| Research Article

Non-Formal Education in Nigeria: Problems and Way Forward

N Nwankwo Nkechi Chinelo

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam, Anambra State

Ugwunnamchi Uchenna Jacinta

St Paul's College of Education Nnewi, Anambra state

Conrad Ugochukwu Ukozor

Department of Educational Management, University of Abuja, Nigeria

Bandekaji Chris Audu, PhD

Department of Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja, Abuja Nigeria

Abstract: The paper explored the problems militating against development of non-formal education in Nigeria. The paper used secondary data. The secondary data were collected from both print and online publications. Content analysis was used to analyze the selection of literature for the study. The paper concluded that inadequate funding, inadequate professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insecurity, inadequate data to plan, inadequate instructional materials and poor capacity building programme are the problems militating against development of non-formal education in Nigeria. To solve the challenges, the following were recommended; an increment in the funding of non-formal education in the Nigeria by the government. Employment of more professional teachers and deploy to all public non-formal education institutions in Nigeria. Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities to all public non-formal education institutions in Nigeria and provision of adequate security to all public non-formal education institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Challenges, Non-formal education, Education.

1.0 Introduction

Non-formal education became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It can be seen as related to the concepts of recurrent and lifelong learning. Tight (1996: 68) suggests that whereas the latter concepts have to do with the extension of education and learning throughout life, non-formal education is about 'acknowledging the importance of education, learning and training which takes place outside recognized educational institutions'. Fordham (1993) suggests that in the 1970s, four characteristics came be associated

with non-formal education: relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups; concern with specific categories of person; a focus on clearly defined purposes; flexibility in organization and methods.

As Fordham (1993) relates, in 1967 at an international conference in Williamsburg USA, ideas were set out for what was to become a widely read analysis of the growing 'world educational crisis' (Coombs 1968). There was concern about unsuitable curricula; a realization that educational growth and economic growth were not necessarily in step, and that jobs did not emerge directly as a result of educational inputs. Many countries were finding it difficult (politically or economically) to pay for the expansion of formal education. At around the same time there were moves in UNESCO toward lifelong education and notions of "the learning society"which culminated in Learning to Be ('The Faure Report', UNESCO 1972). Lifelong learning was to be the 'master concept' that should shape educational systems (UNESCO 1972:182). What emerged was an influential tripartite categorization of learning systems. It's best known statement comes from the work of Combs with Prosser and Ahmed (1973). The Non-formal education: any organised educational activity outside the established formal system – whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity – that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives.

2.0 Literature Review

Non-formal education is an organized educational activity outside the framework of the formal school. It is designed to provide selected types of learning to particular groups in the population particularly the adults. The education includes such out of school programmes as literacy and basic education, technical and vocational training, community development, family planning and agricultural extension services. Others include the education and training programmes of trade unions, industries, professional associations, the military, the government, the church, the press, legal bodies and so on. It takes many forms such as seminars, short courses examination. It provides a wide range of learning services which are beyond the scope of formal education. It is a means of extending the skills and knowledge gained in formal education and of course a counter balancing tool for correcting some of the distortions or lapses in formal education (Aghenta,1993). According to the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the education system consists of three interrelated components: formal and non-formal education and informal learning. Brander et al (2006) in the Compass manual describe them as follows:

➢ **Formal education** refers to a structured education system that encompasses all schools from primary to university, including specialized vocational and professional training programmes.

➢ **Non-formal education** refers to all planned personal and social education programmes for young people that are designed to develop a range of skills and competences outside the formal education curriculum. Non-formal education is intentional and voluntary.

➢ **Informal learning** refers to a lifelong process in which each person acquires certain attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from a variety of educational sources in their environment and from everyday experience (home, neighbourhood, library, media, work, play, etc.).

The difference between formal and non-formal education is often determined by the settings and structures in which they take place. The distinction between non-formal education and informal learning may seem less clear. Both are voluntary, but a programme or activity in non-formal education is planned and targeted to the needs of the participants. The outcome is thus measurable and can be predicted more easily than in informal learning, where learning occurs randomly, usually without a clear objective in advance.

