

# Management of Adult Education Programmes for Empowering Unemployed Youths in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *In Nigeria, the unemployment rate stood at 19.61 percent in 2021. This record is attributed to a United Nations agency known as the International Labour Organization (ILO) charged with the development of policies to lay down labour requirements. The rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria refers to the percentage of those that are not employed. The youths concerned are the group of 15 to 24 years. A significant challenge confronting most developing countries of the world is youth unemployment, and this has given credence to criminal activities among the youths. This has also led to a lot of frustrations, low self-esteem, shame, sadness and in some cases attempted suicides and some have ended up committing suicide. Some unemployed youths have resorted to joining terrorist groups. Onuoha (2012) observed that membership into Boko-Haram Terrorist group in Nigeria is recruited mainly from unemployed youths and destitute children. The way out of this quagmire is through training and retraining of our youths through adult education programmes such as vocational technical education, which promotes the ability of its recipients to qualify for and be part of work that is productive such as functional literacy programmes, agricultural extension services and others. The paper therefore examines the concept of adult education, Management of Adult Education and programmes that can empower unemployed youths, reduce unemployment and youth restlessness in Nigeria. The paper however recommends among others that the government should budget substantial funds annually for various adult education programmes in the country and non-governmental organizations and various industries should help to sponsor some specific programmes centered around adult education in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Management, Unemployed youths, Adult Education, Youth Empowerment*

## Introduction

Education is now generally believed to be the remedy for all development problems in any nation. As a cure for all human maladies, education is needed to provide knowledge, attitude, and necessary skills for individuals to both survive and assist in the development of their nation. Adult education evolved as a strategy to remedy the challenge faced by numerous citizens who for one reason or the other either could not finish or could not participate in mainstream formal education in their early years.

The National Policy on education [2013] section 4, No 67 stated that adult education includes all kinds of practical basic training given to youths and adults away from structured school systems, like remedial education, vocational education, and functional literacy. In No 67 of this section, the goals of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education are as follows:

- (i) Deliver functional basic education for adults and youths that have never obtained formal education or failed to complete it.
- (ii) Provide alternate and long-lasting education for people that were not able to complete secondary education and
- (iii) Promote up skilling by giving various classes of employees and professionals access to in-service vocational and professional training

## The State of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

In the recommendations for implementing programs to reduce poverty in Nigeria, the federal government declared that poverty and unemployment are socially, economically, and politically unacceptable. By implication, the government has declared its intention to fight this twin problem of poverty and unemployment increase in employment rate in Nigeria and automatically reduce the rate of the number of people living in squalor and poverty conditions. In a recent analysis of government guidelines on implementation of poverty alleviation programmes, 63% of Nigerians were said to live below poverty line, 50% without access to safe drinking water, 38% lack access to primary health care, while most Nigerians are believed to lack protein and vitamins in their diet because of low purchasing power. The increasing level of poverty is because of the increasing level of unemployment especially among the youth population.

Abiona and Akinbami (2010) are of the view that the massive unemployment as it were had driven millions of Nigerians below poverty line and has increased social problems like crimes and criminality, drug pushing, prostitution, ritual killing, and armed robberies have dotted the landscape of Nigeria because of this. Youth unemployment in Nigeria is now a disturbing phenomenon with social, political, and economic implications on the development of the nation. Youth unemployment is not a recent phenomenon; it has become the bane of the Nigerian economy and social life without any lasting solution in sight.

Salami (2013) also described unemployment in Nigeria as a 'time bomb waiting to explode' if effective intervention is not put into place. The youthful years are prone to taking advantage of training in entrepreneurship if offered and properly channeled as opposed to falling into self-destructive behavior which has become the norm because such opportunities are not readily available to a large majority both in the rural areas and the cities. Adult education happens to be a veritable tool for entrepreneurship development that should be explored to the fullest capacity.

### Concept of Adult Education

Adult education as a concept has been defined in various ways by different authorities. The term adult education is multi-disciplinary in nature. Hence, it defies a universally acceptable definition. Adult education embraces a lot of activities and focuses on various problems which could be individual, societal, and national (Akinpelu, 2002). It serves different purposes for different people based on their needs.

Merriam and Brockett (2007) buttressing this noted that adult education is complicated, difficult to define and impossible to articulate. Some schools of thought are of the view that adult education is planned and designed for adults while others believe that adult education implies many things in different contexts and different periods.

Ajiboye and Ayeni (2006) define adult education as learning opportunities purposefully planned and offered to those who identify as adults in their own society irrespective of it being in or out of the formal system if they adopt appropriate adult learning methodologies, styles, purposes. They stress further that learning opportunities of this nature will consist of a multitude of activities such as vocational programmes, professional development, leisure pursuits, social and personal growth programmes.

However, UNESCO 1976 in Oladapo (2002) broadly defined adult education as the entirety of structured processes, including the methods, content and level, either prolonging or replacing primary education in the schools, apprenticeship, colleges or universities where those who are adults according to their respective societies, cultivate their talents, expand their knowledge, increase their technological or professional qualifications and generate changes in their attitudes or behaviors from two perspectives; comprehensive personal development and engagement in balanced and independent cultural, social and economic development.

