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ENSURING EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF LITERACY EDUCATION ON MARGINALIZED GROUP IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF KWARA STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Management ensure a well-coordinated efforts aimed at ensuring effectiveness of the literacy education to serve the marginalized groups. Thus, this paper focus attention on the strategies in ensuring effective management of literacy education on marginalized group in rural communities of Kwara State Nigeria. It looks into the concept of literacy and literacy education as it impact on marginalized individual economic well-being. It is accepted that effective management of literacy education could enhance individual marginalized group abilities to cope with the evolving challenges they experience and enhance their chances in the society where they belongs. Hence, education has to be redefined in the context of marginalize individual to make it responsive to their yearning for a better living conditions. The paper takes a review of marginalized groups, their features and status, certain strategies to address literacy education among the marginalized groups were discussed. Against this premise, conclusions were drawn and some recommendations were made to include the need for the need to expand learning programmes to nooks and corners of the federation and the learning centers must be placed close to learners' residence so as to encourage regular participation by all. Also, Government at all level in Nigeria should develop and implement interventions such as subsidies for direct educational costs and greater cultural sensitization to the

educationally marginalized groups. Also, appropriate national government policy and political will are necessary preconditions to expanding access to educationally marginalized populations

Keywords: Effective Management, Literacy Education, Marginalized Group and Rural Communities.

Introduction

Education is the art of teaching and training of the young ones. Education is the aggregate of all the processes which a young adult develop the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior of positive value to the society in which he/she lives. Therefore, the purpose of acquiring education is to gain and share experience from direct or induced contacts for any meaningful development and individual socioeconomic empowerment to take place in any society, needed education must be acquired. (Aladenusi, 2019). In view of the fact that literacy education programme and community development are partners in progress. It is pertinent to ensure that the library is established and maintained and complement the education process, no matter the level, so as to achieve the desire objectives as stated in the National Policies on Education.

To build a society that is self-sufficient requires the mobilization of the uneducated, the poor and marginalized group in the society, many of whom have untapped potentials; and if they are fully developed will be of immense benefit not only to themselves but to the community and nation at large. On this premise the Federal Government of Nigeria promoted mass education to serve and care for every individual irrespective of their tribes and ethnics; the primary objective was to give the masses opportunity to participate in the conduct of their own affairs. The ultimate aim was to develop, among the people, enlightened public opinion, to ensure, particularly civic education and the development of reasoned opinions on matters affecting their well-being and status (Omodewa, 2018).

Hence, effective management of functional literacy education among the marginalized group, there will be a peaceful co-existence where there will be no commotion, violence, destruction and destabilization, thereby enhancing their socio-economic well-being. While peace will be quite, calm or being free from disturbance. It refers to anti-strife, Unity, harmony and friendly relationship or to experience a crises-free atmosphere. According to Mashood (2022), literacy is the ability to understand and use symbols that are culturally specific, such as alphabets, numbers and visual icon for learning and development. Literacy, broadly and properly conceptualized, goes beyond reading and writing and emphasis the acquisition of values of

decency, togetherness, respect for others, irrespective of class ethnic origin, creed and other differences. A literate person avoids all antediluvian, predisposition and demonstrates that he/she is a man or woman of culture, repute and discipline (UNESCO, 2020).

Functional literacy, according to Oduaran (2019), refers to individual ability to use the skill of reading, writing and computing in the acquisition of such information that would make such individual function more effectively in the economic, social, political and cultural activities of the community where he/she lives. Literacy is a complex term if as been described in many ways by different scholars mid authors. Orisawayi (2018) described literacy from two levels micro and macro literacy. He believe that Micro literacy embodied initial or basic literacy and functional literacy derivable from basic education. This he said is concerned with the use of skills of listening, understanding, speaking, writing translation in whatever language of the nation. Macro-literacy is equated to good balanced education of the individual, that is, what enables him or her to attain selffulfillment and self-actualization, and therein- gaining full integration into the society. Literacy is the foundation and pillar for development, it is the engine for sustainable and continuous development of the individual and society (Oduaran, 2019).

