

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR FEMALE DROPOUTS IN SOKOTO STATE - PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper centres on continuing education for females whose studies must have stopped at one time or the other due to personal or societal factors. The paper among others considers the meaning of continuing education, its practice in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods in the northern part of the country generally and Sokoto in particular. It also highlights on the significance of continuing education on economic and human development; as well the causes and solution to female drop-outs with special reference to Sokoto State.

i MEANING OF CONTINUING EDUCATION :-

It is important here to reflect on the word "Continuing". Something can continue only if it is presumed to have commenced at some point in time. Continuing education therefore signifies that some process of acquiring skill, knowledge, values and attitudes which started some time in the past and resumed in the present. It is often important to resume such a process if it had been terminated at some point. Besides, the content of continuing education could be either specific to a discipline or could be of a general sort. From the vocational and professional angle, we are thus able to hear of continuing education for doctors, mechanics, computer operators and so on. On more general education, there are cases of females who left secondary school or other institutions of learning without getting enough credit level passes in their final examinations. These category of people attend continuing education classes to obtain enough credits that would qualify them to enter tertiary institutions. Equally, much of professional and vocational adult education classes take the form of continuing education classes. (Laggerneni & Smith 1989).

ii CONTINUING EDUCATION IN THE PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD

Before the advent of Islamic and European influences, Nigerians had their ways of educating young people as well as adults. The method include Apprenticeship system which involved serving a master-craftsman or woman for a number of years. (Fafunwa 1974 p. 24). There was also short term attachment whereby practitioners of a trade would come back for a short while to their original trainers to acquire latest skills that may not have been in vogue during their period of training. Adult education before the advent of Europeans also took the form of imitating and mimicking. Participation in Age-Grade Activities that time was also considered a form of education. Festivals afforded another medium for educating people, especially adults. (Blackmore & Cooksey 1980: p 18)

Continuing education for adults during the Colonial era was through the Islamic and European influences. The Arab Traders and Scholars rooted Islam and taught

Islamic principles in Kano, Katsina and other towns in Northern Nigeria. Clearly Islamic adult education was to foster trade and to spread Islam. The method most commonly used was rote learning and recitation. One particularly Islamic adult-education influence was the attempt of Shehu Uthman Dan fodio. Apart from trying to purify Islam, he ushered the education of women in his book *Nur al-Albab* he said. "They treat their wives and daughters like household implements which are used until they are broken and then thrown on to the rubbish heap. Alas! how can they abandon their wives and daughters in the perpetual darkness of ignorance while they daily impart knowledge to their students. This is nothing but error because they are instructing their students in this manner out of sheer egotism and hypocrisy". (See Kani 1989 p.69). The Shehu received women in his lectures and preaching.

iii COLONIAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS CONTINUING EDUCATION

Equally, the European traders and missionaries brought western education through the Portuguese. Through, primarily interested in commerce, the Portuguese were essentially Christians and considered same for Nigerians to be good customers. Some important early adult and continuing education during the colonial era include the Industrial education in Pategi, Wushishi and Bida by Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.). School for Mallams in Zaria and Nasarawa (outside Kano) established by Dr. Miller and Hans Vicher respectively. In the same vein, the church missionary society, established a school in Bida. The school encouraged Court officials to write Nupe and Hausa in Roman script. It ran from 7. am., subjects taught were scripture, geography, singing, reading and writing in local language. (Fafunwa 1974: pp 120-3).

CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES :- There are largely organised continuing Education courses by individuals and organisations. Such courses can be broken down under the following headings.

1. BASIC AND COMMERCIAL EDUCATION COURSES :-

These cover remedial classes for senior secondary school certificate, Teachers Grade II certificate, Matriculation examination for entry into the tertiary institutions, typing, shorthand and other commercial subjects. Such classes hold largely in the evenings and on weekends. There are also computer classes for female drop-outs to attend and specialise in, as a profession.

2. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION :-

Again, these are usually run by individuals, clubs organisations and business houses. Subjects taught include computer Science and technology, painting, woodwork, metal ornaments, sculpture, photography, painting, hair dressing, printing, dress making, home economics, baking, auxiliary nursing, cookery and host of others. Some participants attend full-time lasting one to two years while others study part-time possibly just to obtain certain skills. (Deighton, 1971: p. 122).

