

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A TOOL FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

In spite of the rich variety of national resources in Nigeria, the country is still very much underdeveloped. Within and outside Nigeria, analysts are of the view that the country clearly has the potentials to be prosperous. As Nigeria attempts without much success to pull herself out of the quagmire of underdevelopment, the inevitable persistent question at her disposal: why has the country remained mired in poverty? This paper attempted to provide a partial answer by arguing that Nigeria's inadequate commitment over the years to pursue the development of non-formal education as a strategic objective, as well as an instrument for national development has been one of the major drawbacks to the countries efforts to pull itself out of poverty. Non-formal education represents a solution to the deficiency of formal education as a panacea to the developmental needs of third world countries. The study showed that the skills taught in this programme were more practically oriented and thus enhances opportunities for employment. Recommendations were made as the basis of the findings that more of these programmes be established throughout the country.

Keywords: Non-formal Education, Development, Skills, Human Resources.

Education is one of the social institutions that contributes towards the construction and maintenance of social order (Ifeanacho (2006) in Arikpo & Atemie, 2006). Education has been defined as a process by which a young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives (Fafunwa, 1974). The concept education has further earned an important posture in the society. This claim is obvious as education has been identified in Nigeria as a tool "par excellence" for effecting National development (FRN, 2004). Excellence in this paradigm is a generally accepted best way of doing things in education in search of distinction in teaching and learning situation. It is an essential component of best practice that creates quality teaching strategies that produces improved scholarship (Ololube & Ubogu, 2008).

Education can play a dominant role as an instrument for large scale achievement and revolution in all spheres of human endeavour. Purposeful education enables the individual to understand and study real life situations and develop confidence. It also provides a strong base for national value-oriented and nation-building process (Rena, 2008).

Nigeria is currently facing a number of human security challenges –poverty, social unrest, hunger, disease, conflict, marginalization, and the need to meet targets for the 2015, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Ololube, 2012). According to the Human Right Report (UNDP 1994), in order to address these growing challenges, a new development paradigm is called for, one that will put people at the centre of development with regards to economic growth, protecting the life opportunities of future as well as current generations, and respecting the national systems of which all

life depends. To this end, education is one of the social institutions that contributes to the construction and maintenance of social order and progress (Ololube, Egbezor & Kpolovie, 2008).

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) identified education in Nigeria as an “instrument par excellence for effecting national development”, to understand this development, economic growth must be considered. The indices for measuring national development in terms of liberal approach include Gross National Product (GNP), Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and per capita income (PCI). Of course, this national development stems from the degree of resourcefulness of the citizenry both at individual level and collectively. Having identified education as a vehicle for manpower, (resourcefulness)development, it is axiomatic that formal education is capital intensive in terms of infrastructural demands etc hence most families in Nigeria are unable to meet this demands of the formal school system. This gives rise to massive cases of school dropout, who in the absence of formal school engagement turn to such socially abhorrent acts of cultism and so called youth restiveness as well as other social vices including teenage pregnancy, hostage taking etc. Other consequences of non-engagement in formal school include unemployment as a result of lack of knowledge and skills needed for employment in industries and public establishments.

The experience of massive unemployment of Nigerians invariably results from the above scenario. It is however alleged that many Nigerians are ill-equipped for wages employment/self-employment as a result of lack of technical skills needed in various industries as well as lack of entrepreneurial initiatives and the enhancing ethical aspect. Equally, since non-formal education is regarded as an alternative to formal schooling, it is expected that the said non-formal education should train people on these skills. Besides, it is the view of Amirize (2001) that non-formal education could make the difference. This paper has the overall purpose of ascertaining whether non-formal education can make people to be resourceful and also to determine whether non-formal education provides life planning educational skills.

