

# Implication of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Achieving Society 5.0 in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The future of any society depends on the style and form of education provided for the younger generation. The government has been striving to transform society through various forms of education such as distance, continuing, liberal, sandwich/part-time, and adult education programs. The citizenry's engagement in these programs aims to achieve a reasonable level of mass literacy in tune with education for all global agendas. The aim is to raise literate and productive individuals who would fit in and contribute to society, knowing fully well that the world is facing challenges at an unprecedented scale. Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education give opportunities to adults, youths, and children of legal school age who cannot attain regular schooling or have dropped out from school. The paper critically looked at the implication of this concept vis-a-vis attainment of society 5.0 in the 21st century in Nigeria, going by the enormous challenges of insecurity, corruption, kidnapping, ritualism, agitation for self-determination, terrorism, and others currently bedeviling the country. It further examined the role of adult education to national development in the journey towards society 5.0 but expresses skepticism based on the functionality of adult education in the country. It was recommended that educational corruption and insecurity are tackled head-long for the envisaged digital transformation of the country.

**Keywords:** Education, society 5.0, mass literacy, adult and non-formal education, national development

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The future of any society depends on the style and the form of education provided for the younger generation [1]. Education is central to human growth and development. Beside as an essential tool for social and economic growth of a country [2]. The ability of any nation to grow and develop depends on the quality of its educational system. No country can succeed without first making education its ally. These views imply that education offers opportunities for a nation to attain sustainable development. The goal of a man is to work towards his perfection, and perfection of the state because there cannot be a perfect man without a well-ordered and perfect state. Man becomes perfect through education, and the best state is one whose leaders are best qualified through capacity and education.

The concept of education involves every effort, influence, protection, and assistance provided to students aimed at learners' maturation [3]. Education is an activity by which adults influence, protect and provide assistance to students [4]. The provision of quality education is a critical tool in generating opportunities and benefits of social and economic development. Education is an instrument of excellence for effecting national development. Educating people means putting opportunities in the hands of the citizenry, which translates to an anti-poverty strategy. Education empowers individuals politically and economically in ensuring social prosperity and competitiveness amongst individuals and, by extension, the nation. Realizing the

importance of education, the Federal Government domesticated Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which provides the right of everyone to education and that education shall be free and compulsory up to elementary stages. To this effect, Nigeria did not haste to sign Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015) in conformity to a universal call to action for equality and inclusive education for all. These treaties were given legal backing in the 1999 Constitution as amended, stating that education should be free and compulsory from primary to university levels when practically possible. These treaties were translated into action on June 25, 1990, when Mass Literacy, Adult, and Non-Formal Education was established with a core mandate to enhance the literacy rate in the country. Mass Literacy, Adult, and Non-Formal Education components include continuing education, adult and non-formal education, liberal, sandwich, part-time, and distance education programs. Mass literacy became a priority to the country and such. The action was followed by introducing the Universal Basic Education of 1999 to give every Nigerian free, compulsory, and universal basic literacy of 9 years. These attempts are directed towards moving the country on the part of literacy because the world is fast transforming into a technology-driven village with the emergence of Information Communication and Technology, Internet and Networking, Artificial Intelligent, and Robot. The goal of society 5.0 is to create a human-centric society in which economic development and the resolution of the societal challenges are achieved, and people can enjoy a high

quality of life that is fully active and comfortable. Many advanced countries like Japan, China, Cuba, and the United States of America had moved on technologically courtesy of various forms of education, which have enabled them to create values for the citizenry. Nigeria is on the part of progress, maintains a literacy rate of 62.02%.

On gender consideration, male literacy is put at 71.26% over and above 52.66% female literacy rate [5]. No nation progresses without educating its citizenry. In life, opportunities available to citizenry are not equal, alternative mode of education (Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal become an option. Nigeria at 61 of post-independence should possess signs of emerging transformation in a competitive world. No doubt, the country is blessed with enormous human and material resources, enough for the citizens to advance and live in peace and harmony, tolerate one and another with every sense of dignity, love, and the rule of law. Unfortunately, the country is a combination of everything good and evil, cut in the web of society 1.0 but living in the imagination and delusion of society 5.0. What has gone wrong? Adult education supplies unskilled workforce due to current inappropriate education policy. In actual practice, mass literacy, adult and non-formal education cannot transfer relevant skills needed in the emerging world of computers, the internet, and technology. During the peak of covid-19 in 2020, this segment of learners was cut off for lack of knowledge to advance knowledge due to poor network, epileptic power supply, poverty, insurgence, killings, and kidnappings.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Historical Perceptive of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria**

