

## FUNCTIONAL ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR PROMOTING NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This paper examined the roles of functional adult and non-formal education in promoting a sustainable national security in Nigeria. In Nigeria, security challenges such as terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, religious intolerance, banditry, and assassination have been linked to falling education standards, youth unemployment, and corruption. Adult and non-formal education aims at preventing violent conflict in advance and educating individuals and societies for peaceful and harmonious coexistence, which in turn promotes tolerance, non-violence, equity, respect for one another, and social justice. The study employed a systematic method of review. Secondary data was used in the study. Literate individuals and societies resolve conflicts peacefully without resorting to violence or war, which adversely affects the socio-economic, political, and cultural life of the people and the development of any nation. This type of education aims to prevent future conflicts and educate individuals and communities to coexist peacefully and harmoniously, promoting values like tolerance, non-violence, equality, and respect. The findings of the study revealed that educated individuals and societies are more likely to resolve disputes without resorting to violence, which negatively impacts society, politics, culture, and development. In Nigeria, ethnic tensions sometimes arise due to underdevelopment, falling education standards, corruption, unemployment, and political, social, and economic disparities, leading to violent clashes and conflicts. This research examines various aspects of adult and non-formal education, such as the features of functional adult and non-formal education for sustainable national security, some of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria, and some relationships between functional adult and non-formal education for promoting national security in Nigeria. It also identifies challenges in adult and non-formal education and proposes strategies to achieve national peace, security, and development.*

**Keywords:** Adult Education, Non-Formal Education, National Security, Peaceful coexistence, and Social Inclusion

### Introduction

Education is an important tool for national development. It enhances the application of man's achievement towards improvement of his environment. Oribhabor (2019) used education to refer to the process by which individuals are assisted formally through proper direction and guidance to develop their capacities, for their own benefits and that of the state. If a nation bequeaths the

right type of education, there will be a positive change in the behavioural patterns of the citizens. Education is to a nation what the mind is to the body (Oribhabor, 2019). A diseased mind is handicapped in the coordination and direction of the bodily activities, so also a faulty education system cannot create a well-informed citizenry with the appropriate attitudes, skills, abilities and competencies to appreciate and understand one another and contribute to the nation's economic growth. It empowers people and strengthens nations (Oribhabor, 2019).

Education no matter the form it takes with respect to non-formal education; provides a base for the acquisition of human skills, attitudes, abilities and capabilities that are necessary proponent and prerequisite for promoting and sustaining community and national development in Nigeria and developing nations at large. Developing countries previously and recently increasingly appreciate the fact that the promotion of social, economic and political development depends wholesomely on their abilities to produce skilled and informed adult population, capable of understanding national problems and needs and able to channel their efforts and resources towards the fulfillment of community and national goals in every dimension. In the same consideration there is a reaffirmation that in no doubt all nations of the world are revolutionizing their education systems to help them achieve national economic growth and stability (Ugwuzor, 2017). Education is the anchor for national development, and any nation working towards sustainable development must recognize education as such. Although the emphasis is skewed on formal education, nevertheless, formal education has been given more than it can chew, as such alternative forms of education are urgently needed and rife to make up the deficiencies and losses, of which non-formal education should be one of them (Ugwuzor, 2017).

In Nigeria, things happening in recent times have called for thorough appraisal of our educational system with the aim of ascertaining if they have achieved the desired results. The quality of education of a nation determines the quality of the people and the quality of the people determines the development level of the nation. National integration is all embracing as it covers all activities and arrangements put in place to ensure the exercising of the citizens' fundamental human rights without any threat whatsoever (Olugbeko & Asagha, 2019). In Nigeria today, despite the fact that the government has not put up any overt policies that threaten the exercising of the peoples' fundamental human rights, the government has failed at making the people to enjoy one of the most fundamentals of these rights; the right to live. The country is bedeviled with different cases of insecurity that have cut short peoples' lives. The insecurity comes in different shades such as election related killings, robbery, kidnapping, assassination, human trafficking, hunger, militancy, terrorism etc. All these happen on daily basis in Nigeria and thousands of Nigerians have been killed, maimed or displaced (Olugbeko & Asagha, 2019). These crises have remained with us and become intractable despite all efforts being put up by the government to address them, it is therefore pertinent to consider the adult education option as a panacea to the national security challenges.

