

## Adult Education as Human Resource Development Response to Meeting Emerging Development Challenges in Organisations in Nigeria

By

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### Abstract

The focus of the paper is on adult education as human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in organisations in Nigeria. The paper explored the concepts of adult education and human resource development. The paper explored the intervention of adult education as lifelong education or lifelong learning in human resource development; the intervention of adult education as continuing education in human resource development. The paper also identified the promotion of well-trained workforce, promotion of production of high-quality goods and services, updating of knowledge and skilled workers among others as the benefits of adult education as human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in organisations in Nigeria. The paper recommends that there should be a policy framework in Nigeria that all professionals are required by law to undertake regular periods of refresher training in their professions, prioritization of regular periodic training of people in organisations among others.

**Key Words:** Adult Education, Human Resource Development, Meeting Emerging Development Challenges, Organisations and Nigeria

### Introduction

Adult education as sequentially organized education for adults in the society promotes human resource development response in meeting emerging development challenges in organisations in Nigeria. The concept of adult education simply means the education of adults in human environment. In the views of Okeem (1982), adult education is simply defined as the education of adults in the society. An adult from the perspective of Nigerian constitution is a person who has attained the mandatory constitutional age of eighteen (18) years and above in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). The implication of this is that the education whether formal, non-formal or informal of a person who has attained the mandatory constitutional age of eighteen (18) years is simply referred to as adult education.

Adult education from the perspective of human resource development helps people to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, information, understanding, attitudes or behaviour which will enhance their capabilities to perform optimally in their various organisations and establishments in human environment. Adult education as human resource development obviously helps the adult

recipients in meeting emerging development challenges in organizational settings in Nigeria.

### **Adult Education**

The concept of adult education is perceived in different ways by different writers. The concept of adult education is viewed in many ways to include sequentially organized learning activities of adult population with the intention to broaden the scope of their knowledge, skills, information, understanding and attitudes in order to be able to address a number of problems notably personal, community, societal, national, social, economic, cultural, religious, political, technical, vocational, organizational among others in human environment. Schuller (1989) defines the concept of adult education in a very broad sense to include all organized learning activities which are intended to increase the skills and knowledge of the adult population in various areas, especially in technical, social or political areas in the society. The learning activities of the adult population, however, go beyond the areas identified (Schuller, 1989). This implies that the learning activities of adult population are very elaborate to cover numerous areas of human interest and concern in human environment. Aruma (2015) states that adult education provides adults with good opportunities to learn whatever that interests them in the contemporary society.

Essentially, the concept of education should be seen as a learning process which adults receive irrespective of place or locality with the intention of acquiring relevant knowledge, skills, information, attitudes and understanding that will transform them to be able to address prevailing personal, community or societal problems. Nzeneri (2010) states while quoting Liveright and Haygood as well as Townsend Cole that adult education is a process whereby people who no longer attend school on a regular and full time basis undertake sequential and organized learning activities with a conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding, skills, appreciation and attitudes or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems. The implication of this definition is that adult education as sequential and organized learning activities transform the recipients in various ramifications for the ultimate purpose of helping them to address their prevailing personal and community challenges.

Furthermore, the concept of adult education includes such education as in- service training or on-the-job training which is provided to workers who work in an organizational environment to perform efficiently and effectively in carrying out their statutory functions in their various

organizations and establishments in the society. Anyanwu, Omolewa, Adeyeri, Okanlawon and Siddiqui (1985) note that adult education includes among other things the education that is provided for workers in industries, schools or other educational institutions. They further state that this kind of adult education is sometimes known as in-service training or on-the-job training. The provision of in-service training or on-the-job training obviously becomes imperative in order to up-grade the knowledge and skills of the recipients who are engaged to carry out particular jobs in organizations or establishments in the society. This tends to indicate the potential power which adult education has to transform the recipients in organizations and establishments in human environment.

