

REBRANDING ADULT LITERACY AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR ACCELERATING INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Education is a vehicle through which a nation brings about her development. When effective and qualitative education is provided for the citizens, industrial development and vibrant economy is assured. When citizens are not educated the reverse is the case. In Nigeria, there are over 13million out- of –school children and adult illiteracy rate is on the increasing. This study therefore examines the implications of high rate of uneducated adults on industrial development in Nigeria. It also presents adult literacy programmes that can be re-branded to enhance industrial growth and development of the country. In conclusion the need to promote adult literacy and non-formal programmes as a means of improving industrialization were recommended

Keywords: Re-branding, Adult Literacy, Non-formal Education Precursor.

Introduction

Education is no doubt the key to unlocking individual potentials and a tool for nation building. According to the National Policy on Education (2013), it is an instrument ‘par excellence’ which equips an individual with the right skills, knowledge, abilities, competence, attitudes, behaviour and values in order to function effectively in the society. The direct benefit of education to society is qualitative productivity of educated workers which contribute to national income throughout their entire working lives. Education raises the productivity and incomes of workers who receive it, through the diffusion of skills or the reorganization of work procedures. Generally, education:

- Promotes technical change in various ways ranging from the undertaking of research and development to the spread of knowledge through literacy.
- Increases efficiency by increasing the flexibility and mobility of the labour force, in response to changes in the demand for labour.
- Education brings about many other gains of social and economic character, increased social cohesion, stability, democratic values.

Education and industrial development are highly related. Without quality education there will not be effective industrial development. Education is the instrument through which industrial skills and know-how are acquired and developed. It’s the vehicle through which technologists, scientists, industrialist

and entrepreneurial are produced. Therefore, if quality education is provided for the citizen of a particular society, especially at the primary school through tertiary level, a good foundation for a vibrant natural economy is laid. In other words, an effective industrial development and growth is ensured. This is because through effective and quality education, the citizens are effectively equipped to contribute to the development of the society especially in terms of industrial development which brings about self reliance of the society.

Challenges in Nigeria's Educational Landscape

Despite the Nigerian government's commitment to education and its implementation of initiatives such as the "World Declaration on Education for All" and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme, the nation's education system still faces significant challenges. The adult literacy rate, as reported by UNESCO (2019), remains relatively low at 62.6% in 2018, with over 41,763,792 adults categorized as illiterate. Additionally, the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria has increased from 10.5 million in 2010 to 13.2 million in 2018, making it the highest in the world (UNICEF, 2018). These concerning statistics demonstrate the urgent need for redefining and revitalizing adult literacy and non-formal education in Nigeria to overcome the existing educational gaps.

Nigeria's educational landscape faces several challenges that hinder its progress and impact on national development. These challenges encompass various aspects of the education system, from access and quality to funding and infrastructure. Understanding and addressing these challenges is crucial for redefining the educational landscape and achieving inclusive and sustainable growth.

1. Access and Enrollment Disparities: One of the primary challenges in Nigeria's education system is the disparity in access to education. Significant gaps exist between urban and rural areas, with rural

communities often facing limited or no access to quality educational facilities. Additionally, marginalized groups, such as girls, children with disabilities, and vulnerable populations, encounter barriers that restrict their enrollment in schools.

2. Out-of-School Children: The high number of out-of-school children in Nigeria remains a critical concern. Factors such as poverty, insecurity, cultural norms, and lack of awareness contribute to the increasing number of children who do not have access to formal education. This not only hampers their individual development but also poses a challenge to the nation's progress.

3. Quality of Education: Ensuring quality education is another significant challenge. Many schools lack adequate facilities, qualified teachers, and updated curricula, leading to a subpar learning experience. The quality of education directly impacts students' learning outcomes and hampers their preparedness for future challenges.

