



Freirean Literacy Approach: A Functional Model to the Solution of the Problems of Unemployment and Poverty amongst Nigerian Youth

U. J. OBIDIEGWU

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

OSAYEMWENRE RITA ORONSAYE

University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

Abstract. The overall goal of this study was to propose Freirean literacy approach as a functional model to the solution of the problems of unemployment and poverty amongst Nigerian youths. Unemployment is seen as a situation in which persons capable and willing to work are unable to find suitable paid employment. Youth unemployment and poverty rate is high in Nigeria and has been seen to take an increasing turn, over the years. The paper sought to propose sustainable solution to poverty and unemployment which is ravaging Nigerian youths by embarking on analytical review and report of the Freirean Literacy Approach. The paper discussed poverty and employment, consequences of unemployment and poverty, government poverty alleviation and unemployment programme, principles of Freirean functional literacy approach, Freire literacy approach and application to the solution of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. It was concluded that, Freirean literacy approach should be tried out in Nigeria for the solution of poverty and unemployment challenges that bedevils the country for sustainable growth and development, hence, it has been tried out and was successful in some other countries. It was therefore recommended that a well-funded functional literacy and skill acquisition programme using REFLECT approach should be established by government in all communities in Nigeria.

Keywords: Freirean Literacy Approach, Unemployment, Youth Unemployment, Poverty, Nigeria, Education

1. Introduction

The current problems bedeviling Nigeria, such as Boko Haram, banditry, kidnapping and armed robbery

are off shoot of many years of unemployment resulting in poverty. Poverty and unemployment are among the major developmental challenges in Nigeria. Unemployment is used to describe a situation of no job for employable people in an economy. It is an epidemic touching many countries especially the developing ones. According to Udu and Agu (2005), unemployment is “a situation in which persons capable and willing to work are unable to find suitable paid employment”. Similarly, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2012), unemployed workers are those who are currently not working but are willing and able to work in order to earn their living. Hornby (2010) defines unemployment as the facts of a number of people not having a job; the number of people without a job; the state of not having a job. Unemployment situation has political, socio-economic and moral disproportion on any economy. Unemployment replicates the inability to make effective and efficient use of factors of production. Hence, low returns on capital and labour accelerate poverty. Unemployment situation therefore calls for a greater concern in the Nigeria economy.

Unemployment is considered to be a barrier to social progress. According to Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa (2012), a great effort is needed to curb unemployment for meaningful development in emerging economies. Youth unemployment in Nigeria is ignited with unfavourable and defective economic policies coupled with grave and hostile implication of corruption which acted as a deterrent to employment generation (Nworgu,2014). According to Plecher (2020) youth unemployment rate has not been stable. In 1999 it was 9.14%, declined to 8.99% in 2000 it increased to 9.15%, in 2001 and 2002. In 2003 it moved to 9.24%. Furthermore, it declined to 9.04%, 8.08%, 8.51% in 2004-2005. It was 8.8% in 2006 and 2007

respectively. Unemployment rate increased to 8.66%, 9.49%, 9.65, 9.70, 9.75, 9.84, 12.65, 16.30, 20.67, 19.96, 19.68, and 19.58 between 2008 to 2019 respectively. These figures show that the rate of unemployment in Nigeria is high particularly as it relates to youths and this affects poverty rate.

Poverty is seen as lack of access to basic needs/goods. According to Olatomide (2012) the poor are conceived as those individuals or households in a particular society who are incapable of purchasing a specified basket of basic goods and services. Olatomide stressed that basic goods are nutrition, shelter, water, healthcare, access to productive resources including education, work skills, tools, political and civil rights to participate in decisions concerning socio-economic conditions. According to Olatomide (2012) poverty can be structural (chronic) or transient. The former is defined as persistent or permanent socio-economic deprivations and is linked to a host of factors such as limited productive resources, lack of skills for gainful employment, endemic socio-political and cultural factors such as gender. The latter, on the other hand, is defined as transitory/temporary and is linked to natural and man-made disasters. Olatomide further maintained that transient poverty is more reversible but can become structural if it persists.

