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UNDERSTANDING
ADULT
EDUCATION
PRACTICE
IN NIGERIA

Essays in Honour of
Professor Kehinde Oluwaseun Kester

Edited by
Kola Kazeem
Kofoworola Adedayo Aderogba
Olufunke Temitope Ogidan
Margaret 'Bola Oni

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Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	viii
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	xv
<i>Contributors</i>	xvi
Chapter 1: Building a Castle of Hope for Adult Education in Nigeria – <i>K.O. Ojokheta and R. A. Aderinoye</i>	1
Chapter 2: Role of Adult Education in Nigeria's Social Integration – <i>M. A. Oyebamiji and G. A. Nwogu</i>	26
Chapter 3: A Critique of Adult Education Programmes in Multiethnic Nigerian Society – <i>C. O. Omoregie and O. Oyelami</i>	40
Chapter 4: The Media and the Development of Adult Education in Nigeria – <i>S. I. Odiaka</i>	51
Chapter 5: Reflections on Challenges Facing Adult Education Practices in Nigeria: Pre-Independence-2016 – <i>H. I. Kuye and D. Ukpabi</i>	64
Chapter 6: Improving Adult Education Learning Potentials in Nigeria: The Need to Build Capacities of Community Libraries – <i>A. A. Omokhabi and U. C. Osu</i>	76
Chapter 7: Socio-Economic Development of Developing Countries: The Role of Adult Education – <i>K. S. Adesokan and A. O. Olawuni</i>	92
Chapter 8: Adult Education and Peacebuilding Process in Nigerian Communities – <i>O. T. Ogidan, S. A. Akande and M. Goren</i>	104
Chapter 9: The Role of Adult Education in Reducing Out-of-School Incidence in Nigeria – <i>V.F. Iyanda, A. B. Olufayo and O. A. Savage</i>	123

Chapter 10: Adult Education Funding in Nigeria: Issues, Perspectives and Challenges	134
– <i>M. F. Olajide, F. O. Olajide and F. A. Sijuade</i>	
Chapter 11: Developing Curriculum for Adult Learning: Some Considerations	149
– <i>A. I. Gbenro, M. B. Oni and T. Apena</i>	
Chapter 12: Mobilising Financial Resources for Adult and Non-Formal Education in Diversified Socio-Cultural Nigerian Society	165
– <i>S. O. Okemakinde and K. O. Ogunyinka</i>	
Chapter 13: National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education and the Coordination of Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria: An Overview	178
– <i>A. M. Momoh and O. A. Olubodun</i>	
Chapter 14: Contributions of the Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria to Adult Education Practice in Nigeria	189
– <i>A. A. Sarumi</i>	
Chapter 15: The Roles of Foreign Donor Agencies in Promoting Adult Education in Nigeria	206
– <i>A. A. Adeniyi and O. I. Oke</i>	
Chapter 16: Adult and Non-Formal Education as Panacea for Youth Unemployment in Nigeria	222
– <i>O. B. Sanni and T. I. Akinyemi</i>	
Chapter 17: Cultural Imperatives for Motivating Adult Learners	238
– <i>F. E. Ojo and E. Sanya</i>	
Chapter 18: Application of Modern Technologies in Adult Learning Process	251
– <i>O. S. Oludeyi, M. O. Erinsakin and O. T. Omotayo</i>	
Chapter 19: Application of Technology Acceptance Model to Health Information Literacy Improvement in Nigeria: A Critique	269
– <i>N. A. Babalola and A. S. Ajibola</i>	
Chapter 20: Ageing and the Adult Learning Process in Nigeria	284
– <i>M. M. Ayantunji and F. O. Ayoola</i>	

Chapter 21: The Role of Professional Training Programmes in the Promotion of Adult Education Practices in Nigeria – <i>F. A. Akinkunmi and M. A. Omilani</i>	299
Chapter 22: Assessment of Niger State Agency for Mass Education and Its Contributions to Adult Education Development in Niger State – <i>A. A. Olojede, A. A. Adelakun and M. K. A. Sunmola</i>	312
Chapter 23: Global Society and Lifelong Learning – <i>A. O. Akinsanya and L. A. Ibiyemi</i>	326
Chapter 24: Nigerian Women Education and Empowerment for Community and National Development: Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century – <i>K. A. Aderogba and D. A. Egunyomi</i>	343
Chapter 25: Evaluation Process in Adult Education – <i>G. N. Aniemeka and H. E. Adebola</i>	362
Chapter 26: Community Education: A Vibrant Tool for Peacebuilding in the South-south Geo-political Zone of Nigeria – <i>K.A. Ekuri, H. A. Adong and P. A. Betiang</i>	375
Chapter 27: Continuing Professional Development of Adult Educators as a Panacea for Effective Adult Education Provision in Nigeria – <i>C. C. Onwuadi, R. U Nwachukwu and P. Okeke</i>	394
APPENDICES	
<i>Appendix 1: Who is KOK? A Short History</i>	409
<i>Appendix 2: Birthday Tributes</i>	419
<i>Index</i>	427

