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EDUCATION IN NIGERIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: LESSONS FOR POSTERITY

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic threw the world into confusion and brought about unprecedented changes in the way people live and do things. A lot of adjustments were made in every sphere of life in order to contain, curtail and survive the deadly virus. Most sectors of many nations including formal and non-formal education at every level were adversely affected due to long periods of restrictions of movement which led to school closures. Unfortunately for Nigerian educational system, 'End SARS' protests rocked the whole nation just as schools resumed and were adapting to the new normal, thereby causing people to stay indoors again while some people continued to learn through distant education. The people that could afford it embarked on virtual learning while most learners lost out. These researchers embarked on the study as a way of documenting a very trying period in the history of humans of 21st century especially as it pertains to education in Nigerian. The paper attempted to explain the two key concepts which are COVID-19 and education, discussed education in Nigeria during the worst days of COVID-19 pandemic, state of education in Nigeria in the face of relaxation of restrictions imposed to curb the

spread of first wave of covid-19, challenges encountered in online and long distance learning during the COVID-19 lock down/restrictions, lessons from adjustments to COVID-19 situation and way forward for Nigerian education. The paper concludes by asserting that stopping learning whether for school children or adults is not an option in troubled times. Blended learning was recommended as the way forward where appropriate in order to sustain and consolidate on the ICT online adoptions or adaptations and other distance learning strategies utilized in COVID-19 era. The message for posterity is that learning can continue in both favourable and unfavourable situations.

Key words: COVID-19, education, schooling, non-formal education, virtual and distance learning

Introduction

There is no gainsaying the fact that coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), a deadly respiratory disease, has affected the whole world in erenow unimaginable ways. It threw the world into confusion and brought about unprecedented changes in the way people live and do things. A lot of adjustments were made in order to contain, curtail and survive the deadly virus. Theseadjustments were termed the new normal by some people. Most sectors of many nations including formal and non-formal education at every level were affected adversely due to long periods of school closures. The uncertainty and confusion that followed also affected Nigerian education sector. Well-meaning international organizations and governments swung into action to ensure that the world survives and that life and semblance of normalcy is sustained.This study is an attempt to document a very trying period in the history of humans of 21st century especially as it pertains to education for posterity sake. This paper discusses the state of Nigerian education during the first wave of Covid-19 pandemic, the challenges, lessons from adjustments and way forwardand proffers way forward even as the world continues to battle the virus.

COVID-19

Covid-19, which was previously known as 2019-novel coronavirus (2019-nCov),was first reported in Wuhan, the capital and major business city of Hubei Province, China on 1st December,2019. In a very short time, the disease spread across China and cases were reported

with an exponential increase in morbidity and mortality rates. The outbreak has been reported in all continents, with first case in Africa reported in Egypt in February 2020 (Gilbert, Pullano, Pinotti, Valdano, Poletto et al, 2020). Nigeria is one of the 210 countries affected globally. The first case was confirmed in Lagos State on 27th February 2020. This index case was a 44-year old man, an Italian citizen, who returned from Milan, Italy on 24th February and presented at a health facility on 26th February 2020 (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control [NCDC], 2020). The disease has evolved and continues to be a very serious emergency across the globe. On 11th,March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 a pandemic, having met the epidemiological criteria of having infected 100,000 people in at least 100 countries (Cucinotta, &Vanelli, 2020).

According to WHO, preventive measures against this virus includes frequent hand-washing for at least 20 seconds, with soap and running water or using alcohol based hand sanitizer, covering the nose and mouth with disposable tissue or flexed elbow when coughing or sneezing, avoidingtouching the eyes, nose and mouth if hands are not clean and avoiding close physical contact (1 meter or 3 feet) also known as social distancing (WHO, 2020). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] as cited in Agusi, Ijoma, Nnochin, Njoku-Achu, Nwosuh and Meseko, (2020), described social distancing as a set of "methods for reducing frequency and closeness of contact between people in order to decrease the risk of transmission of disease in the course of the 2019-2020 coronavirus pandemic". The CDC further revised the definition of social distancing to include remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately six feet or two meters) from others when possible. Agusi et. al. explained that social distancing entails physical distancing. The key reason for physical distancing is to reduce the spread of the virus by contact. People seriously suspected to have been exposed were subjected to various levels of quarantine and isolation.

