ADULT EDUCATION DECISION MAKING STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA: AN OVERWIEW

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and one of the most populated in the world. The development of a country is said to be measured by its citizenry level of literacy. Literacy indicators of Nigeria are still not encouraging because many children and adults are still out of school and literacy centers respectively. This particular reason has also popularized literacy education at the expenses of Adult Education which is broader in scope and coverage in the educational policy of Nigeria. Achievement of any governmental policies and programmes requires institutional structures and bodies charge with the responsibilities to implement general and specific objectives. This is in addition to establish process and procedures of administration practices which is not limited to human resources, but all resources need to be harmonized and harnessed to achieve set goals and could only be possible through decision making structures and processes which this overview seeks to highlight and concluded that for effective Adult education delivery decision making processes should be available at all levels and involvement of all stakeholders is imperative.

Keywords:Adult Education, Literacy, Decision Making, Institutions.

Introduction

Nigeria is among the nine most populated countries of the world with a highest number of illiterates namely: Mexico, Brazil, Egypt, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Indonesia and China that signed the Delhi Declaration anchored by UNESCO aimed at providing basic learning needs of their citizens, trough making universal basic education accessible to all category of schools age children, youths and adult in the society. The development of a country to some extent is determined by level of literacy of its citizens (Badu-Nyarko & Zumapkeh, 2014). The developed nation's successes in economic, political and social are attributable to its literacy level (Obanya, 2003). Adult Education could be regarded as a sub-system of the entire educational system, regrettably many people think of Adult Education entail literacy education, that is to say that adult education is literacy education and literacy education is adult education. This type of statement is usually said by the layman, from the onset adult education is broader than literacy education. Literacy education is an aspect of adult education and it is usually defined as ability to read, write and do some calculations (Balogun, 2008). Even then, this type of education is referred to as traditional literacy.

In recent times, emphasis is placed on functional literacy i.e the knowledge or the skills of literacy should be one that will help the beneficiary to perform his roles in the society effectively. Functional literacy may be otherwise referred to as work-and-life oriented literacy (Abdulgafar, Bulama, & Yahaya, 2012). In addition to literacy education other component of Adult education are women education, rural education, political education, social education, nomadic education, correspondent, distance or sandwich education and population education.

Furthermore, some authors defined Adult education as education for the adult which encompasses the processes of learning by the adult person. Adult education has also been defined as the education provided out of schools. Omolewa (2016) sees adult education as embracing the education of Adult, Adult literacy, liberal education, extra-mural education, mass education, workers education lifelong education, out-of-school education and non-formal. Therefore, it became necessary to make decisions among all stakeholders in those institutional structures put in place to carry out the implementation through effective and efficient processes and procedures on how best to achieve the set goals of those programmes.

National development in contemporarary soceities is credited to per capital income. Improved wellbeing of the populace could be achieved with the increase in per capita income, gross domestic product(GDP), and gross national product GNP), and a

transformation from consumer economy to producer economy, simply from importation dependency to export base economy, which is a product of infrastructural, industrial and increase literacy state , however, the situation is different in the case of Nigeria (Festus & Adekola, 2015)

This scenario is worrisome and to address these anomalies, the role of Adult educational institutions and structures shall be geared towards these challenges bedeviling national aspiration of becoming a industrial nation. Despite substantial efforts made by government not much was achieved, the programmes are characterised by poor implementation as a result of non involvement of some key stakeholders decision making, planning and implementation process. Hence, the crux of this overview is to highlight the benefits and necessary influence on the programme to ease policy direction and sustainable programme delivery by stakeholders through Adult education decision making structure and institutions.

Since achievement of any governmental policies and programmes requires institutional structures and bodies charge with the responsibilities to implement general and specific objectives. This is in addition to establish process and procedures of administration practices which is not limited to human resources, but all resources need to be harmonized and harnessed to achieve set goals and could only be possible through decision making structures and processes with its basic component. Because effective utilization of available and appropreite alternatives for all forms of administrative challenges are addressed through decision making mechanism. Therefore, this paper will dwell on highlighting existing adult education decision making structure and institutions, decision making and stages, general principles involved in decision making and structure, then adult education institutions sadlled with the responsibilities of promoting literac programmes and national growth.

