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## CHAPTER 45

### COMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION WITH ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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#### **Introduction**

Special Needs Education (SEN) is an educational programme designed to facilitate the learning of individuals who for a wide variety of reasons require additional support and adequate pedagogical methods in order to participate and meeting learning objectives in an educational programme. This is essential due to disadvantages in in physical, behavioural, intellectual, emotional and social capacities. This form of education takes into account the individuals' particular needs by providing specific resources such as trained personnel, equipment or space for effective learning activity. The delivery process could assume individualized instructional method or a group instructional method in a special educational institutions (UNESCO, 2022).

It can be seen that the position of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) on provision of education to people living with disabilities (PWDs) is poor and inadequate. This can be observed from the common trends of inadequate number of special schools in a state not to talk of a Local Government Area(LGA). Most states do not' have special school; not to talk of different forms disabilities of some of the citizens. Little or no commitment is shown to PWDs in most northern states. Nwagou (1988), explained that the poor care given to PWDs in the society made many families to see other members with disabilities as liabilities. Most of them have no knowledge of the cause and therefore shifts blames to evil spirits, curse from ancestors, myths, and so; on about mothers committing sacrilege during her period of pregnancy. This perceptions do make many parents feel ashamed of their special needs children.. Others have even turned their children to street beggars.

The global concerns on PWDs paved ways for inclusion of PWDs in the National Policy on Education (NPE) in the Nigeria. Section 8 of the NPE was enacted. The public law 94-142 in theUnited States(US) section 8 has the following purposes:

1. giving concrete meaning to the idea of equalizing educational opportunities for all children's physical and emotional needs.



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2. providing adequate education for all learners with disabilities so that they may fully play their roles in the development of the nation.
  3. providing opportunities for exceptionally gifted students to develop at their own pace in the interest of the nation's economic and technological development.

Although the National Policy on Education (1977) paid attention to issues on special education by creating a section for it. The implementation of the policy between 1978 to 2013 has been subjected to various interventions such as teacher development, institutional development framework, establishment of special schools, curriculum review and so on. Nigeria was not left out of the global moves for changing the trends in the education sector for the inclusion of the people living with disabilities.

A policy on SEN was formulated in 2015 when the FGN came up policy document on SEN in Nigeria. The 31 pages document spelt out the objectives, philosophy, legal status, financial responsibility, service provision centres, etc which brought a turn-around for PWDs in Nigeria particularly children within school age. Some of the targeted achievements in Nigeria include: paradigm shift in how people think about PWDs, enforcing the national policy on education, institute advocacy groups for SNE in Nigeria, recognition and accommodation of various forms of exceptionalities and giving quality and equal educational opportunities to all children. The pertinent question to ask at this point is how are the adults living with disabilities going to be taken care of since most of the policies above is targeting school age children? What policies exist to cater for adults with special needs education?

This chapter therefore examined PWDs and SEN issues, concept of non-formal education, the complementing services of non-formal education programme for SEN in Nigeria, conclusion/summary and suggestions.

### **People with Special Needs Education**

In the confine of the Adult and Non-Formal Education concepts, which is more focused on taking care of remedial education for people who for one reason or the other could not attend formal school to enable them bridge the missing gap. Adults therefore who are victims of neglect, lack of opportunity, poor orientation by parents and the society and poor access to schools due to their peculiar challenges are left to be burdens to their families and the community. A lot of times they are the population that governments would not wish to go on street begging. This can be seen in the action of Lagos State government when it made moves to end street begging by people who were not given chance to be included in the education (premium times 18/08/21). Begging has become inevitable to these persons as they have the need to take care of themselves and their families. Some state governments have come up with plans to house them and take care of them but the poor facilities and services in such houses are issues. The presence of PWDs can be observed on streets, at motor parks, air ports, and train stations, to



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mention but a few. This situation no doubt gives the Federal government some concerns. Osa-Edoh and Ayano (2012) identified some number of reasons responsible for PWD engaging in street begging to include, homelessness, poverty, rejection by family members, as the need for money was revealed by the researchers as the most needs of the beggars.

Consequently, the Adult and Non-Formal Education sector have to come to rescue by coming up with sound policies that can help provide literacy education, vocational education and other technological education to adults living with various forms of physical challenges that can be helped through provision of special forms of education in order to enable them contribute to national development. Adult and Non-Formal education is flexible and accommodative to cater for the youths and adults who for one reason or the other could not attend formal schools in the child-hood days.