3. LEISURE EDUCATION :- Subjects taught include music, drama and fine Art.

4. **PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND GAMES :-**

These are run by individuals, clubs and sports councils. Females learn by participating in games like netball, swimming, wrestling. There are aspects of non-formal education which may not be introduced for females in Sokoto State for some time to come.

5. **PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION :-**

Here, the following can be included :-

- a) Workers' education provided by the training division of business and commercial enterprises themselves or through the Industrial Training Fund (I.T.F.).
- b) The various seminars, workshops, conferences, symposium organised by private and public organisations and at which professional ideas are exchanged. Some of these workshops last from between one to three weeks.

6. **CIVIC EDUCATION :-**

Much of this (including mass mobilisation and political education) by the Directorate for Mass Mobilisation and social Justices, self-reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). Methods used include seminars, conferences, symposium, print, radio, television and campaign with Mobile vans.

7. **APPRENTICESHIP EDUCATION :-**

These include all the learning experiences obtained through apprenticeship.

- a) Commercial apprenticeship include Cotton merchant, patent medicine dealer, groundnut oil dealer etc.
- b) Vocational apprenticeship include tailoring, dying, weaving, basket making and many others.

8. **NOMADIC EDUCATION :-**

Decree 41 of 1989 established the Nomadic Commission for Nomadic education. This body is charged with the over all responsibility of the education of Nomads and their children. Methods used include mobile schools, print and electronic media. The curriculum include Fulfulde, Hausa, History of Nomadic Fulani, the Fullo culture, civics, Animal Management (including cattle, poultry and Fishing), housekeeping, weaving, sewing carpentry. A special education programme has also been developed for migrant fishermen. In addition to an increased enrolment of females. In these area, continuing of their education is facilitated if once stopped.

9. **WOMEN EDUCATION :-**

This has attained greater significance with the establishment of the National Commission for Women. Other bodies engaged in the non-formal education of women through continuing studies include Better Life For Rural Women, Nigerian Association

of Women in Science, Technology and Mathematics (NAWSETEM). Methods used include Mass Mobilisation of women, Women Education centre, Science, Technology and Mathematics, Road show clinics, Co-operative education and income-generating activities for women.

INFLUENCE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT :-

Economic development refers to the upward movement of the entire social system. It involves growth in the nation's per capital income, eliminating of miseries or poverty, reduction in unemployment and inflation and the elimination of customary obstacles to progress. Continuing education is an agent of social change. Here, the existing practices and attitudes which constitute obstacles to economic development can be eliminated through education. Opportunity is given for citizenship Training so that citizens can develop an awareness of the importance of literacy, social, political and economic patriotism. (Omolewa 1981).

There will also be manpower supply because the economy depends on the education for the supply of manpower in various sectors. This is because the supply of skilled manpower is the pre-occupation of the education sector. There will be adequate opportunity for vocational training which will help females as individuals to sustain themselves and their dependants. Lastly, there will be an increase productivity since conservatism will be replaced by technical know-how-through which the causes of low productivity will be identified and taken care of. Apart from these, extensive continuing education classes will help to include new and progressive ways of doing things in the adult-learners.

The National Policy on Education (N.P.E. 1995) state in section 7 that the objectives of adult and Continuing education are as follows :-

- a) To provide functional literacy education for adults who have never had the advantage of any formal education.
- b) To provide functional and remedial education for those young people who prematurely dropped out of the formal school system.
- c) To provide formal education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their knowledge and skills.
- d) To provide in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills.
- e) To give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment.

Based on these objectives therefore, the National Policy on Education went further that the underlisted six areas of adult/Continuing education are to be provided.

1. Functional literacy education.
2. Functional education.
3. Further education.
4. Remedial education.
5. In-service, on-the-job, Vocational and professional training.
6. Aesthetic, cultural and civic education.

The underlisted are the problems considered as shortcomings not addressed by the National policy on education (N.P.E. 1995).