COVID-19 pandemic brought about both total lockdown and restricted movement days, restrictions in air and other forms of transportation.Many businesses were temporarily forced to shut down. Most governments around the world temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of covid-19 (UNESCO, 2020).


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As at 27th July 2020, approximately 1.725 billion learners were affected due to school closures in response to the pandemic. Closure of schools and other businesses affected economies of countries and the world at large and also the income of parents, corporate bodies and various governments. This has negative impact on the world as a whole and also on education in Nigeria.

Education

Education is a process of changing the behavior pattern of people, that is, the way through which people are changed in their thinking, their feelings and their overt actions so that they can play meaningful parts in the solution of problems of their society (Gbamanja, 1991 as cited in Vikoo, 2007). Education has also been described as the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits (Maniu, n.d.). Education is development. This is why it is one of the key goals of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). SDG 4 is concerned with quality education. Its concern is ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (The SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee, n.d.). All children and other learners, no matter where they live or what their circumstances, have the right to quality education.

There are three main types of education. They are formal, non-formal and informal education. Formal education usually takes place in the premises of a school, where a person may learn basic academic or trade skills that is structured hierarchically, planned and deliberate among other characteristics. Formal education mainly addresses children and youths of school age. The stages in formal education are preschool or kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, higher institutions such as colleges and universities and formal professional training institutions such as the Nigerian Law School.

Unfortunately, although primary education is said to be officially free and compulsory, about 10.5 million of the country's children aged 5-14 years are not in school. Only 61 percent of 6-11 year-olds regularly attend primary school and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36 -59 months receive early childhood education (UNICEF 2013-2020). Some states in the North East and North West of the country have more than half of the girls not enrolled in schools as marginalization ensures that girls are deprived of basic education (UNICEF). There are a lot of children

and young people that are out of school in other regions too. Sustainable Education Enterprise Development [SEED] (2020) stated that Nigeria has the largest number of out of school children in theworld (13.2 million) and 4 out of 5 persons aged 15-24 who are unable to use a full sentence.These children grow up to become illiterate adults. The Nigerian nation has wasted a lot of resources to cater for the interest of these illiterates in order to make for inclusiveness in governance. The humongous sum spent to print ballot papers with pictures of emblems of the numerous political parties just to make sure illiterates can identify the parties of their choice attests to this.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), in a bid to keep up with the dictates of global developmental needs, provided for Adult and Non-Formal Education which makes for lifelong learning as development of any nation depends on the quality of their adults. Lifelong learning is to a great extent promoted through non-formal education. Non-formal education is acquired outside the formal school system. It has been tagged second chance education. It can be organized and systematic. It targets children, youths and adults who have either dropped out of school or never had opportunity for basic education. Non-formal education activities for both adult and less privileged young persons as enunciated by Egbezor and Okanezi (2008) include apprenticeship, nomadic education, vocational training, continuing education, in-service programs, on-the-job training programmes, workers and students' industrial training, extension and community development education programmes. Continuing professional education such as conferences, seminars and workshops may be described as part of non-formal education.

Unfortunately, many adults are still illiterates in Nigeria. Prof. Abba Haladu, the executive chairman of National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education stated that 62 percent of Nigerians were literate while 38 percent were non-literates (Vanguard Newspaper, December 7, 2018). According to him, the out-of-school children are 11 million while the non-literate youths and adults were about 60 million. In effect, we have about70 million citizens of Nigeria of 15 years and above who cannot read and write or who lack basic skills for modern living. These children grow up to become illiterate adults.

Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, delivery of non-formal education in Nigeria was confronted

with challenges such as ineffective mobilization and coordination of efforts, lack of a reliable and accurate database on learners' achievement, poor funding, shortage of teaching/ learning materials and inadequate logistic support for monitoring of the non-formal program (Adewale, 2006). Covid-19 pandemic also took its toll on this already fragile sector.

