

Youth Education: A Prerequisite for Peace-Building and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper tends to posit that youth education is a prerequisite for peace building and sustainable development in Nigeria. A glance looks at the term 'youth education' is often misunderstood, conceived differently from different scholars. And the practices showcased that youth education is of no use in peace building. This is based on the assumption that violent usually starts from youth. It is in this regard that the researcher adopts analytic and expository method in carrying out this work. So that the readers should understand what youth education / education is all about. The researcher concludes that youth education should lay emphasis on the criteria of an educated man not only on the certificate. The researcher also makes some suggestion that youth should involve in political matter, and that government should emphasis on political elites – not on certificate award.

Keywords: Youth, Education, peace building.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is exceedingly instrumental for the realization of one's innate self, strength, natural fitness, and factual being. Education is so necessary and essential that its insufficiency or absence may lead one to choose improper path of life. That is why Tariq (2014) assert that "People without education are like weapons without bullets." Right after our birth, we have, in one way or the other, been imparted education. It would be no exaggeration to think of education vis a vis people like petals of the same flower or like two sides of the same coin, one entirely relying upon the other. Education is a term or concept that is commonly used in our daily activities especially, when such activities is related to specific training or a particular profession, sometimes such concept is used without any precise definition. We most at times talked about education in various ways, for example, John Fidelis had his Secondary education in St. John's Secondary Education, Jagindi. We may equally cite it in his biography; Joy had her university education at the University of Jos. Charity had her nursery /

primary education in Baptist Primary School, Kafanchan. In those various examples, Education according to Akinpelu is subjected with what happen in a formal school system or what takes place in a formal institution of learning. However, had it being we do not know what takes place in the school system, we may not be able to grasp the meaning of the concept.

As a regard of this, we can possibly pose a question whether all activities that go on in the school are educational. This is because in school sector, there are several activities that take place outside the four walls of the classroom e.g., playing of games, cultural activities, immoral behaviour and other activities or behaviours like stealing, raping girls, drug addiction, etc., is it very possible to regard these activities that take place in that institution of learning to be educational? Therefore, when we relate education with schooling it will restrict the concept of education to classroom situation. To think critically on this issue; is it possible for a school to influence the development of a person as contrasted with the influence of the other

agencies of education in the society? The awareness that education is more than schooling, and it can be done through society's agencies like the home, peer-groups, the mass-media, religious bodies can have powerful effect on the teachers and so many other in our society who believe that education cannot be 'had' anywhere apart from the four walls of the classroom.

Furthermore, telling us that a man (Anselm) had his education in so and so place only gives us information about the man's process of education but has not been able to give us what education mean. In these cases, the concept education up to now has not been unfolded. It is also important to note that the use of the education here is merely describing either what the system is of or what the ministry of education is concerned about. The word is only used in a descriptive way, assisting to describe what happen in a formal and non-formal school system. Peters, a popular educational philosopher once stated " the task of defining education is extremely difficult, this is because of its difficult nature. As the researcher unveil in this task "youth and education a catalyst for societal development one will be able to understand how the two concept is catapulted in the societal development.

2. YOUTH

Who are the youth? What does youth mean? It is a challenging task to define who they are. In the great task of this, Majority of an organizations and agencies have adopted a definition in line with their mandate, mostly accompanied by an age range. Notwithstanding, there are a number of problems with this approach. First, the age ranges differ. For instance, the United Nations (UN) defines those aged between 15 and 24 as youth; this is the most common age range used, and is advocated by the UN Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the International Youth Foundation. The African Union widens the definition to include those aged between 15 and 35 years. The draft United States Agency for International Development (USAID) youth policy, due out in the autumn of 2012, defines youth as those persons between 10 and 29 years of age (USAID, 2012a). There is also variation among international agencies, such as Save the Children's age range of 13 to 25 (Sommers, 2001, p. 3).

Second, to complicate matters further, the concepts of youth, adolescence, and young people also vary. The World Health Organization (WHO) uses three

categories: adolescent for those aged 10 to 19, whilst those aged 15 to 24 are defined as youth, and the term young people covers all those aged between 10 and 24. Third, in many parts of the world youth is not determined by age but by factors such as achieving economic independence, leaving the parental home, getting married, and having children. Therefore, another way of understanding youth is as a transitional stage in life between childhood and adulthood. This allows for the exploration of the specific factors that determine the transition into adulthood in different contexts.