### **Concepts of Adult Non-Formal Education**

Adult Education is defined as the entire body of organized educational processes whatever the contents, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeships, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society in which they belong, develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behavior in the two-fold perspective of independent, social, economic and

cultural development (Gbenro, 2021). Adult Education can also be referred to as a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and full-time basis (unless full-time programmes are especially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, undertakings or skills, appreciation and attitude or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems (Gbenro, 2021). To Nzeneri (2005), adult and non-formal education is a means of bringing about positive and progressive change especially among local and downtrodden masses. It is a means to achieve deliberate positive change in the life of an individual, adult or group of adults for improvement in self and community. According to UNESCO, Non-Formal Education (NFE) may be defined as "any organized and sustained educational activity that does not correspond exactly to the formal education systems of schools, colleges, universities, and other formal educational institutions". It may take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater for persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life skills, work skills, and general culture. NFE programmes do not necessarily follow the ladder system and may have differing durations and may not confer certification of the learning achieved (Fagunwa, 2014).

### **Concept of National Security**

The concept of security is of great concern to all human societies as it concerns survival of man and resources. Indeed one of the reasons why men live in groups is the need for security. Oribhabor (2019) exerted that security demands safety from chronic threats and protection from harmful disruption, and involves stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income), predictability of daily life (Knowing what to expect), protection from crime (feeling safe) and freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress) which results from the assurance or knowing that one is accepted, loved in one's community and people around him. They further opined that security does not mean the absence of threats or security, but the ability to rise to the challenges posed by them with expectancy and expertise. According to Ugwu (2017), "security does not merely mean safe-guarding of territory boundaries but also entails that a country should be industrialized and also maintain a high level of cohesiveness, egalitarian and technological advancement". This reveals that security connotes freedom from, or elimination of threat not only to physical existence of the state but also to the ability for self-protection and development and the enhancement of the general well-being of all the people. Security is the bedrock for healthy existence, progress and growth in a nation. People bring out their best efforts to render services to their communities and society if there are no threats to life and property.

On the contrary, the word insecurity has myriads of connotations. It signifies danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. Achumba, Ighomeroho & Akpor (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. National security is therefore the ability of a nation to protect itself and its interest. Skaggs went on to state that national security depends directly on the strength of nation's economy; and economic

strength in the era of global competition depends on a nation's educational attainment (Oribhabor, 2019).

### **Features of Adult and Non-Formal Education for Sustainable National Security**

Non-Formal Education has peculiar features that distinguish it from formal education. A proper diagnosis of the characteristics will clarify the erroneous notions in some quarters by some elites on what NFE is and what it can offer in promoting and sustaining national security and development at large. Many scholars have offered some bits of what the characteristics are. Ugwuzor (2017) revealed that in the 1970s four characteristics came to be associated to non-formal education as follows relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups; concern with specific categories of persons, a focus on the clearly defined purpose, and flexibility in organization and method. In another view, Dannish Adult Education Association (2016) cited in Ugwuzor (2017) argued that comparing the learning provisions of various educational institutions, adult and non-formal education has five common features which are different from formal education. Some of the features they listed are:

1. Flexible courses and mutual responsibility that aims at encouraging the learners to believe in him/herself and to regain motivation for learning.
2. Attractive learning environment, that is based on individual learners 'previous knowledge and strengths and focused on holistic appropriate approach.
3. Motivational pedagogy. The non-formal adult education institutions are based on values and the teaching and the learning process is based on pedagogical praxis.
4. Coherence between training of skills and learning for life. The barriers of formal education are overcome by NFE that focus on whole person and plan programmes which involve the whole range of problems and resources.
5. Coherence between learning and guidance. Guidance and clarification are natural parts of non-formal education provision.

In view of the opinions highlighted above the characteristics of non-formal education can be summarized as follows.