Urban-rural disparities in educational investment and in the quality of teaching and learning are widespread and need to be redressed (FRN, 2018).Education enhances human capital, enabling individuals to contribute to a nations quest for improved productivity," states (Brown, 2019). UNESCO (2020) further emphasizes that education fosters civic responsibility, which, in turn, drives economic growth and sustainable development. Despite Nigerias vast resources, inadequate investment in functional, result-oriented education has contributed to socio-political stagnation. However, as Oladoyin et al. (2024) argue, education alone cannot fully drive national development without social reorientation. The marginalized group in rural communities needs recognition and their problems need to be identifies

According to the Global Partnership for Education and UNDP (2024), education influences multiple sectors, including the economy, security, and overall well-being of citizens. However, Adekeye and Azeez (2021) stress that deep-seated attitudes, values, and behaviors in Nigeria often impede national progress most especially where literacy education among the marginalized groups were effectively managed. To address these challenges, Olowu (2020) asserts that social reorientation is imperative, as it shifts the collective mindset toward civic responsibility, national unity, and collaboration among the marginalized groups. This process, when integrated with

education, equips citizens with the critical thinking skills, ethical consciousness, and leadership values needed for an engaged and productive society for the marginalized groups.

To achieve a sustainable developed community in Nigeria, the government need to strive for universal access to basic education, reduce adult illiteracy and integrate sustainable development into all education programmes irrespective of the groups and tribes Given that education serves as a catalyst for poverty reduction and also helps to reduce disparities in living standards of the beneficiaries which are essential to an improved standard of living, disturbingly many groups like the Fulani headsman, the fisherman and some women groups in most rural communities are still without basic literacy skill and have no access to improve welfare facilities and thus cannot be sufficiently productive (Baseline, 2021).

This is against the fact that a farmer who is educated and understands how to measure and apply fertiliser on the farm would have a good yield unlike those that could not read and write (Lind, 2016). When learners are equipped with life improvement skills such as - writing, reading, speaking, health/hygiene management skills, conflict resolution skills, social and home management skills as well as numeracy skills, they are equipped to make more informed decisions concerning their lives and communities as well as being active participants in identified spheres of sustainable development indicators such as economic, social, health, political, environmental and institutional development (Lind, 2016). It should be noted that sustainable development aims at the highest possible quality of life like living comfortably for all people, individually and collectively. It is based on the natural limits of our environment and the comprehensive needs of the people, food, shelter, water, good environment (Sustainability Indicators Project, 2018).

Marginalized group in most rural area are not homogenous and so, for education to be relevant to these group living in rural areas, in terms of genuine economic and social development, it needs to respond to the diversity of rural situations. Also, for education to be sustainable especially in the rural areas, the beneficiaries have to put skills acquired into their daily activities on issues like health, environment, economic, social and human settlements. They are expected to use the skills in practical ways especially in their interaction with members of the community where they are resident. Rural people should also be able to promote a good living environment along with healthy lifestyles and preventing health threats. They are expected to promote social and civil activities, sustainable crop production patterns as well as consumption habits.

Understandably, the impacts of adult literacy first appear in the individual learner by way of new cognitive behaviour and ways of understanding reality which engender in the individual, a new self-concept accompanied by greater self-confidence and self-esteem. The ability to read will enable an individual to comprehend and use the modern technology and learners' ability to read and write will help to keep their privacy. However, despite phenomenal growth of the formal educational systems and the interest shown to non-formal education in the past decades, some marginalized groups of the population are still found to be non-literate in Nigeria (NBS, 2021).

Survey in Kwara State Statistics of the census summary also reflect that a high percentage of rural dwellers the herdsmen fisherman including women do not have formal education. As most of them are illiterates, they are not qualified for even the little jobs that are available at local government level. Also, for being uneducated, most of them are cut off from communication with the outside world. For the facts enumerated above, this study intends to establish the need for rural literacy as determinants for socio-economic development of rural areas in order to address issues like rural-urban migration, social, cultural and economic problems of the marginalized groups. Thus, there is drastically need for management strategies to ensure effective literacy education programme on the marginalized groups in rural communities in Kwara State.

Concept of Literacy and Literacy Education

According to UNESCO (2023) Literacy is now understood as a means of identification, understanding, interpretation, creation, and communication in an increasingly digital, textmediated, information-rich and fast-changing world. Literacy is a continuum of learning and proficiency in reading, writing and using numbers throughout life and is part of a larger set of skills, which include digital skills, media literacy, education for sustainable development and global citizenship as well as job-specific skills. Alberta Education (2023) defines literacy as the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living. Language is explained as a socially and culturally constructed system of communication. Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world (National Literacy Trust 2023).

