

## **RELEVANCE OF ADULT EDUCATION TO CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract:** This paper aimed at discussing the relevance of adult education to congressional oversights. It is explicit that in the world today, the answers to global problems are not always found within the confines of a single field of knowledge, hence the role of adult education. The professionals in adult education are trained and have general understanding of the significant role they play in sensitizing the legislature to carry out their functions in scrutinizing the executives which would be reflected in the organization of seminars, symposia, workshops and Conferences.

### **Introduction**

Congressional oversight sometimes referred to as vigilant oversight refers to the scrutiny of executive branch programs and performance by legislators. It refers to the power to review, monitor and supervise agencies, programs activities and policy implementation of the executive arm of government by the federal legislature. The federal legislators are members of the Nigerian National Assembly; that is, House of Representatives and Senate. It is a bicameral legislature established on the section 4 of the Nigerian Constitution. It consists of a Senate with 109 members and a 360 member House of Representatives (Akomelede& Bosede, 2008).

The body of the Nigerian National legislature is modeled after the federal Congress of the United States which guarantees equal representation. In Nigeria, there are three senators to each 36 States irrespective of size in this Senate plus one senator representing the federal capital territory (FCT) and single member district.

The national assembly is constitutionally vested with several functions; prominent among them are law-making, representation of oversight and a host of others. The power of oversight is characterized by democratic principles as well as practical reason. According to Jaja(2014) oversight involves maintaining control over expenditure by congressional staff, keeping an eye on how the executive branch carries out the provisions of congressional status, regulating the activities of lobbying and political action committee including establishing procedures for implementing of congressional code of conduct. Egba (2011) reveal that most activities of the National Assembly are done through the committees. A

committee in context is a group of members of Congress responsible for conducting public hearing and developing legislation related to specific area of public policy (Encarta 2019). The House of Representatives has 20 standing committees. Due to high volume and complexity of the work of the Senate, it divides its task among 20 permanent committees, that is, four joint communities and occasionally temporary communities. (National Assembly documents, NAD, 2012). Each community may address bills within the area of public policy for which the community is responsible.

Oversight also derives from the many and varied express powers of the Congress in the Constitution. It implies that the legislative authority among other powers and duties is to appropriate funds, enact laws, impeach and remove from office the President, vice presidents and other civil officers. Congress who not responsibly exercise that powers without knowing what the executives was doing, how programs were obeying the laws and complying with legislative intent (Ezeani, 2010).

Historical antecedents of the executive and agencies are characterized by poor administration, waste, abuse arbitrary capricious behavior, reduction of power to patronage, illegal and unconstitutional conducts, encroachments ETC. Onyekpere (2012) believes that oversight was the government key feature of meaningful representative body which involves 'watch and control'. Thus, different committees within the legislative have played significant role in curbing the excesses of the executives and agencies and would continue to do so.

Although Ejikeme (2013) had argued with a certain amount of justification that congressional

oversight has been intrusive, meddling, short-sighted, counter-productive and have served to drag the executives into the political cockpits of partisan politics of which it has previously been immune. Ndoma & Onuoha (2012) tend to review congressional oversight as being on balance especially with the role adult education has to play. An aspect of adult education is therefore necessary (ie social education which is peculiar to a nation that is adapting itself to rapid change politically and economically).

It is thus pertinent to reveal at this juncture that many people are associated with the early definition of adult education alone and that makes it alarming for them to reconcile its relevance to vigilant oversights.

### **MEANING OF ADULT EDUCATION**

Anyanwu (2010) Review that adult education most times is viewed in the context of literacy societies only. This is because adult education is reported by the Program Committee of the First International Conference of University as a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular or full-time basis undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, undertaking of skills, appreciation, and attitude or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems. Anowor, Umezulike and Ezema (2011) asserts that this definition by First International Conference of University does not portray the holistic scope of adult education. According to Anowor, Umezulike and Ezema, adult education in focus has in recent pasts undergone far reaching changes. What used to be education for dropouts has now acquired its proper status. Adelaja (2013) review that the contemporary scope is comprehensive and it is also deep and wide as life itself and covers all activities affecting the well-being and progress of human beings and society. Therefore to enumerate the relevance of adult education to congressional oversight is to outline the range of activities as portrayed by Anowor, Umezulike and Ezema (2001), as assisting organizations in achieving desired results and adapting the change, provides opportunities to examine societies and societal issues, foster change for the common good and promote a civil society aiming in the end to lead to social, personal, emotional, economically and political development.

Also to understand adult education's relevance to congressional oversight is to understand its principle. Adult education is an ancient enterprise designed to be a vehicle of social change (Umezulike, 2004). In adult education is found the highest overall development of society. Lowe in Otuaka (2019) noted that adult education is perceived as an instrument for promoting and regulating social change. It stresses social responsibility, spiritual moral values. Second, the whole process of congressional oversight is adult-centered and involves adult education directly or indirectly.

Aside that, adult education being a noble field of study enriches knowledge, brings about changes in the attitude of persons; and we are aware that these persons (as individuals) make up a society. Therefore, if adult education brings about positive changes in individuals, and since individuals make up the executive then vices of capricious behavior will no longer be evident in their various agencies. The legislature directly or indirectly needs the services of adult education consultants which we help develop a sense of responsibility and knowledge of how proceeds in making adjustments, decisions etc.

Conscientization which literacy means to make awake or awakening of consciousness or critical consciousness (Encarta 2004) is within this scope of adult's education. Conscientization is basically developing a critical consciousness all taking critical look at a problem in society reflecting on that problem and then taking action against the oppressor. It is a social process that people in a common problem reflects and act upon their world. Thus, adult educators are trained and have relevant expertise to keep an eye on whether programmes and activities of the legislators are carried out, thus, they can keep an eye on whether they are carrying out their activities. This means to ascertain whether or not the legislatures are efficiently carrying out activities of the executive. Adult educators are trained to ensure that the legislature becomes consistent with the constitution which can be achieved through the organization of workshops, symposia, public lectures and conferences. Thus, actions plus reflection brings out what will be summed up as praxis, which is core activity of conscientization process. This technique of Paulo Freire, the Brazilian philosopher can be carefully applied to vigilant oversight. Here the congressional staff in various committee take out time to scrutinize the various

activities of all the ministries within the executives and agencies and actions are taken against defaulters. They scrutinize (1) if the contents of objective or terms of reference are achieved (2) accountability of public monies and marked for projects are judiciously spent. Also, since the ingredients of improvement is present in adult education. Anowor, Umezulike and Ezema opines that adult education will help the legislature organize lectures that will help them improve their activities.

### **CONCLUSION**

The rule of adult education in congressional oversight does not need a great deal of education as it has been found in the course of this study as relevant in its pursuit to monitor, scrutinize, review and supervise the activities of the executives. It is the proper duty of a representative body to work diligently into every affair of government, and how to talk much about what it sees since it is meant to be eyes and voice and embody of wisdom, and of its constituents. This study will therefore popularize one of the most innovative and strategic courses in the field of education especially in Nigeria.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Members of Nigerian national assembly should appoint adult educators as members of education boards in national assembly commission so ask to join other professionals in helping to pilot the affairs of legislators.
2. Members of the national assembly should appoint academics who specialize in adult education to organize seminars workshops and conferences for members of national assembly to improve their delivery.

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