Meaning of Non-formal Education

Non-formal education according to Coombs and Ahmed (2000) in Ihejirika, (2000) is any organized systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal school system to provide selected type of learning to particular sub-group in the population, adults as well as children. Non-formal education includes many types of learning experiences; it is a life-long process of learning which includes adult education, apprenticeship system, continuing education, in-service programme, on-the-job training programme, personnel and professional development, workers and students' industrial training. Extension education as an aspect of non-formal education include co-operative extension programmes, extramural classes, external and extension degree programmes, out-reach and off-campus educational programmes such as weekend and sandwich courses. It also includes community development education such as rural development training, manpower resource training, youth camps, holiday programems, mass obligation campaigns and community health education are aspects of non-formal education. Similarly short-term learning activities such as conferences, evening classes, seminars, workshops, as well as specialized purpose programmes like functional and literacy programmes, volunteer youth programme, skill acquisition and liberal education classes constitute non-formal education which can be called “living room” or leisure education. It also include correspondence, home study, self-study programmes, map communication

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education and open media courses, research service programmes, television or radio school, open university and other independent study activities (Amirize, 2000). Non-formal education is designed to encourage all forms of functional education given to youths and adults outside the formal school systems such as functional literacy, remedial and vocational education (FRN, 2004). In the light of the proceeding, Ihejirika, 2000, posited that non-formal education connotes “alternative to schooling” and known in some quarters as “out of school education. Explaining further, Ihejirika opined that it covers training and instruction outside the formal education system and ranges from apprenticeship to national mass literacy. It may be vocational, such as the craft centres in Nigeria or the girls vocational centres established in many developed and developing countries which train girls in vocational skills like sewing and preparation of young women for marriage and small businesses.

Non-formal education is given in form of training learners. Learners are not involved in intensive and rigorous mental activity. They learn particular skills or trades and particular discipline. The various skills acquisition and apprenticeship programmes are examples of non-formal education. Because of the differences in skills to be acquired, the assessment process will also differ.

Theoretical Framework (Functionalism)

Functionalism, as developed by Emile Durheim (1858-1917), (1956), is the oldest and still most dominant theoretical perspective in sociology and other social sciences, including education. This perspective rests on two main premises: the application of the scientific method to the objective social world and the use of analogy between the individual organism and society (Hurn, 1995). Thus, functionalist assume that the different parts of the society, each have their own roles to play and that they work together to form a harmonious whole. Sociologists often use the metaphor of the body to describe functionalism-society is viewed as a body with the different parts of society-government, media, religion, the family, and of course education-being like the different organs in a body, each contributing in a different way keeping the whole healthy.

Functionalism assumes that the various institution in a society always operate so as to support that society as it is. If these institutions do not operate as such, the society will perish. Functionalists thus believe that in order for a society to remain viable (with all components functioning together), a society must instill similar beliefs and values in each member and each new generation. Education is a component part of any given society and tends to maintain that a society is in a steady state. A steady state occurs when a constant ratio is maintained among the components of the system, given continuous input to the system (Whawo, 1993). Durkheim (1956) believed that education existed to instill morals and skills in children, youths and adults. As such, it is imperative that these morals and skills are taught in both formal and non-formal settings to ensure consistency in their teaching and application. In teaching morals and skills, schools are teaching children, youths and adults that they must become part of the society. Durkheim concluded that a sense of belongings to a larger society was the most important lesson that education could teach learners. In the same vane, parson (1977) contended that a schools’ main function is to socialize children by using the idea of commitments. There are two types of commitments: commitment to the implementation of the broad values of society and commitment to the performance of a specific type of role within the social structure.

When applied to the context of this paper, it becomes obvious that non-formal education has a role to play in creating a just and egalitarian society because it provides functional education to youths and adults outside the formal education system, including functional literacy, remedial and vocational education, which are essential to human and national development.

Objectives of Non-formal Education

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) outlined the goals of mass literacy, adult and non-formal education to include:

- a. Provide functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education or who did not complete their primary education. These include the nomads, migrant families, the disabled and other categories or groups, especially the disadvantaged gender.
- b. Provide functional and remedial education for those youths who did not complete secondary education.
- c. Provide education for different categories of completers of the formal education in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills.
- d. Provide in-service on the job, vocational and professionals in order to improve their skills
- e. Give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment.

Equally, Gbamanja (1997), writing on nomadic education posited that the aims include the following:

- i. To take education to the door steps of children of nomads and migrant fishermen who have been denied their right to education because of their geographical location.
- ii. The programme is aimed at enabling the nomads to acquire functional literacy for general information, enlightenment as well as basic numeracy for accounting and improved management of their stock.
- iii. The purpose of bringing education to all classes of people.

