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THE ROLE OF ADULT ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN POST COVID– 19 ERA IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the role of adult entrepreneurship education for poverty reduction in post COVID-19 era in Nigeria. It is evident that for a nation like Nigeria to strive better in her education and sustain economy adult entrepreneurship education should be taken into consideration and should be broadly embraced in all level of her education to alleviate poverty. With the reduction of COVID-19 epidemic in Nigeria, towns and villages are trying to cope with the difficulties encountered by the citizens, there is a necessity for people to learn more skills and competencies that would enable them cope in living in such circumstances. Adult entrepreneurship education refers to knowledge, skills and information given to adults to develop, organize and manage business ventures along with any of its risk in order to make profit. The main function of entrepreneurship education among others is to give functional education for the adults and youths that will assist them to be self-employed and self-reliant. It is a key drive to the economy, wealth and a high majority of jobs are created by small businesses established by entrepreneurship-minded individuals should lead to big business, which plays a greater role in employment generation and job creation. This paper recommended that government at all levels should raise the level of awareness about adult entrepreneurship education loan opportunity to adult and non-formal education learners for self-reliance and self-sustenance to mention this few.

Keywords: *Adult entrepreneurship, Education, Poverty reduction, Post Covid-19 era*

Introduction

COVID – 19 started from Wuhan, a province in China. It became a world wide pandemic caused by a virus called ‘corona’. The spread of this corona virus/disease started between December 2019 to March 2020 and continued in some parts of the world till date. It has generally affected the world economy. It has affected both the economic development of all countries in the world and their education, social, religious, political and cultural settings. In the WHO report of 25th October, 2021, the Covid – 19 affected 211,887 people, of which 208,992 recovered, while 2,895 died from the infectious disease in Nigeria. The coming of Covid – 19 in Nigeria led to the total lockdown of the whole country. Hence, public services, business centres, industries, banks, social activities as well as essential services were forced to a standstill while the challenges of living become unbearable. The people experience various degrees of challenges. Illness, poverty and deaths were observed all over the country. Various sectors of the economy were closed down including education which experienced the most setback with the completely close down of schools and learning centres in all states and local governments to avert the spread of the pandemic.

In Nigeria, the closure of educational institution to prevent the spread of Covid-19 has affected her educational system. Zamira and Linda cited by UNESCO (2020) stated that there were more than 1 billion and 575 million students in approximately 188 countries around the world are reported to have been affected by the closure of schools and universities due to preventive measures taken by countries against the spread of Covid – 19. This outbreak increased the gaps in the educational sector in the global world including Nigeria. The spread affected all aspect of human activities world wide ranging from education, entertainment sports, transportation, business, economy and politics.

Covid -19 equally caused anxiety fear and other challenges to different citizens in different parts of the world. The whole world was in an overwhelming distressed condition because of the result of Covid-19. This experience gave us many thoughts and lessons. It shows us that the education we acquire is not functional and that we must continue to educate ourselves from time to time in order to learn how to cope with living in an ever changing world so as to learn to adapt to living in difficulties faced in a changing world. Thus, as a result of the hardships

faced by citizens, there is the underlying need for people to learn additional skills and competencies that can allow them cope with living in difficult and hard circumstances. Hence, the recognition of adult and entrepreneurship education programmes that can enhance the people with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed in an ever-changing world. It should be noted that for Nigeria to address the problem of poverty in the post COVID – 19 period, it must first and foremost, address the issue of education generally and entrepreneurship adult education specifically since it is the best way that we can empower adults and youths. It will as well free them from the shades of poverty and equally assist them to be aware of themselves and their communities. Therefore, this paper tries to examine the roles of adult and entrepreneurship education in addressing the hardship, poverty, hunger and economic breakdown caused by Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria under the following sub-themes:

The Concept of Adult Education; The Concept of Entrepreneurship Education; The Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education; Adult Entrepreneurship Education; The Concept of Poverty; Causes of Poverty in Nigeria; Effects of Poverty and Role of Adult Entrepreneurship Education for Poverty Reduction.