Literacy is the mainstay of any nations development hence, any nation that fails to prioritize literacy is doomed to fail. “Literacy affects labour quality and flexibility, employment, training opportunities, income from work and wider participation in civic society” (Musingafi and Chiwanza, 2018). UNESCO (2016) revealed that “the World Literacy Forum estimates the cost of illiteracy to the world economy as 1.2 trillion dollars.” Murphy (2016) notes that “Illiteracy is essentially a personal tragedy … It is a failure of the individual (usually through no fault of his own) to achieve his full potential and to escape the confining prison of ignorance and poverty” (Murphy, 2016).

On this note, UNESCO and other concerned international organizations and agencies have launched aggressive literacy campaigns aimed at raising literacy rates across the globe. However, report of recent literacy survey in Nigeria revealed that preponderance of Nigerian citizenry is illiterate. This development calls for drastic measures. In the prevailing circumstance, functional literacy requires thorough assessment which are eminently and conspicuously positioned to champion the course of literacy promotion and should rise to the challenge by adopting more inclusive strategies and a broader vision to promote literacy in Nigeria (UNESCO, 2019).

The term „literacy" has been conceptualized by many schools of thought. It is “the state or condition of being literate” (New International Websters Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, 2019). UNESCO (2019) defined a literate person as “someone who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life.” Learning which is necessary for an individual to attain a certain level of literacy is endless; otherwise, a relapse may occur. Therefore “literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society” (UNESCO, 2019).

A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development? (UNESCO, 2019). But in today's world, where we read not only words in a written text, but also a wide variety of other symbolic codes for transforming reality, literacy can be defined as the ability of a person to code and decode, smoothly and effortlessly, and with understanding, a living and growing system of symbolic transformations of reality, including words, numbers, notations, schemata, diagrammatic representations and other marks, inscribed on paper or other twodimensional surfaces (cloth, celluloid or the screen of a computer terminal), all of which have become part of the visual language of a people and have thus come to be collectively and democratically shared by both the specialist and the non-specialist (such ability having become part of the current social, economic, political and cultural demand system of a society (Bhola,
2019).

Description of Marginalize Group in Rural Community in Kwara State

The educationally underserved invariably are marginalized groups (UNESCO, 2020). UNESCOs 2020 EFA Global Monitoring Report defines marginalization in education as “a form of acute and persistent disadvantage rooted in underlying social inequalities.” These groups of people are educationally marginalized, and thus underserved, for three overarching reasons: relational (who they are and how they relate to society at large and/or to the dominant groups), locational (where they reside), and situational (their conditions). Membership in multiple marginalized groups has a compounding effect, because these groups constitute additional layers of disadvantage. For example, although twice as many poor in Yemen (ages 17—22) have less than

4 years of schooling when compared to the national average, three times as many poor women have less than 4 years of schooling compared to poor men (UNESCO, 2020).

Similarly, rural poor Nigerians average less than 4 years of schooling, but the rural poor Hausa people of Nigeria average less than 1 year. The average rural Hausa woman attends almost no school. So although average enrollment in Nigeria has grown in recent decades, national average figures mask serious disparities—some subgroups receive almost no schooling and others (e.g., children from wealthy families attend, on average, nearly 10 years of school). Current efforts in many countries will be insufficient to bring all children from marginalized populations into school by the Dakar Frameworks 2015 deadline. The goal will not be achieved simply by stepping up these efforts through increased funding to, and expansion of, conventional education delivery systems because these systems are inadequate to the task. Reaching these underserved groups constitutes what economists call the "last mile problem," which is a persistent challenge experienced (Hartwell, etal, 2016)

Management of Literacy Education on Marginalized Groups Livelihood Status

Effective management of literacy education will enable the marginalized group people to have warm and caring companionship and improved communication thereby enhancing their access to basic needs of the society where they belongs, provides all members of the group with community membership and greater opportunity that would foster peaceful co-existence.

Although most countries are committed officially to the goals of EFA, the political will and official and societal commitment to meet these goals varies by country and with respect to different educationally marginalized groups within countries. Given that concerted efforts and allocations of resources are required to reach underserved populations, levels of government commitment might differ with regard to certain groups, for example, groups who currently are or have been in

conflict with these governments over issues related to citizenship, governance, official recognition of languages and religions, and so on (Omodewa, 2018).

Conversely, even where government commitment and resources are provided, some communities might seek to avoid government provided education, e.g., as an act of political resistance or due to fears of cultural erosion. Governments may also prioritize differently the need to educate all girls or members of certain subgroups. Given these potential sensitivities, external agencies should be circumspect about investing time, energy, and political capital into reaching every marginalized group. A thorough situational assessment is needed to ascertain that target groups are not educationally marginalized because of other forms of marginalization (cultural, political, and religious) that are too sensitive or too impractical for external agencies to address (Murphy, 2016).