1.1 ADULT EDUCATION DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS

The importance of decision making in the administration of organization has been recognized since the writing of Wright and Snell (1991), the influence of these writers and many others has been felt in the field of educational administration as well as elsewhere. Mbiti (1974) stated that decision making is a significant element of administrative leadership. The greater portion of the work of a leader involves making decisions. Decision making is a day-to-day activity in any organization. Decisions are centered on one or several of four things namely: men, money, machines and time. The main question is the personal factor, the money question the cost factor, the machines question the equipment factor and the time question the length of time it will take to get the job done. There are different connotations or ways of viewing at decision making;

1.2 DECISION MAKING

Different authors on the subject defined it differently. Example, some use the expression, decision making as a synonym of planning, others views decision making process as an extension of or a series of interrelated communication events. Simon (1965) on the other hand conceives of decision making as though it were synonymous with managing.

We shall define decision in this paper as a conscious choice from among a well-defined set of often competing alternatives (Midgley, Danaher, & Baguley, 2013). A decision making by school norm, for example commits the whole school to a cause of action, if it is a questionable action the school may suffer and the decision is called a bad one. Decision making is sequential and systematic process that cultivates in a single decision or, a series of choices that stimulate moves or actions. At least the alternative must be generated, and more often than not the number of possible actions is far greater. The results of our decision process are policies, rules or regulations that guide the subsequent behaviour of members of the organization.

Decision making is a major responsibility of all administrators. It is a process by which decisions are made and implemented. Until decision making is converted into action, it is only good intention. An understanding of the decision making process is a *sina quo non* for all administrators because schools, like all formal organizations is basically a decision making structure (Ukwuaba, 2011). The task of deciding what to do pervades the entire administrative organization. Similarly, (Egunyomi, 2000) sees decision making as a conscious choice from among a well-defined set of other competing alternatives. Decision making therefore implies availability of other suitable alternatives for the solution of any form of administrative problems. She further stated that it is one of the major responsibilities, not routine but essential function of administrators, by employing creative thinking initiatives and rational choices in the same vain, evolve stages as follows:

    (i)   Recognizing and defining an observed problem;
    (ii)   Analyzing the problem;
    (iii)   Establishing the criteria for solving the problem;
    (iv)   Developing a plan of strategy for problem solving; and
    (v)   Initiating a plan for action.

Stage 1: Study carefully the existing situation

An intelligent administrator is always studying environment to see what is going wrong and what is being done right. He has to study his staff. The school head needs to be constantly aware of what is happening in the school. This required him to know quite a lot about student affairs, teachers' activities and welfare, parent's opinions about the school and so on. It is only when the school administrator is acquainted with the situation himself that he can be in a position to detect problems, or difficulties which require decisions to be made.

State 2: Recognize and define the problem

All decision making begins with the identification of the problem in the organization. Once a difficulty or undesirable situation in the system has been identified, we start to think about rectifying it or solving the problem. The recognition and understanding of the problem are therefore crucial to the process of decision making and very often do not receive adequate attention. Thus, the decision making process is not simply a reactive process by which the administrator copes with existing problem. It involves a careful identification and definition of the problem; this requires a thorough knowledge of the organization and its surroundings.

Stage 3: Examine the detailed made up of the problem with the existing situation

At this stage the administrator has a classify the problem, this means that he has to decide whether the problem is really unusual or whether it is a new development of a typical difficulty for which an action pattern has already been developed. Once the difficulty or problem has been classified as an unusual one, the administrator can address himself to a number of questions as he proceeds with the analysis of the difficulty. These questions are: How important is the problem? Can the problem be clearly described and specified? What kind of information is needed in describing and specifying the problem? The decision maker must separate cause and effect in the information he collects. This means that he must have valid, reliable and objective information. Effective decision-makers require relevant information before they take any decision.

Stage 4: Decide on the criteria for solving the problem

When we have finished describing analyzing and specifying the problem then as decision-makers, we must decide on what constitutes an acceptable resolution. What are the criteria for the acceptability of a decision? In other words, on what variable/factors will you base your decision? Are these variables acceptable to the staff?