Literacy is an essential factor in the lives of human beings and is likened to light through which a country can develop. The campaign for mass literacy was vigorously pursued after the nation's independence in 1960. In words, "if you want to conquer poverty, ignorance, and disease, you must first conquer illiteracy"[6]. Illiteracy is the most significant handicap for economic, political, social, and individual development that we know. Africa was literate to the extent the traditional education could carry them. With the advent of Islamic and Christian missionaries in the 14th and 19th centuries, religious literacy was promoted in the territory known as Nigeria today. However, the introduction of the 1882 Ordinance by British Colonial administrators changed the direction of the literacy campaign. As of 1950, the estimated illiteracy rate in Nigeria was 84.4% [7]. The Regional Governments led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe leveraged the 1954 Constitution to launch Universal Primary Education in the West in 1955 and Eastern Nigeria in 1957. This set the tone for adult literacy development in the post-independence era [8].

The vision is to enhance literacy rate culminated in the established National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education on June 25, 1990. The Commission maintained its presence in all the states of the federation and 774 Local Government Areas across the

country with Local Education Authorities and States Ministry of Education providing staffing, monitoring, and supervision. The core mandate of the Commission includes: To work with all concerned to eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria and give adults' citizenry the necessary education for public enlightenment amongst others [9].

At the states level and Federal Capital Territory Abuja, the Commission was to implement a plan, research, regulate, and monitor to ensure quality control of all continuing education centers and extra moral classes. While in the local government levels, the agencies carried out day-to-day administration, recruited and paid facilitators and part-time instructors [9]. The launching of Universal Basic Education in 1999 further strengthened the opportunity of citizens to acquire basic literacy.

Components of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Irrespective of its formal, informal, and non-formal form, the branches of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education span from Continuing, Distance, Remedial, Life Long, Sandwich/Part-time, Liberal to Literacy Education programs. Continuing Adult Education is the type of education aimed at building upon the learners' expectations in a given field of endeavor. It boosts the skills and knowledge of the recipients by increasing their expertise, while the distance education system separates learners and teachers in space and time. Examples of distance adults and Non-Formal include Correspondence courses, Open University, Internet, Radio, and Television programs. Remedial education is described as a make-up system of education that provided opportunities to school dropouts and others to remedy their deficiencies in educational attainment.

In the same manner, life Long education system starts from the cradle and stops at a grave. Learning is a continuous process as long as one is alive. Similarly, sandwich/part-time education is mainly undertaking by workers who are already in the service of their fatherland. It is an opportunity designed for workers who may ordinarily not be able to jettison their means of livelihood for further studies and exploit this opportunity to accomplish their desire. Whereas; liberal education offers a broad range of knowledge, skills, sense of values, and orientation to embrace change, accommodation, and literacy education to read, write, and arithmetic.

### **Society 5.0**

The idea of society 5.0 is the future of the modern world where digitalization and globalization are the modes of doing business, teaching, and learning. Significant changes are evolving around the world. The need to create a space where various needs of the people irrespective of age, race, region, sex, and language could be met becomes imminent. A society of this type is referred to as society 5.0. Society 5.0 is an intelligent community where the physical world and cyberspace are integrated [10]. Society 5.0 is a human-centric society in which economic development and societal challenges are resolved, and people can enjoy a high quality of fully active and comfortable life. It is a vision, integrating technology with daily life to create a future society that would sustainably generate new values and services that could benefit and balance society as a whole. In the era of society 5.0, Google and Computer become easy to do business while

e-learning offers affordable and accessible education for all. At the peak of Covid-19 in 2020, the world realized the importance of e-learning. The delivery of education of any sort came under advanced technology. This is where the problem of Africa lies with the use of technology in education and Nigeria in particular. However, during the covid-19 era, learning opportunities thrived for many urban dwellers who could afford the cost, but epileptic power supply hindered the adoption of technology in the course of teaching and learning in most African counties. No doubt, society 5.0 can enable teachers and instructors to facilitate training through technological means.

