

ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AS A PANACEA FOR JOB CREATION

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Abstract

The importance of gainful job opportunities in the creation of wealth and the overall national and individual development cannot be overemphasized. Unfortunately, the monsters of illiteracy and unskillfulness have been the obstacles. Adult and non-formal education is canvassed by this paper as panacea to job creation. This paper therefore examines the concept of adult and non-formal education and its various forms, the causes and problems of unemployment. It also considers adult education vis avis job creation as concerns national development. The paper concludes with some recommendations.

Introduction

The twin problems of unemployment and under-employment have been identified as critical indices responsible for poverty in Nigeria today. Many people caught in this web of poverty are mainly those who lack expertise for job creation and are unemployed, but are still teachable, (educable). Therefore, the only option left for this chunk of poor individuals is to avail themselves of the opportunity of acquiring skills and developing themselves in any vocation of their interest. This is where Adult and

Non-formal education come to play. It is a weapon for turning unemployed adult into job creators and not seekers, and the non-employable into qualified employable citizens.

The 1961 conference of African Heads of State in Addis Ababa of the content of Africa was an attempt to foster development through the acquisition of modern age technology. To achieve this objective, the Heads of States realized that education has to be available to a large majority of people, both young and old.

The task of this paper therefore is to critically examine the noble roles of Adult and Non-formal education as a national escape route from the evil of unemployment through job creation. To achieve this aim, this paper addresses the following issues:

- Meaning of Adult Education
- Meaning of Non-formal Education
- The major causes of unemployment
- Variety of Adult and Job Creation, for national development
- Conclusion and Recommendations.

Meaning of Adult Education

The concept 'adult education' is a microcosm of the macro concept 'education' for the former merely refers to the kind of learning which takes place among adults. This is the idea that tends to emerge from the amalgam of definitions of the term.

Adult education is generally accepted as education and training provided specially for adults outside the regular school system. Ngwu, (2003) stated that from the definition of the term adult education depends on the use of such education in the society as well as on other factors. He indicated that from the cultural standpoint in a society like Nigeria where over 40 percent of the population is still illiterate, adult education may be concerned primarily with literary and other related aspects as a community development, extra mural studies or remedial education, distance education and extension education.

According to Associate Certificate Education Series, (1985) Adult Education is lifelong education, which begins at birth and ends at death. In other words, whoever is tired of learning is also tired of existence.

However, the use of the concept 'Adult Education' depends on how one perceives it and what is prevalent at the time of writing.

Duke (1982: 73) opined that Adult Education may be organized in three ways namely:

- To train adults to get a qualification (e.g. second chance, remedial education).
- As a national mass education programme in Nigeria. This does not necessarily lead to any academic qualifications.
- As a deliberate training programme for adults in specific skills.

Okedara (1981:17) classified adult education into three modes: formal, non-formal and informal. In this opinion, formal education usually involves remedial education or extra mural classes that lead someone to obtain a certificate. Non formal adult education covers training and instruction outside the formal education system and may be organized in the form of individualized apprenticeship, vocational training in craft centers and even as a nationwide mass literary campaign.

Informal adult education presumes that learning may become unintentionally and accidentally through face-to-face

groups, the media and through sereridipity. All these require more explanations in order to appreciate the meaning and impact of non-formal and adult education on the society. The needed explanation is hereby proffered.

Non –Formal Education

The concept of non-formal education emerged recently in the Third World Countries and covers a wide range of programmes outside the formal school system and designed to enable those with little or no schooling to catch up, keep and get ahead.

Azikiwe (1992: 58) saw non-formal education as any intentional and systematic enterprise usually outside the traditional schooling in which contact, media, time, unit, admission criteria, staff facilities and other system components are selected and or adapted for particular students or population or situations in order to maximize the attainment of the learning mission and maximize the maintenance constraints of the system.