Poverty incidence in the country recorded increases between the period 1980 to 1985 and between 1992 to 1996 (Olatomide, 2012). Statistics show appreciable decrease in poverty rates between 1985 and 1992 and between 1996 and 2004. Although, the poverty rate dropped within the period, the population in poverty has maintained a steady increase from 17.7 million in 1980 to 68.7 million in 2004 (NBS, 2005). Within the period, 1980-2004, the proportion of the core poor increased from 6.2% in 1980 to 29.3% in 1996. It came down to 21.8 % in 2004(NBS, 2005). According to Ojekunle (2020) a report released by the National Bureau of Statistics on May 4th, 2020, shows that more than 80 million Nigerians are in extreme poverty, living on less than 400 naira per day (approximately one dollar). This number represents 40.9 % of the population. This means that an average of 4 out of 10 individuals in Nigeria live on one dollar per day. The figure rose from 68.4 million in 2010 (population at 158 million) to 82.9 million in 2020 (with an estimated population figure at 200 million). From the foregoing backdrop, if the rate of youth unemployment and poverty is not checked from its current state, Nigeria may progress to a failed state. There is a dire need for a sustainable measure to check this trend, which is major objectives of this paper

2. Consequences of Unemployment and Poverty among Youths in Nigeria

Unemployment and poverty constitute major global challenges. They cut across boundaries and include the most developed societies in the world. However, the social challenges remain more endemic among the third world countries particularly Africa and Nigeria are among the worst hit. Youth within the age bracket of 14-50 years old are mostly affected (Ajaegbu, 2012). This situation makes it more devastating because this vulnerable group is susceptible to committing and perpetrating all sorts of crimes such as terrorism, kidnapping, arm robbery, assassination, thuggery, prostitution, drug peddling, human trafficking, cybercrime among others. In addition, most violent protests, demonstrations, lawlessness and several actions leading to outbreak of wanton destruction of lives and properties, in many places in Nigeria (as we currently experienced during the End Sars protest) were triggered by the youths. In other words, most prevailing violent conflicts involving youths in Nigeria are intricately linked to unemployment and poverty.

Dagaci and Diyoke (2019) described absolute poverty in Nigeria as “poverty qua poverty” the term used in describing absolute poverty in Nigeria where majority of people find life excruciating due to largely difficulty in meeting or satisfying their basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and qualitative education. Ajufo, (2013) contended that unemployment has become a major problem bedeviling the lives of Nigerian youths, causing militancy, violent crimes, kidnapping, restiveness and socially delinquent behavior. Youth unemployment is devastating to both the individual and the society. It affects the psyche and economic stability of any group of people. Accordingly, any society bedeviled with the problem of endemic rate of unemployment and poverty especially among its productive segment of the population as it is in Nigeria, will have its peace and stability endangered with dire consequences of retrogression instead of progression. As noted by Usman (2015) the paradox of the deepening crisis of mass unemployment, poverty and economic wealth in Nigeria is painful. Although, some poverty alleviation programme were mounted by successive government in the past, they seem not to achieve good results, some of the programme are reviewed hereunder.

3. Brief Historical Review of Poverty Alleviation and Unemployment Programmes in Nigeria

Historically, in relation to the challenges of unemployment and poverty, the government has embarked on many intervention programmes as follows:

3.1 National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

The national poverty eradication programme (NAPEP) came up in 2001 during the tenure of President Olusegun Obasanjo (Mustapha, 2014). It was proposed that the programme will serve as a central coordination point for all anti-poverty efforts from the local government level to the national level by which schemes would be executed with the sole purpose of eradicating absolute poverty. President Olusegun Obasanjo made a deliberate attempt to embark on poverty and unemployment eradication, a shift from the traditional concept of poverty alleviation. According to Mustapha (2014), NAPEP was structured to integrate four sectoral schemes which include: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS) and Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS).