### The Practice of Adult Education Programmes that Can Empower Unemployed Youths in Nigeria

Nnazor (2003) argued that there has been a lack of commitment to adult education as a vehicle for national development and that it has largely been responsible for the country's inability to overcome poverty. Historically, no national development plan has provided an encompassing framework for the creation of adult education. Nnazor equally observed from this antecedent that

*"A sustainable, virile, and coherent thorough set of programmes that demonstrate the government's commitment to adult education as a vital component of Nigeria's development has hardly been rolled out. Furthermore, insufficient funding and a lackadaisical approach to implementation have caused many government-sponsored adult education programs to struggle. The root of the issue lies in a historical lack of emphasis on adult education as a strategic goal and a tool for national development."*

In the same vein Nnazor (2005) cited Aderinoye (2002), Omolewa, (2000) and World Bank identifying among others, problems of inadequate physical and instructional facilities in government owned adult training centers, the implementation of programs can be impeded by several factors, including limited funding, lack of policy continuity, growing debt, and challenges related to gender and language.

Onyenemezu (2012) buttressed the views of Nnazor (2005) saying that adult education operates in diverse, iterative activities not consolidated into a purposeful and consistent programme. He emphasized that adult education has been neglected by government despite its importance in the production sector of the economy.

Referring to African countries, the World Bank claimed that programmes of adult education are necessary, but such programmes have a poor trade record" (World Bank 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Adult Education). This implies lack of continuity and unsustainable development. It further indicates that the condition of unemployment and poverty in these nations which adult education is supposed to address is not improved.

The illustrations of adult education and its purpose in the national policy on education also buttress the fact that there is a place for the empowerment of youths in National development.

The goals of adult education in the National Policy embrace a lot of educational programmes for adults and unemployed youths in Nigeria. Anyanwu (1999) noted that the programmes of adult education are such that can enable people to make money, to use power, acquire wisdom and to bring about the development of the individual.

Adult education programmes that can empower unemployed youths in Nigeria include the following:

1. Vocational / Technical Education
2. Agricultural Extension Education
3. Remedial Education
4. Functional Literacy
5. Leisure (or liberal adult education)
6. Community development

#### 1. Vocational/Technical Adult Education

This is a kind of functional adult education programme that is work oriented. It involves the acquisition of skills that enables its recipients to qualify for and be involved in productive work (Olateju, 2006). Every society has varying occupations that offers various individuals the opportunity to choose any vocation or economic activities that will enable them make ends meet. This will help the unemployed youths to be self-reliant and they can create wealth by themselves and ultimately bring about a sustainable future for them. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) has done and still doing a lot in this area. Through its sub-programmes such as vocational skill development, national open apprenticeship scheme has assisted a lot of youths to gain skills that have made them to be gainfully employed.

#### 2. Agricultural Extension Education

This is a general term that involves the implementation of scientific research and innovative knowledge to agricultural processes via farmer education. It entails learning about natural resources and land management facilitated by hands on experience and guidance to equip students for entry jobs or higher education that would prepare them for advanced agricultural jobs. (Osborne et al. 2008). Agricultural extension education is one of the adult education programmes that can help to empower unemployed youths. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) through its training programmes has given non-agricultural graduates farming schemes that have enabled young school leavers to be empowered and it also provides loans for agricultural business for them.

### **3. Functional Literacy**

Functional literacy came into prominence and technical usage since 1965 when UNESCO adopted it as its new way of attacking illiteracy. Wagner (1999) defines functional literacy as a compendium of that form of education that is given to those who are committed to it with a view to making them function efficiently as individuals and to contribute to national development.

Collins and O'Brien (2003) in the same vein defined functional literacy as the lowest skill level required to satisfy personal and social needs that will enable an individual to be functional in his society.

Literacy becomes functional when it is acquired to such a level that it can be used in everyday transactions. It facilitates the attainment of skills and stimulates the individual for national development. Functional literacy helps to empower unemployed youths, raise consciousness and boost the participation of youths in national development. Apart from this, functional literacy enables the youths that are unemployed to be self-reliant and they can create wealth by themselves and ultimately bring about a sustainable future for them.

### **Remedial Education**

This is the type of adult education programme that is meant to 'remedy' the defects in formal education either for the purpose of employment or enrolment for higher education. (Okenimkpe, 2003). It enables the young and the old adults in sitting for examination to pass or to make up for their inadequacies in some subjects to enable them to proceed to higher education. Remedial education will enable unemployed youths to have access to educational opportunities and thereby help to create a sustainable future for them. In Nigeria, remedial adult education takes the form of all continuing education programmes organized as private or public tutorial classes for preparing people for examination in primary and secondary schools. Remedial adult education helps to reduce drop-out rates in Nigeria by providing opportunities for learning for a lot of youths who through no fault of theirs were not given the opportunity to do so owing to some reasons.

A lot of Nigerian youths are unemployed because they never had the opportunity to learn or dropped out of school. Through remedial adult education, youths can still pick up and become self-reliant.