Informal education is education that is neither officially organized, systematic nor acquired in schools. It has been described as accidental education. This paper is not really concerned with effect of covid-19 on informal education in Nigeria. Suffice it to state that Covid-19 is bound to boost informal education as parents and guardians were at home for children to subconsciously learn the way parents and guardians do things during movement restrictions.Adults are expected to monitor children's online learning as well as participate in same as per the demands of adjustments in Covid-19 era. The concern of this paper is to highlight the state of formal and non-formal education in Nigeria during the Covid-19 era, discuss challenges faced and proffer way forward.

Education in Nigeria during the Worst Days of Covid-19 Pandemic

The Federal Ministry of Education announced the temporary close-down of all schools in Nigeria, effective March 23rd 2020, in a bid to contain the spread of the coronavirus. According to Burgess and Sievertsen (2020), the closure of schools, colleges and universities not only interrupted the teaching for students around the world, the closure coincided with a key assessment period and many exams were postponed or cancelled. Considering the already unsatisfactory state of Nigeria's education sector, the pandemic worsened the situation. A lot of things were not taken into consideration before the closure of schools. The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education's school closure directives, unlike other countries, did not come with any clear policy measures on how to ameliorate learning disruptions for learners and how to address the problem of the digital divide. Digital divide refers to the gap that exists between individuals who have access to modern information and communication technology and those who lack access (Digital Divide Council, 2019).

This closure lasted for several months of uncertainties.Most nations of the world adopted/ adapted various technological educational packages and means in order to ensure that learning continues. Some private stakeholders in

education and various government and non-governmental organizations across the globe came up with plans and strategies to ensure that learners are kept constructively busy. UNESCO recommended the use of distance learning programmes, open educational applications, and platforms by schools and teachers to reach learners remotely. These types of technological innovations include integrated digital learning platforms, video lessons, Massive Open online courses (MOOCs) and broadcast through radio and television.

According to UNESCO (2020), UNESCO Abuja office transformed the School Meets the Learner Approach (SMLA) by uploading and sharing the lesson content through various channels at free of cost in order to build on and strengthen the strategies of the ministry of education to sustain responsiveness and engagement of non-formal education learners at the secondary school level. They claimed that the lesson content developed within the framework of SMLA is aligned with Nigeria's regulated institution standards and covers the curriculum of junior secondary school (formal education), including Bachelor of Science, Basic Technology, Mathematics, English, Physical and Health Education, Information and Communication Technology, as well as full curriculum of basic literacy for non-formal education learners. According to UNESCO, both the formal and non-formal education components can be used online, offline and aired through television and radio. These researchers wonder at the reach of this programme. It appears that many of the targeted recipients were not aware of the programme.Hussain (2020), states that Nigerian government could mitigate the negative impacts of Covid-19 on education by providing solar-powered educational devices, pre-loaded with offline academic resources, to students in disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, such as the tablets used in Sun Books project. The Sun Book tablet is a solar-powered educational tablet that provides a sustainable solution to the 20 million off-the-grid classrooms around the world who lack access to basic educational resources, the internet and electricity (World Literacy Foundation, 2017). The initiative is targeted at providing quality education to marginalized children in the world's most void classroom.

The successes or otherwise of the aforementioned technological innovations are based on the use of high-technology or low technology solutions, which are based on the reliability of

power supply, internet connectivity and the digital skills of teachers, pupils/students, parents as well as caretakers.Unfortunately, as good as the proffered solutions to learning during this pandemic period are, a lot of pupils/students/adult learners could neither afford nor access them. Learners from low income families and communities were left out and unable to access learning during this period. However, some states in the federation contextualized the directive of the federal government on the use of alternative means to teach and keyed in when the ministry of education released a schedule of radio and TV lessons for pupils/students in public schools. Yet, families that earn below $1 per day and are faced with harsh economic realities could not afford radios and televisions. Neither the adults nor children of these families could participate in these learning activities.

In essence, although the federal and some state governments supplied learning programmes/ tutorials through radio and television stations, some learners could not access the programmes due to lack of constant power supply, unavailability of money with which to purchase and/or power the facilities needed to participate in such learning. The efforts of various governments in this regard though inadequate were still commendable although learning outlets were not beneficial to many learners because they did not have the necessary facilities. Amorighoye (2020), observed that learners in rural and underserved communities in Nigeria were left behind as they were not equipped to adapt or transit to new methods of learning.

