Leadership Role of Adult Education Departments in the Practice of Adult Education in Nigeria:
1990–2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter briefly describes the challenges faced by the Nigerian education system as from 1983 after it had performed well between 1960 and 1980. It follows this description with the discussion of the innovative and ingenious educational devise that kept about one third of the number of school age children and youths in school between 1990 and the early part of the 21st century. That innovative educational sub-system was known as non-formal education for the Girl-Child, the out-of-school boy and Quranic school learners and it was developed, nurtured and implemented by academic personnel drawn from the eight existing university departments of adult education in Nigeria at the time. The chapter finally discusses how these departments of adult education worked for the establishment of national structures of adult education which ultimately came to promote both the visibility and popularisation of the modern practice of adult education in Nigeria from the 1980s.

BACKGROUND

The background information presents the geo-political outlook of Nigeria on the one hand and the historical development of education in Nigeria on the other hand. These two aspects of Nigeria are key to the understanding of the adult education case study discussed here.

An Outline of Nigeria

Although representatives of the British Crown had been in contact with the people of West Africa since the 18th century, it was at the beginning of the 20th century that the Crown began to firm up its administration in Africa. Following the 1884 Berlin Conference that shared Africa and its people between the French and Britons primarily (Werner, 2009), Great Britain took possession of two large areas of land and people lying scattered on the two banks of the River Niger. For a while, the two areas were administered separately before they were brought together in 1914 to make up the country known today as Nigeria. Nigeria is bordered in the north by Niger and Chad Republics, in the west by Benin Republic and in the East by the Republic of Cameroun. It counts about 250 languages among which the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa are the three main languages. English language is the official language of the country while Nigerian English (Broken English) remains the country's lingua franca.

Nigeria is the most populous black country on earth with a population estimated to reach 185 million inhabitants in 2015 and about 390 million in 2050 (United Nations, 2010). It occupies a land area of 910,770 square kilometres which includes such a variety of features as the Niger Delta, the Coastal Lowlands, the Undulating Plains of the Interior Lowland, the Scarp lands of South-central Nigeria, the Niger-Benue trough, the Sokoto Plains, the Chad Basin, the Western Uplands, the North Central Plateau and the Eastern and Northeastern Highlands (Suleiman, 2012; OnlineNigeria, 2012; Adeaga, 2005; Crowder, 1980).

Up until 1954, Nigeria was made up of 24 Provinces ruled as a national unit from Lagos. However, beginning from 1954 and up until 1st October 1960 (the year of its political independence), it was governed by the British as a three-Region nation. These Regions were the Western Region, the Eastern Region and the Northern Region (Eke, 1997). The Regions were fairly semi-autonomous political constituents of the country, each with its Premier (Governor) and administrative compliment known as Regional Government (Eke, 1997; Crowder, 1980). The region-based administrative structure of the country subsisted up to the middle of the 1960s, when a 30-month old civil war broke out and was fought with a view to keeping Nigeria as one indivisible country.

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