### **Concept of Non-Formal Education**

According to UNESCO in Fafunwa (1981), such programmes which programmes??? are geared towards helping the individual from child-hood, youth and adulthood. The programmes just like in life-long education are all embracing. They include science and technology, vocational and civic education, humanities, recreational and leisure. The wide and all-embracing scope and nature of Non-Formal Education makes it to be run by several agencies, ministries and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); while other private sectors run it as skill acquisition centres (Adesina, Fagbonge & Taibi 1985). Against this backdrop, the definition of Non-Formal Education is not very different from what adult education means. The term from the foregoing can be right to adopt the 1976 definition raised by UNESCO in Anowor, Ezema and Umezulike (2001), to denote

*“the entire body of organized educational process, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in 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 qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behavior in the two fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development” (Anowor, Ezema and Umezulike, 2001).*

On the other view Ngwu (2004); inferred that Non-Formal Adult Education covers training and instruction outside the formal education system and may be organized in the form of individualized apprenticeship, vocational training in craft centres, and even as a nation-wide mass literacy campaign. He summed up Duke’s work on classification of adult education to be in three major areas. Non-formal education targets at:-

- training adults for qualifications



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- national mass education programme
  - deliberate training programme in specific skills using pre-established curriculum by inventing its own resources for effective learning.

The concept of NFE in adult education associated with the Danish philosopher, poet, educational thinker and clergy man, N.F.S. Grundtvi and his thoughts concerning free educational opportunities. The concept first arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is one of the special features of the Danish education system. Non-Formal Education activities are frequently based on private initiatives by NGOs. The NFE adult education comprises of Independent Non-Formal Education activity (evening schools and voluntary activities in associations), University extension courses, Day folk high schools and private independent boarding schools (folk high schools, home economic schools, arts and crafts schools, and continuation schools).

Each of the forms of Non-Formal Adult Education programme itemized above according to the Danish experience can be suitable for accommodating PWDs to access education. Non-Formal Education can provide PWDs with literacy programmes of different levels. It can be basic literacy, post-literacy, continuing education programme, skill acquisition programme and other professional trainings. The teaming out of school youths and adults who missed their chances of enrolling into formal school would be accommodated in the Non-Formal Education. A lot of PWDs are out of formal school, as reported on Premiumtimes in August, 2021, where Lagos State government came up with a policy that there is no tolerance for street begging on the streets of Lagos. This implies that the rate of youths and adult beggars as well as women was alarming in Lagos State. The number of beggars on the streets of Nigerian cities calls for a fall back to the Non-Formal Education Sector to take care of their educational needs towards making them productive citizens for national development.

In order to have a good comprehension of NFE programmes and how it compliments special needs education in the society, some silent features must need be carried along. Here a reflection on Ngwu (2004), where he identified some relevance of this form of education on humanism to includes:-

- its content has a short-term usefulness, and is determined by the community itself.
- develops critical and committed consciousness of the transformation of the physical and social development.
- utilizes methodologies where all may participate in a creative process.
- provokes self-appraisal
- preserves individual identity without losing the fixed objectives of the learning group, etcetera.

For a good understanding of Non-Formal Education nature distinguishes it from other forms of education. Therefore, Ishaq and Ali (2014), presented the



following to constitute the nature of Non-Formal Education in the professional context:

- a. **Flexibility:** Non-formal education is not rigid as in the case of formal school curriculum. Yet that doesn't mean it operates without laws and principles of operation. Even though the learning process lasts for life yet it has no book plan of instruction to sequentially follow. It tries to address educational needs arising in the course of life, this is because life is dynamic and each level of social changes comes with specific educational need to meet such challenges. The typical example is the facing out of the manual type writer and the advent of computer which is a better technology to go by. Likewise it is flexible in the process of learning, this is because dealing with adults has to be through the use of andragogy- that is the learners taking lead in the learning process. So the facilitator should be ready and mindful to change roles as instructor and sometimes to serve as a learner as he gives opportunity to the learners to contribute to the learning process from their wealth of life experiences. Flexibility can be in terms of sex mix in enrollment, age-grade mix in enrolment, in terms of learning needs, nature of disabilities, mixture in social background and mixture of persons with different educational backgrounds. People with special needs education can be accommodated as the flexible nature can make provisions to take care of their specialities. This sector can take care of the physically challenged persons by providing them with education at their own pace, in their environment, taking into cognizance their immediate special learning needs.
- b. **Non-Formal:** Non-Formal Education is not formal in setting even though semi-structured in modes of operation. Just like any other educational encounter, there is a facilitator and a participant who comes together to teach/learn. Here also learners come from whatever age grade, consequently with various degrees of experience, interest and goals. Yet they are constructively carried along same class in the case of skill acquisition centres. Sometimes some learners may like to enroll into a programme late, failure to accommodate them can demoralize them and loose hope. Therefore adult learners particularly the people with special needs education can be handle in high wisdom in professional practice as they are adults. People with special needs education can be enrolled into adult centres but may be since his aim is to learn, help him/her learn without insisting on strict formalities of the structure by guiding the learners to achieve his/her life goal of coming to learn. This is operation as learning by NFE nature is learner-centred. The learning process can accommodate even slow learners by making special arrangements for them to learn at their pace and at their convenience. This can be by using the distance learning medium to reach them at their various centres or homes as the case may require.
- c. **Skill Oriented:** skills are the most needed product of any learning activity. Be it reading, writing, computing or vocational skills. These if obtained turns a



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learner into a useful citizen for himself as well as his community. A walk through the line of history of education, has inform most educators that before the advent of western education, there was a traditional form of education which is also known as Non-Formal Education. Where people are trained in to various skills and trades to help them earn a living as well as support the survival of the community by dispensing their live-skills eg blacksmith, tailors, farming, fishing, crafting, hide and skin work, bronze work, etc. the question is how was it taught? In a Non-Formal way focusing on the necessary skills to be transmitted to the learners. It will be very worthy to note here that age or so call disability is never a hinderance to learning vocational skills so long as the willingness to learn is there. Therefore the apprenticeship method in the learning process is the emphasis when teaching adult and youths to acquire any needed skills. This built on the premise of Malcolm Knowles who identified the principles of learning to include the need to learn by the adult learners. Vocational skills is one of the most needed skills by people with physical challenges. PWDs usually resorts to begging after they have grown into youthful or adult hood stage. Adult and Non-Formal Education can make provision to equip them with vocational skills they can live on. This takes care of their unemployment status by becoming self-reliant.

### **The Complimenting Services of Non-Formal Education Programme for Special Needs Education in Nigeria**

This section picks up by reflecting on the words of coombs in Anyanwu (1998), who summed up the contributions of Adult and Non-Formal Education to nation building as follows:-

*“the programmes are varied and cover such areas as literacy, community development family planning, agricultural extension, industrial training health education, technical and vocational training, workers education, nutrition, trade and labour union, cooperatives small scale industries, manpower development and military training. All these areas are vital in nation building”.* (Anyanwu, 1998:100)

Going by the above summative description of what Non-Formal Education comprised. The rational of Non-Formal Education is seen in its objectives. According to preservearticles.com(2015).

The broad-based objective of Non-Formal Education may be enumerated as to:-

1. enable the maximum number of non-school going children of 9-14 age group to join the non-formal stream so that we may help in achieving constitutional directive.
2. enable learners to learn basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic so as to make the self-reliant in day to day life.



3. develop general awareness about the socio-politico-economic problems of local, state and national importance so as to seek their solutions.
4. enrich knowledge/experiences in the vocational/professions in which the clientele is involved by utilizing local and outside resources.
5. develop basic skills to handle/repair modern ordinary gadgets with which the learners are familiar and have access to.
6. develop desirable personal and social habits as well as healing attitudes towards our cherished national ideals and values.

