

EXAMINING CONSCIENTIZATION AS A RADICAL MODEL OF ADULT EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

A greater part of the developmental problems we have in Nigeria today stem from lack of education or lack of proper education. Many Nigerian leaders are either not educated or improperly educated. This is why sustainable development has become a nightmare in a great nation like Nigeria. Education therefore, is the key to development, and for this reason, adults should be given the opportunity to learn if our nation is to develop. This paper is thus set to demonstrate that conscientisation as a model of Adult Education is indeed a radical adult education needed for a progressive education of adults in Nigeria and for the holistic growth of the nation in general. As a philosophical study of the concept of conscientisation as a radical model of education, the paper argues that if the nation is to develop properly, adults should be given the opportunity to learn regardless of wealth, social status, and tribe. To achieve our objective, the paper recommends democratic education which will usher in educational opportunities for adults and for the growth and development of the nation.

Keywords: Conscientisation, Radical, Adult, Education, Model.

Introduction

A society's perception of life and its purpose can be learnt through its system of education. That is why all education is rooted in philosophy. It is what one believes about life and its purpose he attempts to perpetuate and transmit to the succeeding generations born and yet unborn, through education formally, informally or non-formally. Conscientisation, which we propose in this paper as a radical model of adult education is a praxical and radical need in current educational and cultural contexts which employs the development of critical consciousness through a process of reflection and action. It offers an alternative to counter the anti-humanist character of globalization and neo-liberalism. At the same time, it also fits in with the progressive trend of postmodernism and thus plays a significant role in promoting a

more free and democratic educational culture across the globe. Conscientisation therefore, should have applicability to any education which includes as goals both democratization and radical social change. In this paper, we shall first, attempt a definition of “education”. Secondly, we shall highlight the purpose and methods of education as well as chart a historical development of adult education in Nigeria. Radical adult education as well as the concept of conscientisation will be highlighted. Next we shall sketch out the relevance of conscientisation model of adult education to Nigeria education system as well as highlight areas of conscientisation in Nigeria.

Definitions and Meaning of Education

Among many factors that distinguish man from animals, and which covers all the experiences of man by which knowledge is acquired is education. As human beings, we all started learning as soon as we were born, and we continue to learn until we die. Thus, education and life cannot be separated, for it impinges on our lives all the time. Through education, man is trained to become effective and contributing member of the society.

Many people have defined education as schooling, but schooling of course is not education. This is because to define education as schooling is like saying that a house is a room. The point we are making here is that to define education as schooling is a very narrow definition of education. Education transcends the four walls of a school. Education can take place anywhere a person finds himself or herself, in different shapes and forms.

To illustrate further, the school is a structured institution basically designed for the training of a people in diverse disciplines or as the case may be, in a specific discipline. On the other hand, education involves all phases of learning activities embarked upon by human beings. According to the progressivists’ view, education is not restricted to the school, but includes all those incidental and activities that society uses to pass on values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Education in this sense, therefore, becomes extensive and includes the works of many institutions of society such as the family, the school, the church, the working place, and the entire community.

However, education is concerned with improvement. It undertakes to change a man or woman from what he or she is to what he or she might be or ought to be. It follows then that the process of education involves change – the change of the educated and also the educator. For George Hegel (1956: 56), “education is a progressive perfection of humanity from a simple, uncultivated, primitive state of mind through the hard discipline of labour and toil to the consciousness and exercise of freedom.” According to Plato, “a good education consists in giving to the body and the soul all the beauty and all the perfection of which they are capable.” John Dewey (1938:23), an influential modern educator sees education as a reconstruction of experience which assists the individual in the direction of subsequent experience.

The Purpose of Education

According to Julius Nyerere (1982: 49), one of the African philosophers, “a man learns because he wants to do something. And once he has started along this road of developing his capacity he also learns because he wants to be; to be a more conscious and understanding person.” In the quotation above, Nyerere fails to tell us the ‘something’ the person wants to do. However, it is not out of order to suggest that what Nyerere means by ‘to do something’ is to have a

practical expression of what one has learnt, and the ability to apply information and knowledge to the activities of daily life. According to Nyerere, education is best when it is theoretically and practically combined in a person. It means conscientisation, which according to Paulo Freire (1970:5) is defined as “the process in which men not as recipients, but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality.”

The purpose of education therefore, is as follows: (1) conscientisation, (2) liberation from Ignorance, (3) man power development, (4) better human relationship, and (5) appreciation and care for one's environment. Simply put education means 'development'.

