

IMPERATIVE OF HUMANISTIC ADULT LEARNING THEORIES IN EDUCATING INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Internal Displacement as one of serious humanitarian crises worldwide, has subjected millions to require humanitarian assistance. Besides emergency needs of water, food and shelter of the displaced, their rights to education and other social services must not be compromised. It is in this regards that, International treaties, declarations, global and domestic policies were made on education of the displaced persons. Nigeria's Policy on Internally Displaced Persons has underscore education and other humanitarian action to alleviate their travails. The Displaced, as they need humanitarian support to address urgent needs of theirs, they equally require humanistic approach to their learning. Humanistic theories are observed by this paper using desktop reviews as necessity when educating the displaced persons. Attempt has been made to clarify the concepts of Displacement, educational needs and educational interventions for the displaced, Humanistic theories and their relevance to learning. Ivans Illich's Deschooling, Knowle's andragogy, Fraire's pedagogy of the Oppressed among others were reviewed, juxtaposing the imperative of their applications to education of displaced persons in Nigeria. Also reviewed, is the Nyerere's duo concepts of education for self-reliance and education for liberation and how both can be used in imparting knowledge to the displaced. The paper concludes that, the provisions of the afore mentioned declarations, treaties and policies be fully practiced to guarantee their rights. A national sensitisation campaign be launched by the stakeholders in displacement management on the need by all to play their roles toward addressing the situation in accordance to those policies was suggested among others.

Keywords: Education, Humanistic theory, Internally Displaced Persons, Adult Learning

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Introduction

Internal Displacement in Nigeria like in other countries within and outside the continent has become topical issue of concern to all. Majority of the population are affected whether directly or indirectly by displacement and its consequences. The issue remains topical to professional in education, health, environment and several others. The causes of displacement in pre and post-colonial era are complex, frequently overlapping and multi-dimensional. Nigeria has experienced and still experiencing the menace of displacement resulting from internal conflicts, large scale violence (banditry, insurgency kidnapping, post-election violence), Herdsmen and Farmers, border clashes, inter-ethnic, ethnoreligious and inter communal conflicts (Daramola,2022, National Policy of Internally Displaced Persons, 2012). Natural Disasters like flooding, and oil spillage have been the dominant cause of displacement but hijacked by violent conflict in the last decade especially in northern part of the country. (Alhasan,2024).

Accurate, comprehensive and reliable figures on displacement are not simply attainable due to multiplicity of causes as mentioned above and how disasters scattered them as maintained

by FGN (2013). cited in Alhasan (2024). Recently, flooding and banditry activities have heightened the number of displacement in Nigeria. As at December 2023, nearly three and half million people were displaced, about two million returnees and nearly two hundred and ten thousand refugee returnees as reported by the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) of International Organisation for Migration (IOM). These categories according to the report live in more than 3,900 locations in 14 Nigerian States. Of the displaced people reported, North East Zone houses 2, 305,335 while 1,092,196 were found in north west and north central Nigeria.

Like refugee, Internal Displacement is linked to human right protection and assistance. Internally. Displaced persons require humanitarian assistance throughout their stay in formal, informal camps and with host communities. The assistance should be purely impartial, neutral and humane. Saving lives and alleviating the sufferings of victims of displacement is the aim the assistance. The obligations of performing this task is based on but not limited to domestic and humanitarian agencies based on the laid down humanitarian principles (Ashi, 2021).

The most important service needed by IDPs is education despite being secondary. After conflict subsided and relative security realised. The primary needs of IDPs to be immediately addressed are water, shelter, insecurity, trauma, bitterness and sexual exploitations. Other needs are hunger and starvation, malnutrition, diseases, possible recruitment into acts of insurgency, waste management and electricity. All the aforementioned needs require acquisition of knowledge and skills for easy and immediate application. This shows the place of education as rights enabler and strategies of coping with consequences of displacement. (Akuto, 2017, Alhasan 2021).