Whereas majority of Nigerian learners wallowed in idleness, neglect and uncertainty, few privileged learners were learning in the cities. Some private institutions of learning continued remote teaching so that learners could continue to learn. In the big cities in Nigeria, some elitist private primary schools, secondary schools and universities were able to conclude their second term examinations as well as their third term curriculum through online studies. They even successfully conducted their end of session examinations/assessments via online facilities such as Computer Based Tests (CBTs). For some, the means of assessment was notes copied by students through blended learning.

ICT devices, Apps and packages like Zoom, Google Classroom, Telegram, WhatsApp, Chromebook, Microsoft Teams became popular among many Nigerian learners and instructors. For instance, teachers would teach

through zoom and Microsoft Teams classes which affords interaction with students and send notes via the teams, google classroom or WhatsApp for students to copy. They often administer tests through Google classroom. Schools whose parents could not afford extensive use of data sent pre-recorded lessons via WhatsApp voice calls and notes via WhatsApp messenger to their students. These notes or tests are returned at fixed dates for correction and assessment. They also made extensive use of e-mail.

These students/pupils were able to carry on because their parents and school management were able to finance, sponsor and sustain virtual learning.Many private primary and secondary schools conducted virtual graduation ceremonies for their students/pupils. Some private tertiary institutions also did virtual graduation; Babcock University was one of them. In as much as online /remote/virtual learning is good, the vulnerable children that attend government and low-cost private schools (often regarded as "private schools for the poor") that are not government funded were left behind.

The challenges faced in the delivery of non-formal education in Nigeria mentioned earlier as identified by Adewale (2006),worsened due to the restrictions on physical movement imposed to combat Covid-19. Activities in adult literacy centres in Nigeria were also adversely affected. Some experts in adult education have expressed the concern that the post-pandemic 'next normal' could be a perilous time for adult and lifelong education especially as it concerns youth and adult literacy. It is feared that a lot of people might not continue with the programmes in literacy centres after the pandemic due to worsened economic situation. Several continuing professional education such as conferences were cancelled or post-poned. Other training programmes such as in-service training was negatively affected. For the adult learners in adult literacy centres and other platforms for non-formal education, their physical meetings were interrupted. Opportunities for community education during festivals and annual general meetings of age grades, men and women such as August meetings of various communities were largely circumvented. Attendance were very poor for the meetings that held.

Fortuitously, Covid-19 pandemic turned out not to be a total disadvantage to the professionals. A lot of virtual meetings such as webinars and online conferences took place. It afforded some that could not ordinarily afford it the opportunity to attend virtual

international conferences from the comfort of their sitting rooms. However, much as the physical restrictions engendered by Covid-19 led to massive usage of online facilities, which is a great leap in adaptation to technological advancement, it came with its own challenges and further widened the gap in education in Nigeria.

Closure of schools/institutions of learning also had serious effects on stakeholders in educational sector, especially private schools' operators. The restriction on collection of school fees by the government led to paucity of funds and consequent inability to pay and retain good teachers. Many private schools could not cope with paying teachers' salaries during the worst days of Covid-19 pandemic. Some schools paid half salaries while others scaled down on their staff by sacking some teachers. Some of these teachers are also parents. It has been a terrible and trying time for most people.

Social and economic aspects of life were also affected. According to UNESCO (2020), school closures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have shed a light on numerous issues affecting access to education, as well as broader socio-economic issues. According to the United Nations International Children's Fund [UNICEF] (2020), the Covid-19 pandemic has affected more than 91% of students worldwide, with approximately 1.6 billion children and youngsters unable to attend physical schools due to temporary closures and lockdowns.

State of Education in Nigeria in the Face of Relaxation of Restrictions imposed to Curb the Spread of First Wave of Covid-19

Schools closure have clear negative impacts on child health, education and development, family income and overall economy (WHO, 2020). Global bodies and leaders of various nations met and considered the pros and cons of continuing to close schools against the danger of massive spreading of the virus that the resumption poses. They concluded that the gains of resumption far outweigh the danger it might pose. Among their considerations include the need to allow students to complete their studies and continue to next level; essential services, access to nutrition, child welfare such as preventing violence against children, social and physical well-being; access to reliable information on how to keep themselves and others safe; and the benefits to the society such as allowing parents to work. Besides, various groups of people were worried about what will become of the nation and globe without education as

provided in schools. According to Soland, Kuhfeld, Tarasawa, Johnson, Ruzek and Liu (2020) many parents and educators shared a common worry. The worry was that when the pandemic subsides, kids would return to school with lower achievement. There were also concerns that the gap between high-and low-achieving students will become larger. Parents were worried on whether it is safe to allow their children to return to school or not. WHO devised a cCovid-19 control and prevention guide which many nations utilized.