These schemes were designed to spearhead government's programme of eradicating absolute poverty with a take-off grant of N6 billion approved in 2001. The difference between NAPEP and past poverty reduction programme is that it is not a sector project implementation agency, but a coordination facility that ensures that the core poverty eradication, ministries were effective. Although NAPEP appears to be well crafted, the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria was on the increase. Part of the failure of this programme was that, it was politicized, as people complained of marginalization. It was alluded that the beneficiaries were members of the ruling political party. NAPEP was succeeded by the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

3.2 The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)

In the year 2004, still under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo. The NEEDS strategy was inaugurated. The implementation of NEEDS rests on four major strategies. It aimed at reforming government and institutions by fighting corruption, ensuring transparency and promoting rule of law and strict enforcement of contracts. Furthermore, it aimed to foster the private sector as the engine of growth and wealth creation, employment generation and poverty

reduction. In addition, it seeks to implement a social charter with emphasis on people's welfare, health, education, employment, poverty reduction, empowerment, security, and participation. It equally aimed at value reorientation (Chukwuemeka, 2009). NEEDS is a national framework of action, which has its equivalent at the state and local government levels as State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (LEEDS) respectively (Mustapha, 2014). The implementation stressed on collaboration and coordination between the Federal and State governments, donor agencies, private sector, civil society, NGOs and other stakeholders. As a home-grown strategy, NEEDS has been described as the Nigerian version of the MDGs (Muatapha, 2014). Mustapha further maintained that the weakness of this programme was that, there were a weak statistic on poverty, particularly on income poverty. This necessitated the seven point agenda of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua,

3.3 The Seven-Point Agenda

In 2007 under the leadership of late President Umar Musa Yar'Adua, the seven-point agenda was initiated. The agenda proposed a Seven-Point plan for development. The agenda later became the policy thrust of the Yar'Adua administration. The main objectives and principles of the agenda include improving the general well-being of Nigerians and building the country to become one of the biggest economies in the world by the year 2020. The agenda has critical infrastructure as the first key area of focus. This includes power, transportation, national gas distribution and telecommunication. The other areas of focus of the seven-point agenda were addressing the existing issues in the Niger Delta, food security, human capital development, and the land tenure reform, national security, poverty alleviation and wealth creation. Although the Seven-Point Agenda appears to have broad coverage to address the various development challenges facing the country. The wide ambit of the programme did not allow for proper monitoring and effective implementation. Furthermore, resource constraints hampered the capacity of the government to productively address the wide areas covered by the programme (Oshewolo, 2010). This programme did not achieve much; the ill-health of the President and his death brought an end to the programme. The end of the programme ushers the subsidy reinvestment and empowerment programme.

3.4 The Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme

In January 2012 during the administration of President Jonathan, the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme known as the 'SURE-P' scheme was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The aim was to re-invest the Federal Government savings from fuel subsidy removal on critical infrastructure projects and social safety net programmes with direct impact on the citizens of Nigeria (Wikipedia, 2020). The scheme was one of the pivots of transformation agenda of the Federal Government in 2012. The core objectives of the programme include but not limited to provision of employment for unemployed graduates through internship programmes, creating database of unemployed youth and reducing social vulnerability among the group in the country through the mechanism of the policy. The limitation and weakness of the programme was corruption, institutional failure, lack of funding and political interference. This programme was succeeded by the N-Power Scheme

3.5 N-Power Scheme

On the 8th of June 2016, the N-Power scheme was set up by the incumbent President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, to address the issues of youth unemployment and help increase social development. The scheme was created as a component of National Social Investment Programme, to provide a structure for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development and to ensure that each participant learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work (Okogba,2017). The scheme was created for unemployed graduates and non-graduates between the ages of 18 and 35 (Abdulmalik, 2020). It is a paid programme of a two-year duration, aimed at engaging beneficiaries in their states of residence. On 13th July 2019, the Federal Government of Nigeria disclosed that they have spent a total of ₦279b since they started paying the scheme beneficiaries from December 2016 to June 2019 (Agbakwuru, 2020). The scheme currently has six categories namely; N-Teach, N-Health, N-Agro, N-Build, N-Creative and N-Tech. N-Teach and N-Health are available to graduates who have completed the mandatory one year NYSC programme, while N-Agro, N-Build, N-Creative and N-Tech are available to graduates and non-graduates (Onehi,2020). Economic crunch deeply affected the success of the programme as most of the beneficiaries are not paid on time (Onehi,2020). The programme is fraught with irregularities as some of the beneficiaries had job elsewhere, thereby denying prospective beneficiaries the opportunities.