Coombs (1968) also saw non-formal education as any organized activity outside the established framework of the formal school and university system, which aims to communicate specific ideas, skills, attitudes and practices in response to a predetermined end, hence, Ahmed and Coombs (1975) referred to non-formal education as the random assortment of organized educational activities operating outside the regular structure and routines of the formal system aimed at serving a great variety of the learning needs of different sub groups in the population; both

young and old. These individuals express the view that non-formal education is a substitute for formal school hence; Azikiwe (1992) saw non-formal education as an at alternatives system to the formal education in the form of part-time education intended to service identifiable clientele made up of those who for one reason or the other did not benefit from formal education.

All definitions of non-formal education given above may be synthesized in the summary Nwogu (1987: 59) gave as its characteristics thus:

- Non-formal education is usually focused on a specific knowledge of skill which is needed. As such, it deals with modular units of learning designed for identified needs/problems.
- Non-formal education is essentially practiced, a process of learning by doing.
- Non-formal education may be direct learning experience adopting whatever methodology may be suited to the client as he is literate or not.
- Non-formal education processes are flexible and will normally be available on a part-time and spare time basis as and when the clientele is available, and for as long as often as may be required or possible.
- Many non-formal education activities may be located close to the life and work of the clientele. Education thus provided will be

closely related to the home or to the work place and will not be so much preparation for doing something sometime in the future but for applying the learning experience as it is learned.

- In non formal education, it is possible to bring three important learning factors-skills, motivation and opportunities into close relationship. The skills which are learned will be selected according to their immediate applicability in the daily life and circumstances of the client.
- Many forms of Non-formal education can be entirely paid for by the participants, individual groups and firms may be benefit from it. However, problems arise when potential participants in non-formal education are unable to enroll for the programme, either for lack of funds or lack of interest. This brings us to the problems of unemployment.

Problems of Unemployment

The theory of unemployment was propounded by Adam Smith, Alfred Marshal, Thomas Malthus and J.M. Keyes. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2000) defines unemployment as a state of not having job; people willing to work not working presently are referred to as unemployed.

The following are the problems caused by unemployment:

- The unemployed is not given the opportunity to contribute to the

national, economic growth Ijere (1992).

- Secondly, the unemployed constitute security risks to the society. An idle brain is the devil's conference hall.
- Psychologically, unemployment has led some people to frustration, divorce, suicide and mental bondage. Some forms of malady are traceable to unemployment.

Causes of Unemployment and Types of Unemployment

- **Structural unemployment:** This arise from changes in the pattern of demand of a country's population. If the demand for a commodity falls, this will lead the factory to reduce its production of such commodity. Consequently, some workers may be laid off.
- **Seasonal unemployment:** This occurs in industries whose production is subject to seasonal variations (.e.g Road, House construction and Crop farming).
- **Voluntary unemployment:** This arises from deliberate refusal of labour to work in the face of unemployment benefits, either because they get unemployment benefits, low wage is being offered or the available job has low prestige (night soil men).

- **Frictional unemployment:** Caused by change in techniques in production. This is also the time between when a student completes his course and gains employment.
 - **Casual unemployment:** This occurs when the economy is producing at a level lower than what the society desired. In this case, the economy in general will not have foils for all those who are able and willing to work because aggregate demand is deficient.
5. **Show rate of economic growth:** Since the economy of the country has been growing at a very slow rate, large number of people remains unemployed because insufficient job opportunities are generated.
 6. **Immobility of Labour:** occupational and geographical immobility of labour make it impossible for the lots of peasant farmers to get good job in the cities.

Other general causes of unemployment in Nigeria today according to Ijere (1992) are as follows:

1. Inadequate educational curricula and poor educational planning.
2. **Low level of Education:** Many youths are not educated beyond the primary or better still, school level. Such categories in the labour market may not get jobs because they lack skills.
3. **Rural-Urban Drift:** Many young adults leave the rural for the cities for many reasons which include to get white collar jobs, better social amenities. This category can hardly get such job opportunities because they are not trained in any trade or skill.
4. **Industrialization** – The use of highly automated and labour-saving machines that only requires

few skilled hands to operate special machine or gadgets.