Development

Development is a process of series of changes going within the human being and his environment, occasioned by him. In other words, the human being is the agent of development. In this case we distinguish human aided development from the one accounted for by natural process, for example, growth and maturation of the human person. But then, is every type of learning (education) developmental? Can there be a learning that lacks development? To answer these questions, let us turn to Nyerere once more thus:

Learning has not liberated a man if all he learns to want is a certificate on his wall, and the reputation of being a 'learned person', a possessor of knowledge. For such a desire is another aspect of the disease of the acquisition society – the accumulation of knowledge, or worse still the accumulation of pieces of paper which represent a kind of legal tender for such knowledge has nothing to do with development (1982:50).

Nyerere holds that not all learning is developmental. He argues that the craze for the acquisition of certificates without the consequent theoretical and practical backing is counter developmental. Such learning is counter-productive for it goes contrary to the position of the Paris Conference on Adult Education (1985) which maintains that:

If we want peoples of the world to be self-sufficient in food production and other essential human needs, they must have to learn. If women and men are to enjoy better health, they must have the right to learn. If we are to avoid war, we must learn to live in peace, and learn to understand one another.

Although the Paris Conference does not have a final say on education as development, yet, we acknowledge the fact that it contains the essentials of proper learning, namely learning, meaning, development and change. There is therefore, no case where the greed for certificates without the consequent theoretical and practical backing of those certificates would be considered as proper learning. And we ask, of what use is an engineer who has a certificate in engineering but cannot make blue prints or construct prototypes let alone engaging in real and actual engineering works? Similarly, a Surgeon who cannot perform even a minor surgery is not fit to be or be called a Surgeon just because he has a certificate in Surgery. That is why the Paris Conference lays emphasis on the type of learning that can be translated into reality. As such we maintain that education has to be a serious business in any society, and it requires serious and sustained effort on the part of any man whatever his birth.

Thus education or learning should not just be the passing of examinations or the grabbing of certificates. It has to bring about change – development. It is only when a learner accommodates change in the course of his training, that we can actually affirm that so - and - so is learned. It is not by flashing of a piece of paper nicknamed ‘certificate’. Therefore, there has to be a method of education that would bring about the desired goal or purpose of education in our society.

Methods of Education

Methods of education mean the pedagogical methods and dispositions employed by educators to make their subjects or persons being trained educated. Obviously, there are three methods agreed upon by educators as the methods of learning or methods of imparting knowledge. These methods are: (1) formal, (2) informal, and (3) non-formal methods of education. Note that by methods, we are not concerned with the conceptual analyses of acquiring knowledge, namely, whether it is by anamnesis (Plato) or imprint (Aristotle). We are concerned rather with the ways in which one can know when taught, and not how the process of learning is acquired in the individual.

Formal Method of Education

Formal education is a structured method of education in which curriculum applications, numbers of years to be spent during training, and a well organized administrative machinery that oversees the execution of the curriculum are in place. The school system of education which includes (1) the nursery/primary schools, (2) the secondary schools and (3) the tertiary institutions (colleges and universities, and allied institutions of higher learning) is a typical example of the formal method of education. In a formal method of education, examination taking seems to be the major characteristic. Hence completion of a formal educational training implies the taking of an examination, and success or failure is determined by the type of certificate one obtains. Usually, in such a system, certificates are graded according to individual performances.

Informal Method of Education

This refers to knowledge acquired in life outside the school system. In this method, there is no scheduled examination at the end of training. Learners come to learn right from their home, from interaction with significant others, and generally from their daily activities. This method of education is primarily obtained in the earliest stage of a person’s life, where a child tends to know from his or her parents, and imitate the general patterns of life within his or her reach. Training therefore takes place casually without prior or premeditated planning.

However, the idea of informal training is so vast that it incorporates a wide range of activities in human life. The idea is that the human being continues to learn till death. In line with this belief, therefore, any learning consciously embarked upon by people without an examination attached to it falls into this category. Informal method of education comes in various forms and shapes, for instance, through a radio enlightenment programme, Newspapers and magazines, club meetings, religious and political affiliations, etc. Short-term courses, symposia and seminars, are also a form of informal education. Almost all human situations present some opportunity for informal education.

Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education is a close relation of informal education. Like the informal educational method, it involves the type of education acquired casually. It is an unconscious form of learning as opposed to the informal education which follows a conscious plan. The learner passively, assimilating without consciously being involved.

Non-formal method of education can be termed the 'apeing' method since it involves observation and emulation. For instance, let us say that a child has been watching a renowned speaker on the television, and unknowingly had already started talking like his or her television model. The phenomenon described above shows a type of observation and emulation. Non-formal type of education is therefore, closely connected with the life of the human being. Human beings continue to observe wherever they are, and the more one is exposed to a particular phenomenon or persons, the more the person's character and behaviour is molded. Environment influences our behaviour so much that its impact in our behaviours cannot be accurately measured. No wonder proponents of school education system such as John Dewey calls for a type of curricula in schools that would relate to the pupil's environmental needs. Examples of non-formal type of education include on-the-job training and vestibule training, where learners unconsciously imitate their trainers.

