

Attainment of Society 5.0 in Nigeria using Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Programme

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ABSTRACT: The growth and development of any nation are dependent upon the type of education provided for its generation. Realizing this fact therefore, the Federal Government of Nigeria is committed to transforming Nigerian society through various forms of education. One of these is mass literacy, adult and non-formal education. The underlying objective of this educational programme is to achieve a reasonable level of literacy in the country in line with the global agenda of education for all. The paper examined mass literacy, adult and non-formal education as means of attaining globalized and digitalized society outlook known as ‘society 5.0’ in Nigeria. It further notes that mass literacy, adult and non-formal education is intended to raise literacy level of Nigerians to cope with evolving technologies. However, the paper expressed some level of skepticisms on the weight of this educational programme to attain a digitalized society referred to as ‘Society 5.0’. The reason is due to disruptions of Nigerian economy arising from herdsmen attack and killings, kidnappings, terrorism, ritualism, resource control and some other corrupt practices bedeviling the country. It was recommended that federal government should address the colossal educational infrastructural deficit on the ground that cannot sustain e-learning in the school system and also tackle the issues of corruption and insecurity that are bedeviling the system.

KEYWORDS: Society 5.0, mass literacy, adult and non-formal education, national development.

1. INTRODUCTION

The growth and development of every nation are dependent upon the type of education provided for its generation (Hanum, 1992). Corroborating this assertion, Ocho (2005) reiterates that the growth and development of any nation depend on her educational system. It is on this strength that Heath (1981) opines that no meaningful growth and development could be attained without education. The perception of education by Hanum, (1992), Ocho (2005) and Heath (1981) implies that education offers an opportunity for nations to attain a sustainable development. Stressing on the importance of education to humanity, Plato in Nwuzor & Ocho (1985) contents that man becomes perfect through education. According to him the ‘goal of man is to work towards his own perfection, and perfection of the state through education’.

The concept of education, in the words of Aslanbek (2016), is the effort, influence, protection and assistance given to learners. This definition was further interpreted by Nasir, Badrudin, Pujiyati & Safitri, (2020) as any activity that can influence, protect and provide assistance to learners. Whatever kind of education provided to learners, it has to be qualitative to contrive social and economic development (World Bank Report, 2005). Keeping with the importance of education to humanity, National Policy on Education (2014) describes education as an instrument per

excellence for effecting national development. To educate is to empower and by extension opening opportunities in the hands of the citizenry as a means of alleviating poverty. It was on the bases of this that, Federal Government of Nigeria domesticated Article 26 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The article placed education as the right of every individual (Tilak, 2011), the NPE (2014) provided that this right shall be free and compulsory while the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) provided that education shall be free and compulsory up to university level when it is practically possible. To further demonstrate her commitment to the citizenry, the Federal Government of Nigeria signed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015) to conform to universal call for education for all. The domestication of United Nation treaty of 1948 was translated into action on 25th June, 1990 when Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education was established in the country with the objective of eradicating illiteracy amongst Nigerians. Under the family of mass literacy programme, other educational programmes such as adult and non-formal, continuing, liberal, sandwich, part-time and distance education exist as educational programmes operated in the country. The quest of mass literacy was taken to different level by the introduction of Universal Basic Education in 1999 giving Nigerians opportunity of free, compulsory and universal basic literacy of 9 years. The attempt was to make education vocational, technological and academic in nature. This is important because the world is fast driven by technology engineered by literacy level of the digital nations. Information Communication and Technology, Internet, Networking, Artificial Intelligent and Robotic have been the order of doing business in the world of today. The emergence of this world controlled by technology is known as Society 5.0. Put differently, Society 5.0 is the world through which human and societal challenges can be surmounted (Fukuyama, 2018). Industrialized and advanced nations such as Japan, China, Cuba, Germany and United States of America had moved on technologically courtesy of their functional educational system. With the introduction of mass literacy, adult and non-formal education, Nigeria is maintaining literacy rate of 62.02% according to World Bank (2021). When the literacy is categorized on gender basis, the literacy rate of Nigeria male folk is put at 71.26% over and above 52.66% of literacy rate of female folk (World Bank, 2021). It is evidently clear that no nation advances technologically with low rate of literacy. The literacy rate of any country is a function of its educational system. From creation, life opportunity open to individuals are not equal. It is on the basis of inequalities in life that alternative mode of education as an option is put in place to accommodate every sheds of interest and ability amongst Nigerians. Nigeria at 63 is deemed old, mature and blessed with enormous human and material resources is supposed to be showing signs of advancement technologically. Unfortunately, the country is leaning on imaginative glory of its description as the giant of Africa, devoid of any kind of technological breakthrough via mass literacy, adult and non-formal education programme. The problem associated with this form of education programme was clarified by New Europe (2017) in Hamilton (2020) when he states that adult education produces unskilled manpower. In practice, mass literacy, adult and non-formal education lacks the capability of transmitting appropriate and employable skills needed in the digital world driven by computer, internet and artificial intelligence. For instance, during the peak of covid-19 in 2020, many countries especially the third world countries were cut off from educational attainment due to lack of technological know-how to impact knowledge virtually. Those who made an attempt were stalled because they lacked what it takes to advance knowledge with e-learning devices.