Nevertheless, though efforts were made by several government in Nigeria to promote these programmes, poverty and unemployment remain endemic and pervasive in Nigeria. According to Mustapha (2014), all the poverty alleviation initiatives in Nigeria have yielded very little fruit. The author asserted that the programme seems mostly not designed to alleviate poverty. He further noted that they lacked clearly defined policy framework with proper guidelines for poverty alleviation; they suffer from political instability, interference by political class in power, policy and macroeconomic dislocations; and are riddled with corruption, political deception, outright kleptomania and distasteful looting (Mustapha, 2014). It must also be stated that lack of continuity in governance trailed poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria. Each subsequent administration came with a different idea or no idea at all. Poverty reduction programme became more 'regime specific' because there was hardly any continuity with those initiated by previous governments. However, having experienced and read through some of the lapses of the federal government intervention programmes for poverty and unemployment alleviation, it seems convincing that another dimension to poverty and unemployment reduction through the application and try-out of the Freirean Functional Approach which is the trust of this paper is quite desirable for sustainable restoration of the country to her past glory as the giant of Africa.

3.6 Principles of Freirean Functional Literacy Approach (FFLA)

Freire is an Italian educator-philosopher who lived in Brazil and cautioned unequal distribution of wealth in Brazil. He created a radical movement for sensitizing poor people. This resulted in critical awareness by the poor who questioned issues and demanded their rights. He got imprisoned but was later released. His philosophy was that literacy is not only about reading and writing; but rather, a tool for positive social-economic change (Finnish Refugee Council, 2016). Some key concepts in the Freirean philosophy include as follows:

Culture of Oppression: The culture of oppression exists where people live in suppression and have little control over their own destiny. In the present times this situation could be seen at leadership and state governance levels, as well as in learning situations where the 'teacher' alone decides on behalf of the 'students'. This system, Paulo Freire believes is ineffective for adult learning and strongly frowns at it (Finnish Refugee Council, 2016).

Culture of Silence: If people fear that by expressing their feelings they could be exposed to ridicule,

danger, punishment or other unfavorable consequences, there is tendency that they will remain silent even where they disagree to a government policy or ideology. This culture of silence does not help community and national development nor adult literacy (Finnish Refugee Council, 2016).

Banking Education: According to Freire, a quality teacher-student relationship centered on genuine approach of learning is an essential prerequisite for education and liberation, which is in stark contrast to the traditional notion of education. Freire defined conventional education through the concept of "banking education". This is the situation where students merely receive, classify, and store the knowledge that is conveyed to them by teachers, thereby restricting the recipients' freedom and independence. This prevailing banking model of learning tends to perpetuate complete ignorance in students, through the one-sided modes of communication, which alienates learner from teacher. According to Freire, structural relations between the oppressors and the oppressed create a "culture of silence" which pervades all aspects of the life and thinking of the dominated individuals, which was foreign to the real needs, problems, and conditions of their existence.

According to Freire such model of educational practice (banking process) will definitely add no value to any society, because it does not pave way to critical thinking, creativity, innovation and technological advancement. As a result, any society still practicing this model of learning will continue to swim in unemployment which is an offshoot of poverty as currently being experienced in Nigeria.

Codification and De-codification: Messages and lessons could be presented as coded messages for participants to analyze and then decode. This can be used as an effective tool especially in situations where the culture of oppression and silence is deep seated.

Conscientization: Conscientization according to Paulo Freire is the act of informing, enlightening, empowering and giving people the choice to decide what is right or wrong. REFLECT promotes this concept through the use of participatory communication and analysis tools including dialogue, conversation, talks and exchange of views in literacy circles (Finnish Refugee Council, 2016).