4. Teacher Shortage and Quality: Nigeria faces a shortage of qualified and motivated teachers, particularly in rural areas. The teaching profession often lacks incentives and competitive salaries, resulting in low morale and high attrition rates. Consequently, the quality of instruction suffers, affecting students' overall learning experience.

5. Funding and Infrastructure: Insufficient funding for education remains a persistent challenge. The allocation of funds to the education sector is often inadequate to meet the growing demands for educational resources, infrastructure development, and capacity building. Inadequate infrastructure further exacerbates the problem, with many schools lacking basic amenities like classrooms, libraries, and sanitation facilities.

6. Curriculum Relevance: The curriculum's relevance and alignment with the changing demands of the job market and society are crucial for preparing students for the future. Ensuring that the curriculum

incorporates relevant and practical skills is vital to bridge the gap between education and employability.

7. Political Instability and Policy Inconsistency: Frequent changes in government and policy inconsistency can disrupt long-term education plans and initiatives. Stable and consistent policies are essential for sustained progress in the education sector.

8. Security Concerns: Insecurity, particularly in certain regions of Nigeria, poses a significant challenge to education. Attacks on schools and students deter families from sending their children to educational institutions, further exacerbating the out-of-school children crisis.

In realization of the importance of education, various governments in Nigeria had committed herself to implementing international agreements such as the implementation of “World Declaration on Education for All” and launched of Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme in May 2000. Despite the level of commitment by the government, the education system in Nigeria is still far from being ready for the challenges of the new century. According UNESCO (2019) Nigeria adult literacy rate was at level of 62.6 % in 2018, up from 51.1 % in 2008 and over 41,763,792 adult illiterate. A survey conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2018) indicates that the population of out of school children in Nigeria has risen from 10.5 million in 2010 to 13.2 million in 2018, now the highest in the world. UNICEF (2018) asserts that one in every five of the world’s out-of-school children is in Nigeria. The most worrisome is the report by the National Bureau of Statistic (2016) which revealed that only 30.2 per cent of the adult population was aware of the existence of any literacy programme and the same small proportion (32.5 per cent) of the adult population was aware of the existence of any literacy centres while the majority (54.2%) of the adult interviewed would

want the literacy centres to be sited very near to the people.

Consequently, the UN Human Development Report (2016) ranked Nigeria 153rd out of 193 countries whereas human capital development is seen as a focal point for pivoting industrial development, for reducing the level of unemployment and increasing the supply of entrepreneurs in any economy. Empirical investigations from various researchers Bakare (2006); Lawanson and marimathu (2009) have revealed that adequate investment in human capital serves as catalyst for improved productivity and economic growth

Nigeria Quest for Industrial Growth and Development

Industrialization is concerned with the expansion of a country’s manufacturing activities, including the generation of electricity and the growth of its communications network. It is also a process of reducing the relative importance of extractive industries and of increasing that of secondary and the tertiary sectors (Adejugebe, 2004). Industrialization, raises productivity, creates employment, reduces exposure to risk, enhances income-generating assets of the poor and helps to diversify exports. However, since Nigeria became independent in 1960, achieving economic development through rapid industrialization has been the principal focus of the various administrations. Several economic development policies aim at industrializing the country have been adopted ranging from import substitution strategy (ISS) through indigenization to the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and National Economic Empowerments and Development Strategy, (NEEDS) all these policies were Meant to achieve poverty reduction through wealth creation, employment generation and value re-orientation. But it seems as if none of these policies provided sufficient answer to the challenges of the

country's industrialization to the point that many have concluded that the country has moved away from being industrialized.