Definitions and Meaning of Adult Education

Adult education has been defined in various ways by various scholars, authors, organizations and even States in trying to explain what it should mean to the people in general. Each definition is centered on the specific function or the understanding of the function adult education to the people. Nevertheless, the definitions of certain reputed authors, and some organizations try to give a general view of their understanding of the adult education processes. For instance, Bryson (1953:35) defines adult education as "an activity with an educational purpose that is carried on by people engaged in ordinary business of life. It is generally carried on as part-time or leisure time activity. It may be done at all levels of education including literacy, elementary, secondary, tertiary and other levels depending on the needs of the students, the type of community and the demand of the age.

To one group of educationists, adult education is understood as "any purposeful effort towards self development, carried on by an individual voluntarily without its becoming his major field of activity" (Callaghan, 1962:12). For Okedara (1975), adult education is simply "a conscious effort of a mature person to learn something new. Sheats (1953:5) on the other hand defines adult education as "a new learning and not merely a continuation of learning which embraces the learning achieved by adults during their mature years. The most comprehensive definition is perhaps the one given by the First International Conference on Comparative Study of Adult Education which states that: "Adult education is a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and full time basis undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding or skills, appreciation and attitudes or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems (Leveright & Haygood, 1968:7-8).

The Report of the National Institute of Adult Education (England and Wales) is another comprehensive account of the meaning of adult education. It states:

In the widest sense adult education is any kind of education for people who are old enough to work, vote, fight, and marry and who have completed the cycle of continuous education, (if any) commenced in childhood. They may want to make up for limited schooling (or for no schooling), to pass examination, to learn the basic skills of trade or professions or to master new working processes. They may turn to it because they want to understand themselves and their world better and to act in the light of their understanding, or they may go to classes for the pleasure they can get from developing talents and skills – intellectual, aesthetic, physical or practical. They may not even ‘go to classes’: they may find what they want from books or broadcasts or take guidance by post from a tutor they never meet. They may find education without a label by sharing in common pursuits with like-minded people (1970:246).

above definition is considered as comprehensive since it defines what kind of people adult education is meant for. It also makes provision to include adults who may want to make up for limited schooling or lack of schooling. This is quite true of Nigeria system of Adult Education where most of the adults involved in adult literacy or education have never been to any school. From the above, we gather also that those involved in adult education may through adult education want to understand themselves and their environment better. Understanding here is quite important because it is through it that any radical change can be effected in the society. Awareness and understanding arouse desires to change for the better, or the appreciation of the favourable conditions. The definition also pointed out that the adults need not to go to any school or class in order to acquire knowledge.

Another outlook on adult education is that of Makulu (1971:75) who sees adult education as “the all-inclusive pattern of adult development which has in view the need of the adult not only as an individual but also as a member of his community, and which helps him to live more effectively in his society. Makulu maintains that mass education, community development, vocational training, learning to read and write are all incorporated into adult education.

The UNESCO’s position on meaning or definition of adult education maintains that “adult education is concerned with the development of personal abilities and aptitudes, and the encouragement of social, moral and intellectual responsibility in relation to local, national and world citizenship (1970). Adult education therefore, incorporates anything that enlarges man’s understanding, activates him, helps him to make his own choices, and to implement those decisions for himself. The function of adult education therefore, is to inspire both a desire for change and an understanding that change is possible. This is because a belief that poverty or suffering is the “will of God” and that man’s only task is to endure is the most fundamental of all the enemies of freedom. And so the feeling of dissatisfaction with what is must be combined with a conviction that it can be changed, otherwise it is simply destructive. For instance, men living in poverty or sickness or under tyranny or exploitation must be enabled to recognize both that the life they lead is miserable, and that they can change it by their own action, either individually or in cooperation with others.

Adult education is therefore any act of learning embarked upon by an adult, be it through formal, informal and non-formal method of education. It is a voluntary desire by an adult to learn. And since it is education, it connotes change and development. Adult education simply put means any instruction or activities with an educational and developmental values directed towards adults. It could also include a complex system of post-school education. This brings us to a consideration of the concept of adult or adulthood. In other words, who is an adult and what does it mean to say that someone is an adult? The meaning of adult or adulthood varies with person and country using it and in what context the word is used. For instance, in the military, a person is regarded as a man or adult if he has attained the age of 'conscription', or 'call-up' for national service. The politician on the other hands regard a person as an adult only when he has reached the age of voting and being voted for. Even the age at which one is regarded as an adult is also varied. For instance countries like the United States of America and England require a person to be at least 18 years of age to be called an adult, while other countries stick to 21 years of age. The problem with these views is that they are all centered on the number of years an individual has to attain in order to be called an adult; and obviously, the number of years an individual attains has little or nothing to do with his maturity. There are individuals who are right over 30 years yet, they are not mature individuals; while there are individuals who are below 18 years of age and they are quite mature.