Stage 5: Develop a plan for action

This stage is to identify the alternative methods available of tackling the problem, evaluating the cost and consequences of each alternative and selecting the one offering the most advantageous combination of costs and consequences.
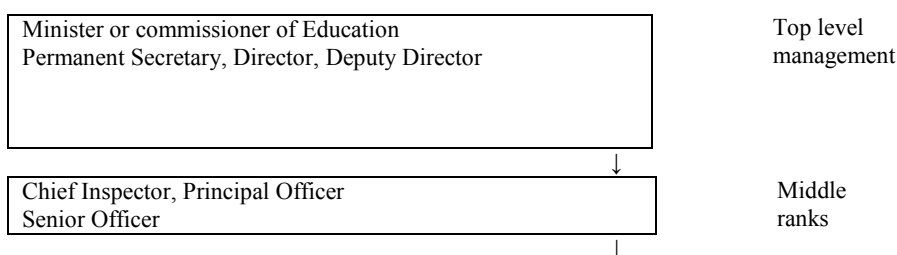
State 6: Initiate the plan of action

This is the implementation stage that is putting planned activity into effect or into action, establishing an organization to carry out the policy, programme or decision chosen allocating resources to it and motivating people to carry it out. What sort of department or section can carry out this plan of action or needs to be created for it. What does it need in term of money, manpower, equipment or legal authority? etc. The next thing we do in the implementation stage is establish controls to monitor the performance of the plan, evaluate its degree of achievement and determine the reasons for any deviation from the expected consequences. Reasons for the success or failure have to be identified if the programmes have been a failure the corrective action must be taken.

1.3 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING AND STRUCTURE

Currently thinking about the nature of administration, both within and outside education takes decision making as a core process of administration to which other activities as subordinates (Egunyomi, 2000). It can be said that decision making is a key function or activity of administrators. This involves a cycle of activities which include (a) decision making, (b) programming, (c) Communication, (d) controlling and (e) reappraising. Litchfield (1956) notes that this cycle of process involves the administrator not only in the making of a decision, but also in establishing arrangements to implement the decision (programming), to adhere to the plans decided upon (controlling), to keep the organization informed (communication), and to evaluate results (reappraising). According to UNESCO (1982) the success of the adult education programme greatly depends on popular support and the wide participation of various agencies and organizations. The involvement of many people at all levels is also imperative, if the programme is to achieve a high degree of success. Moreover, Hanachor & Needom, (2015) stated that in order to ensure the popular support of the people and the widest participation of various agencies in the programme, there is a need for and effective process of administration and an efficient administrative set up. From this decision making process must make people at all stages of policy formulation and implementation, because activity involves are people driven, hence consultation at every stage is necessary to achieve a predetermined goal of an organization.

In the specific area of adult education, the organizational structure is represented below as follow:

Fig. 1 The system structure of management

| Minister or commissioner of Education
Permanent Secretary, Director, Deputy Director | Top level
management |

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| Chief Inspector, Principal Officer
Senior Officer | Middle
ranks |

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Field Works: Zonal Leaders, Organizers, Instructors, Volunteers

When this principle is adhered to the organization, be it education or business, becomes an effective tool for the implementation of decision. In many states of Nigeria, there are so many levels of authority in the organization of adult education. For example, one notes the following: Chief Adult Education officer, Adult Education Officers, Assistant Adult Education Officer, Zonal Leaders, Organizers', Supervisors and Instructors.

The structure of Adult Education in Borno State Ministry of Education could be represented as follows: -

Fig. 2 The system structure of Adult Education Management

Chief Inspector of Education and Deputy Inspector of Education

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Chief Adult Education Officer

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Principal Adult Education Officer

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Senior Adult Education Officer	Senior Adult Education Officer (Vernacular Publication	Senior Adult Education Officer (Visual Aids)