The Concept of Adult Education

In Nigeria, education started with the targets on adult population who had to be convinced of its importance before the children started benefiting from it. The missionaries educated the adults as believers, interpreters, and office clerks before they established schools and hospitals for the communities. Hence adult education started in Nigeria as a practice before it became a discipline that has its professionals. According to Liveright and Haygood (1969) cited by Okenwa-Ojo and Omoregie (2020:3) stated that:

“Adult education was defined as a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular full time basis undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding, or skill and attitudes; or for the purpose of identifying or solving personal or community problem of adult education”

Paiko (2012:15) quoted a comprehensive definition of adult education by UNESCO as follows:

“The entire body organised educational processes whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education, schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualification or are turned in a new direction, bringing about changes in their attitudes or behaviour”.

Barikor (2002) opined that adult education is any form of educative experience engaged in by people who are chronologically mature, socially responsible and mentally alert or deficient but eager to meet their specific needs. These may include intellectual need, occupational skills, social-economic responsibilities, professional competencies and self fulfillment or self-actualizing needs, to improve themselves, by developing their knowledge, insight, tastes, attitude and skills. Fasokun (2006) emphasised that all forms of functional education programmes for youths and adults outside the formal school system is termed adult education. He further ascertained that, it helps adults to live more successfully as useful and acceptable members of their societies and contribute meaningfully to the development of those societies.

Mbalis (2010) viewed adult education as any educative and purposeful learning activity organised for adults to initiate them into a new way of life by providing them with relevant skills, competencies, knowledge, information and attitudes required to excel in that aspect of life. Onyenemezu (2013) opines that adult education is a core component of lifelong learning. It denote the entire body of organized learning processes, formal and non-formal, whereby those regarded as adults by the society in which they live develop and enrich their capability for living and working, both in their own interest and those of their communities and societies. Adult education, as an integral aspect of education, is learning processes whether formal, informal and non-formal which the adult person engages in,. It is for better information, self and national development. It is worthy to note that adult education liberates the recipients from ignorance, poverty, idleness and makes

adult aware of their responsibilities to themselves, their communities and the world at large. Thus, the education of the adults should be a must, if our communities and nations must develop. This is because, practically every sector of the economy is manned by the adults, it will therefore be suicidal to leave the adults on whose shoulders rest the responsibilities of running our communities and nation unenlightened. An enlightened adult force will lead to achievement of stable, patriotic and self-reliant citizenry, with zeal and ability to mobilise local and national resources for both economic and social development of a nation (UNESCO, 2005).

We can say that education is an important tool for the realization of economic, social and political development of any nation. While adult education is equally an important instrument for the advancement of both the individual and the society. Hence, adult education comes in various forms and programmes. It could be for acquiring literacy and numeracy skills, vocational education skills, like tailoring, carpentry, motor mechanic, bricklayer and so on. Thus, the National Policy on Education (2014) outlines goals of adult and non-formal education as that which should be to: 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. Provide functional and remedial education for those young people who did not have formal education. Provide education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills. Provide in-service on the job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills. And give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment

The Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunity (FME, 2011). To Davenport (2002) Entrepreneurship occurs when an individual develops a new venture or a new approach to an

old business or idea, or a unique way of giving the market place product or service by using resources in a new way under conditions of risk. Obi (2007) said that entrepreneurial skills are required to set up a business and run it effectively. Some people are born entrepreneurs while others have it thrust upon them and others acquire it through training. However, it must be borne in mind that business is not for everybody, because not everyone has the heart to bear losses or handle risks which occur in businesses. Nwangwu (2007) opined that entrepreneurship is a process of bringing together the factors of production, which include land, labour and capital, so as to provide a product or service for public consumption. Entrepreneurship is the act of starting a company, arranging business deals and taking risks in order to make a profit using the education skills acquired. Another view of entrepreneurship is the term used when someone who has innovative ideas and transforms them to profitable activities.

To Nnorom (2010) entrepreneurship education is the education that prepares and equips an individual with entrepreneurship skills that will enable him or her start off a business for wealth creation and cope with its attendant financial risks. In other words entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to start and run a business. Unlike in general education where emphasis is laid on providing life and occupational skills that will enhance the potentials of individuals, reinforcing self-sufficiency and improving qualities of life. Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide its students with knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in different settings. This is with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to start their own businesses in order to make profit and create job for others.

The Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

The interesting aspect of entrepreneurship education is to motivate and instill in the youths and adults the knowledge, skills and attitudes to start businesses in order to make profit and create job opportunities for others. Paul (2005) said that entrepreneurship education is structured to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.