In fact, defining youth in terms of chronological age is arguably even less appropriate in conflict situations than elsewhere. Youth are often thrust into adult roles earlier than would be the case in times of peace. They might, for example, find themselves heading households in the event of parental death and displacement. Conflict also causes difficulties for the sociocultural definition of youth, since the traditional markers of the transition into adulthood are often disrupted. Furthermore, the very concept can become heavily politicized: young activists call themselves children to avoid punishment, while authorities call them 'youth' to make them legally culpable (Kemper, 2005: 10)³. It is also important, particularly in conflict settings, to avoid 'youth' becoming used as shorthand for 'young men who pose a potential threat'. 'Young women can be invisible and doubly disadvantaged, and are left out of many youth-focused interventions in part because they are not perceived as a threat' (McLean Hilker and Fraser, 2009).

Above all, the researcher deduced from the aforementioned point that youth are group / standard of people that can take responsibilities individually as far as he / she is not married.

3. EDUCATION

On the attempt to explain what education is, aroused a lot of different views on the concept. These formed a various description / definition of education across the globe. Modern educational philosophers and those in the field of education had the intention to abandon attempts to analyze the concept. For those of what they think education is or what it means or stands for in a given society. Schofield on his own way viewed the concept of education in two perspectives:

3.1 Descriptive perspectives

The descriptive perspective of the concept "education" by definitions is very familiar to us all.

They are often regarded as dictionary definitions. A descriptive definition is one of that has been formulated in the past, has become standard is accepted as explaining adequately what something i.e., what education etymology is the studies of words and their functions; therefore, etymologically education is derived from Latin word *educare* which means to lead or to train. Therefore, there is a belief that such definition which begins with 'education is... are descriptive definitions. To a lot of people therefore, education is concerned with training children and adult alike for some particular functions in the society. It is one of the greatest agents of socialization in human history. Plato (427-348 BC) as quoted by Schofield state:

By education, I mean that training which is given by suitable habits to the first instincts of virtue in children, when pleasure and pains are rightly implemented in non-rational souls. The particular training in respect of pleasure and pains, which leads you to hate and love what you ought to hate and love is called education.

Notable, Plato's definition has a moral emphasis since it talks about good and bad pleasures and pains. On the other hand, Sir Ahmadu Bello cited by Enoh⁶ defined Education as spiritual and cultural transmission of inherited tradition, the purpose of transmitting the inherited aspect of our culture to all who come to school". In the same definition properties, Fafunwa cited by Gbari⁷ defined education as the aggregate of all process by which a child or young adult develops the ability, attitudes and other forms of behaviours which are positive to the society he lives in; it is transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growths of disseminating knowledge either to ensure control as to guarantee rational direction of the society or both.

Different scholars and educators view the meaning of education in various perspectives, by describing what it is and what it does to change learner's behaviours. Such manners viewing the concept 'education' are regarded as descriptive in nature.

3.2 Normative Prescriptive perspectives

It refers to an ideal of an educated man. That is to say some of the expected values from an educated man. As a result of this, Akinpelu viewed the concept of education and an educated man in African culture as; education being life-long and embracing the whole way of living, to talk of an educated man is to talk of the ideal man in the culture of his people. To Akinpelu,

educated man in the African culture can be described as one who combines expertise in some specific economic skills, with soundness of character and wisdom in judgments. He is one who is equipped to handle successfully the problems of living in his immediate and extended family, who is well versed in the folk tale and genealogies of his ancestors, who has some skill to handle some minor health problems and where to obtain advice and help major ones; who stands well with the ancestral spirits of his family or community and knows how to observe their worship; who has the ability to discharge his political duties; who is wise and shrewd in judgments; who expresses himself not in too many words but rather in proverbs and analogies leaving his hearers to unveil his thought; who is self-controlled under provocation; dignified in sorrow and retained in success,, and finally and most importantly, who is of excellent character. In any form; an educated man in the African context must be a person of reputable and description excellent character. In the above description of an educated man, it is the social, nature and the social abilities of the individual that are mostly emphasized.

On the other hand, R.S Peters, a renowned educational philosopher deduced the characteristic of an educated man as follows:

1. Exhibition of good conduct and desirable behaviours
2. Must be knowledgeable and not confined to a mode of thinking.
3. Knowledge and understanding must be inert either in the sense that they made no difference to his general view of the world, his actions within it and reaction to it or in the sense that they involve no concern for the standard and immanent in form of thought or awareness as well as the ability to attain them.

4. YOUTH EDUCATION: AN INDISPENSABLE TOOL FOR PEACE BUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Having known the meaning of education and youth, one will believe with me that education is not to acquire a certificate neither is it restricted to attend school. Rather education involves acquiring a certain value that is worthwhile. One can be an educated without attending school; one can attend school without being educated. Youth as a concept is majorly refers to people who are responsible for what he/she does. Education is of great important instrument for human and social transformation. Many societies had

used it to effect dramatic changes and bring about desired growth and development. Development generally involves enhancement of human capacity which is usually achieved through the process of education. For human capacity to develop in order to bring about social growth and development, the mind of the individual beneficiary of the process of education need to nurtured in the right way, since it is from the mind that action dispositions and thought springs.