1. It could be a local or a nationwide program organized to meet the immediate needs and aspirations of the recipients.
2. For the fact that the programs of activities are prepared for and by the recipients they are therefore learner centered and draws more commitment.
3. The recipients of the education are most often democratically involved in generating the contents of the curriculum through friendly environmental setting.
4. It is always a short term learning program designed to meet the immediate pressing needs of the recipients and the community.
5. The ultimate goal is not long term or for certification of the beneficiaries, rather knowledge and skills based.

6. It is concurrently part-time activities or a short term courses organized at the convenience of the learners (literate and illiterate alike).

7. Entry requirement is driven by needs and past experiences of the learners and the circumstance.

8. It is relevant to note that non-formal education is garnished and lubricated to a great extent with proper guidance and counseling which is naturally embedded in the entire gamut of teaching and learning process.

### **Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria**

The term insecurity can be conceptualized according to the discipline or subject of study. For instance, Nigerians talk of insecurity when describing a state or situation of declining safety of lives and properties, apprehension over increasing rate terrorism, armed robbery, kidnappings, political upheavals, religious conflicts, assassinations, secret cults-related criminal acts, intra and inter-ethnic strife, hijacking, riots, demonstrations, etc. But for the purpose of this study, we will adopt the definition of Effiom & Edinyang (2013) as cited in Omoroje, Egbule & Emuebie (2020) who defined insecurity as the state of being subjected to danger and injury. It is a feeling of unusual nervousness that may be triggered by perceiving of oneself to be vulnerable. Omoroje et al. (2020) identified a plethora of factors as causes of insecurity in Nigeria. These include, but not limited to, the following;

- i. Corruption
- ii. Ethnicity
- iii. Religious intolerance
- iv. Bad leadership
- v. Youth unemployment
- vi. Falling standard of education
- vii. Cultism and cult activities
- viii. Manipulation of electoral processes by political parties
- ix. Lack of trust on security agents
- x. Human right abuses

### **Functional Adult and Non-Formal Education for Promoting National Security**

There is a significant relationship between national security and education. A cursory look at the personality of Boko-Haram Islamists and bandits in the northern region of Nigeria reveals high level or rate of illiteracy among them. It is in the light of this that the Emir of Kano; HRM Lamido Sanusi, admonished the elites of the region to establish schools, instead of building mosques. Also, in a bid to help reduce the rate of illiteracy the past administration of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan established Nomadic education and Al-Majari schools in the northern region.

According to Omoroje et al. (2020), education helps in developing intelligent social actors with the ability to make rational decisions and act intelligently. It also helps to address issues of poverty, violent crimes and illiteracy. Through education, the moral personality of man is built up as it equips learners with the skills of moral judgment that in turn guides his actions and behaviors. In other words, the right type of values such as honesty, respect for elders, integrity inter alia is inculcated into the young ones. Quality education also promotes the spirit of nationalism and patriotism among youths. Through education, it has been discovered that youths develop positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards the entire nation. Adult and Non-Formal Education is essential in inculcating discipline in people. The members of the society can be oriented towards peace and tolerance rather than towards violence. Adult and non-formal Education provides substantial contribution to personal development, social inclusion and active citizen and as such it could play a key role in national integration. In fact adult and non-Formal education provides an opportunity to promote the values of tolerance and solidarity. It could be defined as any systematic and organized educational activity carried out outside the framework of the formal school system to provide selected type of learning to a particular sub-group in the population, adults. It can therefore, be referred to as recurrent learning (Gbenro, 2021).

The current global security environment is increasingly becoming complex and dynamic due to the activities of non-state actors who have become the major source of conflict all over the world. The upsurge in intra-state crisis and conflict, as well as the entanglement between domestic and international threats, has compounded security challenges. Nigeria is plagued with social disorders, insecurity, poverty, illiteracy, balance of payment deficit, poor health statistics, ethnic and religious conflicts, corruption and crime and political crisis (Ugwuzor, 2017). Orikpe (2018) decrying the pitiable state of security in Nigeria averred that national security is in jeopardy. He further stressed that insecurity comes in different coloration and magnitude among which are the spate of bombings, election-related crisis, kidnapping, human trafficking, militancy, assassination, hunger, arm robbery, environmental degradation and other untoward acts being experienced in the country. Security threats impact negatively on individuals and her society in general. Thus, there is no doubt that the current security situation in Nigeria calls for extraordinary measures, it will require a transformation in the way individuals think and, in the way they look at one another (Ugwuzor, 2017). Consequently, this much sought individual transformation can be attained by improving people's access to effective literacy provisions. Literacy remains an inevitable instrument for shaping the pace of a nation's intellectual, cultural, social and economic development in order to guarantee the achievement of national goals of unity, economic progress, security and social justice for all citizens.