The suitable learning programme/curriculum for IDPs and delivery approaches remain the most important concern. The education of IDPS was less visible and not popularized like refugee education thus not visible in international community (Alhasan, 2021). Several recommendations, declarations and interventions were made locally and domestically to address the education of the displaced persons. Education for emergencies EIE, operating shifts programme, distance learning, vocational education and many others were suggested and practiced in some instances as approach to education of IDPS. Nigeria's National Policy on IDP (2012) suggested for transfer of IDP learners to safe schools in neighboring communities, collaborating with UNICEF and educational sector for creating conducive learning environment, provision and informal education options for livelihood skills.

Whatever learning programme/content designed to target the displaced persons, humanitarian learning theories should be embedded this is the thrust of this piece. The application of the theories is observed as important due to its emphasis on self-actualization, self-maintenance and self-enhancement, individual perceptions, interpretation of events and helping man to develop his potentials (Bello,2001, Bananuka, 2014). The theories are seen as the most suitable approaches in addressing the unique educational challenges of the displaced. It begins with conceptualizing the internally displaced persons, learning theories and humanistic learning theories. The practicability of the theories on conventional and disadvantaged learners were also examined before juxtaposing them to Nigerian IDPs, and provision of suggestions.

Conceptual Framework

Internal Displacement in Nigeria: An Overview

Displacement is the detachment of people on whatever reason from their habitual residence to other places within their country which (detachment) expose them to adversity and limited social and economic rights. Kampala Declaration (2009) in article 1 as cited in Nigeria's National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons (2012) viewed Internal Displacement as "the involuntary or forced movement, evacuation or relocation of persons or groups of persons within internationally recognized state borders"

Ugwu, and Ibanga (2019) as Alhasan (2024) reported believes that, the United Nations Guiding Principles definition of Internally Persons as generally accepted definition it defines IDPS as:

“Persons or groups of persons who have been forced IDPs or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border”

While critiquing the definition the threesome Ejiofor, Oni & Sejoro, (2017) assessed it as incomplete. This is due to non-inclusion by category of people who were displaced by development projects. They further argued that, some South Asian and West African who adopted the definition have included developmental projects as a cause for displacement. Development induced displacement is receiving less recognition compared to those displaced by violence. An example of development induced displacement is the construction of Bakalori Dam (1974-1978) in present Zamfara State which caused the resettlement of 18,000 inhabitants to villages with poor land and supply of water. Similarly, those who were displaced as a result of diplomatic conflict of resources should be regarded as IDP (Alhassan, 2024; Yahya, 2002). Cameroon and Nigeria's conflict on Bakassi Peninsula is a clear example. After the legal battle that led ceding Bakassi to Cameroon. Internal and external displacement affecting Cross Rivers and Akwa Ibom State were recorded as at 2008 more than 76,000 returnees registered as displaced persons (Oluyemi, 2014).

As at August 2024, 8,067,908 displaced persons were hosted by Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria according to International Organisation for Migration (2024). The figure includes displaced, returnees and returnees from abroad. Nigeria host 74% of the number with 4,436,811 against 13%, (777,656), 5% (294965) and 9% (558416) for Cameroon, Chad, and Niger Republic respectively. The recent flooding in Borno State, North Eastern Nigeria has significantly raised the number of internally displaced persons. This is coupled with the fact that, the state and its neighboring states of Adamawa and Yobe suffered displacements resulted from insurgency activities in the last one and half decade. In most instances, displacement by natural disasters outnumbered human disasters but in some countries, Nigeria inclusive, reverse is the case. The narrative has been recently changed due to flooding experienced by many Nigerian States. As at September 18, close to 400,000 people have been displaced to 30 relocation sites in Borno as the result of the flooding caused by the collapse of Alau Dam as reliefweb.int reported from the Emergency Operation Centre of Borno State Government

Educational Challenges and Needs of Internally Displaced Persons

Educational challenges of the IDPs ranges from destruction of schools, conversion of schools to informal camp thereby denial or alteration of the right to education of the children, women and adults. Conventional schooling in some instances become impossible. The educational situation of the IDPS is internationally less visible as most of the concentration is given to refugee education which exist for seven decades. Even the refugees suffered limitations and uneven treatment across some regions. Other educational challenges of the displaced are lack of access to non-formal learning spaces or primary schools supported by the international community, very limited access to secondary education. The IDPs with the host communities who are not settled in either formal or informal camp tend to receive less attention and support from international humanitarian organisations but in many scenarios they might be opportune to have access to schools of the host communities. Learning acquired during the displacement might not be recognised after returning home is another difficulty. (HERT, 2016, Alhasan, 2024).