Educating youth is an instrument per excellent which can be used for social, cultural and moral transformation through the inculcation of appropriate desire values.

5. YOUTH EDUCATION IS A FACTOR OF POSITIVE CHANGE IN ONE'S LIFE

Education for the youth is the medium with the help of which they can quench their thirst for realizing their potentialities. The youth should be equipped with the best possible education and facilitated with favorable conditions to, through the attainment of their skills, be an asset to the community and that way contribute actively to the development of the community, as they are essential elements of the society. In this globalized and knowledge-based world, every young person should be given the opportunity to contribute to the society while fulfilling their potentials. Since education, as conceived of, seeks to change the way one lives and thinks, the youth first must be provided great educational opportunities and suitable conditions, the hurdles laying on their way to educational ends ought to be removed, only then will the youth be a boon to the community. The self-development of the youth is directly tied with that of the society. To help others change their paths of lives, one must first start from himself. To reach apex, it should be started from the bottom. Beginning with self-awareness, the youth should go up, flourishing and prospering. When children are sent to schools, they are on the point of fact opened the wide windows of the dark rooms of this world. There they can learn about their society, environment, social ethics and values and so on. So, it is incumbent upon every society to create constructive conditions for the youth so as to receive education.

Youth Education as the path leader of the youth: It is with the help of education that the youth can choose and seek their interests. They choose their ways and

directions of lives. With this, they set goals for themselves and strive to achieve them. Education propels the youth in the right, proper and straight direction.

Youth Education; Today's Youth, Tomorrow's leaders a progressive impact: Today the youth learn but tomorrow they will either lead or teach. Impartation of education is a "give-and-take" process and deal. Education encompassing all walks of life is transferred from one generation to another. So, if the present generation is appropriately educated and instructed, the coming one is for sure to be even more properly educated and taught. The youth should be properly educated as they will shoulder the leadership, expanded responsibilities tomorrow. They will lead the society and country tomorrow.

Youth Education a tool for the amendment minds of the youth: Globally speaking, education has been recognized as the priority area since it is so central to the improvement and betterment of the lives of the youth. Young people lacking proper education generally cannot differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad. They can even go misguided unless guided accurately through education.

Youth education is a route of all-comprising developments: Education to youth is as important as soul to body. To wipe out poverty, have sustained and equitable economy, sustainable development, social and political enrichment, globally aware society, stabilized and secure world-a decent life, education is on top of all the possible means to achieve the said objectives. Further, behavior refinement, and biodiversity are the two other key developments the youth can achieve through education. Similarly, with the help of education, the youth can promote competitive issues like analytical precision, envisioning future scenarios and decision-making. Gender gap is another chief issue which the youth can reform and that way resolve through education. Keeping good health and creating suitable peaceful conditions and working for security are the other developments which the youth can achieve through education.

In one word, with proper education imparted to youth, the youth can become productive, scientific-

oriented, broad-minded, and ideal citizens of the society as the society is significantly influenced by this category of people.

Bellow is some of the articulated point that the researcher observed and subscribed that youth education triggers sustainable development.

1. Education / being educated is often referred to humans not animals. It is in this regard that the researcher opines that human are youth and for any society to develop if the youth or the humans really ascribed to the criteria of being an educated man, it will increase the level of morality.
2. We are often use to this slogan that youths are the leaders of tomorrow. In this aspect, when one is being educated in the context being ascribed as a criterion, it will make them to have all it takes to be a leader starting from family and society at large.
3. This two concept is like two side of a coin. This is because there can be no education without humans and there can be humans without education. Although some may not abide to the criterion for educated man.

6. CONCLUSION

Although, the contemporary youth focuses on the certificate instead of the criteria of an educated man which is worthwhile. This is because of the stage we are into now. Pride on the certificate is nothing to write home about. That Charity went for school; I also will acquire the certificate so that she cannot be proud of herself again in the village. Moreover, the issue of the job opportunities which at times if one has this or that certificate the person will be appointed to one offices. It triggers many youths to focus on paper certificate thereby forgetting to acquire the worthwhile value which is expected from every educated person.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Youth are more likely to promote societal development if they are granted a specific set of opportunities, interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

1. Equipping the youth with desirable norms and values
2. Engage themselves in politics/ political participation; forging connections between youth and their societies; youth are the leaders of tomorrow. So it is important for them to engage and have the knowledge of politics since there are bay chances for one to rule.

3. Training youth for the workplace; and building youth confidence and self-esteem. In the process of this, youth finds out their potentials.
4. Youth should advocate equalities and power relations between groups in society
5. Government should emphasize on political elites – not on certificate award.
6. Focus on elections and transmission of civic knowledge should be observed.

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