Furthermore, the international encyclopedia of Education (1985), identified four major goals of non-formal education which include the following:

- i. Alternative Route to Upward Mobility. The emphasis on academic competence in the formal system means that only learners who are able to achieve the required level of competence are the only few that will eventually gain upward mobility at the expense of low achievers. Non-formal education afford alternatives routes to cope with the required level of competence in the social education.

- ii. **Training for Modernizing the Workforce:** The planned labour needs of the economy are often not met by the formal schools; the result is structural unemployment, while there are over production of manpower that cannot be filled in the economy. Non-formal education recognizes the need for adjusting the learning programme to change conditions in the society.
- iii. **Rural Development:** Non-formal education system should caters for the whole population not just school age who because of the necessity of schooling migrates to the urban centres; thereby totally neglecting those in the rural areas where great measure of resources for development resides.
- iv. **Political Incorporation:** Non-formal education has its own area, the political facilitation of the individual to be conscious of himself as a citizen or as belonging to a political community. Developing nations are in dare need to develop national consciousness among the citizens over and above ethnic sentiment which has been one of the major obstacles towards national development and integration.

Models of Non-formal Education

Various models of non-formal education usually indicate and arise from the purpose and needs which they are intended to serve according to the prevailing situations and priorities of a society and programme sponsors, Amirize (2001) indentified the following models:

- a. **Agricultural Extension Model:** This is about the commonest and earliest model of non-formal education practiced in Nigeria whose purpose is geared towards increased food production through improved farming methods. Facilitators of this model were agricultural extension officers and the target audience was rural farmers and cooperative societies. Extension officers played the role of agents of change who identified agricultural needs in various communities and devised strategies to solve them by working in collaboration and partnership with farmers and cooperatives.
- b. **Apprenticeship Model:** As the oldest and universal approach to skill acquisition, various governments and employers of labour have used the apprenticeship system as a reliable and effective model of non-formal occupational education. Such programmes in Nigeria included the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), skill acquisition programme, school-to-land and other vocational training and job-improvement programme.
- c. **Age-Group Model:** This is traditional African model of non-formal Education whereby peer groups and youths of the same age range interact and engage in various community activities. This model promotes the understanding of social obligation and rules as well as the acquisition of basic skills, which would enable youths to function as responsible members of the society.
- d. **Self-Help Model:** This method does not only rely on local skills and materials but it also promotes self reliance and industry. Community leaders and Chairmen of Community Development Committees (CDC) are usually facilitators in this model and their roles include

helping and motivating the community through the youths, first to identify their needs and then mobilize and organize them to work in the project.

- e. **Sunday School Model:** The goal of this model of non-formal education goes beyond religion and moral instructions. Sometimes instructions given and skills taught in the Sunday school can include cookery and home management for girls and theory of music and other trades for boys some churches train youths as organists, choir-master and youth leaders through the Sunday school.
- f. **Training Institute Model:** This model of non-formal education is kind of on-the-job training within places of work, meant to improve the occupational competence of the participants. They include farm training centres, management training and job orientation centres organized by industries, organizations or governments.
- g. **Village Craft Centre Model:** Sometimes initiated by local government authorities or community development agencies. This model has two purposes namely; to impart some skills to youths in rural areas, thus creating self-employment, and discourages rural-urban migration among youths of both sexes. It encourages hardwork, creativity and the dignity of labour by challenging to shun idleness. Skills taught include masonry, sewing, weaving, dyeing shoe-making, carpentry, painting, plumbing etc. Facilitators play the role of entrepreneurs and teachers.
- h. **Basic Literacy Education Model:** This can still be organized by local government authorities or other voluntary agencies. The intention here is to teach basic literacy-reading, writing and Arithmetic (3Rs) in the form of adult education or night classes. Migrant fishermen and nomadic education programmes aimed at adopting this model.
- i. **Community Mobilization Model:** This model can be described as a system of liberal education and counselling, aimed at transforming the rural community by working in close relationship with them. The idea is not to impart literacy or skills but to liberate the minds of the people from debilitating conditions. This centres on sensitizing and conscientizing the people generally. Facilitators are community development experts.
- j. **Enrichment-of-Skills Model:** This is a process of enablement of the individual through responsible and creative use of leisure, devoted to enriching the mind through creative and constructive engagements.