Many national and international organisations are involved in the provision of educational services to the displaced, UNESCO for example assist the move through protection of schools from attack, youth empowerment during crises and strengthening education data system in emergencies and crises according to UNHCR (2014). as cited in Bridget & Zalakro (2019). Suitable approach and the type of education needed for coping with displacement situations remained the problem. In this regard, Functional Literacy, Distance Learning, Vocational Education were suggested. Domestically, Nigeria's National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons (2012:32) has captured the afore mentioned challenges and educational interventions for the displaced persons thus:

“Schools are often destroyed during most disasters therefore, in order for the Internally Displaced Children to return to school while in camp, the Education Sector lead agency under the sectoral approach established by this National Policy shall liaise with relevant agencies within the locality to assist in relocating the children to neighboring schools that are ascertained to be safe. This shall not preclude the building of new schools in the place of relocation....

It shall also be the responsibility of the Education Sector lead agency under the sectoral approach established by this National Policy to work in conjunction with local and state education authorities to create a conducive learning environment for Internally Displaced Children by collaborating with the UNICEF and other education agencies to provide instructional materials and teaching aids for the schools....

Where formal education facilities are not available, informal education options including livelihood skills training should be provided for internally displaced children. While providing access to education, attention should be paid to girl –child education, as they are most likely to miss out on the basis of gender dynamics”

Humanistic Learning Theories

Humanistic Learning Theories centres on the qualities that distinguishes man from animal, freewill and their drive towards self-actualization, self-maintenance and self-enhancement, individual perceptions, interpretation of events and helping man to develop his potentials. The theorists believed that, man has free will thus he should have freedom to choose what he wants to learn not have learning activities imposed on him (Bello,2001:94). Human do not passively respond to the world, they are not locked in the prison of their own subjectivity, but represents the world to themselves an act based on the representation that clearly shows how man's behaviour is self-directing and purposeful as Jegede (2011) reported. He went futher to describe man as viewed by the theory as someone who has needs that must be satisfied. His behaviour is targeted towards satisfying these needs.

Lilik, and Iain (2016) citing Rochmahana outlined the principles of humanistic learning theory as provided by Rogers one of its proponents:

Desire to learn: Human have strong and natural desire tom learn, that is manifested in children curiosity of wanting to understand their environment. This serves as basic assumptions of the theory. The children are given the opportunity to learn meaningful things to them

Meaningful learning: This principle is merely on the relevance of learning. Learning has no meaning and importance when it is not relevant learners needs and aspiration

Learning without threat: It is only a threat free environment that guarantees learning. Achievements of learning are only realized when the learning environment is threat- free

Learning under self-initiative: Learners' initiatives according to this principle are what constitute learning. This is due to the fact that, their beliefs and feelings are reflected in learning activities

Humanistic learning theories have many proponents. Abram Maslow, Carl Rogers and Paulo Freire Malcom Knowles, Ivan Illich, Nyerere etc. A brief on the following will be provided to pave way for the discussing on their relevance to educational programming for the displaced people in Nigerian state.

Freire's Pedagogy: Freire recognized two groups in the society - oppressor and those being oppressed. Creating a state of consciousness for the oppressed who accepted their position of oppression. The relationships between the two classes is that when A Exploits B or hinders him from pursuing self-affirmation that is viewed as oppression according to Freire (Halilu, 2018). Learner centered approach is fundamental to Freire's advocacy. The mission is to get individual to understand how to form himself not to be formed, he wants learners to understand their own reality which as he believed is part of the learning activity (Fauzan. & Akram, 2017). Fauzan and Akram outlined Problem Posing Method, Dialogue Method and Praxis as components of the theory.