The industrial development initiatives by successive government have created a culture of dependence on materials recourses rather than the people themselves initiating development orientations through human/capital development. According to Simon-Oke (2012), Manufacturing in Nigeria has largely been dominated by a valorization of raw materials and import-substitution type that are capital intensive rather than labour intensive. This is reflected in the level of unemployment in the country. For instance, national Bureau of Statistic Report(2018) indicates that the number of people within the labour force who did not have a job and did nothing at all (unemployed) and those that were in some part time work (underemployed) rose respectively from 15.9 million and 18.0 million in Q3 2017 to Q3, 2018. While a Total combined unemployment and underemployment rates increased from 40.0% in Q3 2017 to 43.3% in Q3, 2018. There is therefore need for paradigm shift in addressing issue of industrialization

The Nexus between Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education and Industrial Development

Adult literacy and non-formal education in Nigeria is traceable to the pre-colonial era where educations were taken place in a traditional setting whereby young ones were taught moral, social, physical and cultural development informally and non-formally. Then, apprenticeship training that encompasses all forms of vocational education such as tailoring, carpentry, gold-smiting, farming, craftsmanship etc., were done non-formally to train and equip men and women with skills and competencies to be self-reliant and be responsible member of the society.

The National Policy on Education (2013) defines adult literacy and formal education as education given to adult and youths outside the formal school system.

Nzeneri (2008) defined adult literacy and non-formal education as a form of education that accommodates all the forms of formal, non-formal and informal aspects of education given to men and women (alone, in groups or institutional settings) to improve them in their society by increasing their skills, their knowledge, understanding, attitudes and sensitiveness. Whatever the case may be, adult literacy and non-formal education remains a form of education organized and designed to accommodate any educational activities for categories of people who deem it fit to enrich their knowledge, develop their skills and abilities, and improve their professionalism to bring about the desired changes in cultural, political and socio-economic development.

In Nigeria, adult literacy and non-formal education have been recognized as important tools for achieving national development goals. The National Policy on Education (2014) identifies non-formal education as a means of expanding access to education and promoting lifelong learning for individuals who may have missed out on formal schooling. It acknowledges the need to address the challenges posed by illiteracy and lack of education, particularly among the adult population.

Non-formal education in Nigeria takes various forms, including literacy programs, vocational training, agricultural extension services, nomadic education, and remedial education (Adeyemi, 2005). These programs are designed to meet the diverse learning needs of different segments of the population and bridge the gaps in education and skills training.

The importance of Non-Formal Education has long been recognized by the Government as stated in National Policy on Education (2014) because of rigidity of formal education system. The rigid formal education system does not reach sections of a society and all categories of men and women. Only the privileged groups, by and large, avail themselves of educational facilities through schools, college,

universities and technological institutions. The fixed point of entry and exit of formal education makes it more difficult for students from the weaker sections of the society to re-enter therefore much more emphasis needs to be placed on non-formal ways of education particularly for those who are excluded from the benefit of formal schooling.

Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education programmes that are Critical for industrial growth and development

➤ **Literacy Education**

- Literacy has been identified as an essential tool for development. It is therefore logical to say that the low standard of living and prevailing low industrial output has illiteracy as one of the causative factors. Literacy to a layman is just the act of reading, writing and being able to do simple arithmetic. It is, however, important to note that literacy goes beyond activities designed to teach adults to read and write simple sentences.
- A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enables him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group or community. Some of the aspect of literacy includes,
- **Scientific Literacy:** It is the knowledge and understanding of the scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic, cultural affairs and economic productivity (National Academy of Sciences 1995). It involves the understanding and processes required for participation in a digital age society and having the ability to describe, explain and predict natural phenomena.
- **Economic Literacy:** It is the ability to find cost, benefits and problems, analyze the incentives at work in economic situations; examine the consequences of changes in economic conditions and public policies, collect and organize economic

evidence, weigh cost against benefits. People need economic literacy or monetary literacy that will help them better understand the world and take good decisions for the future.