CHAPTER FOUR

The Media and the Development of Adult Education in Nigeria

S. I. Odiaka

Introduction

Education, generally, refers to all-round development of humans so that they can be useful to themselves and society at large. Such development includes the physical, intellectual, mental, emotional and social perspectives. These facets of development are undergone throughout the lifetime of an individual. Wherever we are as individuals, we are positioned to receive one form of education or the other so long as we are not unconscious, absent-minded or dead. It is in this sense that sociologists generally refer to education as socialisation. While some forms of education are structured, others are unstructured. According to *Merriam Webster's Dictionary*, education is defined as knowledge, skill and development gained from study and training. This definition expresses the fact that education is not equated to reading and cognition; there are vocational aspects to it. Quoting Anyanwu (1992), Abiona and Osu (2015) define education as:

the tool for the integration of the individual effectively into a society so that the individual can achieve self-realisation, develop national consciousness, promote unity and strive for social, economic, political, scientific, cultural and technical progress.

This definition, apart from recognising education as a tool for socialisation, points out that other benefits of education are achievable within a social context. Obanya (2007) notes the fact that education encapsulates literacy, ability to understand and use English language in a variety of life situations, knowledge possession and technical

competence; he concluded that these alone do not make up the totality of education. He stated that education is “the overall lifetime development of the human person for the benefit of the individual as well as for the wider society . . .”. This definition sees education as lifelong learning which implies engaging in education in order to meet various needs and solve various problems as one lives through the ages of one’s existence.

Adult education is a special form of education that is put in place to afford the adult learner the opportunity to optimise his or her potentials and become relevant, productive and fulfilled, socially, economically and intellectually. It is a multidisciplinary approach to learning aimed at catering for myriads of problem areas that relate to adults’ welfare. According to Adiele (2006), different people have associated adult education with all the activities aimed at eradicating illiteracy. He notes, however, that owing to the multidimensional nature of adult education, different names like continuing education, lifelong learning, independent learning, community education, on-the-job training, facilitation and conscientisation are used to describe adult education. All these descriptions represent the different areas of adult education. Some of the terms describe the content (e.g. community education and on-the-job training) while others (conscientisation and independent learning) describe the methods adopted to make adult education successful.

The relevance of adult education is attested to, by the attention paid to it by the Nigerian government in its educational policy. In the document, National Policy on Education (2013), the sixth edition (section 4) titled “Mass and Nomadic Education”, the goals of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education include the following:

- (a) Provide functional basic education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education or who left school too early. The target groups include migrant folks, almajiri pupils, illiterate and semi-literate adults, youths and adolescents; persons who left the formal school system early and are now willing to come back and continue schooling; and other categories of disadvantaged groups who are unable to have access to the conventional educational system and

therefore require other forms of educational programmes to cater for their particular/peculiar needs and circumstances.

- (b) Provide remedial and lifelong education for youths and adults who did not complete secondary education, and
- (c) Provide in-service, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills.

A proper view of above-listed objectives shows that this form of education (adult education) cannot be provided in a static setting. This is because different categories of people are involved: the employed and the unemployed, the challenged, the literate and non-literate, the aged and of course, the young vibrant professionals who desire more knowledge, be it vocational, professional or purely intellectual. It is on this basis that adult education as a discipline employs various means of communication including the media to ensure the facilitation of learning among adults. This chapter examines the various forms of adult education as we have them in Nigeria (informal, non-formal and formal) and how the media has contributed to their development over the years. The various types of media are discussed, including their origin in Nigeria. The chapter rounds off with some important recommendations.