For this reason, therefore, we see an adult rather as one who has reached maturity, and according to Bergevin (1911), the term maturity means "the growth and development of the individual towards wholeness in order to achieve constructive spiritual, vocational, physical, political and cultural goals. Maturity here is not confined to psycho-physical development, it rather embraces the attainment of puberty and some mental or judgmental maturity which includes the ability to reason rationally or logically, interpret experience and take decisions. Maturity equal entails both social and economic responsibility.

Purpose of Adult Education

Adult education is a voluntary learning and adults embark on studying out of their choice and volition because they want to learn not under compulsion as do children and youths who must go to school or face the wrath of their parents. The necessity of adult education, however, lies in the fact that if an adult cares for his welfare, he should and must continue to learn, and it is an established fact that both social, economic, political, moral, intellectual and even spiritual can overcome him should he refuse to learn new things or to improve his skills.

The world is changing very fast; there is shortage of living accommodations and jobs due to increasing advanced technologies. Adults therefore must continue to acquire new knowledge if they must survive in the midst of these problems. They must be u-to-date with their environment, society and the universe. They need re-orientation and re-adjustment in their life to ensure a balance in their ever changing world. Adult education, therefore gives them the necessary tools with which to combat those problems as they arise. Through adult education, an individual develops abilities in such ways that his life becomes more satisfying to himself. Adult education also offers desirable goals for success in life for adults.

The purpose of adult education is then the liberation of man from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency. It has to increase man's physical and mental freedom. It can

also help individual find meaning and happiness in life, to ensure survival and democracy and to help the individual citizen take his rightful place in society, and to help the individual in his physical, psychological and spiritual maturation processes.

Radical Adult Education

Radical according to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary means tending or disposed to make extreme changes in existing views, habits, conditions, or institutions; of relating to, or constituting a political group associated with views, practices, and policies of extreme change.¹⁸ Radical or radicalism therefore entails fundamental changes or reforms. Radical adult education is therefore, that aspect of adult education which is disposed to make extreme changes in existing views, habits, and conditions in the minds and intellects of the adult in the society in general. It creates awareness which brings about social, political and economic changes in the society. The radical critics propose profound changes in society. Since Friere's Philosophy of Adult Education is an example of a radical philosophy of adult education, he should be regarded as one of the radicals. The radicals are strong in both criticisms and visions. In making its criticisms and presenting its visions, the radical adult tradition questions the basic values, structures, and practices of society. Every area of societal life is touched by the radical theorists: family, schooling, work, religion, economic and political systems.

Radical adult education is revolutionary in character because it is geared or directed towards change in the society and in the system of adult education. The first step in radical change is therefore, the overcoming of alienation. Thus radical adult education is concerned with the fundamental reforms or changes both in the lives of the adults involved, their environment and their societies in general. This is why the qualifier "radical" is attached to this type of education. Thus, in order for the purpose of adult education to be achieved, it has to be radical in nature, i.e. practical. It has to initiate change and fundamental reforms.

Conscientisation

According to Paulo Friere, a Brazilian educator and originator of conscientisation, conscientisation means "to make aware," or "awakening of consciousness", or "critical consciousness." Conscientisation is therefore defined as "the process in which men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality (1970:7). Conscientisation is therefore, a social process taking place among men as they unite in common reflection and action upon their world. This occurs not through intellectual effort alone but through "praxis", the unity of reflection and action. Conscientisation does not stop at an awakening of perception but proceeds to action, which in turn provides the basis for new perception, reflection or understanding of the society or oneself. In addition to that, it must be followed by action. For instance, it is not enough to teach or awaken the people to realize that dirty environment is dangerous. This alone is not enough until a provision is made which not only conscientises the people but also induces them to make change by providing refuse disposal van and fighting against dirty environment. The liberation of the oppressed according to Friere's view can be done through reflection and action upon the world in order to critically, simultaneously objectifying and acting upon the reality. A mere perception or reality not followed by this critical intervention will not lead to a transformation of oppressive reality because it is not a true perception. This is obvious because practice without thought is blind; and thought without practice is empty. Friere therefore, is a critic of the formal school

system. He calls for a reformation of education so as to afford an individual continuous and integrated development to grapple with the changing world and to restore himself as the author of his own and society's development.