Adult Education Officers

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Assistant Adult Education Officers
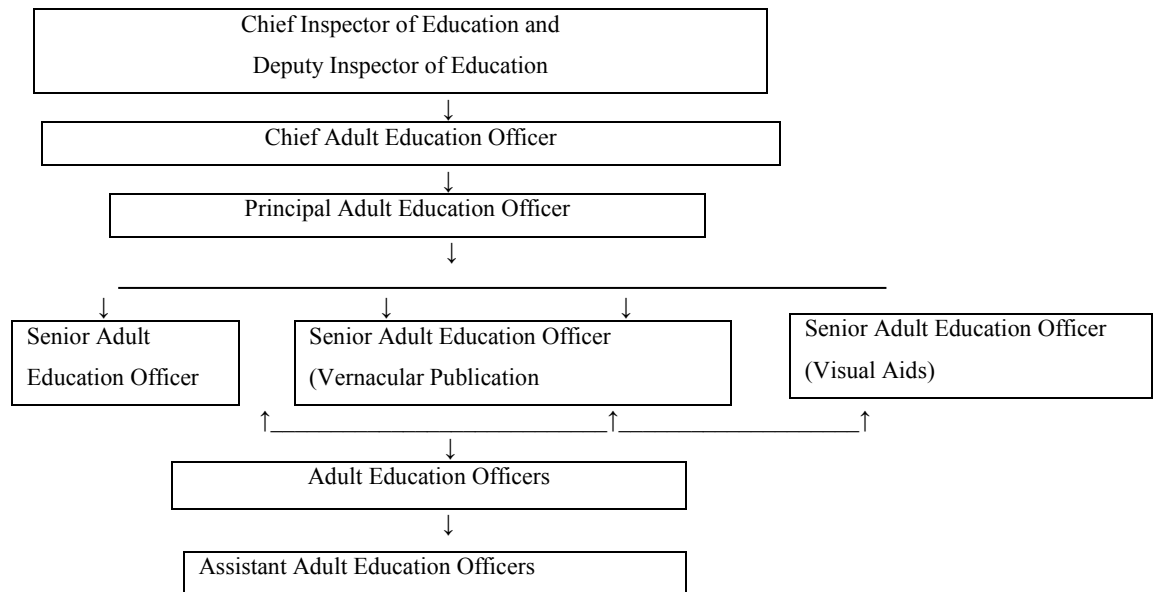
The responsibilities of the above mentioned officers include the following:
1. Chief Adult Education Officer: is responsible to the Deputy Chief Inspector Education. The duties of the Officer are as follows:
   i. Advising on formulation of policies and programmes on Adult Education generally in the state.
   ii. Interpretation, implementation and administration of government policies regarding adult education in the state
   iii. Initiation of adult education programmes, etc.
2. Principal Adult Education Officer: He is directly responsible to the Chief Adult Education Officer. His work among others are;
   i. To deputies for the Chief Adult Education Officer when he is away from the station
   ii. To prepare programmes of training courses at the local level for adult education personnel of all categories
   iii. To take care of UNESCO and other questionnaire pertaining to adult education etc.
3. Senior Adult Education Officer
   i. Co-ordination of Adult Education activities and programmes in his area of supervision
   ii. Responsible for making arrangements for preparation of scripts and making of literacy and post-literacy examination etc.
4. Senior Adult Education Officer (Vernacular Publication): Responsible for producing vernacular publication and news sheets in the five (5) main languages in the state for the newly introduced literatures.
5. Senior Adult Education Officer (Visual Aids): Responsible for producing visual aid materials – posters, etc. for helping in the teaching of students of literacy and vocation classes.
6. Adult Education Officer: performs the same duties as the senior adult education officer where they are in charge of division.
7. Assistant Adult Education Officer: Assist Adult Education Officer in the field where they happen to work under these officers. Their main duty will be training of organizers for which they are specially trained.

1.4 INSTITUTIONS OF ADULT EDUCATION

According to Oduaran (2000), this concept is a socio-psychological concept which typifies the ability of an institution to sustain itself in usual and stressful situations and connote the ability of an institution to upholds its internal efficiency by training and re-training its key personnel such that the institution is in a good psychological state of cope with changing needs, conditions and challenges. In order to ensure an effective Adult Education delivery in Nigeria, Some decision making structure and institution where established:

1.4.1 *AGENCY FOR MASS LITERACY*: this was established in 1988, the function of the Agency spelt out as follows: To lay down policy for post literacy and non-formal education geared towards the overall social and economic development of the country. It is also geared towards the organizing and carrying out literacy programme in both Roman and Arabic scripts for adult and non-formal education learners in the country, with the aims of eradicating illiteracy in order to develop in adults the ability to use skills, acquired to enhance their knowledge and understanding of their physical and social environment and in order to improve their needs for living.