In desperate search for more comprehensive definition of adult education Nzeneri (2010:9) states while quoting UNESCO's definition of adult education that the concept of adult education is defined as:

The entire body of organized educational process, whatever the content, level and methods, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in the schools, colleges or universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full-personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

This definition of adult education is, indeed, very comprehensive. This definition accommodates informal, non-formal and formal education. The definition, however, reveals the broad nature of adult education as it affects various categories of people as its recipients by their respective societies in human environment. This definition presents adult education as human resource development response which focuses on meeting emerging development challenges in various areas of human endeavour in the society.

This definition of adult education presents adult education from the perspective of human resource development as organized educational process at various levels of educational institutions namely schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities in formal educational sector and non-formal educational sector as well as in informal educational sector where apprenticeship and other forms of learning form predominant part of the learning activities. In accordance with this definition, the benefits of adult education which accrue to people who are considered as adults by

their respective societies to which they belong are the following:

1. **Development of People's Abilities:** The people of various societies through the instrumentality of adult education as human resource development response develop their abilities in human environment. This equips them with the potential to address prevailing issues of concern in their respective societies.
2. **Enhancement of People's Knowledge:** The people of various societies through the instrumentality of adult education as human resource development response at various levels enhance people's knowledge in human environment. This enables the recipients of such organized adult education learning activities to enrich their knowledge in order to remain relevant in their various organizations in Nigeria as a developing country.
3. **Improvement of People's Technical and Professional Qualifications:** The people of various societies through the instrumentality of adult education as human resource development response improve their technical and professional qualifications. The improvement of people's technical and professional qualifications remains an impressive reward for engaging in organized adult education learning activities at various levels of educational institutions. Consequently, adult education through the improvement of technical and professional qualifications readily helps various organizations to get the required qualified personnel to work in various organizations in the society. Adult education as human resource development response helps very tremendously in meeting emerging development challenges in various organizations in Nigeria as a developing country.

### **Human Resource Development**

The concept of human resource development can simply be defined as a development process that focuses on enhancing human capabilities in an organizational environment and other establishments which the multiplier effects in turn facilitate the development of organisations and people in human environment. The idea for this is ultimately to enhance effective service delivery in various organisations and establishments in the society.

Aruma (2016) states that human resource development is, indeed, an expansion of human capabilities in an organizational environment or establishment for development of concerned organisations and people so as to enhance effective service delivery in the society. Human resource development as an educational process must help people as the recipients to acquire relevant

knowledge, skills, information, understanding, ideas, attitudes or behaviour in order to improve performance, competence and effective service delivery in organisations and other establishments in the society. Aruma (2016) asserts that as an educational process that human resource development must, of course, be sequentially organized to accommodate learning activities that will enable people to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, information, understanding, attitudes and behaviour which will help them to improve their performance, efficiency, competence level and effective service delivery in organisations, institutions, communities, groups among others in the society. The contemporary global environment that is dominated by knowledge explosion and technological development demands the intervention of adult education as human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in various organisations and establishments in Nigeria.

### **Intervention of Adult Education as Lifelong Education or Lifelong Learning in Human Resource Development**

The intervention of adult education as lifelong education or lifelong learning can be seen as human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in organisations in Nigeria which helps the system to develop competent workforce. Adult education as lifelong education provides opportunities to people to engage in learning process from birth to death. Lifelong learning is, indeed, a learning process which begins at birth and terminates at death.

The concept of lifelong education or lifelong learning is a learning process which starts from birth and ends in death or in the grave. Life is, indeed, characterized with learning process which enables people to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, information, understanding, attitudes or behaviour which helps them to manage their affairs, community problems, societal problems, national problems among other areas of human interventions in the society. This, indeed, enables people to respond very effectively to emerging development challenges in all areas of human endeavour.

Lifelong education or lifelong learning is part of human life in the society. In the views of Anyanwu, Omolewa, Adeyeri, Okanlawon and Siddiqui (1985) this explains the belief of people in many societies that education is a lifelong process and that whoever is tired of learning is, indeed, tired of life. Lifelong education which characterizes human life manifests clearly in all forms of education namely informal, non-formal and formal education. Anyanwu, Omolewa,

Adeyeri, Okanlawon and Siddiqui (1985) state that lifelong education holds the belief that people, however, need to continue their education throughout their life in the society. Lifelong education becomes imperative in the contemporary global environment because of emerging development challenges.