Basic features of non-formal learning include:

➢ **Voluntary** - it is up to the participant to decide whether to take part in the activity or programme.

➢ **A set aim and goals**, based on the needs of the participants, the organisation or the environment or society, in the individual activity and in the whole programme.

➢ **Conscious and holistic learning**, where participants are aware of what and how they are learning, evaluate their own learning and develop the different components of competence (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes). In non-formal education, we emphasize the whole person - engaging their thoughts, feelings and emotions as well as their bodies. At the same time, we make use of their previous experience and knowledge, complementing it and linking it to other practice.

➢ **A partnership relationship between participants and organizers**. The activity leader is a guide in the learning process who adapts the program or activity based on the needs of the participants.

➢ **Valuing mistakes**. Mistakes are seen as opportunities for further development.

➢ **Role of the group**. Individual group members, including activity leaders, serve as additional sources of experience, knowledge, skills and attitudes. Group work also opens up additional opportunities for learning.

➢ **Accountability for learning outcomes.** The participant determines what they need to learn and thus take partial responsibility for the outcome.

4.0 Result and Discussion on Problems facing Non-formal Education in Nigeria

Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding is one of the major problems facing the administration of non-formal education in Nigeria. The budgetary allocation for the administration of non-formal education in Nigeria is not adequate to implement the programme of the institutions. The poor funding of non-formal education in in Nigeria is responsible for the poor quality of education and decay infrastructural facilities. The factors responsible for inadequate funding of non-formal education in in Nigeria include lack of political will, corruption, increase in population, inflation, fall in national revenue and poor financial planning. The implications of underfunding of the non-formal education in include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academics staff, poor quality of education, brain-drain and strike action. Hussain, (2013) noted that the budgetary allocation to adult education at all levels of government is grossly inadequate especially when compared to the formal education sector. More importantly Non-Formal Education is excluded in the share of two percent Consolidated Fund meant for Basic Education in spite of policy provision. However, it is noted that there is problem of accountability and transparency in the management of funds allocated to Non-formal education sector.

Inadequate professional Teachers

Inadequate professional teachers is another major problem facing the administration of non-formal education in Nigeria. Many non-formal institutions in Nigeria are understaffed and lack the financial capacity to employ staff. The Nigerian non-formal education are faced with the problem of shortage of professional teachers. The shortage of professional teachers in the non-formal institutions is responsible for high teacher-student ratio in the Nigerian non-formal institutions. There is the dearth of skilled manpower according to Hussain, (2013) in the area of monitoring and evaluation: lack of trained monitoring and evaluation personnel in the Non-formal education sector is a serious problem to the development of the sector since monitoring is a sine qua non to a successful adult and Non-formal education programmes. It involves the management of a large database. Monitoring is vital ingredient for successful implementation of NFE as such it should be integrated in the programme action plan. Adequate funds are not provided and required information about the status of the programmes is not available. Due to lack of proper monitoring

and evaluation in the Non-formal education has resulted in variations in the types of programmes available and offered across the states of the federation.

Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facilities is a very big problem facing the administration of non-formal institutions in Nigeria. Non-formal institutions in Nigeria do not have adequate infrastructural facilities. Infrastructural facilities according to Ogunode (2020) refers to facilities aiding delivery of services in educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels, roads facilities, water, electricity, internet etc. The availability of the infrastructural facilities in adequate quantities will support effective administration of educational institutions and the inadequacies will prevent effective administration of educational institutions. Many non-formal institutions in Nigeria do not have adequate halls, laboratories and offices for both students and teachers.