### **Leisure (Liberal Adult Education)**

This could be described as education for enlightenment and liberation. Liberal education is designed to improve man's degree of awareness and thinking faculty (Adewale, 2003). Liberal education is essential for grooming of leaders and the training of leadership skills which enables them think logically, exercise sound judgment and execute decisions firmly and promptly. It is embarked upon by voluntary agencies, government, and universities because of its importance in the development of man's hidden potentials. Through liberal education, sound minds are produced. It will enable the youths to be conscious of their political rights and this will help them to participate in the political development of their country. Liberal education enables people to be conscious of their national ideologies, economic, social and cultural programmes and how they can affect their development, maintain their independence through participation and decision making (Oladapo, 1999).

### **Community Development**

Community development is an adult education programme that is aimed at establishing organized system of social services to make people to be self-reliant. (Olateju, 2006). It is defined as a means through which the people of a community plan and execute actions in unison for the fulfillment of their shared needs. In other words, it is a movement for improved standard of life through the willing co-operative effort of the people and the youths inclusive. Community development through its economic goals as its main objective encourages co-operative and thrift societies that can help the unemployed youths to be empowered. Their involvement in co-operative societies gives them the opportunity to create business on their own and also gives them access to loans that will increase the scope of their business.

### **Managing Adult Education Programmes in Nigeria**

The national policy on education is a strategy for achieving those national development objectives of the nation. Broadly, the national philosophy has identified the following as national objectives which education is expected to bring about:

- A free and democratic society
- A united, strong, and self-reliant nation.
- A great and dynamic economy
- A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens

Through equal access to opportunities at all educational levels, the government seeks to give each person the resources they need to become productive citizens. To realize these national objectives, education must be deliberately planned, administered, and sustained much more than other sectors of national life. Under this premise, education can be rightly considered as fundamental for political, social, and economic growth.

To achieve this, section 12 of the National Policy on Education is centered on planning, administration and supervision of education which are all functions of management. This establishes the fact that the success of the education system is determined by appropriate planning, optimized administration, and effective financing. Administration is subsumed as a function of organization and structure, ownership, control, inspection, and supervision.

To buttress the importance of management in the implementation and realization of these objectives of education as it relates to adult education inclusive, Section 12, No. 107 of the national policy of education listed the objectives of planning, administration, inspection, and supervisory and financial services in education as follows to.

- (a) guarantee adequate and effective planning of all educational services
- (b) deliver efficient administrative and management control for the maintenance and improvement of the system.
- (c) ensure quality control through regular and continuous supervision of instructional and other education services; and
- (d) provide adequate and balanced financial support for all educational services.

### **Management of Adult Education**

Meshane (2009) identified four management functions as a reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as planning and strategizing, organizing, controlling, leading, and developing employees. Oluborode (2007) defined management of adult education as a process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling all educational activities and programmes intentionally organized for adults on a part-time basis with voluntary participation of adults to attain organizational and educational goals and objectives. In order to affect change, this requires overseeing, managing and coordinating all the educational activities intended to improve the professional or technical qualifications and skill acquisition of adult learners.

The management of adult education will make it an integral part of national development planning especially in addressing unemployment problems as well as eliminating illiteracy. Without sustainability, management of adult education cannot be said to be effective and efficient as a solution to youth unemployment. The level to which objectives of eradicating illiteracy, unemployment and empowerment of youths and adults out of school learners is attained, is the determining factor of how successful the management of adult education will be. Sustained management of adult education by the government especially in planning, funding and supervision is proof of the commitment of tackling the massive youth unemployment and restiveness in the country.

Securing and maintaining the interest and motivation of beneficiaries through administration and supervision is needed to evaluate participant's achievement and provide information for adult educators to both plan and implement programmes.

### **Recommendations**

- (i) Adult education should be integrated into the mainstream formal education sector by giving it equal priority especially in implementation of the policy of adult education.
- (ii) Definite and permanent units/departments on adult education should be established in all state and local government level units with adequate monitoring strategies to ensure that adult education policies and planning are implemented and sustained.
- (iii) There cannot be sustainable management without adequate funding. Adult education should be well funded by the government, and the government should also encourage private initiatives with grants-in-aid to provide the incentives needed.
- (iv) The government should budget substantial funds annually for various adult education programmes in the country.
- (v) Non-governmental organizations and various industries should help to sponsor some specific adult education programmes.
- (vi) Adult educators should embark on more research work in order to gather data for appropriate planning of the programmes.

### **Conclusion**

Adult education continues to serve as a powerful tool for helping individuals escape poverty and for reshaping society to be more productive, contemporary and value-driven. A sustainable management of adult education programmes therefore becomes imperative for achieving a self-reliant nation because sustainable development cannot be achieved where we have a nation where majority of its youths are unemployed.

For adult education programs to effectively combat the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria, they must be energetically pursued under the correct supervision, coordination, control, and finance. Adult education may help people meet their diverse needs, thus it should be adequately supported, managed, and efficiently monitored.

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