Praxis: Praxis briefly refers to action or intervention. According to Paulo Freire, learners should be allowed to develop praxis which refers to an inventive way of life that encourages free, creative reflection and thoughtful action in order to change the world and become transformed (Emmy & Ahmed, 2013). Freire contended that true knowledge, emerges only through restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful, critical inquiry with other people about their relations to the

world. A core component of Freirian theory is that learning begins with action then shaped by reflection, which gives rise to further action. Learning is thus a continuous process, directed at enhancing the learner's capacity to act in the world and change it. According to Freire, the act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action. In summary, in regard to learning, literacy and praxis Freire noted that if learning to read and write is to constitute an act of knowing the learners must assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects. It is not a matter of memorizing and repeating given syllables, words and phrases but rather, reflecting critically on the process of reading and writing itself and on the profound significance of language (Freire, 1988). It is through action, dialogue, reflection and intervention by both the teacher and the learner that true learning can be achieved. Another major principle of Freirean functional literacy approach is dialogue

Dialogue: According to Freire (1997) dialogue is a form of collective praxis directly concerned with unveiling inequitable conditions obscured by the ruling classes. The process is important and can be seen as enhancing community and building social capital that leads to justice and human flourishing. To enter into dialogue presupposes equality amongst participants. Each must trust the others; there must be mutual respect and love (care & commitment). Each one must question what he or she knows and realizes that through dialogue existing thoughts will change and new knowledge will be created (Emmy & Ahmed, 2013).

These principles if adopted or adapted in any learning environment both formal and non-formal will go a long way to reduce poverty and unemployment among youths. World Bank (2020) has declared Nigeria as the capital poverty of the world. The present state of education in Nigeria which have affinity with the banking model of education and tailored towards only reading and writing is no longer feasible in the 21st century, in terms of poverty and unemployment reduction. However, education for functionality and freedom as proposed by Freire will reduce poverty, unemployment, crime rate such as kidnapping, arm robbery, rape, violent protest and all other anti-social vices. These principles will help to solve many problems bordering on technology, economy, education, health which will reduce poverty and unemployment among youths, if it is well articulated.

3.7 REFLECT Circle as a Conception of Freirean Functional Literacy Approach

REFLECT is an acronym standing for (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowerment Community Techniques). The Freirean literacy approach or model proposed the culture circle or REFLECT circle. According to Archer (2001) RELECT is a structured participatory learning process, which facilitates people's critical analysis of their environment, placing empowerment at the heart of sustainable and equitable development. The focus of the learning process is on learner-generated materials not prepared primers. It emphasizes activity rather than passivity. It involves community members in the development of the literacy lessons through activities related to their developmental needs. The literacy model relates to the wider environment rather than simply classroom activity.

REFLECT circle provides a democratic space for a group of people to meet and discuss issues relevant to them. The participants choose topics of interest, according to their own priorities and supported by a local facilitator. Freire's literacy principles as discussed in the previous section took education out of the classroom and created the 'Culture Circle' which is a participatory learning approach where learners articulate their shared understanding to act and change their future. In the process, education became a process of dialogue in which the educator and the learner engage in mutually respectful process to act and change the limitations of their lives. In Nigeria the approach can be used to reduce the pangs of poverty and unemployment among youths. The participants in a RELECT Circle starts learning activities by constructing maps or matrices, diagram and charts of their environment based on the realities of their situations, and life circumstances for critical reflection and action.

Such maps and matrices may include houses, forests, rivers, agricultural resources, social life and status, inequality in the society, cultural practices and gender role stereotypes, discrimination, caste, political processes, cultural practices and involvement, family planning, nutrition and other health issues (Obidiegwu, Madu and Anthony, 2020). In Nigeria social vices of poverty and unemployment can be reduced using REFLECT circles. The maps, diagrams and matrices are analysed and dialogued upon for further action. They can copy key words in exercise books (ie if basic literacy is among the objectives). Depending on a social problem the learning group intends to tackle they construct their own learning guides, manual or facilitators guide which lead to

strong ownership of the issues and solution they proffer for action to be taken. This preliminary stage is the codification and decodification which according to Freire enables learners to be critically aware of their environment for action towards their problem, which in the case of Nigeria is unemployment and poverty.