In the light of the above objectives, it can be deduced that objective one is ready to accommodate the school age children and youth who could not access the formal school education can afford to be part of learning for self-actualization under the NFE. Literacy skills can be obtained by children, youths and adults. General awareness creation on the public on the need to enroll the PWDs into education and or adult and non-formal education programmes. Mass Education: This constitutes all forms of educational programs intended at creating awareness on specific issues in a given area of socio-economic or cultural life in order to facilitate the transformation of the peoples' consciousness in order to adopt an opinion because NFE belief in the adaptive nature of man, and therefore believes that if the man is given proper educational orientation, the people concern will understand and embrace the way towards the change through the application of the acquired knowledge. The medium of this educational encounter comes through the mass media such as the radio, televisions, newspapers. Others includes festivals, cultural days, feasts, religious centres, etc. These are believed on by professionals in NFE as means of reaching out to a large number of people with education programs designed in line with the identified community problems such as: illiteracy, poor agricultural production, divorce, cholera drug abuse, political violence, care for PWDs, etc. the problem areas covers education, health, economics, cultural, political and social areas of human life. These are meant to improve the standard of peoples' lives to the minimum requirement to integrate them into national life (Omolewa, 1981). For the purpose of this paper, this form of pretera ogramme can make voice for PWDs as awareness creation among communities to have the right attitude towards PWDs. Intensified campaign for attitudinal changes and behavioural changes toward sending people with special needs education to schools.

The adults and youths who are beyond school age can also be enlightened to consider enrolling into adult and Non- education programme to secure literacy skills for onward educational development. The enlightenment can help them have change in attitudes and behaviour to enable them turn away from practices such as begging and dependent practices on relations affect their dignity.

Secondly, objectives number two has the programme that cater for the illiterate PWDs in the country. Provision for qualification training citizens of educational programmes aimed at helping such community members (PWDs inclusive) desiring to obtain qualifications or certificates that will enable them use



it in their social function or continue with their education to higher levels. These people could be stuck illiterates, drop outs of formal schools, graduates of adult literacy classes and graduates of senior secondary schools who want to remedy their results.

This programme can help accommodate PWDs education who missed the chance of attending school due to the neglect suffer during childhood or school age. The Non-Formal Educational programme can be developed to enable PWDs to obtain the kind of educational certificates which will help them move on to higher educational institutions for higher certificates. Various courses are arranged for adults with disabilities to acquire adult literacy certificates which may earn some of the employment as others will use it as stepping stone to enroll for higher qualifications that may give them higher chances of excelling in any career of their choice.

Thirdly, in line with objective number four, skill acquisition trainings programmes in trades that will provide participants with live-skills to live on. This form of training was on going in the primitive era, through the colonial and post-Colonial period. During the primitive life, skills are learnt through family lines. NFE has a provision in centres where learners adults or youths are trained to help them become self-learned and productive members of the society to which they belong. PWDs can acquire vocational skills that can give them employment at the point of graduation. Particularly that some of them are adults and even married. Instead of begging in the society they can learn skills that could help them be self-employed and enables them to be responsible members of the community and therefore contribute to national economy rather being seen as liabilities by the society.

### **Conclusion/Summary**

Non-Formal Education is truly a platform for awareness creation about the educational needs of people living with disability around us, especially if the attitude of the society towards the PWDs. Nigeria has a large number of people living with disabilities many are out of school due to wrong perception that educating them is a waste of resources as parents give up on them simply because of their disability. These teeming population are useful human resources but if they are left out of the school system, there will be a growing population of out of school children and consequently increase the number of illiterates in the nation. Non-Formal Education by its nature and objectives have three major ways it can complement special needs education in Nigeria. These are awareness creation for the need to enroll the children with disability into formal schools as they are human beings. Also, literacy programmes exists which can accommodate children and youths who are out of school and cannot access formal schools to enroll into literacy centres to acquire literacy skills for onward development and provision of skills to youths and adult with disabilities who missed formal school during school age to



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become useful members and productive members of the community instead of forcing them to embrace begging.

### **Suggestions**

In line with 1999 constitution section 18 sub-section (1) which reads “government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.” (Federal Republic of Nigeria 199). This paper came up with the following conclusions towards ensuring inclusive education of youths and adults that:

1. National Mass Education Commission in collaboration with the state agencies for adult and non-formal education should urgently develop sound policies that can accommodate youths and adults with special needs education to help boost the human resource development in Nigeria.
2. State Agencies for adult and Non-Formal Education should collaborate with experts in special education towards training facilitators who will be in the direct implementation as facilitators in the special needs youths and adults learners’ centres.
3. Non-Formal education should embark and intensify campaign for awareness creation in the wider society on the need for enrolling PWDs to schools
4. Government, Civil Society Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations are hereby called upon to partner with Non-Formal Education Agencies to help enroll youths and adults with special needs education in our wider society to reduce rates of illiteracy and unemployment among the populace.
5. Government should consider providing some allowances to the youths and adults in order to sustain them on the programme as some of them are responsible married men and women.

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