Adult and non-formal education seems to be the only way out from the crescendo of unemployment. This becomes clearer as we examine the variety of Adult and non-formal education.

Variety of Adult and Non-formal Education

The branches of Adult and Non-formal education which expose its nature and scope are:

- **Adult Basic Education:** his is organized by government or religious bodies to eradicate illiteracy and to assist the disadvantaged groups to acquire skills to make them employable and to help them perform their social roles effectively. Basic literacy involves the skills of reading, writing and computing figures (i.e. numeracy). A person is literate if he

uses these skills to solve his day-to-day life problems.

- **Adult Extension Education:** Such agencies as government Ministries, libraries and Museums usually carry out extension education for instance it can be concerned with teaching farmers how to overcome plant and crop diseases.
- **Adult Post-Literacy Education:** This is planned for adults to enable them update the knowledge they gained or missed in the school system. It involves those who have reached certain levels in the formal schooling. It is all or any education no matter its objectives/content provided it is beyond the literacy education stage.
- **Adult Remedial Education:** This is concerned with teaching adults about the nature and content of available goods and services which they want to buy (as well as the time and place to get them).
- **Continuing Education:** Adult and Non-formal Education, is a continuing education that is why David (1962) strongly indicated that: 'Adult education must be continuing as means for each individual to improve the insufficient education received during his compulsory schooling (for) adaptation of the workers training to technological changes and the resultant increase in the minimum of knowledge required.
- **Death Education:** Education which examines the end of life. It helps to break down or reduce unhealthy fears and misunderstanding about the end of life.
- **Distance Education:** Distance teaching and learning in adult education involve such components as the mass media, the broadcast media, the print media and sometimes, correspondence instruction.
- **Environmental Adult Education:** This is concerned with communal area management using indigenous resources. It exposes adults to current energy crises, which is experienced in all the continents.
- **Fundamental Adult Education:** Concerned with day -to-day living hygiene, nutrition, agriculture, local governments and co-operative organizations.
- **Life-long Education:** Adult and non formal education is life-long. This type of education starts from the cradle to the grave. UNESCO (1976) recommendation for life-long education emphasized global approach to education.
- **Recurrent Education:** Institutionalized education system which permits learners to come back to learning at will throughout life.

- **Workers Education:** This is concerned with increasing the individual adult worker's capacity and socio-economic efficiency through the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Thus, adult education and national development go pari passu.

and development of the economy (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974).

From the paradigm above, it is clear that Adult and non-formal education is veritable tool for churning the poor, illiterate and unskilled members of our society into the productive gear of job creation.

Adult Education for National Development

The aims of adult education are reflected in the priority accorded it. Adult education for national development can achieve four main goals:

- **General and Basic Education:** Is geared towards providing capabilities, arithmetic and knowledge of society and value system. It provides enough literacy to enable the individual to function in his immediate environment as well as understand the world around him.
- **Family Improvement Education:** Is consistent with the cardinal principles of education, which aims at providing skills, knowledge about family life and the rearing of children and improvement of life.
- **Community Education:** Provides knowledge of the social and national institutions and foster the understanding of association and participation in civic matters.
- **Occupational Education:** Assist people to acquire occupational skills, foster achievement of personal needs

Conclusion and Recommendation

The submission of this paper is that Nigeria cannot rise above the quality of its educational system. Since a vibrant part of the populace often miss out from the formal educational arrangement, adult and non-formal education remains the only tool available to Nigerian to shake off the shackles of unemployment and under-employment.

To achieve success in this direction, the government, NGO's, organized private sector and religious bodies should join forces to encourage the Adult and Non-formal education as project. Indigent individuals can also be sponsored and encouraged to enroll in the programme.

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