- **Information Literacy:** It includes the ability to recognize when information is needed, locate access, synthesize, evaluate and use information effectively, efficiently, and creatively and accomplish these functions using technology, communication networks and electronic resources.
- **Multicultural Literacy:** It is the ability to understand and appreciate the similarities and difficulties in the customs, values and beliefs of one's own and culture of others. People should have the opportunity to interact cross-culturally in meaningful ways. Such interaction might include, communicating via e-mail or video conferencing with peers in other countries to enhance language proficiency, sharing view points on international events via moderated on line exchanges, or participating in shared environmental science project.
- **Agricultural Extension Education**
- Agricultural extension is a programme or service which assists farmers, through educational procedures, in improving farming methods and techniques, increasing production efficiency and income, bettering their standard of living and lifting the social and educational standards of rural dwellers (FAO, 2004). The programme is meant to bring attitudinal change in the rural dwellers towards agriculture. When there is innovation in farming techniques for instance, introduction of improved seedling, changing in farming seasons, weather conditions (AEE) promotes the transfer and exchange of information that can be converted into functional knowledge, which in turn helps develop enterprises that promote productivity and generate income in present changing climate. In

addition to technology transfer, agricultural extension provides agricultural education and information services that can provide whole population with institutional development and income generation together with increased food crop output (Malik, 2003; Bajwa, 2008).

- **Vocational Education:** This programmes aimed solely at preparing the people for a job, it is an organized and unorganized method of securing occupational confidence and competence for individual through their acquisition of working proficiency.
- **Nomadic Education:** This is new in Nigeria, but it is quickly becoming a well-recognized element of education. It aims at making provisions which fit into the unsettled pattern of life led by cattle's rearing nomads and by fishermen.
- **Remedial or Second Chance Education:** this is often called extra-mural or evening classes, it is very easy to set up and can be loosely organized. It offers general education curriculum and are very flexible in operations and normally teach the same subjects like the formal schools.

However, despite the recognition of the importance of adult literacy and non-formal education, there are significant challenges in implementation and effectiveness. One key challenge is the limited availability of resources and funding for these programs. Adequate funding is crucial for the establishment and sustainability of adult literacy centers and non-formal education initiatives (Akpa et al., 2013). Another challenge is the low level of awareness and participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programs. Many adults, especially in rural and marginalized communities, may not be aware of the opportunities available to them or may face barriers to accessing these programs (Olofu & Anagbogu, 2015).

Furthermore, there is a need to enhance the quality and relevance of adult literacy and non-formal

education programs. Effective curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment strategies are essential for ensuring that learners acquire meaningful skills and knowledge that can be applied in their daily lives (Abubakar, 2018).

Addressing the issue of illiteracy and promoting non-formal education requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including the government, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, and educators (Oyinloye, 2019). Synergy among these stakeholders is necessary to develop comprehensive and sustainable programs that cater to the diverse learning needs of the population. The concept of adult literacy and non-formal education is vital for promoting lifelong learning and addressing the challenges of illiteracy and lack of education in Nigeria. However, effective implementation and impact require overcoming challenges related to funding, awareness, quality, and collaboration among stakeholders. By addressing these challenges and investing in comprehensive and inclusive programs, Nigeria can make significant strides in advancing adult literacy and non-formal education, contributing to individual empowerment and overall national development.

The need to Re-brand Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education programmes

Adult literacy and non-formal education play a pivotal role in empowering individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to actively participate in the industrial sector and contribute to the overall economic development of a country. Specifically, rebranding adult literacy and non-formal education will plays a critical role in advancing industrial growth and development in Nigeria in the following ways:

1. **Skill Development:** Adult literacy and non-formal education programs equip individuals, including those in the working-age population, with essential skills and vocational competencies. These programs

offer specialized training in various sectors, such as agriculture, technology, entrepreneurship, and craftsmanship, thereby creating a pool of skilled workers who can actively contribute to industrial development.

2. Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Adult literacy and non-formal education programs foster entrepreneurship and innovation. Individuals with improved literacy and numeracy skills are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities, leading to the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These SMEs play a vital role in industrial development by creating employment opportunities, stimulating local economies, and contributing to technological advancements.