Importance of Non-formal Education

Education plays an important role in development. Out-of-school programmes, in particular are central in providing adaptable learning opportunities, new skills and knowledge for a large percentage of people outside the reach of formal education (Vermuaak, 1985). Non-formal education (as one type of out-of-school programme) began to appear in international discourse on education in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In this context, it is referred to as any organized education activities outside the formal system, whether operating independently or as a feature of some broader activity intended to serve identifiable learning cliented and learning objectives. Non-formal education today

should be seen as related to the concepts of recurrent and lifelong learning. Fordham (1993) identified four characteristics associated with non-formal education.

- i. Relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups;
- ii. Concern with specific category of person;
- iii. A focus on clearly defined purpose; and
- iv. Flexibility in organization and methods.

According to the UNESCO (2010), non-formal education helps to ensure equal access to education, eradicate illiteracy among women, and improve women's access to vocational training, science, technology and continuing education. It also encourages the development of non-discrimination education and training, allocates resources for and monitors the implementation of educational reforms, and promotes women's and girls' lifelong education and training. There are a number of impacts and facets of literacy and education, especially as they pertain to girls and women are worth considering.

- i. **Health Development:** Adult literacy and the education of young women are critical for healthy physical and intellectual development. The effectiveness of such literacy and non-formal education programme are bolstered by family, community and parental involvement (Russell, 2001).
- ii. **Education of Parents:** The education of parents, particularly mothers, is associated with significant reductions in infant mortality and improved child health care. In addition, the better educated parents are, the more likely it is they will raise literate children. Likewise the foremost reason for low school enrolment in pastoral communities is parental fear that education will lead children away from their traditional way of life. Non-formal and distance education for parents can help to reduce these fears (Carr-Hill & Peart, 2006).
- iii. **Human and Economic Development:** Improved literacy level delivers economic benefits to individuals, communities and the nation. In fact, studies show that there is a connection between literacy levels and per capita economic growth and hence the reduction of poverty. Bangladesh, one of the E-9 countries, is home to the most recent non-formal education initiative, the post-literacy and continuing education for human development project, which focuses on skills training and income generation for poverty alleviation. There, all sectors concerned with human development and economic growth have been encouraged to recognize the importance of and the need to support non-formal education in the national interest (Islam, 2007). Nigeria can emulate this by urging key stakeholders to tap into the non-formal education agenda so as to enhance economic development-the mass education of people undoubtedly stands to bring about a significant and positive change in individual and community quality of life and in the pace of national development.
- iv. **Preventing HIV/AIDS:** Adult literacy programmes can play a central role in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS. According to Bakilana et al (2005), adult literacy is essential for communicating many of the key HIV/AIDS prevention messages. For instance, Bakilana and her colleagues discovered that Uganda has reduced the prevalence of HIV/AIDS from 14% in the early 1990s to about 41% in 2003. An important aspect of this success was the use of

information campaigns to educate Ugandans about the existence of HIV/AIDS and means of self-protection.

Many African countries require some kind of formal and/or non-formal education and training to be able to benefit from basic health care, including sexual and reproductive health services and the development of new machines, and thus free themselves from the diseases that devastate the poor (Seya, 2005).

Role of Non-formal Education in Manpower Development

Manpower development denotes a process of education and training through which human resources available are enable to acquire skills for optimal performance and subsequent improved productivity. As a process, such recurrent form of education and training could be at the instance of governments, employers of labour or associations or still at the discretion of individual workers who perceive the need for further training in order to be relevant in the society. In the views of Igbo (2008), the role of non-formal education in development is explained by the complex relationships existing between all its forms and the economic, social and cultural factors of development.

For instance, the economic role of non-formal education in development is apparent in its contribution to human capital development. Non-formal education yields high rates on investments and enhances labour productivity by equipping various categories of recipients with essential literacy and numeracy skills alongside health care, sanitation and nutrition knowledge that improve people's standard of living, as well as relevant skills to improve productivity. In all, Igbo (2008) concluded that investment in the development of human capital through non-formal education is critical for producing a labour force and technical-know-how that is able to compete in today's global economy.

Non-formal education has brought about reduction in poverty and thus contributed to national development in practical terms, non-formal education equips participants with skills that enhance income generation and improve self-reliance. Non-formal education skills development programmes reduces burden placed on family members, help participants to contribute meaningfully to the society, and reduce unemployment by developing this many aspects of the individual. Studies have shown that there is a connection between literacy levels and par-capital growth and ultimately a decrease in poverty.