The high rate of social change and technological change demands for continuous training and retraining of people in order to keep abreast with emerging trends in the society. This continuous training and re-training which lifelong education as a component of adult education offers people helps professionals to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, information, understanding, attitudes or behaviour for optimum job input. Lifelong education and learning equip the recipients with relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes, information and understanding and to live a life of self-fulfillment. Ali (2020) asserts that lifelong learning leads the recipients to an enriched self-fulfilled life in the society. The intervention of adult education as lifelong education or lifelong learning in human resource development in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized.

### **Intervention of Adult Education as Continuing Education in Human Resource Development**

The intervention of adult education as continuing education can be seen as another human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in organizations which helps the system to engage in continuing education in training and retraining of people or workers in various areas of human endeavour in the society. Adults acquire relevant knowledge, skills, information, attitudes or behaviour through the instrumentality of adult education as continuing education in the society. The intervention of adult education as continuing education in human resource development in organizations becomes obvious now that the contemporary global environment is dominated by knowledge explosion. This certainly enables people to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, information, understanding, attitudes or behaviour which helps them to address numerous problems in their various areas of human endeavour in human society. Anyanwu, Omolewa, Adeyeri, Okanlawon and Siddiqui (1985) assert that continuing education is the branch of education which helps to solve the problems of the adult throughout his life by means of education, training as well as experience. The implication of this is that continuing education, undoubtedly, provides the adult recipient with an opportunity to continually acquire relevant training, knowledge, skills, information, understanding, attitudes or behaviour in order to help such recipient to address his or her problems.

Consequently, the focus of continuing education is on helping individual recipient to acquire relevant education, training, knowledge, skills, information, understanding, attitudes or behaviour in order to make him to her more responsive in his or her social setting or work environment. The desire for continuing education becomes very imperative because of knowledge explosion in the contemporary global environment which is dominated by knowledge economy. Anyanwu, Omolewa, Adeyeri, Okanlawon and Siddiqui (1985) clearly state that the main focus of continuing education is the individual and his relationship with the society. The recipient of continuing education through the instrumentality of adult education as human resource development response is equipped with relevant education, training, knowledge, skills, information, understanding, attitudes or behaviour in meeting emerging development challenges in organizations in particular and society in general.

### **The people or Clients who should Seek for Services of Continuing Education as Adult Education Intervention in Human Resource Development Response to Meeting Emerging Development Challenges in Organisations in Nigeria.**

The people or clients who should seek for services of continuing education as adult education intervention in human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in organisations in Nigeria are as follows:

1. Professionals in various professions
  - i. Teachers
  - ii. Adult Educators
  - iii. Members of academic staff in educational institutions
  - iv. Lawyers
  - v. Medical professionals
  - vi. Engineers as professionals in various engineering professions
  - vii. Medical laboratory scientists as professionals
  - viii. Nurses and midwives
  - ix. Healthcare workers
  - x. Pharmacists
  - xi. Accountants
  - xii. Auditors

- xiii. Community development professionals/practitioners
  - xiv. Environmental educators/environmentalists
  - xv. Social workers
  - xvi. Non-governmental organization workers etc
2. Non-professionals
- i. Civil servants
  - ii. Company workers
  - iii. School dropouts
  - iv. People with deficiency in their educational qualifications engaging in extra-mural studies
  - v. Farmers
  - vi. People who engage in small businesses etc

In particular, the people or clients who seek for the services of continuing education as adult education intervention in human resources development response in meeting emerging development challenges are many in organisations and the society in general. A good number of the people or clients who engage in continuing education as adult education intervention in human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges are professionals while some of the people or clients who engage in continuing education process are non-professionals. Anyanwu, Omolewa, Adeyeri, Okanlawon and Siddiqui (1985), identify the clients of continuing education as professionals such as members of the medical profession, engineering profession, lawyers, social workers, teachers and other professionals in the society. They also identify the non-professionals of continuing education to include illiterates who are adults, school dropouts, small scale businessmen, farmers as well as old people who, indeed, do not even know how to make adequate use of their leisure time. The implication of this is that people of various categories of professionals and non-professionals have access to continuing education in accordance with the emerging needs for development.