Conscientisation is a deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergences. It does not only initiate a process by which people become aware of the contradictions in the social structures of situations but also supports it. Conscientisation then implies that one has come to the realization that he is oppressed and can also liberate himself by transforming the concrete situation where he finds himself oppressed. This transformation should not only be in idea but both in reality and practice. For if it should only be in the mind, one would think that he is free, yet he is enslaved, because this does not change his situation. According to Freire (1970), conscientisation entails critical consciousness and as Francisco Weffort (1995:22) puts it, "the awakening of critical consciousness leads the way to the expression of social discontents precisely because those discontents are real components of an oppressive situation. Freire sees the pedagogy of the oppressed as an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization. In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there exists no exits but as a limiting situation which they can transform, since it is a concrete situation that the oppressed-oppressed contradiction is established. Hence the radical requirement, both for man who is discovering himself to be an oppressor and for the oppressed – that the concrete situation which begets oppression must be transformed.

In trying to conscientise the African society on the need for funding the weapon of African Philosophy in the environment and living conditions of the African people, with a view of decolonizing African Philosophy, Kwame Nkrumah (1964:78) has this to say:

...what is called for as a step is a body of connected thoughts which will determine a general nature of our action in unifying the society which we have inherited...This social revolution must therefore, have standing firmly behind it, an intellectual revolution, a revolution in which our thinking and our philosophy are directed towards the redemption of our society...The emancipation of the African continent is the emancipation of man. This requires tow aims: the restitution of egalitarianism of human society, and the logistic mobilization of all our resources towards the attainment of that restitution.

This quotation explains clearly Nkurumah's view on conscientising the African people. His view is a practical or radical way of making the African people understand their culture, and how to bring into African Philosophy, the African tradition in place of foreign traditions. Nkurumah clearly stated that the emancipation of the African continent is the emancipation of man. For him, the African continent is in need of freedom from colonial traditions and influences. And he believes that the first stage or step in achieving this goal is through decolonization. Thus Nkurumah's aim in his book *Consciencism* is to create deep awareness in the mind of the African people, and to take a practical step forward to achieve it through societal and intellectual revolution.

Kwasi Wiredu in his essay “Conceptual Decolonisation of African Philosophy” is also echoing the same view with Nkrumah - creative and radical awareness towards achievement of decolonization of foreign tradition in African Philosophy. Thus Wiredu (1995:22) writes:

...I mean avoiding or reversing through a critical conceptual self-awareness the unexamined assimilation in our thought of the conceptual frameworks embedded in the foreign philosophical traditions that have had an impact on African life and thought, ... It is encountered in the fact that our philosophical education has generally been in the medium of foreign languages, usually of our erstwhile colonizers. This is the most fundamental, subtle persuasive and intractable circumstance of mental colonization.

Both Nkrumah and Wiredu are all agents of conscientisation in trying to create a deep-down awareness among the African people and in getting them to take a radical step towards change for the better. Thus since conscientisation connotes change, the result of the works of both Nkrumah and Wiredu as agents of conscientisation or radical conscientisers is the outbreak of African Philosophers and scholars taking up the writing of African Philosophy based on the African tradition.

Freire rightly pointed out that, conscientisation is meant for under-developed and under-developing third world countries. What made him to develop his concept of conscientisation was his experience and observation with the oppressed situation in the under-developed, poverty-ridden nations of Latin America. His observation gave birth to his book called *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire observed that the peasants depend upon the elites. They were oppressed, isolated and marginalized. The schools and institutions were established by the elites, instrument of oppression, for in these institutions established by the elites, the oppressed are being indoctrinated with the principles of the elites. These elites are superior in knowledge and power. They are the subject, while the oppressed are the objects. The oppressors are characterized by certain principles of conquest, manipulation, and cultural invasion. They try to suppress group consciousness and awareness of class interest, because they want to dominate, divide and rule the people they consider ignorance.

In cultural invasion, most third world countries have been oppressed, dominated, and stripped of their culture. Worse still, the oppressor society try to convince the oppressed society that their culture is bad, evil, barbaric, old-fashioned and unaccepted. This is exactly what happened when the British set their feet on the African soil. They condemned the African culture and saw nothing good in it. And to further implement and solidify their domination they introduced their own culture and religion, imposed schools on the people in which they further dominated and oppressed the people by making them not to only to abandon their own culture but also to hate it. The function of conscientisation does not imply that the oppressed are aware that they are oppressed, but according to Freire(1970):

their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of oppression. At this level, their perception of themselves as opposites of the oppressor does not yet signify engagement in a struggle to overcome the contradiction; the one pole aspires not to liberation but to identification with its opposite pole (10)

It is this type of situation that Freire's conscientisation is set in motion to combat. Conscientisation as a model of adult education here serves to liberate the oppressed society from the hands of the oppressor society. Here the oppressed society is made to become aware or conscious of its situation. In this case (cultural invasion), the oppressed are made to understand that they are culturally dominated or invaded; they are made to know that their culture is not bad. Here radicalism comes in – a revolutionary action that leads to change and transformation of reality. However, the traditional reasons for the importance of combating illiteracy include: "provision of minimal knowledge so that people can assume the complex roles required in developing countries, incorporating all the people into the structure, values and functions of society; providing the credentials for participation in the political, social and economic processes (Paulo Friere, 1970:6)." In Freire's understanding, therefore, illiteracy stands for the oppressed beings inside a dominant, oppressive society; illiteracy is the mark of men robbed of their words, who exist not for themselves but for another, the oppressed (1970).