3. Inclusive Industrialization: Adult literacy and non-formal education programs promote inclusive industrialization by providing opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable groups to acquire skills and knowledge. Inclusive industrialization ensures that the benefits of economic growth are distributed equitably, reducing income disparities and fostering social cohesion.

4. Technological Advancement: Adult literacy and non-formal education contribute to technological advancement by improving individuals' digital literacy and adaptability to new technologies. A technologically skilled workforce is essential for the adoption and integration of advanced technologies in the industrial sector, leading to increased efficiency and competitiveness.

5. Enhanced Productivity: Literacy and non-formal education programs enhance workers' productivity by improving their ability to understand instructions, communicate effectively, and apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Increased productivity within the industrial sector translates to higher outputs and greater economic growth.

6. Promotion of Lifelong Learning: Adult literacy and non-formal education foster a culture of lifelong

learning, where individuals continuously update their skills and knowledge to keep pace with changing industrial demands. Lifelong learners contribute to a dynamic and resilient industrial workforce.

7. Labour Market Flexibility: Adult literacy and non-formal education programs enhance labour market flexibility by creating a skilled and adaptable workforce. This flexibility allows industries to respond efficiently to changes in market demands and technological advancements.

8. Social Transformation: Adult literacy and non-formal education bring about social transformation by empowering individuals with knowledge, awareness, and the ability to participate actively in the development process. This empowerment leads to improved social cohesion, democratic values, and collective efforts towards sustainable industrial development.

By re-branding these programs and ensuring access to quality education for all, nations can harness the potential of their human capital to drive industrialization, innovation, and socioeconomic progress. A holistic approach to education that includes both formal and non-formal components is vital for creating a skilled and empowered workforce capable of contributing significantly to industrial advancement and national prosperity.

Strategies for Rebranding Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education

1. Integrated Literacy Approach: Implementing an integrated literacy approach that includes scientific literacy, economic literacy, information literacy, and multicultural literacy, equipping learners with a comprehensive skill set essential for thriving in a dynamic globalized world.

2. Strengthening Agricultural Extension Education: Enhancing agricultural extension services to disseminate innovative farming techniques, knowledge, and best practices, thus promoting

sustainable agriculture, increasing agricultural productivity, and ensuring food security.

3. Empowering Vocational Education: Establishing state-of-the-art vocational training centres equipped with modern technologies, enabling citizens to acquire specialized skills that align with the evolving demands of industries.

4. Nomadic Education Transformation: Transforming nomadic education to cater to the needs of nomadic groups by providing relevant and culturally sensitive education, empowering them to contribute effectively to national development.

5. Inclusive and Accessible Remedial Education: Designing inclusive and accessible remedial education programs to re-engage those who left formal education prematurely, allowing them to bridge educational gaps and participate in economic activities.

6. Resuscitating Adult literacy and Non formal education programmes that had been tested such as “Each One Teach One” (EOTO), basic literacy, post literacy, woman education, nomadic education, continuing education, Arabic integrated literacy (Ajami), literacy for the blind, worker education, functional literacy, vocational education and literacy for the disabled which had hitherto been neglected in favour of formal education.

7. Apart from the government formulating , organizing and financing of adult literacy and non-formal education in Nigeria, informal organizations such as churches, mosques, should be mandated to establish, found adult literacy and non-formal education centre

Conclusion

Rebranding adult literacy and non-formal education in Nigeria is an imperative step towards accelerating industrial growth and development. Implementing comprehensive strategies that integrate multiple literacy domains enhance vocational education, and embrace inclusivity will ensure that education

becomes a driving force for socio-economic transformation. Adequate funding, robust policy frameworks, and active collaboration among governmental, non-governmental, and private stakeholders are essential to create an enabling environment for sustainable educational development. By prioritizing adult literacy and non-formal education, Nigeria can unlock its full potential and usher in an era of accelerated industrial growth and development, ultimately propelling the nation towards prosperity and self-reliance.

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