It is pertinent to state that there is no policy framework in Nigeria that all professionals are, indeed, required by law to undertake regular periods of training in their various professions. It is, however, good that both professionals and non-professionals engage in periodic refresher training and continuing education in order to update their knowledge and skills required in their various professions and other areas of human endeavour where their services are required.

Understandably, the development which takes place is a continuous process in various areas of human endeavour namely social, economic, political, technological and scientific development among others. The intervention of continuing education as a component of adult education becomes very imperative in order to help people to be responsive in meeting emerging development challenges in organisations in particular and other areas of human endeavour in general. Adedokun (2016) states that the knowledge and skills acquired through adult education programmes will certainly build the people up socially, economically, psychologically, politically and culturally in the various areas of human endeavour. Continuing education as a component of adult education offers an opportunity to people to engage in continuous learning enterprise which will help them to respond very well to numerous emerging development challenges.

### **Benefits of Adult Education as Human Resource Development Response to Meeting Emerging Development Challenges in Organisations in Nigeria.**

The following are the benefits of adult education as human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in organisations in Nigeria.

1. Provision of well-trained workforce in various organisations in the society
2. Promotion of production of high-quality goods and services. The promotion of production of high quality of goods and services can be seen as another important benefit of adult education as human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in organisations in Nigeria. Onah (2015) clearly states that well-trained workforce will help organisations to produce high standard of goods or services which promotes more cost effectiveness. It is always good to consider cost-effectiveness of production of goods and services in organisations in meeting human needs.
3. Promotion of updating of knowledge and skills.
4. Promotion of achievement of organizational goals. The promotion of achievement of organizational goals is equally another important benefit of adult education as human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in organisations in Nigeria. Adult education as human resource development offers an opportunity of achieving organizational goals in many organisations.
5. Improved job performance.

Furthermore, Onah (2015) outlines the following benefits which organisations can always enjoy from human resource development:

- 1 The development of knowledge and skills in the workforce;
- 2 Promotion of improved work performance;
- 3 Promotion of improved productivity;
- 4 Promotion of enhanced quality of products;
- 5 Promotion of increased motivation of workers and
- 6 Provision of opportunities to meet inadequacy of personnel among others.

### **Conclusion**

Adult education as human resource development response is very imperative in meeting emerging development challenges in various organisations in Nigeria as a developing country. This, indeed, becomes very obvious as the global economy is dominated by knowledge economy occasioned by knowledge explosion and technological change. This, however, requires appropriate response from governmental authorities, education service providers and other relevant stakeholders in various organisations and establishments in Nigeria.

It is appropriate to explore more ways and opportunities where adult education can be employed to facilitate effective service delivery in human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in organizations and other establishments in Nigeria. This will stimulate consciousness among various employers of labour to create more opportunities for professionals and non-professionals to engage in various adult education programmes as a means of meeting emerging human resource development needs in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the issues presented in the discussion above, the following recommendations are made:

- There should be a policy framework in Nigeria that all professionals are required by law to undertake regular periods of refresher training in their various professions and other areas of human endeavour. This will enable them to update their knowledge and skills that will help them to perform optimally in their various professions and other areas of human endeavour in their various organisations in Nigeria.
- There should be concerted efforts to legislate on regular periods of refresher training

- prioritized in various organisations and other establishments.
- There should be legislation that providers of refresher trainings in adult education should be qualified adult educators in various organisations in Nigeria. This will help to check the incursion of quacks in adult education as a distinct area of study.
  - Adult education should be funded adequately by the three tiers of government in Nigeria. This will enable adult education to produce qualified workforce who will work diligently to enhance human resource development response to meeting emerging development challenges in organisations in Nigeria.

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