2. EMERGENCE OF MASS LITERACY, ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Literacy is an important factor in the lives of human beings. The importance of literacy propels the country to indulge on literacy campaign from independence in 1960 to date. Omolewa (2006) captures the need for literacy when he opines that for one to do away with poverty, ignorance and disease, he must first conquer illiteracy. He further stressed that illiteracy is the most handicap that has retarded the economic, political, social and individual development in most countries of the world. However most commentators augured that Africa was literate based on its traditional education. The advent of Islamic and Christian missionaries in 14th and 19th centuries changed the literacy pattern of African continents. Western and Islamic religion promoted western literacy in the territory known as Nigeria today. However, the introduction of 1882 Ordinance by British Colonial administrators changed the direction of literacy campaign from traditional literacy to religious and modern day literacy of today. Records had it that as at 1950 the estimated illiteracy rate of Nigeria was 84.4% (UNESCO, 2010). Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikwe leveraged on 1954 Federated Constitution to declare Universal Primary Education in the West in 1955 and Eastern Nigeria in 1957 respectively. That further developed literacy level of the country in the pre-independence era (Yusuf, Ladan, Idris & Halilu, 2013).

The vision of mass literacy was actualized on 25th June, 1990 through the institutionalization of National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in the country. The Commission established its presence in the 36 states of the federation including Abuja. Also the Commission maintains offices in 774 Local Government Areas across the country with its affinities with States Ministry of Education and Local Education Authorities with the role of staffing, monitoring and supervision of the programme. The attainable objectives of the Commission are to:

- i. Collaborate with all concerned to eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria
- ii. Implement plan, research, regulate, and monitor to ensure quality control of all the continuing education centres and extra moral classes at states level and Federal Capital Territory Abuja
- iii. Carry out day-to- day administration, recruit and pay facilitators and part-time instructors (FRN, 2014).

3.0 SOCIETY 5.0

The vision of society 5.0 revolves around digital and global world. It reflects on the ease of doing business including teaching and learning. The emergence of society 5.0 is critical to technological advancement of the world of today. The advanced and industrialized counties operating within the frame work of Society 5.0 have created world space where various needs of the people could be met and solved through digital process. This kind of world is referred to as Society 5.0. In the words of Salgues (2018), Society 5.0 is a ‘smart community where physical world and cyberspace are integrated’. Furthermore, Fukuyama, (2018) sees Society 5.0 as a ‘human centric society in which economic development and the resolution of the societal challenges are achieved and people can enjoy a high quality of life that is fully active and comfortable’. The vision behind Society 5.0 is to employ technology in dealing with daily human lives to sustainably generate new values beneficial to human race (Hamilton, (2020). In the peak of Covid-19 in 2020, the world realized that the infusion of technology into teaching and learning is critical. The

delivery of education of any sort came under advance technology. During the pandemic, e-learning opportunities thrived in Society 5.0 compliant nations and many urban dwellers in African countries who could afford the cost. In Nigeria, epileptic power supply, poverty, and non-availability of e-learning devices were hindrances to teaching and learning processes. Fukuyama (2018) decried that Society 5.0 is meant to surmount man's challenges by the fusion of cyberspace with the physical space to generate quality data that could be used to eliminate man's challenges. Amongst 193 countries which domesticated SDG to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality, provide quality and inclusive education to all citizens in 2030, only few advanced countries such as Japan, Britain, China, Cuba, Germany and United States of America amongst others are operating within the track of Society 5.0.