Forms of Adult Education

Adult education is diversified and multidimensional, therefore it takes place in different contexts. It is not pinned down to a particular form. According to Fenwick, Nesbit and Spencer (2006) "Adult Education happens in many ways and in different contexts". These authors realised the different forms of adult education as formal, informal and non-formal. Formal adult education refers to the institutionalised form of adult education where both the young and the aged or middle-aged are exposed to various areas of learning within a formal institution like the university, a research centre or a college of education. Participants are exposed to curriculums and are given certificates after a study period. The informal adult education comprises all forms of adult learning that go on during informal interactions in society. Such interactions build up learning either deliberately or inadvertently. For example learning that

happens in the kitchen, through the mass media, in the church, on the sports field and at social gatherings can be classified under informal adult education. Such learning is not structured.

Non-formal adult education is organised by an educational institution but it exists outside a formal school environment. Its importance lies in the fact that it helps to cater for various forms of learning that cannot be captured in a formal learning environment, especially the non-cognitive type of learning. For this reason, it is sometimes described as work education. According to Zaki Dib (1987), formal education is systematic, organised educational model that is structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms presenting a rigid curriculum as regards objective, content and methodology; any educational practice that is devoid of any of these characteristics can be safely described as non-formal education. He added that when informal education is highly organised and administered it could take the form of non-formal education. Non-formal education therefore, has the following characteristics:

- (1) It is an organised educational activity outside the formal school systems.
- (2) It aims at meeting the immediate needs and interests of the participants (adult clientele involved).
- (3) It is not always for the poor and the unschooled; some highly educated professionals can enrol for programmes under the non-formal educational system (Coombs, 1988).
- (4) It is generally less structured and it is not as rigid as the formal system.
- (5) It is more effective in meeting non-cognitive learning needs than the formal education.
- (6) It easily incorporates locally organised programmes on issues that border on agriculture, home economics, health, nutrition, industrial development, literacy and family planning; the rigid formal school system is not open to such community education ventures.

Based on the above description of non-formal education, distance learning, open learning, correspondence education, continuing education,

extra-mural studies and extension services are different forms of non-formal adult education that exist in Nigeria. All these modes of adult learning including the formal and informal modes utilise the media in the dissemination of knowledge. Attempt is made here, however to concentrate on media utilisation in the non-formal sector of Adult Education.

Distance learning, which is a very prominent aspect of non-formal adult education can be described as a mode of lecture delivery in which the facilitator and the clientele are separated by space and time. It cannot thrive without the use of the media. According to Egunyomi and Aderinoye (2001), Distance Learning is a branch of Adult Education which recognises an answer to an existing injustice in the distribution of educational opportunities. This is to say that this mode of learning removes all the possible obstacles in the ways of innumerable individuals who for social, economic, physical, political and cultural reasons could not obtain quality education.

Continuing education is also a form of non-formal education. Here, individuals who have received some form of education but for some reasons could not complete it, are given the opportunity to come on board again. These include learners who are 'early school leavers' from primary and secondary schools or learners who had a long break after completing any of these levels. It is possible for such learners to be enrolled into extramural education centres too – a form of continuing education, popularly called 'second chance' or 'alternative' education. According to Odiaka (2015), "Extramural educational programme is usually an evening learning programme where learners gradually get exposed to the primary and secondary school curriculum after which they will participate in the state's organised formal examinations".

Other forms of non-formal education include nomadic education and extension services. Extension education is usually provided by research bodies including certain departments within various universities who use research findings to assist the rural populace in farming, health issues and home economics. This is with a view to enhancing the quality of life of dwellers in the rural settings.

Non-formal education, particularly in Nigeria is not without some hitches. Several factors have made this promising mode of education

ineffective or underutilised and these inhibiting factors include the following:

- (1) Inability of people to grasp the usefulness and the roles that non-formal education can play in their lives.
- (2) Improper organisation and administration of this form of education leading to non-achievement of stated objectives.
- (3) Lack of government's full involvement in ensuring that this form of education is highly recognised as a worthwhile venture, particularly in the area of funding.
- (4) Lack of motivational strategies that can keep clients in the non-formal education programmes, sustain their interest and help achieve their personal goals.
- (5) Lack of expertise in the use of communication gadgets for distribution of course contents.
- (6) Inability to reach the very poor and uneducated, owing to lack of time and economic needs (Bock and Bock, 1989).
- (7) "There is the problem of social distance felt by the target population relative to those participants who have more education and status" (Bock and Bock, 1989).

The problems identified above, as they exist in non-formal adult education can be tackled as much as possible, with beneficial results if the media can be maximally utilised.

What Constitute the Media?