Problem Solving deals with reciprocal learning relationship between learner and facilitator against banking system of education which was castigated. The purpose is to encourage learners to develop critical thinking. The Dialogue or the method of dialogue proposed by Freire based on the treatment of learners as co-participants of their own development. It is also concerned with the creation and recreation of acts of knowledge through conscientization. Praxis in the theory represents genuine union between reflection and action. The reflection is involving a dialogue among parties in an attempt to critically understand the social structures and ideological beliefs that control their daily lives. It is about expression and actions, interpretation and change which open the world for transformative purposes.

Intellectual efforts alone cannot bring critical consciousness unless when merged with praxis. (Halilu ,2018, Alhassan, 2024).

Ivan Illich’s Deschooling: Access to learning to all categories of people who want to engage in learning is the purpose of the theory. Ivan Illich (1971). believes that, a good educational system should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives. He is against irrelevant learning content and school curricular incapable of meeting the demands of learners;

“The deschooling of society implies recognition of the two-faced nature of learning. An insistence on skill drill alone could be a disaster; equal emphasis must be placed on other kinds of learning. But if schools are the wrong places for learning a skill, they are even worse places for getting an education. School does both tasks badly, partly because it does not distinguish between them. School is inefficient in skill instruction especially because it is curricular. In most schools a program which is meant to improve one skill is chained always to another irrelevant task. History is tied to advancement in math, and class attendance to the right to use the playground” (Ivan Illich, 1971)

Although, his proposals of deschooling did not succeeded, the theory and that of emancipatory pedagogy and alternative school have made an attempt to rescue formal schooling from circumstantial irrelevance based on the assumption that all knowledge, all education are derived from schools which should be avoided.as Bagudo (2006) maintained.

Knowles’s Andragogy: Provision of alternative concept of educational process was the push for the emergence of andragogy as Bio (2005) argued. The learning activities designed is expected to solve learner’s problems, thus a departure from subject centered to problem centered. Changing the situation of learners crucial in designing learning programmes for adult learners a reality backed by Knowles (1970):

Adults, on the other hand, tend to have a perspective of immediacy of application toward most of their learning. They engage in learning largely in response to pressures they feel from their current life situation. To adults, education is a process of improving their ability to cope with life problems they face now. They tend, therefore, to enter an educational activity in a problem-centered or performance-centered frame of mind (Knowles, 1973).

Nyerere’s Ujama: Ujamaa educational theory known as African Socialism is meant to address the unique African challenges as Bananuka (2014) reported. Nyerere’s mission of the concept which literally means familyhood was opposing capitalism aiming to make society happier through exploitation of men by men, Ujama also debunked the socialism doctrines based on the philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man. Both Capitalism and Western Socialism were rejected as means of attaining development in post-independence Tanzania. Central to the theory is building a society in which men cooperate together for mutual benefits. A synthesized stand between the two extremes if socialism and capitalism to bring the best system for traditional African peasantry, the ultimate goal was overhauling the means of production based on respect and equity. The core in the theory are participation, cooperation and unity. These according to Nyerere (1967) as cited in Bananuka (2014) the principle of Ujama as educational theory was guided by human dignity, sharing of the resources produced by all, work by everyone and exploitation by none. The distinguishing

factor of Nyerere's African socialism and the leftist socialism is the recognition of the fact that each individual has a duty to contribute to the bag of resources to be shared equally according to his capabilities as obtained in African traditional norms.

Nyerere never sat down to develop a theory neither labeled his arguments as philosophy but the consistency of his arguments in political speeches and pronouncement led some scholars to position him as theorist of lifelong learning. The aspect of lifelong learning was highly cherished by him. Nyerere (1973) as cited in Bananuka (2014) backed John Dewey's assertions that learning spans the entire life said "to live is to learn and to learn is to try to live better". Education for self-reliance and education for liberation are the duo concepts Nyerere stood for. Education for liberation is about liberating people from the shackles of ignorance and dependency. Education has to liberate body and mind according to him (Bananuka2014). Humanistic Learning Theories have been applied in many places. Freire's approach to learning for example has been applied in many learning programmes for conventional and disadvantaged learners throughout the globe in last half century. Some of the studies and programmes where the theory was applied as Bananuka (2014) reported includes:

Popular education in South African anti-apartheid programme

NGO movement largely located in emancipator and transformative adult education is linked to Freirean learning theory

University Lecturers in South Africa have made efforts to use Freirean learning theory in order to improve learning outcome

consciousness and praxis has greatly influenced popular communication strategies in apartheid ridden south Africa and other African countries

Regenerated Freirean Learning through Empowering Community Technique which combines literacy, empowerment and livelihood for the poor.