Another characteristic of conscientisation which we need to touch is the fact that it involves not just awareness of oppressive situation in the society in general as explained above, but touches every individual. An individual could be conscientised to come to understand that his inability to read and write could be destructive to him; a farmer could also be made to be aware that the cause of his poor and low production of food is due to lack of land maintenance in the form of fertilizer application. All these are areas where conscientisation touches individuals. In fact, conscientisation begins with individuals who then spread it to the whole society by the process of radical reformation or break away from the old views.

So many third world countries are under oppression and domination of one kind. Even the word "third world", "under-developing", "developing" used to designate countries like Nigeria, and many other African countries that are not politically, socially, and economically buoyant and strong as the rest of other countries, are also forms of oppression or domination too. Why in the first place should these countries be called "third world countries", "under-developed countries"? And why should countries like America and Japan for instance see themselves as the developed or first class or first nations? Granted that they are truly developed, we see their use of the term mentioned already as a means of further oppression and domination, and to rob the so called third world countries of their dignity and culture. Conscientisation is therefore, needed here not only to educate and free the people in the hands of the so called developed countries, but also to liberate the developed countries from the oppressive activities.

Meanwhile, in order for men to be free themselves and transform the dehumanising culture, there should be a process through projects and programmes operating outside the dominating society's school system. This liberation and freedom can be achieved through conscientisation, and one stage in the process of conscientisation is literacy training. It is unfortunate that most third world countries in the hands of the societies are illiterate. Adult education is therefore needed to direct and redirect social change to better the social order of the people as well as to insure social stability. The focus of adult education is individual improvement which leads to change in society. Conscientisation is necessary to any education which includes both democratisation and structural change in its purpose.

Conscientisation: A Radical Model of Adult Education

As already discussed, conscientisation means to make or to become conscious, while radical means tending or disposed to changes. With this we see that conscientisation and radicalism are children of one parent. They go hand in hand; in fact, they mean one and the same thing. Conscientisation is geared towards change and so does radicalism. They bring completion or fulfillment to the work of each other. This is seen in the fact that in conscientisation, when people are educated, they come to be aware or become conscious of reality or truth, their situation, the evils and oppression in the society. This awareness is not enough or complete in order to improve the situation until radical changes are introduced. On the other hand, radical change cannot take place if there has not been awareness of the situations that call for radical change.

Nkrumah again, in his book *Consciencism* gives a vivid picture of conscientisation as a radical means of initiating change and reforms in the society. He writes:

...it is necessary for positive action to be backed by a mass party, and qualitatively to improve this mass so that by education and an increase in its degree of consciousness, its aptitude for positive action becomes heightened. We can therefore say that in a colonial territory, positive action must be backed by a mass party complete with its instrument of education. This was the Convention People's Party of Ghana developed from an early stage its education wing, worker's wing, farmers' wing, women's wing, youth wing, etc. In this way, the people received constant political education, their self-awareness was increased...It is also in the backing of millions of members and supporters, united by a common radical purpose, that the revolutionary character of the Conventional People's Party consists, and not merely in the piquancy of its programmes (1964:79).

In the above quotation, we see that conscientisation is really a model of educating the people and bringing about radical reforms. Thus in every facet of learning, conscientisation is the model. Another reason why we see conscientisation model of adult education as a radical adult education is its influence in the Nigerian electoral system. When the open ballot system of voting was first introduced, people were conscientised and educated on its importance and workability. The result of this conscientisation was a tremendous mass turn out on the days of voting. The conscientisation brought in a radical change in the Nigerian system of election with new system displacing the old one.

Furthermore, conscientisation as a radical model of adult education can be observed in the abolition of slave trade. We all know the evils of slave trade which after so many centuries was abolished only in the 18th century. We also know that there has never been or will ever be anything oppressive, dehumanizing, and dominating like slavery. The slave masters oppressed the people (slaves), robbed them of their human dignity and administered inhuman treatment to them. They were regarded as mere tools – objects, while the masters were the subjects. The slaves were robbed of words and freedom. They were made to be silent about their conditions and consider such a condition as the will of God. It was only when some well-meaning individuals, Churches and organizations began to launch attack on the evils of slave trade by conscientising the rest of the human race to be conscious of the evils

and man's inhumanity to man involved in slave trading that hope came upon the slaves. This conscientisation was followed by a radical transformation that gave birth to revolutionary action. The anti-slave trade campaign groups went from place to place conscientising people, urging people to see the evils of slave trade and to join in the restoration of human dignity to the enslaved people. Finally, slave trade was put to death through the effort of William Wilberforce in the 18th century.