Communication is the life wire of any thriving institution or organisation. It is also a tool needed for proper human development. Communication as a human activity uses various channels to get information, learning and developmental ideas across to concerned individuals: these channels are known as the media. The media today, include the radio, the television, the newspaper and the internet together with its various tools like the email and World Wide Web. According to Adhlakun (2008), media generally refers to the various means or channels by which message is carried from the sender to the receiver. Robinson and Groombridge (1989) refer to the media as "those means of communication that reach numbers of people namely: national and regional newspapers, popular

magazines, national and local radio and television (by open transmission, cable system or video recovery)". Quoting Bates (1993, 1995), Adelokun (2008) notes that there are five important media that could be used to dispense education and these are: direct human contact (face to face), text (including still graphics), audio, television and computing. Since it is not possible to achieve an objective of learning (or objectives) by sticking to one medium alone, there is no doubt that a number of these media would be utilised at a given time to achieve necessary learning goals.

In utilising the media for adult and non-formal education, it must be noted that selection is of utmost importance since all the media cannot be relevant and effective in every learning situation. Adult learners are highly diversified with regard to age, experience, interest, literacy, intelligence, aptitude, personality, employment and socio-economic status. These call for proper consideration during the choice of media. According to Fasokun, Katahore and Oduaran (2005), "concerning the choice of appropriate media, each facilitator should find the right medium for the message they wish to convey".

Nigeria, over the years have witnessed a lot of changes owing to media utilisation: informal indigenous communication, the radio, the television, the newspaper and of course the new media have contributed immensely to the growth of informal, formal and non-formal learning among adults. It is necessary at this juncture to examine these media and their inputs over time.

The Media and Adult Education in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives

Ever before the advent of the newspaper and radio in Nigeria, the indigenous communication systems existed and they are still in existence today in rural settings. Such indigenous communication systems include the town crier, festivals, indigenous languages with their proverbs and praise songs like the 'oriki' in Yoruba. Others are village square meetings, clans meetings, the use of symbols, music and storytelling. According to Egunyomi and Ekpenyong (2008), traditional channels are familiar, easily accessed, utilisable and reliable channels of news and information gathering that bring change and progress to the people. Indigenous media

help to communicate the identity and level of understanding of clients to adult facilitators so as to define their entry behaviour for a programme. This is particularly so when enrolling learners at the basic literacy level. Indigenous knowledge built through indigenous communication have helped in the field of traditional medicine, farming and entertainment. Today, informal face-to-face indigenous communication, using indigenous language is essential for technological diffusion, cultural change and rural adult education programmes.

The Newspaper

The newspaper is a daily print medium, circulated to disseminate news or a fresher dimension of some reported events. It is a mass medium that provides detailed account of happenings and can be referred to, several times by several individuals. Non-literates however, find it difficult to decipher information directly from newspapers.

The first newspaper in Nigeria was an indigenous one known as *Iwe Irohin*, published around 3 December, 1859 even before Nigeria became a constitutional entity (Sambe, 2008). According to Sambe, "The missionary factor is a major one in the development, evolution and growth of the Nigerian print media". Henry Townsend, an Anglican missionary was the publisher of *Iwe Irohin* which was later published in both English and Yoruba. The Methodist Church, the Catholics and the Muslims had their own indigenous publications too. All these missions used the newspaper to spread religious news.

Today, the newspaper is used to teach various topics in formal, informal and non-formal adult education. Newspaper cuttings can be used to teach languages, Home Economics, politics, aesthetics and social studies using different techniques in adult education.

The Radio

The radio is a ubiquitous apparatus that receives transmitted signals from radio stations in form of news, entertainment, jingles, documentaries and advertisements. It is a cheap instrument that educates and sensitises any group of people irrespective of their levels of education. Radio service in Nigeria started in 1933 with the introduction of wireless broadcasting. This later metamorphosed into wired

broadcasting in 1935 with the name "Radio Distribution Service". These radio services were characterised by the transmission of British Broadcasting Corporation programmes. In 1956, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation was established and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) was established in 1978. This was followed by voice of Nigeria (VON) in 1990 – meant for external broadcast.

With the establishment of radio in Nigeria, particularly between 1935 and 1947, the radio did not meet the needs of immediate communities in the North (Moemeka 1981). According to Moemeka, the situation remained dormant until Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, established its Department of Adult Education and Extension services in 1971 with a mass media section. Through radio services, topics on health, culture, history, sanitation, business management, family life and child care were broadcast. However, the listeners were passive and there was a gap between the organisers and the recipients. Due to financial constraints, the whole programme flopped.