Management of literacy education among the marginalized groups entails proper monitoring of the structure, forms and pattern through which such education could be accessible and made functional to the group and this could be attained through; The situational analysis should also help program planners to understand the policy environment as well as the educational delivery structures operational in the given context. It is critically important to understand which structures are centralized, which are decentralized and how resources get allocated.

Educational development programs should target their inputs directly to the educationally marginalized groups. Areas with concentrations of marginalized groups who are underserved must first be identified. Effective identification requires data systems that disaggregate along appropriate indicators that characterize the marginalized groups. Some of these indicators are routinely used in most countries data collection, such as gender and poverty status (whether the family is below the nationally defined poverty line). According to Oduaran (2019), other indicators that might be

overlooked or be considered controversial include language spoken in the home, religion, and ethnic group. Successful education programs for marginalized children often find that their starting point is assisting government departments to establish and maintain these data systems. It is best to understand what indicators the country currently uses, examine how these indicators overlay educational marginalization, and then build on this system.

Secondly, appropriate local structures and processes need to developed and adequate support needs to be provided. These structures and processes may need to be deliberately organized and given a consistent structure across different target areas, and thus require a certain level of central coordination and oversight. Successful education programming for marginalized children builds partnerships among governments, local NGOs, and communities so that their complementary strengths can enhance the impact of the interventions. The key is to build on and complement, rather than replace, existing systems and structures. Locally managed and intersectoral approaches can be very efficient (in terms of allocation of personnel, materials, and resources) as well as sustainable (Oduaran, 2019).

Effective local management of programs, however, depends firstly on complementarity with national policies as well as with those systems that need to be. Appropriate national government policy and political will are necessary preconditions to expanding access to educationally marginalized populations. Ideally, national-level policy should entail a flexible project design that enables local stakeholders to develop some portion of their own programming content that is based on local needs (Thompson, 2019).

According to Sustainable Indicator Project (2018), with technical support, local stakeholders can determine what they need to change in their schools and communities and how they can effect these changes. When educational development is stakeholder driven in this way, it

ensures local ownership and engagement in programming, which in turn increases the likelihood for sustainability once external program support is phased out. Such changes, however, need to be in keeping with national education policies, performance standards and curriculum frameworks, as well as conforming to laws that ensure equal rights and protection for all categories of leaners and citizens.

Because of the nature of a groups marginalization (e.g., poverty, remoteness, language barriers; school participation among the underserved is low and problematic. Program designs that aim to address low participation rates thus need to consider both supply-side and demand-side needs within the education sector. Solving the supply problem (e.g., constructing schools, increasing the number of teachers, improving public transportation) is essential for expanding access for the underserved. Expanded access alone, however, will not guarantee increased school participation if the demand for education is low (owing to opportunity costs, cultural traditions, attitudes toward girls, etc) (Brown, 2019).

To address demand-side factors, then, interventions such as subsidies for direct educational costs and greater cultural sensitization to the educationally marginalized groups needs are required. Building inclusive learning environments is essential to overcoming the classroom-based factors and should be developed with an appreciation of the barriers confronting the child outside the classroom. For example, inclusive classrooms comprise not only skilled teachers and appropriate pedagogy and materials but also some teachers (professionals or volunteers) who can communicate with children in their language and understand their cultural mores.

Conclusion

The paper examined the contributions of the literacy Education programme among the marginalized groups in rural communities in Kwara State. The finding reveals that effective

management of literacy education programmes will provides all members of the group with community membership and greater opportunity that would foster peaceful co-existence. Management of literacy education among the marginalized groups entails proper monitoring of the structure, forms and pattern through which such education could be accessible and made functional to them.

Recommendations

Based on the review work and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. The participation of marginalized groups in functional literacy programme should be encouraged.
2. Appropriate national government policy and political will are necessary preconditions to expanding access to educationally marginalized populations
3. Necessary facilities should be put in place for the take-off of functional literacy educational program and classroom structure well designed should be made available to marginalized groups within rural communities in Kwara State.
4. Every community member should join hands with the government to spread the good news of inclusive education to the nooks and crannies of this country because when everyone is educated, they will contribute to the development of the nation.
5. Marginalized group should be sensitized about literacy education through community education so that people will be made aware that the ultimate goal of the education for their personal, group and the development of the nation at large.

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