Thus since conscientisation is a model of adult education, it is equally a radical adult education, for through it, man achieve a deepening awareness both of socio-cultural reality which in turn shapes his life and enables him to transform or change that reality. Conscientisation does not stop at only awakening or perception, it backs up this awakening with action and it is this theory of action that leads to change that radical adult education is all about.

As we have seen, conscientisation focuses on the relationship between oppressor and the oppressed societies. This is evident among the third world countries, Nigeria inclusive. According to Freire, the elites dominate and oppress the less privileged societies. They attempt to promote individualism and isolation and to suppress group consciousness and awareness of class interests. They succeeded in dividing men from their fellow men, and even divide the oppressed within – by this the oppressed begins to see themselves and their situation with the eye of the oppressor. Conscientisation however, is according to Lloyd (1972:9), not a part of adult education in general, but because of its goals and methods (change) it is a means of encouraging active participation by those who are "being for others" on issues of direct concern to them, but also of democratizing institutions that is mobilizing people to de-colonise their institutions, opening them up to free participation by all members.

Conscientisation being a radical model of adult education helps persons become aware of and gain perspective on their perceptions of their social reality and of themselves, thereby mobilizing them to engage in a process of reflection and action – to change the reality. it is a means for self-realisation of oppressed and dispossessed groups or those whose members are systematically discriminated against. "Conscientisation is a tested pedagogy for the self-liberation of oppressed people, at least under certain circumstances" (Paulo Friere, 1970).

Conscientisation as a radical adult education therefore, is a key to an open democratic society and to permanent Cultural Revolution. According to Freire, only the dispossessed can liberate themselves, not the oppressor. They cannot depend upon the dominant to serve other than their own interests. The dominants need liberation from structures and attitudes that are oppressive, and for Freire, ironically, it is the oppressed who will eventually liberate the oppressors. And this according to Freire is through the power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed that will be enough to liberate them.

Thus it is from these viewpoints that radical adult education emerged – a radical education of adults; education of adults to the awareness of reality and a radical step towards change; an attempt to utilize education to reform society. Radical adult education is therefore, a step forward for personal autonomy. In fact, radical adult education advocates freedom and liberation. It criticizes and opposes indoctrination and oppression. It is the view of radical adult education that when people become aware of what they view as evil social structures,

they will be able to bring about the necessary changes. Radical adult education is meant to create awareness in the minds of adults about themselves and their society and the necessary steps towards change for the better.

Adult Education in Nigeria

Is there really adult education in Nigeria? If there is, what is its nature, form and objectives; and what is the underpinning factors surrounding its establishment? No doubt, there exists some form of adult education in Nigeria, though there are certain factors which need to be addressed. First, adult education in Nigeria is seen as an exercise meant only for those who have never been to school; those who cannot read or write. The number of those who have received some form of education participating in adult education in Nigeria is minimal. This is because, as it were, Nigeria seems to have not developed a genuine interest and support to the development and concern of adult education. What our government rather does is to pump in money into child education forgetting that uneducated parents or adults will bring up uneducated children. Our government one way or the other has not really taken cognizance of this reality. It has refused to realize that majority of our adults are uneducated and even the few that are educated stand in great need of continuing education and upgrading knowledge and skills. Unfortunately, this affects every aspects of our national life. And since education is the bedrock of every nation, any nation that fails to provide good education for her children is like a house with a shaky foundation.

Have we ever asked ourselves why some countries are developed and others are not? Have we ever reflected on why many nations are poor and few rich? What is responsible for this great imbalance? Is it natural resources? Has God blessed the few and cursed the many? Have we ever pondered why the tiny Britain still colonizes the gargantuan Nigeria? What is the underpinning factor? If we have asked ourselves all these questions and pondered on them for answers, there is something quite striking. And that is that the majority of the people in the developing countries are not literate and numerate. They are simply ignorant and live under the weight of superstitions and myths. And for these countries to move forward, their people have to be educated, not just the children alone but also the adults who steer the governance wheel. They are the ones who understand what the economy is; what politics entails; not the children. If therefore, Nigeria should indeed move forward, mass education of the adults must be encouraged, for as the Paris Conference on Adult Education aptly noted:

There can be no human development without the right to learn. There will be no breakthrough in agriculture and industry, no progress in community health, and indeed no change in learning conditions without the right to learn. Without this right there will be no improvement in the standard of living for workers in our cities and villages. In short, the right to learn is one of the best contributions we can make to solving the problems of humanity today (1985:2).