Application of Humanistic Adult Learning Theories in Educating Nigeria's Displaced Persons

Humanistic approaches to learning are needed for all learners in all situations. Disadvantaged learners like IDPs whose situation was caused by mostly humanitarian crises need the approaches the most. This is due to multiple challenges they are subjected to which requires acquisition of knowledge and skills in addressing them. Embedding humanitarian approaches to learning programmes can be applied in Nigerian state through:

Development of Flexible Curricular/Programmes: Looking at displacement and its consequences on education and economy, one can safely assert that, internally displaced persons have been practically deschooled. They no longer enjoy educational services, schools were turned to informal camps and many found themselves in negative coping strategies of begging due to detachment from their livelihood. In the first instance, nonformal education and extension services need to be wholly embraced. Educational programmes/curricular need to be designed to impact skills needed to address the urgent needs of shelter, food, environmental hygiene, livelihood sustenance and dealing with trauma and other psychological problems caused by the displacement. Programmes for IDP should be purely need driven, learner centered and problem solving. IDPs educational needs differ with those of host communities thus they should be given special attention if integrated into learning institutions of host communities.

Learning for Empowerment: The learning content of the IDPs should focus on their liberation from the condition and consequences of displacement, they should be empowered with lifelong learning skills through vocational education, functional education programmes and other programmes requiring immediate application. Empowerment and cooperative learning should also be encouraged to tap skills from individuals to improve lives of the displaced and host communities in some instances. The economic insecurity has heightened by the combination of property loss and absence or limited opportunities for income generation. Thus the need for livelihoods and skills acquisition as priority needs of the IDPs. This will lessen the dependency on humanitarian assistance and guarantee sustainable livelihood for the displaced. In this regard several initiatives were made by State Ministries of Women with international supports for skills acquisition training of the displaced in Maiduguri and Yola. (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 2016). The components of livelihood for the displaced which educational programming should be prioritized is captured in the Nigerian National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons (2012: P16) as:

the combination of the resources used and the activities undertaken in order to live. The resources might consist of individual skills and abilities (human capital), land, savings and equipment (natural, financial and physical capital, respectively), and formal support groups or informal networks that assist in the.

Suggestions

Based on the above discussion on the imperative of Humanistic Learning Theories in educating Nigerian Displaced Persons, the following are recommended:

In realisation of Chapter four of the National Policy on the Internally Displaced Persons, the Stakeholders in displacement management, Federal and States governments through agencies for emergency management, International and Domestic humanitarian organisations, host communities should sensitize the public on the need for all to engage and put in their expertise in addressing the issue of displacement as everyone is potential IDP.

Educating migrants folks and other disadvantaged groups like Almajiri, adult illiterates and semi illiterates and drop out are the responsibility of Mass Literacy Adult and Non-Formal Education Commission (NMEC) as contained in section 4 of National Policy on Education. This should be fully implemented by Federal and State Government as mention was not made of the commission as one of the 26 agencies that constituted the institutional framework of the policy.

Flexible learning content which address the peculiar needs of the displaced persons should be designed by Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council at National and Educational Resource Centres by Federal and States Governments respectively.

As communities hosts greater number of the displaced persons, community education which take into cognizance the immediate need of the displaced should be encouraged by government and nongovernmental organisations.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that, application of humanitarian learning theories is needed by all but the most deserving category of people are those whose situation is caused by humanitarian crises and subjected them to the need of humanitarian supports. Doing so, is rendering a humanitarian services and support. Conflicts are natural like natural disasters as the causes of displacement and educational needs of the displaced are multiple, educational programming approaches should also be in multiplicity. Education being a right that enable other rights thus the need of protecting these rights in displacement through humanitarian learning methods.

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