- ii. Provide youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel businesses opportunities.
- iii. Serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
- iv. Offer graduates of tertiary institutions with adequate training in risk management to make risk bearing feasible.
- v. Reduce high rate of poverty.
- vi. Create employment.
- vii. Reduce rural urban migration.
- viii. Provide young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them establish a career in small medium-sized businesses.
- ix. Inculcate the spirit of perseverance in youths and adults which will enable them persist in any business venture they embark on.
- x. Create smooth transition from a traditional to a modern industrial economy.

Looking at the above objectives, entrepreneurship education could be said to be relevant in Nigeria taking into consideration the level of unemployment in the country especially among the youths. Hence, this venture would help to reduce the problem of unemployment in Nigeria.

Adult Entrepreneurship Education

Adult entrepreneurship education entails the knowledge, skills and information given to adults to develop, organize and manage business ventures along with any of its risk in order to make profit. Nwagwu (2007) stated that entrepreneurial opportunities in adult and non-formal education include instructors training, special education, early education and child daycare, organization of literacy centres and remedial education, building and constructional, catering and hospitality, cosmetology and beauty therapy, creative design and craft, business and computer technology, fashion and interior design, motor mechanics and repair, carpentry work, poultry, fish farming, trade among others.

Adult entrepreneurship education assists adults and youths to embrace new and improved techniques for a better way of living socially and economically. It equally improves employment opportunity

and provision of skilled entrepreneurial individual who produce economically and independently as individual and as groups. People believed that adult entrepreneurship education is important to economic development, employment creating and improvement of standard of living of people in different communities. Thus, in Nigeria, generating and promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship education among youths and adults would assist in curtailing the problem for unemployment and promote self-reliance and improve the quality of life.

The Concept of Poverty

Poverty is a complex multidimensional phenomenon. It is a common condition in all parts of the world, especially in the less developed nations of Asia and Africa. The phenomenon is not only an expression of life situation but also a state of mind and a perception of self in the complex web of social relations. Omolewa (2001) submitted that poverty is the inability to live a decent life with respect to food, shelter, good health care and transport. Abe (1999) viewed poverty as a state of being poor as having very little money with which to procure one's basic needs. It is regarded as an aberration, misfortune, deprivation and lack of basic amenities of life for human survival. Ekundayo (2001) defined poverty as a situation of individual deprivation of the basic needs of life, which calls to question the essence of his or her social existence. Ebirim (2008) and Nnsien (2013) inferred that poverty is a state of chronic insufficiency and economic inequality, a condition of want and scarcity, and dependence on others for every necessity of life.

The UNDP (2004) defined poverty as a multi-dimensional phenomenon characterized by deprivation of entitlements through lack of access to economic and social resources, political participation and consultation. In order to understand the definition and operationalisation of the concept poverty, we need to look at it from different dimensions. According to Abe (1999), such includes:

- I. Absolute poverty which usually focuses on basic human needs and is often measured in terms of resources required to maintain health and physical efficiency. It is a situation in which the property owned and controlled by an individual or member of a community are not enough to ensure that he or she can meet the basic needs of life, such as housing, food, clothing,

shelter and medical facilities. This is achieved by drawing a poverty line and defining being poor. An individual whose income falls below that figure line (or level of living index) is regarded as poor.

- II. Relative poverty refers to a situation where the poor, though not starving, is deprived of many good things of life which others take for granted. The essence of relative poverty, therefore, is that a few individuals in the society dominate access to social resources goods, and services to the detriment of many who cannot have their basic needs met.
- III. Subjective poverty refers to the subjective feeling of poverty by an individual. It is a matter of the individual's feeling about his or her social condition, that is, whether or not such an individual feels that he or she is poor.

Causes of Poverty in Nigeria

Odumosu (2003) highlighted the following as causes of poverty in Nigeria:

- 1) High cost of living
- 2) Unemployment
- 3) Insecurity and other social crises
- 4) Government's inability to provide basic social amenities.
- 5) Poor access to educational/opportunities or high level illiteracy
- 6) Poor productivity
- 7) Lack of good feeder roads.
- 8) Ill-health
- 9) Insufficient farmlands.
- 10) Insufficient irrigation systems.
- 11) Lack of storage facilities
- 12) Lack of electricity.
- 13) Subsistence farming, with nothing to sell for cash.
- 14) Frustration from life's ambition.
- 15) Reckless spending during social functions or ceremonies/local festivals.