The Federal Task Force on Covid-19 in collaboration with NCDC gradually started relaxing the Covid-19 protocols. According to Alo (2020), Monday, 29th June 2020 was given by the Federal government of Nigeria as the date for the resumption of examination or exit classes, that is, for those in primary six, junior secondary school three (JSS 3) and senior secondary school three (SSS 3).These classes were tagged examination classes because they were the classes that write First School Leaving Certificate [FSLC] Examination, Basic Education Schools Certificate [BESC] examination and West African Schools Certificate [WASC] examinations/National Examination Council[NECO] terminal examinations respectively. Various states chose resumption dates based on their circumstances. The Federal government gave directives on things they must do to comply with relaxed Covid-19 protocols before resumption. These were largely based on WHO recommendations (WHO – Schools and Covid-19 – Control and Prevention Guide, 2020).

WHO's control and prevention guide cover subheadings that include the following:Hygiene and daily practices at school and classroom level, physical distancing of at least one metre between individuals including spacing of desks, frequent hand and respiratory hygiene, age–appropriate mask use, ventilation and environmental cleaning measures to be put in place to limit exposure; education of staff and students on Covid-19 prevention measures, develop a schedule for daily cleaning and disinfection of the school environment, facilities and frequently touched surfaces, and ensure availability of hand hygiene facilities and national/local guidance on the use of mask; screening and care of sick students, teachers and school staff; protection of individuals at high risk; and communication among parents and students.

There were other checklists for parents/caregivers and community; and checklist for students and children,

among others.Schools like Graceland International Secondary School Port Harcourt, a Christian private school, asked their examination class students to compulsorily return with oneface shield, three face masks, three small bottles of alcohol based hand sanitizer, three small bottles of liquid soap and one laptop/chrome book. The rest of their students were later required to return with similar items. The demands made on students in a bid to comply with Covid-19 protocols varied on quantity of the above items but followed the same trend across private schools.

Schools were to provide things like bucket of water and soap in all the strategic places in the school, and also in the classrooms, face masks and infra-red thermometer for checking temperature among others. The Federal and state governments were to provide most things needed by students of public schools. With all these in place, schools resumed on dates announced by various state governments. On the 5th of August 2020, students in examination classes started going to school in Anambra state. These researchers also observed that some SS2 students in some private schools that were preparing for Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Testand International General Certificate of Secondary Educationexaminations also went back to school for physical meetings.

After the examinations, government further relaxed protocols and allowed other students to resume physical meetings. By the middle of October 2020, all primary and secondary schools had resumed physical meetings. Universities, colleges of education and polytechnics, that were not caught in the web of ongoing Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)'s strike, reopened their institutions for studies. Nigerian Laws School chose January 2021 for its resumption. Schools have been running smoothly in most places such that when it was reported that a total of 181 students and teachers of a private school in Lagos tested positive to corona virus, it did not significantly disrupt academic activities. It is however observed that many schools in Nigeria are no longer strictly enforcing compliance with Covid-19 protocols among their students. This trend is not good in the face of the said present second spread/ outbreak of the virus.

While attention and much energy were put into ensuring that schools resume, same cannot be said for adult and non-formal education. Many studies focused solely on education of children and youths. Experts in adult education such as Princess Laurentien of

Netherlands as cited in Stainstreet (2020) feared a return to illiteracy as adults who suspended their studies in youths and adult literacy centres will focus on economic activities for survival. There is fear that globally the field of adult and lifelog learning will be weakened more as government prioritizes health, economy and schools' resumption.