In the South, the first educational radio programmes were based on English language, in the early 1940s (Babalola, 2012). This was done once in a week. Today, adult education programmes are aired on the radios-private, public and institutional radios but the communities do not have firm grip or firm control of the media. Community radios are more flexible in meeting the needs of communities. For instance, at the University of Ibadan, Diamond F.M. Radio station presents Distance Learning Lectures to different participants in a highly organised manner.

The Television

The television is a broadcast medium that combines pictures, sound and motion to present various programmes to viewers. It is more expensive than the radio. Unlike the radio which presents a "blind broadcast", the television is an audio-visual medium. According to Aina (2008), the radio, television and films are of short duration unlike books, magazines and newspapers, as broadcast media. The television, through the aid of satellite features events around the world to a global audience. Apart from this, it also ensures live coverage of events.

In Nigeria, the first television station was established by the Western Regional government in 1959 (Babalola, 2012). The television station,

known as Western Nigerian Television (WNTV) sent out its first television single on 11 October, 1959. The purpose of setting up the station was to make it "serve as surrogate teacher in improving the regional school systems that were handicapped by ill-qualified teachers or a shortage of them in certain subject areas" (Babalola, 2012). According to Babalola, television sets were distributed to schools to meet these educational needs. However, only formal secondary schools received such attention from the government.

Utilising the television for formal and non-formal adult education would require collaboration among the government, Agencies for Adult and Non-formal Education (AANFE), the organising institution and the television stations. This is because the television is not as flexible as the radio. It is possible however, to record already broadcast items on television, using video tapes for learning facilitation among adult learners. This is based on the initiative of the facilitator.

The Internet

The "internet" interpreted to mean "international network" is an educational medium that has accelerated learning among children, young and older adults in Nigeria today. With their modems hooked to their computers, adult learners are opportuned to build up knowledge on any topic of their choice. According to Soola (2001), "its potential for teleconferencing implies that it can be used to meet, discuss, teach, learn and share information on any subject matter". All the distance learning programmes in the various institutions in Nigeria utilise the internet for lecturing, training, examination and participants' continuous assessment.

Other forms of media used in Adult Education are books, encyclopedias, audio-tapes and journals. Several books have been written in indigenous languages to facilitate adult learning. Examples are: *Akitinyan Oro aje* (A business guide) *Akii dagba eko* (There is no limit to education) *Gbogbo yin ni yio ditan* (All will become history) (Akande, Babalola and Aboderin, 2008).

Ensuring Proper Media Utilisation for Adult Education in Nigeria

In a developing country like Nigeria, the media remains a rich source to

tap from, in order to ensure personal development and societal advancement. In the field of adult and non-formal education, proper utilisation of the media can help organisers of non-formal education to enrich their programmes much better than what used to be. In the first place, the media should be used to educate the public on the usefulness of adult and non-formal education. It should stress the difference between NFE and formal secondary and primary education. There is need to see the capacity of this form of education in actively meeting the needs of the adult persons.

There should be a collaboration among various higher institutions in charge of NFE, the media houses and the government with a view to providing different types of learning to viewers and listeners in the country. With this, the various institutions can always liaise with the media houses when certain items of knowledge are to be broadcast. Radio and television classes can only be successful if guides are sent to monitor such classes from TV and radio stations. This will act as a motivational strategy for adult learners who hitherto appear not to be receiving the required motivation.

Adult Education experts can organise a form of teleconferencing through the internet on a quarterly basis, to discuss issues that border on adult learning and relay conclusions to various institutions. Part of the issues that must be handled in these fora is the training of facilitators on the handling of various media for adult learning.

The media will open doors for resource persons to make their wealth of knowledge available to facilitators, organisers and learners in the field of adult education.

Conclusion

Adult and non-formal education remains a form of education that can fill the gaps left by the formal school in Nigeria. Since adult learners are diverse in nature, personality and goals, coupled with the fact that they are engaged in so many roles, the media are instrumental to facilitating knowledge among this group of learners. The radio, the television, newspapers, books and the internet have gone a long way in enriching learning among adults in Nigeria. However, there is need to engage in better educational media planning incorporating the media houses, adult

education organisers and the government. With proper funding by government the government, flexibility and monitoring by the media, and provision of materials by parent institutions, there is no doubt that Adult and non-formal education will experience a great boost in Nigeria.

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