- i) The level of involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGO) in literacy and continuing adult education is not defined. This commission is significant because of the fact that most of the literacy and continuing education efforts are being made by private and religious organisations such as Christian and Islamic Associations. It is important that activities of such organisations be well co-ordinated to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained.
- ii) Another important problem not addressed by the continuing education programmes generally and the National Policy in particular is how to sustain people's interests in literacy education. Adult women who attend such courses suffer immediate economic loss in their business concern. They have not been receiving some financial and material inducements for purposes of encouragement's.
- iii) Another problem is that of communication' literacy education should commence in indigenous language for beginners who have not been speaking English and who are aged. This is important for the added reason that the policy stipulated that context of literacy education should be adapted to local culture and prevailing sociological conditions.

PROSPECTS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR FEMALES :-

- 1) The National Policy on Education (N.P.E.) has already stated that non-formal education would continue to be under the Ministries of Education to this end. a National Commission for Adult Education has been set up along with State Commissions Mass Literacy Board is set up in Sokoto State.
 - i) The Federal Government is determined to ensure uniform standards and quality control of private and public organisations responsible for continuing education.
 - ii) Inspectorates services are being established to improve and maintain standards of education practices for continuing education.
 - iii) Support services are being set up including curriculum development libraries and audio-visual materials.
- 2) Already in the State, seminars and workshops are being organised in addition to sending female workers on in-service training.
- 3) The Nomadic Education programme in the state is taking due cognisance of female educators.
- 4) At State level, efforts are being made to ensure that numerous bodies responsible for female education in the formal and non-formal aspect are more effectively, decisively co-ordinated and institutionally integrated.
- 5) Since the campaign is supposed to be mass one it is important ultimately that all possible illiterate females be reached. The human and material resources available would be converted into a massive anti-illiteracy campaign. Female drop-outs and secondary school leavers residing in the rural areas would be reached through mass mobilisation and literacy campaigns. In some countries, methods like 'each one, teach one' and 'each one, find a teacher' have worked. This could also be a possibility in our society in near future.
- 6) Literacy efforts of females can be built not just around occupational interests (as in functional literacy) but around the intimate personal interest of participants. For example, a lot of women are known to be particularly zealous

about religious issues. religious organisations could therefore be massively involved in mass literacy campaign and continuing education programmes.

SOME PROBLEMS PRECIPITATING FEMALE DROPOUT IN SOKOTO STATE :-

The definition of a drop-out has a universal phenomenon. He/She starts a course of study at any level be it primary, secondary or tertiary, but could not complete because of some reasons. In Nigeria generally and Sokoto State in particular, there are many reasons for female drop-out, which include:

Early Marriage. Female students at primary, secondary, or tertiary level of education would be withdrawn in order to marry. This affects their opportunity for completing the course of study and consequently denying them acquiring the necessary education. Religious/Cultural factors contributed immensely for female drop-out in this area. This can be realised if one views the conflict between the religio/cultural life and social consequences of western education in this society. Thus some parents refused or discontinue the schooling of their children to avert social hazards. Inadequate motivation from parent/guardian to their children constitute a major setback to completing of schooling. This may arise either due to financial constraints or total indifference to western education particularly females who are considered unproductive. Similarly, some houses are in object poverty which also affects the stay of their children in school in favour of unskilled employments or hawking.

The concern of this paper therefore is that a course of study once started by a girl - child could still be continued if once terminated. As such, having one or few children should not bring about permanence in female's education.

Finally, there is hope that the curriculum of continuing education courses would be expanded to include areas of technical and vocational skills for females, leisure education, retirement education and so on.

Government established National Directorate of employment (NDE), which contributed immensely to the Development of Continuing education. Through this, many dropped-out girls and women acquire skills in needle work, sewing, catering and domestic Science in that way. The acquired skills which are reasonably high in few cases do contribute to the growth of self employment.

An important addition here is school-on-the wheel programme run by the National Directorate of employment (NDE). In some States of the Federation which is also practicable in Sokoto State here, the mobile schools move from one community to another with teachers, equipment etc., enlist participants, train them for two weeks at a time and come back later.

CONCLUSION:- In the paper attempt has been made to show some factors responsible for female dropouts from school, which include religious, cultural, social and economic. Continuing education in the pre-colonial and post-colonial eras has been highlighted with special reference to Sokoto State. Rehabilitation of a dropout through various course under continuing education like vocational, leisure, apprenticeship education etc as well as prospects for continuing education in the state has been analysed. Finally the paper calls for the review and expansion of curriculum of continuing education for females to incorporate technical and vocational courses the area which they are very much lagging.

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