Generally, poverty is caused by different factors, such as economic, socio-cultural, biological/health, structural defects, lack of income, bureaucracy to name this few.

Effects of Poverty

Osiji (2001) summarized the effects poverty on the victims as follows:

- I. Inability to secure balanced feeding.
- II. Inability to clothe adequately.
- III. Being unable to afford and shelter.
- IV. Not being able to meet social and economic obligations.
- V. Lack of gainful employment.
- VI. Physical insecurity.
- VII. Inadequate skills and assets
- VIII. Ignorance
- IX. Lack of self-esteem
- X. Being economically powerless.

Role of Adult Entrepreneurship Education for Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction could be said to be things put in place in order to rescue society or individual from poverty. It can come about through individual, government, non-governmental organizations and philanthropist. During the period of Covid-19 in Nigeria many people experienced hardship as a result of the total lockdown in some part of the country. This resulted in a serious impact in our economy as well as on the people's means of livelihood. Hence, adult and entrepreneurship education could be beneficial to both individual and society. The reason being that it empowers the youths to become entrepreneurs and self-reliant and turn hard times of life into opportunities. Hence, adult entrepreneurship education can reduce the prevalence of poverty among the youths and adults in several ways.

It can serve as an instrument for directing professional knowledge and bringing the light of general culture to enlighten the technicalities of special pursuit. It serves as a key driver to the economy, wealth and a high majority of jobs are created by small businesses started by entrepreneurially minded people many of whom went on to create big businesses. Hence, adult entrepreneurship education would boost and strengthen the poverty reduction in this post Covid-19 era.

It plays an important role in employment generation and job creation. Thus, it is a foundation for the supply of potential entrepreneurs who are always ready to explore new ideas at any given moment. Thus, it is an important tool for youth unemployment reduction in Nigeria in post Covid-19 era. This is because unemployed

youth can be gainfully self-employed through entrepreneurship education. It provides equal educational opportunities and access for every Nigerian including school dropouts, youths, women, industrial workers, illiterate rural and urban adults among others. For example World Bank (2001) states that the more the access to quality education and training, the less poverty experience in the nation concerned, especially employing non-formal education and pedagogical strategies.

It is important to the economy and community in general. For instance, a person who has entrepreneurial skills will recognize a genuine opportunity when he or she comes across one. It helps condition adults and youths towards embracing new and improved techniques, progressive ways and action for higher standard of living economically and socially. Thus, adult education conscientises and orientate adults to change their behaviour and attitude towards poverty.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study opines that adult entrepreneurship education refers to skills and knowledge information given to youths and adults to organize, develop and manage business ventures in respected of any risk in order to make profit. It is a key driver to the economy, wealth and a high majority of jobs are created by small businesses started by entrepreneurially -minded individual who go on to create big business, hence, plays an important role in employment generation and job creation. However, as a result of the hardship faced by people, there is the underlying need for people to learn additional skills and competencies that can enable them cope with living in difficult times. It also brought about strong enlightenment in youths and adults to change in their behaviour and attitude towards poverty.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were raised from this study:

1. Government in Nigeria at all level should raise the level of awareness about adult entrepreneurship education to her citizens. It is important for the Federal Ministry of Trade and Investment, National Mass Education Commission (NMEC) to organize seminars and conferences on adult entrepreneurship education.

2. Entrepreneurship education should be fully recognized, integrated and made compulsory into the Nigerian education curriculum at both the basic and post-basic level as well as in the adult and non-formal education sector, this will take the form of venture creation, business education, financial literacy, to mention this few.
3. Government should give loan opportunity to adult and non-formal education learners for self-reliance and self-sustenance.
4. Qualified personnel in the field of entrepreneurship should be given opportunity to handle the training of adults and youths for effectiveness and efficiency.
5. Government should create many more centres for skill acquisition development in all states of the federation.
6. Youths and adults should be empowered for better skill position.

The National Mass Education (NMEC) should work hand in hand with the Federal Ministry of Trade and Investment to create programme for Nigerian Youths and Adults that should reduce the hardship of the previous lockdown during Covid-19 era.

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