4. Freire Literacy Approach and Application to the Solution of Unemployment and Poverty in Nigeria

Freire took education out of the classroom and created the 'culture circle' which is participatory. A process whereby learners used their own ways of speaking to articulate their shared understanding of the world and how to act to change their world. He transformed education from being a monologue process, to a process of dialogue in which educatee and educators engaged in mutually respectful learning. The concrete basis for Freire's dialogical system of education is the *culture circle*, in which learners and facilitators together discuss generative themes that have significance within the context of the learners' lives (Freire, 1988). These themes, which are related to nature, society, culture, work, and relationships, are discovered through the cooperative effects of facilitators and learners. They express, in an open rather than propagandistic fashion, the principle contradictions that confront the learners in their world. These themes are then represented in the form of codifications (usually visual representations) that are taken as the basis for dialogue within a culture. A culture circle does not involve the use of textbooks - no literacy 'primer' - no pre-printed materials other than a guide for the facilitators that is produced locally. As learners decode these representations, they recognize them as situations in which they themselves are involved as subjects. The process of critical consciousness formation is initiated when learners learn to read the codifications in their situation, rather than simply experiencing them, and this makes possible the intervention by learners in society. The learning circle is a non-hierarchical 'class' model where participants can discuss *generative* themes which are significance within the context of their lives. This involves creating a democratic space where every one's voice has equal weight. The conditions needed for this have to be actively created as it does not often occur naturally.

In the Nigerian case a holistic functional literacy imbued with Freirean ideology for the solution of unemployment and poverty should equip youths with self-reliant skills in addition to productive skills. Holistic literacy should involve not only reading, writing and computing on a self-learning basis, but

also skills in citizenship, production and living, sanitation and health, environment among others. In a culture circle, there is no textbook - no literacy 'primer' - no pre-printed materials other than a guide for the facilitators that is produced locally (preferably with the input of the facilitators themselves). Each literacy circle develops its own learning materials through the construction of maps, matrices, calendars and diagrams that represent local reality, systematize the existing knowledge of learners and promote detailed analysis of local issues (Danfodiyo,2011)

Literacy with a holistic perspective is concerned with the development of every person's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potential. In adopting a holistic approach to literacy, stakeholders in education should address the needs of the youths. Since youths play substantial productive roles, literacy programmes should provide them with creative skills and knowledge. At the same time, since a considerable portion of youth subordination can be traced to their lack of financial autonomy, basic literacy skills should be integrated into vocational skills and productive skills.

A major social challenge we are witnessing in Nigeria today is unemployment which is the root cause of poverty. REFLECT as a literacy and community development model, is a structured participatory learning process, a synthesis of planned and unplanned learning which helps people to read, write, calculate in the language of tuition chosen by them for critical awareness. It helps people to develop their capability to critically analyze their own environment and issues directly affecting them and helps people to write about their own lives and their world.

From the foregoing analysis of the principles of Freire's functional literacy approach and that help a great deal in reducing unemployment and poverty, because it creates a democratic space where learners gain the consciousness for developing critical thinking, learners are made to develop themes to their own advantage, raise question and solve problems. This literacy programme does not see teacher as a know all rather there is harmonious collaboration between educators and the educates. In such relationship new ground of development are discovered and new ideas resonated. As a result everyone makes progress, in this manner unemployment and poverty will be reduced to its lowest ebb. The culture circle has been tried in Brazil, Nicaragua and Sudan, the result was quite encouraging and worthy of emulation. Through the culture circles process, people progressed very quickly, in Brazil illiterate adults learned to read and write in 30 hours; in Nicaragua illiteracy was reduced from 40% to 13%

in two months while in Sudan, from a baseline of 100% illiteracy, 67% of beneficiaries could write a short paragraph, and 71% were able to do written calculations with two digit number, 78% of beneficiaries have mobilized their community to take part in discussions or events on health and education. 93% of beneficiaries have attended health and nutrition awareness training, 80% of beneficiaries are active in implementing savings or small projects within their group (Hanemann,2017). The culture circle if well thought out, will help to reduce unemployment and poverty among youths in Nigeria.

5. Implication of the Study

This paper implies that a functional literacy approach as shown in the REFLECT circle which was proposed by Paulo Freire should be integrated in all learning environments in Nigeria in order to reduce the challenges of unemployment and poverty. A need for functional approach where a learner is active and not passive in a learning environment is implied for restoration of the past glory of Nigeria, by reducing armed banditry, kidnapping, youth restiveness, drug abuse, cybercrime amongst others.

