



ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF NIGERIAN YOUTHS FOR SELF-RELIANCE

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Abstract:

For several decades now, the problem of empowering the Nigerian youths for self-reliance to checkmate unemployment has been a great concern to the nation. The poverty level and the inability of most parents to sponsor their wards in school have greatly contributed to youths drop out of school. Many of such youths are used as ad-hoc workers. In order to supplement and assist their parents' efforts, some joined peers who were thugs, hawkers and sometimes criminals who pick pockets, and commit other crimes. Youths have also become tools in the hands of politicians for purposes of political campaigns and perpetration of heinous vices.

Keywords: adult education, non-formal education, empowerment of youths, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The need to absorb this group of youths in the society to make them more productive to the society, more useful to themselves and the nation at large calls for the provision of noble alternative work to do. It is important to fully absorb them into the workforce of the nation and make them self-reliant. No doubt, education is a powerful tool of transformation. But this group of people have never been to school or left school prematurely. Adequate education is still needed to remedy their situation. This is where the issue of Adult education and non-formal education comes in.

2. Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education is the type of education that usually focuses on skill acquisition and skill development chiefly for purposes of economic empowerment. This type of education according to Asojo (2001), has no beginning and has no end. He goes on still to say that, this type of education brings about change in information, knowledge, understanding, or skill acquisition and positive change in attitude. It is therefore regarded as all round development of an individual, aimed at making the person more than simply an independent person but also useful socially, economically and politically in the society. Seen from Aderinoye's (2004) view, non-formal education is any organized educational activity for out-of-school youths and adults outside the formal school system. He classified every educational activity that falls within the scope of these definitions as Non-formal Education. Oyebamiji (2006) spelt out the educational activities that are categorized as being part of non-formal education.

These include: Literacy, continuing education, agricultural extension, distance learning, vocational training, and apprenticeship, among others. All the definitions above, distinguish non-formal education from formal education with its social attributes. While the former attempts to address the diverse educational needs of those who, for different reasons cannot attend the formal school, the latter's primary concern are those who are in the regular school. It has more staff conditions for early qualifications than the Non-formal programmes which spread its activities to cater for all categories of prospective learners.

3. The Nigerian Youths

The Nigerian Youths are very diverse. There are the stack illiterates that only acquire some basic home (traditional) training; there is the semi-literate; there are the well-educated. The current joblessness of a significant number of these youths is a disturbing denominator which begs for urgent redress. If joblessness defies formal school training in terms of getting employed by Government or Non-Government organizations (NGOs), it then means that more measures are required to forestall this malady. Therefore, in addition to all other forms of education provided, the training that will adequately equip the beneficiaries for employment by the Government, NGOs and self-employment becomes necessary.

4. Non-formal education and youth empowerment

The non-formal education provides opportunities for entrepreneurship training and such other empowering training agents. It encourages all forms of training that promote the combination of the brain, hand and all the skills that human endowments can talents. The era of over dependency on others to survive is giving way to collaborative efforts where all parties are empowered to contribute their unique quarters for holistic and long sustainable development.

Adult education (which embraces non-formal educating) plays a major role in the socio-economic and socio-political life of human beings beyond providing literacy for the people. It provides meaningful socio-economic and political development especially among the rural dwellers that constitute the majority of Nigerians. Again, the majority among these rural dwellers are youths. The neglect of the youths and their non-participatory attitude in non-formal education is a major factor that has encouraged insurgency, kidnapping, political turgery and so on in Nigeria. When the majorities who are youths are passive and have no form of empowerment for sustainability of life, they become easy victims of indoctrination from all quarters and they get enlisted into all vices. Majority of the enlisted youths in the dreaded 'boko haram' of Nigeria for instance, are illiterates who have been deceived through indoctrination.

Efforts should therefore be made so that the youths and all vulnerable groups of the society are involved in the course of Adult and non-formal education in Nigeria to encourage citizens to acquire appropriate skills and knowledge for individual and community circumstances, and to induce desirable social and political changes for better living in the country.

Another thing non-formal education does is to arouse the spirit of research and entrepreneurship. That is, the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities (Nwafor, 2007).

Through non-formal education, the youths acquire knowledge and skills that will make them become useful and also promote national development. This will expose them to opportunities that will enable them have the opportunity to harness their resources well and so move towards self-reliance and independence. The national policy on Education (2004) made provisions for all forms of functional education given to youths and adults outside the formal school system.

5. Conclusion

On a general note, the foregoing highlight would suggest a complimentary role of the formal and non-formal education. This is to create as many educational opportunities as possible. However, while the non-formal education is the object of this work, its uniqueness in a nation as Nigeria where only a few are above the poverty line cannot be over emphasized: hence having the majority of the populace below the line. The non-formal educational programmes provide literacy programme to the over-grown school age people, it runs short term and with minimal cost in order to encourage participation. Also, its programmes are for immediate utility at completion. It is much more learner – centred and seeks to always fill educational gaps for both the pre-school and post school participants.

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