Unfortunately, most countries in Africa see this as a dream. African countries are still dangling around society 1.0 (hunting society), society 2.0 (agricultural society), and society 3.0 (industrial society), with any significant hope advancing beyond that level. The advanced world has moved on society 4.0 (information society and lastly society 5.0, which is acknowledged to have provided solutions to both future economic and societal challenges faced by humanity at its present and future stages by using all the advances of industry of society 4.0. Society 5.0 surmount man's challenges by the fusion of cyberspace with the physical space to generate quality data, which the values could create and man's challengers eliminated. Amongst 193 countries that domesticated SDG to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality, provide quality and inclusive education to all citizens and protect the planet by 2030, only a few advanced countries are on track. In society 5.0, the internet will connect all people; data, information, and knowledge will be shared. Education is believed to have a brighter future with society 5.0. Sustainable development. Ent goal, goal 4, accommodates everyone and that education should be free, affordable, and accessible to all; society 5.0 can deliver these attributes to the citizenry. In this era, a close relationship is established in the use of technology to acquire skills and technology to teach.

### **Education and Society 5.0**

The development and its dynamic in the emerging society 5.0 significantly impact education, especially in the changing characteristics of learning [11]. The lockdown, restrictions, and closure of schools in 2020 occasioned by the covid-19 pandemic brought e-learning to the limelight, especially in Africa, for teachers and students to reach out. Technological breakthroughs of the emerging era influenced the traditional teaching model of face-to-face. Society 5.0 promoted a student-centered learning approach where learners actively source and process information without necessarily depending on teachers/facilitators. The passion for accessing the internet and the use of Google, YouTube, Big, zoom, and Skype increased, making teaching and learning easier in meeting individual needs as quickly as possible. Artificial intelligence and robotics are characteristic of society 5.0 deployed in education delivery to help students in learning and teachers in instructional preparations and delivery. Society 5.0 gives room students centered, collaborative, and project-based learning. However, the approach does not foreclose the role of teachers in the teaching-learning process. The role of teachers is that of direction and facilitation. Unfortunately, Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education is part of distance

education but lacks a collaborative learning approach. The emerging technology is associated with new jobs requiring new skills as a challenge to the educational sector. In Nigeria, the campaign for mass literacy yields positive results, with a literacy rate of 62.02% [5]. Of what percentage of this literate population possesses the required skills that would fit into the new world of work? The literal education bequeathed to the country at independence in 1960 is very much trending. Therefore, the journey towards the digital transformation of the educational sector occasioned by society 5.0 in the 21st Century is still gloomy.

### **Challenges of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in the era of Society 5.0**

The Federal Government of Nigeria has succeeded in putting its citizenry on the knowledge that education is worthwhile through its various programs and campaigns. However, the attainment of the desired goals is faced with a herculean task. Firstly, the country is at war with itself. No day passes without records of dozens of killings or maiming, kidnapping for ransom, abduction of school children, pupils, undergraduates, forcing schools to be shut down, and parents abandoning farm work to escape the menace of Fulani herders. The country's security architecture is fast collapsing, and for the majority of the people, it is the living that education is meant for. The children who are our future are being threatened, particularly the girl-child who are regularly abducted from their schools in the northern part of the country with our governments and everyone who should do something prostrate before the agents of evil [12].

Secondly, Nigeria is blessing with enormous and material resources. The resources meant to train, fix and build infrastructures towards better lives fizzle out with impunity. For instance, reports that mysterious snakes swallowed N36 million from the JAMB office vault in Benue State. To date, the case was adjudged sine-die due to legal maneuvers. Though the government is fighting corruption, corruption is fighting back.

Similarly, Kanji Dam supplies electricity to even neighboring countries, for example. While those neighboring countries enjoy 24 hours power supply, Nigerians are grubbing with epileptic power supply in most areas while others enjoy power black-out. The privileged few make use of light with a cost. In this scenario, e-learning, the internet, and networking, which is the hub of ease of doing business, suffers, and the ordinary person for which mass literacy, adult, and non-formal education is meant for has been surcharged. Though the leadership is denying the corruption index, it is interesting to note that Transparency International (2020) rated Nigeria 149/180 globally, 32/49 (2nd) in Africa, and 1st in West Africa. Again, the cultural practices of some ethnic groups in the country tend to work against adults education programs generally. Many inhabitants prefer their traditional ways of life to modern education. The migrant herders and fishers have yet to come in term with a national campaign for mass literacy, which is to turn their illiteracy into literacy. Inappropriate teaching methodology and insufficient teaching materials for educational delivery are not in tune with global best practices meant to produce the needed skills, competencies, and knowledge for today's world of work. This

revolves around the government's lack of political will to address these teething problems bedeviling the country's education system. The success of any program hinges on the willingness of the political leaders to adequately provide funds for the training of teachers, provide equipment and other educational resources for program implementation. The Open University system gives credence to Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education. Left for Nigerian factor which makes the country's learning environments hostile, National Open University of Nigeria (NAOUN), which produces high human resources through Mass Literacy programme would have rewritten the history of Nigeria technologically.