6. Conclusion

Based on the idea as presented in this paper, it was concluded that, Freirean literacy approach should be tried out in Nigeria for the solution of poverty and unemployment challenges that bedevils the country for sustainable growth and development, hence, it has been tried out and was successful in some other countries.

7. Recommendations

Based on the analyses and report made in this paper, the following recommendations were made:

- A well-funded functional literacy and skill acquisition programme using REFLECT approach should be established by government in all communities in Nigeria.
- REFLECT literacy approach should be incorporated into Nigerians poverty alleviation programme
- The current curriculum which seems to encourage banking model of learning which breeds poverty and unemployment should be infused with a more sustainable and practical oriented model such as dialogue, conscientization, codification and decodification.

References

- Abdilmalik, F. (2020, July 3.). Is the N-power programme key to delivering a campaign promise? Ventures Africa.
- Adebola O. Rafiu, S. and Igbayemi. A. (2016) Poverty and rate of unemployment in Nigeria. *International Journal of Management of Unemployment in Nigeria*. 2 (1), 1-4.
- Agbakwuru, J. (2020, July 3.). N-power jobs in just 5 days, applications exceed a whole of 2016 with 750,000 entries. Vanguard Newspaper.
- Ajaegbu, O.O. (2012). Rising youth unemployment and the violent crime in Nigeria. *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanity*. 2 (5), 60-68
- Archer, D. (1996). The experiences of three REFLECT pilot projects in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador. ODA Educational Research Serial No 17.
- Chukwuemeka, E.E.O. (2009). Poverty and the millennium development goals in Nigeria: The nexus. *Educational Research and Review*, 4, (9), 405-410.
- Collins D, (1997). *Paulo Freire: His Life, Works and Thought*, New York,
- Dajan, A.M & Diyoke, H. (2019). Aa analysis of unemployment and political violence in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa state. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business, Arts and Sciences*, 2 (1), 200-231.
- Danfodiyo, U. (2011). Adult literacy programmes for sustainable livelihood for poor rural women in Nigeria. www.adultliteracyprogrammesforsustainablelivelihoodfor.pdf
- Ellias J, (1994). *Paulo Freire: Pedagogue of Liberation*, Malabar, Florida, Krieger Publishing Company, London and New York, Routledge.
- Emmy, J and Ahmed, A.O. (2013). Reflection of Paulo Fereire and classroom relevance. *American International Journal of Social Science*. 2 (2), 23-28.
- Entwistle H, (1994). Ideologies in Adult Education, in: Tuijnman, A., *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education and Training*, Paris, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, (OECD) Pergamon, p. 182-187.
- Finnis Refugee Council (FRC, 2016). Adult literacy REFLECT training manual
- Freire P, (1970). The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom, in: *Harvard Educational Review*, 3.
- Freire P, (1972). *Cultural action for freedom*, Harmondworth, Penguin.
- Freire P, (1985). *The politics of education: Culture, Power and Liberation*, Massachusetts, Bergin & Garvey Publishers.
- Freire P, (1996). *Letters to Cristina. Reflections on my life and work*, London, Routledge.
- Freire P, (1998). *Pedagogy of Freedom*, (ed. P. Clark), Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham.
- Freire P, (1998). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach*. The edge critical studies in educational theory, Boulder, Colo., Westview Press.
- Freire P, (2007). *When education is a liberating act*, in: *Adult Education*, 11, 17-19.
- Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York: Seabury.
- Freire, P. (1988). "The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom and education and conscientizacao." In perspectives on literacy, ed. Eugene R. Kintgen, Barry M. Kroll, and Mike Rose, pp. 398-409. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press. Freire,
- Gadotti M, 1994. *Reading Paulo Freire. His Life and Work*, New York, State University of New York Press.
- Grabowski S. M., (1974). (ed.) *Paulo Freire: A Revolutionary Dilemma for the Adult Educator*, Syracuse, Syracuse University-Publications in Continuing Education.
- Hanemann, U. (2021). REFLECT and literacy and livelihood programme in Sudan. UNESCO Institute for Livelong Learning.
- Ikejiaku, B.V. (2009). The relationship between poverty, conflict and development. *Journal of Sustainable Development*. 2,1.
- International Labour Organization, (2012). Global employment trends for youth.
- Jarvis P, (2001). *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education*. Malabar, Florida, Krieger Publishing Company. London and New York, Routledge.
- London J, (1973). Reflections upon the Relevance of Paulo Freire for American Adult Education, in: *Convergence*, 1.
- Matthews M, (1985). Knowledge, Action and Power, in: Mackie, R. (ed.), *Literacy and Revolution. The Pedagogy of Paulo Freire*, London, Pluto Press.
- Mustapha, H. (2005). Poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria: Issues and challenges. *International Journal of Development Research*. 4 (3)717-720.
- Nwagwu, E. J. (2014). Unemployment and poverty in Nigeria: A link to national insecurity. *Global*