Following this, it is only through education that a country can move forward. It is folly to encourage only child-education and neglect adult education. Children perform better in education if they have educated adults who value and encourage education. Therefore, adult education should be seriously encouraged, supported and adequately funded in Nigeria if the nation must move forward.

Areas of Conscientisation in Nigeria

Oppression and domination can occur in different shape and form. For instance, in Nigeria, there is need for conscientisation or radical liberation of the people from tribalism and ethnicism. In Nigeria, we have developed some meanings attached to certain towns or people. For instance, when one is called “Igbo man”, “Yoruba man”, “Hausa man”, in the mind of our people today, these have some implications. A typical example is the Calabar people. It has come to the extent that to call a person a “Calabar man” is the same as saying that the person is a womanizer or a prostitute. This is also another form of oppression. Here the Calabar people are tagged as bad people and unmarriageable, for no just cause. Education is also needed here to conscientise both the oppressed and the oppressor. The people of Calabar could be conscientised as well as the people humiliating or passing derogatory remarks on them.

Another factor is racism – racial discrimination. It is not long when apartheid was buried in South Africa. Under racism or racial discrimination, the people are subjugated and made to live a life unworthy of their status as human beings. They usually occupy the lowest ranks in the society. For instance, in South Africa before, blacks and white did not enter the same bus let alone attend the same school. The ugly part of this is that the oppressed now begin to see themselves according to their oppressors’ opinions of them. They will then begin to lose self-confidence. This is why adult education is necessary to enlighten and liberate the individuals through conscientisation and radical changes.

The Task before Adult Educators in Nigeria

Why is it that policies on adult education fail in most developing countries? In Nigeria for instance, Jibrin Aminu, the then Nigeria Minister of Education propagated the dismal Nomadic Education; Jerry Gana once headed the dreaded Mass Mobilisation of Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER); many state governments in Nigeria mounted their various mass adult literacy campaign. The question is, why were they not successful? They were not successful because the tasks before adult educators were not clearly defined. By this we mean that the policy makers did not properly plan for a lasting adult education. They did not meet up with Freire’s conception of conscientisation. We argue that unless these tasks are clearly spelt out to adult educators, there can be no way a successful adult education policy could be implemented. The onus lies on the teachers whose duty is to educate the adults. For this reason, we present the following as the task facing the adult educators in Nigeria:

1. Clarification of the appropriateness of Adult Education at a national level and the inter-agency relations;
2. Transposition of integral initiatives in adult education through harmonization, consultation and coordination of adult education mini-projects and initiatives undertaken separately from one another;
3. Overcoming of obstacles in motivating the target groups (the needy and the disadvantaged) which have often been treated but too seldom reached and the planning agencies which should now belong to the more important clientele of adult education measures for without their understanding, insight and political will, nothing positive will ever happen for adult education;
4. Strengthening of non-formal education and adult education at a methodological and financial level as opposed to formal education.

If these measures are taken and implemented by adult educators in Nigeria, the problem of illiteracy will be reduced and the nation will move forward. And unless these are being taken cognizance of, there can be no way Nigeria or any developing country would move up in the socio-political and economic ladder of comity of nations. In this vein, we recommend the unbiased education of the entire adult population. Our recommendation implies therefore a type of education democracy. Democracy here implies the right of every citizen to develop his intellectual powers to the fullest extent possible, irrespective of wealth, social position, and tribe. Our line of argument lies in the fact that the government is to be blamed for the mass illiterate populace in Nigeria. The Nigerian government has never shown great interest in educating the adults. It pumps money into primary and tertiary education, where the focus is on the children. Where they support adult education, they couch it in tribal undertone such as the Nomadic education.

It is therefore imperative that we remind the government of Nigeria and other governments of the developing world that poverty and ignorance were the lot of the common man in the past. The elimination, not perpetuation of poverty and ignorance is the mission of democracy. Let them realize that we are no more in the ancient time. Things have changed and are still changing, and the only way to catch-up is to encourage adult education at all levels. It follows therefore, that adult education has to be thrown open to all, not just a section of the people, nor a privileged few. Let it be for every adult irrespective of social and economic positions, for every citizen has the right to learn. This being the case, why not give them the opportunity to build the nation?

Conclusion

In this paper we have tried to justify that education is the key to development. And for this reason, we have argued that adults should be given the opportunity to learn if our nation is to develop. This is why we recommend what we termed democratic education whereby adults should be given educational opportunities regardless of wealth, social status, and tribe. Hence, adult education must be encouraged and supported at all cost if Nigeria must attain economic, social and political power.

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