Equally, there is a relationship between non-formal education and the re-skilling and up-skilling of the population to be useful to the society. Non-formal education programmes have created opportunities for learners to acquire and apply the knowledge and skills that will propel their own economic development, and national development.

Generally, non-formal education is effective in the provision of life planning education. This programme kept participant busy by getting them committed to various skills of their choice. The topic treated in life planning education include; sexuality, teenage unwanted pregnancy, abortion, communication skills, HIV/AIDS, rights and responsibilities, mediation and peer pressure gender roles, cultism and examination malpractice. Furthermore, Assemblies of God (2006) posited that "the inward reality of conversion must influence the outward life, including a person's character,

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disposition, conversation and behaviour". This means that Sunday school which is a model of non-formal education also teaches life planning skills. Furthermore, in the Nigerian prisons, the in-mates are often given advice on how to refrain from acts capable of indicting them again after serving their jail term.

Again, non-formal education is effective in the provision of practical skills. This is supported by the initiative of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) by training 1000 persons annually in various skills. The Directorate has established vocational skills development programmes. One of which is school-on-wheels in which the skills acquisition activities of National open Apprenticeship scheme are taken to the grassroots through the use of well-equipped mobile workshops and waste-wealth scheme. Here, interested unemployed youths are taught the techniques of converting hitherto neglected waste objects such as small shells, horn etc into decorative items. There are several other non-formal education programme by many state governments that train people constantly in the country.

In addition, skill acquired in non-formal education centres enhances securing employment. To Ihejirika (2000) functional literacy education could be work oriented. For instance, an industrial worker needs to improve his skills for greater efficiency and productivity through retraining and attendance of workshop and seminars. Again, an apprentice who had completed his apprentice training could establish his own workshop (self employment). Besides the certificates issued after the training could be used to seek employment in any company, civil service, etc depending on the sector that needs the trade or skill. Furthermore, Ranson (1994) opined that the control and direction of education, because of the perceived function in preparing young people for their future roles in employment and society, becomes a central concern for the corporatist state.

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) also operates small scale enterprises programme designed to promote self-employment among job-seekers by inculcating in them the spirit of entrepreneurship, creativity and self-reliance as against the usual dependence on public and private sector establishments. To achieve, these objectives, the NDE encourages the retential entrepreneurship through the provision of requisite training, other called the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), credit assistance and other necessary support services, to set up small scale business thereby generating jobs for themselves and other Nigerians.

Conclusion

Education is a necessity for man in order to articulate himself and achieve fullness. But the formal system, which is elitist, discriminatory and installment, cannot alone help man to attain all the education that he needs for the achievement of self fulfillment and national development. The terminologies, such as continuing education, recurrent education, education permanents, and life-long, have been used by different bodies to stress that education should be co-terminous with life. To cater for the educational aspirations of all citizens of Nigeria, non-formal education plays a very important role. It provides for the interest of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the formal system. In fact, Nigeria has made modest but significant progress in the development of formal and youth education. Nevertheless, a country that almost concentrates its educational investment on youth and formal is unwillingly failing to develop and utilize its human resources optimally. Considering that knowledge

and skills have become the means for individual and national development, the high rates of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria, in spite of the countries natural resources, can be attributed, to a significant extent, to the lack of an education and training system committed to equip youths and adults to contribute more effectively to social, economic, political and cultural development. National development or competitiveness, no matter how passionately desired, is not likely to occur to any meaningful level of a country if not earnestly committed to a sustainable and coherent non-formal education policy purposefully articulate with its development goals.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government should establish non-formal education centres in all the states, since non-formal education teaches life planning educational skills. The proximity advantage would no doubt be optimally utilized by the grassroots.
- ii. Churches should make attendance of Sunday school compulsory since much of the life planning skills and the attendant moral ethics are taught in Sunday school.
- iii. Government should encourage the non-formal education programme currently undertaken in prisons. Government should provide equipment to be given to anyone who completes his/her jail term so that he/she can engage in meaningful activity at home.
- iv. Traditional birth attendants and bone setters should be encouraged to train others in lieu of hoarding their knowledge and monopolizing the trade.
- v. Vocational Guidance Counsellors should be provided bearing in mind the decision for life work can take place at various ages and levels in an individual (Zuofa, 2001).

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