It also provides post literacy and continuing education programmes, also it also provides public enlightenment and awareness through the viewing centers of the agency. It also provides functional education for the socio-economic development of learners by equipping them with general skills and political education and by providing a chance for training programmes in the field of adult education for (adult education and administration) as well as vocational education (typewriting and secretarial studies) it prepares and issue annual reports on mass literacy activities in the country and it undertakes research programmes and pilot projects in mass literacy programme.

1.4.2 NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF EMPLOYMENT (N.D.E)

It was set up by the Federal Government in November (1986), the directorate aims and objectives is to among others (N.D.E) work out strategies for dealing with the mass unemployment in the country especially among schools leavers and college graduates. The N.D.E has articulated a number of programmes to give effect to government objectives of generating employment. The programme can be broadly categorized as follows:-
1. Small scale industries and graduate employment programme
2. National Youth Employment and Vocational skill development programme
3. Special public workers
4. Agricultural programme

The thrust of the Directorate programmes is to assist applicants in agriculture, carpentry and joinery, welding, small-scale industries, etc and also to enable them employ additional hands in their entrepreneurial endeavors, thus helping to reduce the level of unemployment among unemployed youths.These programmes are backed up by necessary administrative functions, monitoring and support personnel resources and prompt responses to the requirement of the public (NDE, 1989).

1.4. 3 ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTION/PROGRAMMES

The Adult Education Institute was established in 1979. It was formally known as Adult Education Centre. The aims and objectives were to provide a higher professional training of state and local government Adult Education Frontline staff. Supervisors, organizers, and instructors, with the creation of the Agency for mass Literacy in 1988, the Centre was upgraded to an institute to enable it run courses at certificate levels and recently awarding diploma. The institute has two departments, namely. The Department of Adult Education and Department of Home Economics

Department of Adult Education: This Department runs various courses as follows:
1. Certificate and diploma courses in Adult Education
2. Basic course in Adult Education
3. Seminars and refreshers courses to workers.

Department of Home Economics: This department runs certificate and diploma course in Home Economics.

1.4.4 NATIONAL ORIENTATION AGENCY (N.O.A)

The National Orientation Agency was established by Decree 100 of August 1993. To establish the Agency, the Decree merged three (3) significant organizations of government, namely the public enlightenment (PE) the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) National Orientation Movement (NOM) and a division of the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture with the Directorate for Social Mobilization, Self Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). The rationale for the merger was to harmonize and consolidate efforts and resources for effective decision making and synergy among government institutions in the fields of public enlightenment, social mobilization and value re-orientation.

The functions of the Agency are;
1. To inform, educate, enlighten and sensitize the people on the policies and activities of government and all other public agencies.
2. To maintain a comprehensive feedback mechanism between the government and the public reporting by public opinions and reactions to its programme and thereby encourage public input into decision making.

CONCLUSION.

From this overview, there is the need for all stakeholders to proactively ensure policies are implemented to its logical conclusions through effective decision making mechanism, this to allow all benefiaciaries to be literate and become functional in anticipation to receive return when those citizens are yielding potential output, in other word are gainfully employed. Because adult education policies work in the same direction with economic growth a country that has lesser percentage of illiteracy always yields productivity. Without proper implementation of policy that will affect the level adult education spread positively, there will be colossal instability between the economic, social and technological advancement in the country. Government at all levels should at least know that the economic emancipation and development would remain a mirage when high level of illiteracy persist.

Suggestion

Nigerian rapid changing climate as a result of globalization requires a sustain structures, approach, effective decision making mechanism in institution saddled with responsibility of promoting national development such as adult education programmes in line with global best practices. Thus modern trends of programme implementations must reflect on how things are done. Adult education programmes should reflect on the principles of basic education to succeed, as well as it must begin with a ways of reflecting and creating awareness to make the adult learners not only consumers of information but utilize those information to his benefits and national development. In addition, make them participate fully in the process of identifying, executing and implementing such programmes and their alternatives. Adult education programmes should be integrated with the total education programme. This is achievable with involvement of all stakeholders in the decision making processes. Adult Education can serve and supplement education effort at all levels starting from elementary through secondary to higher education. More importantly the time is ripe to provide adult education "around the clock" and "around the year"

This overview is limited to adult educations programme structure and institutions in Nigeria with particular focus on decision making process and procedures aim at facilitating programme planning and implementation among stakeholders.

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