Challenges Encountered in Online andLong Distance Learning during the Covid-19 Lock Down/ Restrictions

Challenges encountered in education in Nigeria during Covid-19 pandemic are numerous because all stakeholders in education were affected. It should ideally form the topic of another discuss all together for justice to be done to it. However, this paper will not be complete without highlighting some of the challenges as it is done hereunder.

Poverty was a major challenge in adjusting to the new normal education-wise in Nigeria. Many Nigerians and communities lack the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. The nation currently has about 50% of her population living in poverty. Many of the citizens are struggling to afford three square meals especially during this time of the pandemic. As a result of this, a lot of pupils/student did not have access to either radio or television, encountered epileptic power supply, had no internet access and lacked technological resources for educational purposes. This situation created gaps in these pupils'/students' academic progress. Education is supposed to provide platform for bridging gaps in social status but coronavirus pandemic has created a lot of educational inequalities in Nigeria. It was mainly those with access to digital learning resources that kept learning while those without these resources which are in the majority are left behind.According to Sustainable Education Enterprise Development [SEED] (2020), Nigeria has the largest number of extremely poor people in the world and this affected capacity to take online and distance learning.

Another challenges encountered in online and long distance learning during the Covid-19 lock down/restrictions is the types of amilies. Bjorklund and Salvanes (2011), posits that families are central to education and are widely agreed to provide major inputs into a child's learning.The question now is how many parents are literate enough to assist their children in online learning process?How many are actually computer literateout of those that are literate? How many parents have smart

phones and laptops? How many are online? Some that have smart phones don't stay with their children. Some of the children travelled to go and be with their grandparents, uncles, aunts among other reasons while some parents were busy trying to make ends meet by trying to provide food for the family. Again, some parents find it difficult to engage their children as a result of inability to buy data that will be used for the online teaching. Among these categories of people are the academic staff of government owned tertiary institutions who were on industrial strike at the instant time and were not paid for several months. Very many traders whose businesses were shot down were also in the number. They were barely able to feed the family and therefore not likely to have money for data.However, some people made the best of the situation by utilizing virtual opportunities to advance their businesses. Some government workers and those in some big conglomerates continued to get their pay and therefore could afford the cost of online learning for their children. Burgess and Sievertsen (2020),rightly surmised that there would likely be substantial disparities between families in the extent to which they can help their children learn during the pandemic.

Oreopoulos, Page & Stevens (2006), earlier identified some factors that make for the key differences in the way families can enable learning at home to include the amount of time available to devote to teaching, the non-cognitive skills of the parents, resources (for example, not everyone will have the kit to access the best online materials) and also the amount of knowledge needed to utilize same. For instance, it is difficult and hard for parents to teach and help a child learn something that they may not understand. Consequently, this situation will lead to an increase in the inequality of human capital growth for the affected cohorts (Burgess &Sievertsen, 2020). According to Amorighoye (2020), one major issue that may stem from this inequality is that these kids who currently cannot keep up with their peers because of inaccessibility to digital tools may never catch up and will continue to feel the effect of this gap long after the pandemic is over.

According to The Digital 2020 Global Overview Report cited in Obiakor and Adeniran (2020), about 60 percent of Nigerians are not connected to the internet. The statistics for mobile phones, which could also be used as a learning medium are more hopeful.According to the report, there

were 169.2 million mobile connections in Nigeria in January 2020 which showed that the number of mobile connections in Nigeria were equivalent to 83 percent of the total population. However, of these 50 percent, around 84.5 million people reside in urban areas. The proportion of the population with access would be skewed towards high socio-economic households and urban households with an overwhelming majority whom are private school pupils/ students who already have a learning advantage over their public-school peers. The case of children from poorer backgrounds who tend to have less access to internet connectivity, computers, and other devices and reside in rural areas where local languages take dominance over English, ICT-learning uptake will be limited (Obiakor& Adeniran, 2020). The inequality in access to ICT-based learning has the adverse effect of further intensifying the existing disparities in learning outcomes along socio-economics lines and the urban rural divide. For students with learning disabilities, and those living in fragile and conflict-affected regions, the outlook is even bleaker (Obiakor& Adeniran, 2020).

