viewed as the protection of persons and property against attacks from enemies either from within or without the Nigerian society.

Functional adult education through peace education empowers learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to end violence and injustice and promote the culture of peace. Peace education helps in promoting values such as compassion, equality, as well as peaceful co-existence. Seji, Omoreje & Emuebie (2020) states that there is a significant relationship between national security and education. According to them, a cursory look at the personality of Boko Haram Islamists and bandits in the northern region of Nigeria reveals high level of illiteracy among them. This therefore means that concerted effort be made towards educating the illiterate adult population of the country on the need for peaceful coexistence. However, such education should also aim at providing these adults with vocational skills so as to enable them practice these skills and earn money for themselves so that they will be able to take care of themselves as well as their families rather than engaging in crimes of kidnapping, armed robbery and so on.

Improving Nigeria's National Unity through Functional Adult Education

National unity portends a feeling of common purpose that bind people of diverse cultures, colours and ethnic nationalities together. It is achieving cohesion between groups of diverse backgrounds that have come together for a common purpose (Eme-Uche&Okonkwo, 2020).Ojo (2019) sees national unity as the process of unifying a society to make it harmonious based upon an order its members regard as equitably harmonious. Therefore, national unity is a process by which members of a social system become less consequential in

affecting behaviour. In this process, members of the social system develop an escalating sequence of contact, cooperation, consensus and community.

To Onifade (2013), national unity is a relationship of community among people within the same political entity. He further explained that it is a state of mind or disposition to be cohesive, to act together and to be committed to mutual programmes.

From the above, national unity can be seen as a process that produces an omnibus of initiatives put in place by a State. Its representatives or institution guided by respect for the unique traditions and cultural background of ethnicities sharing the same polity with the goal of harmonizing all interest through a form of dialogue and representation and addressing differences that may be divisive and conflictual using the instrument of fairness, justice and equity in the sharing of resources, benefits, opportunities and responsibilities in order to guarantee stability, longevity and prosperity of the polity as long as the inhabitants decide to remain in the polity.

Functional adult education through peace education can help educate adults on the need for peaceful coexistence among the various ethnic groups that exist in a nation. It is obvious that one of the fundamental challenges Nigeria faces as a nation is the issue of religious and ethnic intolerance. Hence, the need for well-designed adult education programme that will educate adults on the need for religious and ethnic tolerance, equality, justice and fairness because the above listed, when absent in any heterogeneous society like Nigeria can bring about distrust, thereby triggering off national disunity.

Peace education, according to Ojokheta (2020), equips learners with the knowledge, skills, attitude and values necessary to end violence and injustice and to promote the culture of peace. This means that through functional adult education, adults, both literates and non-literates will be equipped with the skills of tolerance, peaceful coexistence and on the need to eschew violence so as to bring about overall national development. To Kester (2011), peace education as a component of adult education aim at inculcating in every learner the universal values and behaviors in which the culture of peace is predicated, including the development of non-violent conflict resolution skills and a commitment to work together to realize a shared and preferred future. This means that peace education enables an individual to be able to explore the root cause of conflict, knowing humanitarian and human right law, envisioning alternative security structures, and learning skills for managing micro and macro conflicts without resorting to violence.

Conclusion

Nigeria's nascent democracy, dwindling security and national unity calls for extraordinary measures save the nation from becoming a failed state. For this reason, functional adult education becomes an option to reduce the widespread electoral malpractice, abuse of human rights, kidnapping, banditry, communal clash, armed robbery, religious intolerance and so on, that is currently threatening Nigeria's national development. To improve Nigeria's nascent democracy, security and national unity, functional adult education therefore becomes handy to help educate and equip adults on democratic principles and on the need for peaceful coexistence that will bring about overall national development of the Nigerian nation.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations were proffered:

- i. The Government, through the national orientation agency, should ensure that mass education is carried out to educate the adults on the need to participate in election as electing people into public offices is a fundamental human right.

- ii. The national orientation agency should also ensure that adults are educated on their fundamental human rights as well as fundamental responsibilities of a citizen to the nation.
- iii. Radio and television stations should schedule programmes aimed at educating adults on the need to participate in electoral process, as well as on the need to tolerate one another, while also respecting other's culture and traditions.
- iv. The National Commission for Mass Literacy Adult and Non-Formal Education should ensure to provide vocational skill courses at adult education centres in order to equip the learners with vocational skills
- v. Repentant book haram members, arrested kidnappers and armed robbers should be educated on the need to eschew violence and criminality in the society
- vii. Basic education should be provided for the almajiris, migrant fishermen folks, migrant farmers, hunters and nomadic pastoralist etc. on the need for a peaceful coexistence, this will help reduce conflict, insurgency, militancy, banditry and other violent crimes in the country.

References

- Abo, G. (2020). Management of Integrated Functional Education Programme: A Critical Analysis of Policy – Practice Gaps Creative Education II, 1261-1288.doi:10.4236ke.2020.118094
- Adewole S (2022 April, 30) Deborahs demise; *Daily sun* page 13
- Eme-Uche, U. & Okonkwo, C. (2020). Nigeria and the Challenges of National Unity. <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/338839917>
- Ezeani, O. E (2019) Gender and democracy: A survey of women and men representation in Nigerian national assembly (1999-2019) *Journal of Political Economy* University of Nigeria Nsukka 3(1) 103-117
- Ihejirika, J. C (2013). A reflection of administrative machineries and challenges in the management of adult literacy education in Nigeria. *Journal of social science and humanities*, 4(2), 1-11
- Ihejirika, J. & Onyenemezu, E. (2012). *Anatomy of Adult Education*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Kester, K. (2009). Education for Peace: content, form and structure: mobilizing youth for civic engagement. Retrieved from [http://www.review.upeace.org/...](http://www.review.upeace.org/)
- Michael S (2021 Octoberr, 20) Nigeria's development; Now and beyond page 19
- Nzeneri, I. S. (2011). Adult in battle: Any hope of victory? *Inaugural Lecture series* No. 71, University of Port Harcourt.
- Ojo, R. C. (2019). The Nature of Philosophy, Adult and Non-Formal Education and Philosophical Research Method in Trends and Issues in Education in Nigeria. A. Alani & S. Oni (eds) Ibadan: Triumph – Providential Publishers. Pp 33-47
- Ojokheta, K. O. (2020). *Compendium of Adult Education*. Ibadan: Clemeve Media Konsult.

Improving Nigeria's Democracy, Security and National Unity through Functional Adult Education

- Olawale, S. & Yemisi, M. (2012). The Roles of Religious Education to Peace, Security and Sustainable Development in Nigeria in *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 3(1) 1-5.
- Onifade, C. A. (2013). Towards National Integration in Nigeria Jumping the Hurdles. www.iiste.org/HSTE
- Onyenemezu, C. E. & Aduvo, R. (2014). Utilization of Adult Continuing Education Programmes for Sustainable National Development. *International Journal of Development and Emerging Economies*, 2(1), 1-7.
- Papen, U. (2015). *Adult Literacy as Social Practice – More Than Skills*. London: Routledge. <http://doi.org/10.4324/9780203347119>
- Sandhaas, B. (2019). *Portrait Adult Education Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: DVV International.
- Seji, D.; Omoroje, P. & Emuebie, J. (2020). Achieving National Security in Nigeria through Education. *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 2(4) 135-154
- Ugwuanyi, K. O. (2011) *Government terms and facts; a dictionary for students of government*. Port-Harcourt; B-Alive Publishers
- Wikipedia (2021) Insecurity in Nigeria. Retrieved from www.wikipedia.com on march 11, 2022