- Journal of Politics and Law Research*. 2 (1), 19-35.
- Obadan, M.I. (1996). Poverty in Nigeria: Characteristics of alleviation strategies and programmes. *Ncema Policy Analysis Series* 2, 2.
- Obidiegwu, U.J, Madu, C.O, and Apiti, A.A. (2020). Repositioning adult education using reflect circle: A non-formal education strategy for inclusiveness and sustainable development among rural women. *Journal of Research & Methods in Education*. 10, 1,01-08
- Ojekunle, A. (2020). More than 80 million Nigerians are extremely poor-living on less than #400 per day. www.dataphyte.com/development/its-official-more-than-80-million-nigerians-are-extremely-poor-living-on-less-than-400-per-day-html.
- Okogba, E. (2017, June 13). Facts you need to know about N-power. Vanguard Newspaper.
- Olatomide, W. O. (2012). Concept, measurement and causes of poverty: Nigeria in Perspective. *American Journal of Economics*. 2 (1), 25-36.
- Onehi, V. (3, July, 2020). Six jobs available for N-power Batch C applicants. Daily Trust Newspaper.
- Oshewoho, S. (2011). Poverty reduction and the attainment of the MDGS in Nigeria: Problems and challenges. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*, 21, 23, Quarterly III.
- Oyekanmi, S. (2020). Nigeria unemployment rate jumps to 33.3% as at Q4 2020. www.nairametrics.com.
- Plecher, H. (2020). Nigeria: Youth unemployment rate from 1999-2019. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/812330/youth-unemployment-rate-in-nigeria/html>.
- Rhizome (2021). What is REFLECT? www.rhizome.coop/reflect-action-org/what-is-reflect/html
- Schaefer, B.D. (2005). How the scope of government shapes the wealth of nations: Heritage lecture delivered in December 1, 2005.
- Shor I, Freire P, (1987). *A Pedagogy for Liberation. Dialogues on Transforming Education*, New York, Bergin & Garvey
- Sipitanou A, (2011). *Adult education as an act release. Paulo Freire 1921-1997*, Thessaloniki, Kyriakides Bros.
- Turner T, Williams R, (1971). International Education: A Political Action, in: *Convergence*, 1, 75-79.
- Udu, E. & Agu, G.A. (2005). *New System Economics*. Africana First Publisher LTD. Onitsha.
- Usman, S.A. (2015). Unemployment and poverty as sources and consequences of insecurity in Nigeria. The Boko Haram insurgency revisited. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*. 9, 3, 90-99.
- Watkins M, (1999). Pathways between the multiplicities of psyche and culture: The development of dialogical capacities, in: Cooper M. & J. Rowan (eds), *The Plural Self: Multiplicity in everyday life*, New York, Sage.
- Wikipedia. (2020). Sure-P en.wikipedia.or/wiki/sure-p#:~:text=The%20subsidy%Reinvestment%20and%20empowerment.Safety%net%20programmes%20with%20direct.
- World Bank. (1996). Poverty in the midst of plenty. The challenge of growth with inclusion. A World Bank poverty assessment, May 31, World Bank Washington D. C.
- Xohelis, P. (2007). *Dictionary of Education*. Thessaloniki, Kyriakides Bros.