A lot of pupils/students are being disadvantaged by the pandemic in terms of education and learning. This can also less likely make them to fall under the category of young people to get well paying and satisfying jobs. When this happens, they can get involved in a lot of social vices or become nuisance in the society, doing things that are not noble just to make ends meet. Concurring with the above, Amorighoye (2020) posited that this may result in a severally diminishing pool of young adults who have not garnered the necessary skills to stay ahead in the future. With Nigeria already behind in preparing its young people for the workplace of the future, the effects of the pandemic further exacerbate issue.

Availability or otherwise of technology and infrastructure for online/distance learning, households having the facilities to engage learners in remote learning, teachers/facilitators not having the resources and skills to deliver live lessons and/or record massive open online courses (MOOCs) among others were part of thechallenges. Learners that were privileged to participate in virtual learning also faced challenges of lack of adequate power supply,insufficient data due to absence of free WiFi, other technical issues such as frustrating poor network from providers which bring about cracks and breaks in lesson delivery, poor know-how of management of virtual classes by

educators and disruptive behaviours of learners such as annotations on screen during classes, noisy background of learners that refuse to mute their devices as appropriate and general lack of discipline.

Lessons from Adjustments to Covid-19 Situation and Way Forward for Nigerian Education A lot of lessons emerged from adjustments to Covid-19 pandemic. People were forced to adopt, adapt and adjust to the new normal for life to continue. While Covid-19 brought innovations in the ways things are done, it also exposes gaps in various sectors. According to Hussain (2020), Covid-19 exposed education gap and worsens it. Hussain recommended investing in the provision of solar-powered educational gadgets, pre-loaded with offline academic resources to learners in disadvantaged and vulnerable communities as a way of mitigating the negative impact of Covid-19 on education.

Notwithstanding the widen gap, these researchersacknowledge that the great leap in the adoption of Information Communication Technology (ICT) made during Covid-19 movement restrictions days is a giant stride in the right direction notwithstanding the fact that not all learners participated. It should therefore be sustained even now that physical meetings have started. Schools should be made to adopt blended learning system where they can continue with both virtual and physical meetings for learning purposes. It is manifestly clear that the world would never be the same again after Covid-19. The utilization of radio and television for learning among children and adults should be sustained. The Sun Book project type of offline devices should be arranged in Nigeria for use of both children and adults in need of basic literacy as a matter of priority.

Administrators of adult learning centres should collaborate with leaders of various towns and communities in order to ensure the provision and sustenance of community learning centres where pre-recorded lessons can be aired (where there are no adult educators) so that as many as desire to learn to read, write and compute can freely come to learn. The town union can bear the cost if government is not forthcoming. This is very important because inputs of adults are very essential in children's learning. Scaling up of ICT-based learning is very important in order to avoid interruption of learning during crisis. Acquisition of computer literacy by the youths and adult is also imperative for them to

properly supervise children.Nigeria must not let poverty stop her. It is said that where there is a will, there is a way. It is important to consolidate on the technological inroads made. There is no way everybody can be carried along at the same time. Some people must of necessity run along with the rest of the world while the others will catch on later.

Government at various levels should give education the pride of place it deserves as the major driver of development by providing the financial, technical and technological devices, equipment and materials needed to make for quality education for all. Government should no longer cut short education budget.In order to curtail educational inequity, there is need for adequate funding of the education sector. It is important to provide an equitable and inclusive learning environment for the learners. This is to ensure continuity in learning for all, irrespective of their socio economic background.Government should also provide portable solar radio to each family in the rural areas. This will enable majority of the learners who were not able to access digital learning resources during this period of the pandemic to get involved or continue learning.Government should help in training teachers on how best to deliver radio lessons and virtual platforms.Additionally, the national curriculum should be reformed by the government to bridge the gap of inequality in education.

Conclusion

Covid-19 affected every aspect of Nigerian education in unprecedented manners but the helplessness it brought to education in Nigeria at the onset was soon addressed as some Nigerians were able to join the rest of the world in embracing digital and other distance learning strategies. While Covid-19 widened the gap in the digital divide, it also heralded breakthroughs in the utilization of ICT facilities which sustained learning like never before. This paper recommends blended learning for schools and deeper harnessing of other distance learning strategies for sustainability of the interest of adult learners in non-formal education. The lesson for posterity is that learning can be continued both in favourable and unsavory situations.

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