4. PROMOTION OF SOCIETY 5.0 IN NIGERIA THROUGH MASS LITERACY, ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Sharma (2015) contends that development of civilization is closely related to learning and education system obtained in communities and societies. This implies that education has a great impact on literacy level of any nation (Sudibjo, Idawati & Harapan, 2019). The Society 5.0 concerns itself with the use of technology to advance human course. This manifested itself during the lockdown when the schools were shut down in 2020 occasioned by covid-19 pandemic. Traditional teaching model of face-to-face gave way to e-learning influenced by technological breakthrough of the emerging era. This promoted student-centred approach of learning where learners were active in sourcing and processing data without recourse to traditional teaching method. The prevailing situation stimulated learners in exploiting the option of distance learning approach through internet devices as quickly as possible in meeting their instructional needs. Instructions became students' centred and delivered via internet, video, satellite TV etc. However, technological approach to instructions does not undermine the role of teachers in teaching and learning. With the effort and resources devoted to mass Literacy campaign in the country, the augment remains whether the mass literacy educational programme is capable of producing skills, manpower and competencies needed in the digital world of today? In African countries and Nigeria in particular, the answer is capital NO. Bates (2009) in Sharma (2015) states that e-learning enables the learners to develop vocational skills for knowledge-based work. Whether or not the campaign for mass literacy is impacting relevant skills and competencies, the literacy rate of Nigeria has increased to 62.02% (World Bank, 2021). The establishment of National Open University of Nigeria Facilitates mass literacy campaign. NAOUN is technologically driven in tune with the characteristics of Society 5.0 where students' centeredness and teachers' direction and facilitation are the order of the day. Nonetheless, the journey towards digital transformation using Mass literacy, Adults and Non-formal Education to achieve society 5.0 in Nigeria is still gloomy consequent upon erratic power supply, vandalization of public property, high cost of networking, kidnapping of parents and school children, insecurity and host of others.

5. CHALLENGES OF MASS LITERACY CAMPAIGN IN THE ERA OF SOCIETY 5.0 IN NIGERIA

No doubt, the campaign of Federal Government of Nigeria towards enhancing literacy rate of the country is succeeding going by the World Bank, (2021) statistics of 62.02% of literacy rate of the country. However, Nigeria is going through adverse crises, educationally, politically, socially and morally. This is the bane of its

underdevelopment technologically towards attainment of Society 5.0. First, the citizenry is at war with themselves. Every passing day goes without the news of of herdsmen killings, cases of kidnapping of parents, farmers. School children, pupils, undergraduates, forced closure of schools to escape the menace of insurgency. Government seems to be helpless securing people and property which is primary mandate of government. Many people have dropped out of schools, stating that life is paramount. Describing this situation, Osuntokun, (2021) laments on the rate of abduction of children who are the future particularly the girl-child in the northern part of the country without much concern from the government; people who are to act, stay indifferent while the evil is been perpetuated.

Also, Nigeria is enmeshed with corruption of various degrees. The common wealth of the country fizzles away in the hands of few privileged individuals with impunity. The Vanguard, (2018) reports of the missing thirty six million naira (₦36m) only from the vault of Benue State JAMB Office where it was alleged that mysterious snake swallowed the money was a good example of the corruption case. Till date, the case was adjourned sine-die due to legal maneuvers. Similarly, Nigeria supplies electricity to Niger Republic on 24 hours bases while Nigerians enjoy epileptic power supply and black out. The corruption index of the country is adjudged to be high. Transparency International (2020) reports that Nigeria occupies 149/180 position in the world, second in Africa with 32/49 and first in West Africa. It may be on the basis of this corruption index that the former American President, Trump described the country as fantastically corrupt.

Ochai (2012) decries that the use of Information and Communication Technology in schools is not working due to due to lack of complementary infrastructures such as electricity, telephone, data, and network services. In this circumstance, the envisaged Society 5.0 with attendant technology to facilitate e-learning and ease of doing business suffer. Also, Nigeria is multi -cultural and multi ethnicity. At this 21st century, some ethnic groups still cling to their traditional life style against any form (s) of education. The migrant herders and fishermen are yet to come in term with national campaign for mass literacy which is meant to turn their illiteracy to literacy. Again, mass literacy education centres lack requisite and appropriate teaching personnel, methodology, facilities and teaching materials to take the learners to the expected level of educational attainment. Government on its own lack political will to fix Nigerian educational system in line with global best practices. In spite of the hostile learning environments inhibiting Nigerian education system; the establishment of National Open University of Nigeria (NAOUN) which produces high manpower skills is a course in the right direction towards mass literacy, adult and non-formal education as an instrument of e-learning platform.

6. CONCLUSION

The rate of growth and development of any nation is a function of literacy level of its citizenry. It has been emphasized that civilization is closely related to learning. The course of technology cannot be advanced in the state of illiteracy. The vision of Society 5.0 is technological oriented. That implies that any nation (s) that does not advance the course of transforming it teeming populace through education is out of the equation. It is also important that all nations key into the vision of society 5.0 in order to create world space where various needs of the people

could be met and solved through digital process. The ways and manner mass literacy, adult and non-formal education is programmed and operated in the country may not be able to drive society 5.0 agenda. A call is hereby made to government to develop political will in order to fix Nigerian educational system in line with global best practices for the attainment of society 5.0 like other advanced and industrial nations of the world. In doing this, the burden of educational insecurity and corruption which are the bane of the national society be tackled head long.

7. RECOMMENDATION

If government is willing to nib corruption on the board, with the quantum of human and material resources available deployed accurately and prudently, attainment of Society 5.0 using Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education and other educational platforms would have been a matter of time.

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