### **National Development**

Development is critical and essential to the growth of individuals, communities, and nations. The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language Encyclopedic Edition defines development as the series of changes by which an individual, plant or animal passes from lower to high state of being or from embryonic condition to maturity. In Gboyega (2003) words in [13], development is an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. Similarly, Chrisman in believes that development is a process of societal advancement, where improvement in the wellbeing of people is generated through the strong partnership between all sectors, corporate bodies, and other groups in the society [14]. A country is said to be developed when it can provide for the wellbeing of its citizenry by the level of standard of living of people, creates employment opportunities, and reduces poverty amongst other things. In this case, the development of a nation liberates its people from poverty, diseases, hunger, traditional forms of beliefs and superstitions. The development of an economy is measured in various ways, including income per head, amount of savings, growth of the social system, degree of education of the populace, and infrastructures. The underdeveloped/ Less developed/ developing countries or emerging economics in this context refer to third-world countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Egypt, Lebanon, and Pakistan, which are characterized by debt stock. For instance, the Federal Government debt stock stands at N33.11trillion (external and internal). Upon disaggregation, N12.47 trillion representing 37.64% of the debt, is external, while N20.64 trillion, representing 62.33% is domestic debt [15]. Underdeveloped countries are characterized by substantial external and internal indebtedness, trade imbalances, corruption, breakdown of social amenities, healthcare failure, hunger and poverty, nepotism and ethnicity, religious bigotry, etc. Loan dependent nation is poor and can hardly develop. A developed nation is described as a nation whose citizens have access to social amenities to improve their wellbeing. This is exemplified by the United States of America, Britain, France, Germany, and China. These nations are highly democratic, governed by the rule of law, technologically above board, self-sufficient, and manipulate third world countries to their advantage. The developed countries are characterized by high per capita income, high human development, high Gross Domestic Product (GDP), high energy consumption, and literacy level.

### **Role of Mass Literacy, Adults and Non-Formal Education to National Development**

1. Mass Literacy, Adults and Non-Formal Education is a sub-set of the conventional education system which promotes a progressive and united country through physical, emotional, and psychological development of all citizens through the acquisition of competencies needed for self-reliance.

2. Provision of needed human resources. People embrace Mass Literacy, Adults, and Non-Formal Education to acquire reading, writing, and arithmetic skills to participate effectively and contribute to the nation's development. The knowledge and moral development that has gotten through this educational program level are developmental ingredients of an economy.

3. Instrument for meeting political, economic, cultural, and technological national aspirations. The importance ascribed to education has made the government be committed to its provision. According to National Policy on Education (2014), education is an instrument of excellence in affecting national development. Through and by it, the country's nationals are empowered to exit from poverty, superstitious beliefs, and religious bigotry and make in-road technologically.

4. Mass Literacy, Adults, and Non-Formal Education permit a flexible social group relationship and interactions, exchange of ideas, materials, and assistance within and outside the shores of the country's territorial borders.

5. Enhancement of national productivity. Adult education develops a sense of creativity and increases the value of labor efficiency, and, by so doing, improves the quality of life.

6. Inculcation of the correct values and attitudes for individual and Nigerian nation [9].

### **3. CONCLUSION**

The national development strategy is quantitative. Though the Mass Literacy campaign promotes literacy, entrepreneurship, science, and technology, education should form the bedrock of the educational system to launch into the new world order of Society 5.0. Advancing towards information and communication technology, the internet, or cyberspace for ease of teaching and learning to produce skillful and productive citizens to face the evolving new jobs in the changing global world remains an option. Going by Nigeria's involvement in several treaties such as U.N., (1948) education for all, MDG, (2000) universality of primary education, SDG, (2015), equality and inclusive education with 1999 Federal Constitution confirms equal educational opportunity, free and compulsory primary to university education to all citizens when it is practicable possible, address the country's desire to aspire for society 5.0. However, the burden of insecurity, corruption, sectionalism, and favoritism may not give way for the attainment of society 5.0 in the 21st Century.

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