Sadly, Nigeria failed to reach any of the Education for All goals as revealed in the UNESCO 2015 Education for all (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR). The report revealed that Nigeria exhibited disturbing credentials in EFA goal four (adult literacy), just as it noted that there were 17million more illiterate adults in the country in 2008 than there were in 1991, an increase of 71 per cent. In summary, the report noted that there were 40 million illiterate adults in the country as of 2014 and that half of the Nigerian adult population (51%) are still illiterate (Ugwuzor, 2017). Literacy, therefore, plays a significant role in liberating most people (youths and adults) from the vicious circle of poverty, socio-economic dependence, ignorance, indignity and hopelessness. Therefore, there is a compelling need to accord due attention to literacy as an alternative and complementary pathway in realizing the goals of quality education and lifelong

learning for all by 2030 in tandem with the United Nations (UN) sustainable goals on inclusive education (Adamu, 2017) cited in (Ugwuzor, 2017).

Thus, improving literacy provision will not only bring about improved and inclusive learning for national development but will also heighten individual's commitment to social justice, socio-economic progress and national security.

## **Conclusion**

Peaceful co-existence means living together in a quiet and calm environment devoid of violence, force, war, hostility or killings or shedding of innocent blood. A country devoid of peace may have no meaningful development and may likely suffer from retardation and stagnation rather than experience development and progress. The growth and development in a multi ethnic and diverse nation like Nigeria can only be attained when people co-exist peacefully irrespective of their diverse cultures, ethnic groups, political differences and various religious beliefs via functional education. Functional education is the one that frees the mind of its recipients from their misconceptions. Education has earlier been defined as a process by which individuals are assisted formally through proper direction and guidance to develop their capacities for their own benefits and that of the society. Therefore there is need to carry out a total overhaul of the curriculum at all levels of education with a view to providing its recipients broad based education in the development of the mind, soul and body; and in comprehending the environment and in the development of appropriate attitudes, skills, abilities and competencies to co-exist with and contribute to the development of the society. It is our firm belief that if adult and non-formal education is given the needed attention to be functional and national security is handled with utmost seriousness, there will be national unity in Nigeria; Nigeria will then be indeed a giant of Africa, not only in size and population but also in educational development as well.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been made based on the issues raised in this paper:

1. Appointment of qualified adult education personnel should be done. Considering the areas to be covered, more qualified adult education supervisors should be trained and employed for more effective supervision of the programme. This will create more contact opportunities for the instructors and supervisors. Furthermore, it would then be possible to organize more frequent orientation courses, seminars, and workshops for instructors and proprietors.
2. More adequate training or at least orientation, in the handling of adults, should be given to formal school teachers if they are going to be more effective since school teachers constitute the teaching staff of the adult literacy classes.
3. The Federal Government should make a policy that could help to remote and proximate causes of insecurity in Nigeria such as falling education standard, corruption, poverty, Youth unemployment, Ethnicity, dearth of infrastructural facilities, uneven development, among others.
4. Government should phase out the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and establish a more viable and result-oriented agency or even radically declare a state of emergency in the educational sector of the country.

5. The current arrangement where security apparatuses are totally in control by the central/federal government needs to be looked into and redressed. This is where the issue of community policing comes into focus. This security configuration should produce a committee at village, community, local, state, and federal levels with the responsibility of providing sensitive security information for security agencies at their areas of operation. This will ultimately assist in identifying criminals, their sponsors and hideouts in the country. This when implemented could help to foster national unity in Nigeria.

6. For all these to be achieved, functional adult and non-formal education for the masses is key to enhance smooth and effective democratic system for national unity.

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