Insecurity

Insecurity is another problem facing the administration of non-formal institutions in Nigeria. Nigeria is facing insecurity challenge and this has affected the entire educational institutions in the country. The Islamic sect called Boko haram meaning western education is forbidden is attacking educational institutions in the Northern part of Nigeria. Non-formal institutions located in the Northern Nigeria have been victims of continuous attacks. Many students and teachers have been killed while others kidnapped. The various attacks on the non-formal institutions have resulted to school closure leading to unstable academic programme. Ogunode & Muhammed (2023) opined that insecurity has prevented the effective administration of mass literacy, and adult and non-formal education programs in the country. Many school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and students have been killed. Some school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and students have been kidnapped and many infrastructural facilities destroyed by Boko Haram members. Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education programmes have been disrupted due to school closures in North-East, North-central, North West and South East Nigeria.

Inadequate Data to Plan

Inadequate data on non-formal education in Nigeria is another problem facing the planning of non-formal education in Nigeria. There is limited data on non-formal education in Nigeria. The data available are not current. Administration of non-formal education needs data to plan and take decision concerning non-formal programme. Data is what is needed to plan and take decisions. Data is very important for planning educational programmes. Without current educational data, planning is impossible. It is very sad to realize that current data on various forms of education in Nigeria is not available (Ogunode 2020b). Ogunode. Adah, Audu, & Umeora (2021) observed that inadequate data/information on relevant education data on mass literacy, and adult and non-formal education is not available for the planning of adult education in the country. Inadequate reliable data/information is a problem facing the planning of education. Educational planning is possible only when there are data/ information on the educational system. In Nigeria, educational data/information are not timely generated for planning purposes and this is affecting the planning of educational planning, especially adult education.

Inadequate Instructional Materials

Another problem militating against implementation of teaching and learning in non-formal education in Nigeria. Instructional materials are very significant learning and teaching tools (Kochher 2012). Oluwagbohunmi and Abdu Raheem (2014) find out that instructional materials are such that are used by teacher to explain and make learning of subjects matter understandable to students during teaching and learning process. From past research, it is observed that researchers do not examine the extent to which teachers use instructional materials in the teaching

and learning or whether they make use of it at all. The use of instructional materials is central to the teaching and learning simply because teaching should not be only abstract.

Poor Capacity Building Programme

Facilitators in most mass literacy, adult and non-formal education centres across the country have not been exposed to training and retraining programmes since their engagement as facilitators in the various centres (Ogunode, 2023). United Nations Environment Programme (2006) defined capacity-building program as the act of building abilities, relationships and values that will enable organizations, groups and individuals to improve their performance and achieve their developmental objectives. The importance of a professional development program for academic and non-academic staff cannot be overstated. Professional development program helps academic and non-academic staff to increase their knowledge and skills. Unfortunately, majorities of facilitators in the centres of mass literacy, and adult and non-formal education are not given the opportunities for effective training due to poor funding. This has slowed down development in most of the centres because training and retraining have a relationship with educational development (Ogunode et al 2023). Ogunode, Adah, Audu & Pajo (2021) identified poor funding as a factor militating against the development of manpower development in educational institutions.

4.1 Findings

The paper revealed that inadequate funding, inadequate professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insecurity, inadequate data to plan, inadequate instructional materials and poor capacity building programme are the problems militating against development of non-formal education in Nigeria. .

4.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper explored the problems militating against development of non-formal education in Nigeria. The paper concluded that inadequate funding, inadequate professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insecurity, inadequate data to plan, inadequate instructional materials and poor capacity building programme are the problems militating against development of non-formal education in Nigeria. To solve the challenges, the following were recommended:

a) Increase the funding of non-formal education in the Nigeria;

b) Employ more professional teachers and deploy to all public non-formal education institutions in Nigeria;

c) Provide adequate infrastructural facilities to all public non-formal education institutions in Nigeria;

d) Provide adequate security to all public non-formal education institutions in Nigeria ;

f) Improve the capacity of data generating agencies in the country to ensure generation of current and adequate data for all public non-formal education institutions in Nigeria;

g) The government should ensure effective capacity building for teachers in to all public non-formal education institutions in Nigeria;

h) The government should provide adequate instructional resources to to all public non-formal education institutions in Nigeria.

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