

THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED ADULTS AND INCLUSIVE ADULT EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Adult Education Is Synonymous With Education For All And As Such The Contributions Of Inclusive Adult Education To Sustainable National Development Cannot Be Overemphasized. Consequently, Real Learning Opportunities To Promote Lifelong Learning Should Be Provided For All Groups Of Individuals To Better Their Lives And Also Be Able To Contribute Meaningfully To The Development Of The Country Irrespective Of Their Location, Gender, Status, Disability, Population And Culture. This Paper Examines Inclusive Adult Education For The Physically Challenged Adults For Sustainable National Development In Nigeria. It Focuses On The Past And Present Efforts Of Government At Providing Education For The Physically Challenged And The Challenges. It Also Explores Inclusive Adult Education For The Physically Challenged Adults So As To Leave No One Behind In Their Personal Development And Contributions To Sustainable National Development Of Nigeria. Based On The Conclusion Of The Paper, Suggestions Are Given On How Inclusive Adult Education Can Be Used To Bridge The Gap In Education Between The Able Bodied And Physically Challenged Adults For Development Of Self, Family, Community, State And Nigeria At Large.

Key-words: Physically Challenged Adults, Inclusive Adult Education, National Development, Sustainable National Development

Introduction

A Physically Challenged Person Is Someone Who Has A Problem With The [Body](#) That Makes It [Difficult](#) For Him/her To Do Things That Other People Can Do Easily. This Cuts Across People Of Different Ages, Gender, Status, Race Or Colour. When The Disability Happens At A Tender Age, It Gives Ample Time To Adjustment, Counselling, Training And Education Before Adulthood. But In Some Cases, It Happens At Young, Middle Or Late Adulthood As A Result Of Ailments, Accidents, Ageing And Other Circumstances, Making The Adult Not Only To Be Likely Devastated But Also Frustrated. Some Of The Disabilities Include Poor Or Low Vision, Blindness, Hard Hearing, Locomotor Disability Such As Stiffed Fingers, Joints, Neck Or Muscles; Mental Illness Such As Loss Of Memory, Paralysis, Partial Or Total Stroke And So On. This Does Not Mean That The Affected Individuals Can No Longer Live A Meaningful Life Or Contribute To National Development. However, Persons With Disabilities In Nigeria Persistently Face Stigma, Discrimination, And Barriers To Accessing Education, Basic Social Services And Economic Opportunities Among Others.

Education Has Generally Been Accepted As The Most Viable And Inevitable Instrument For Spurring Up Positive Change In Individuals, Families, Communities And The Nation. The Role Played By Education Includes Inculcation Of The Right Type Of Values And Attitudes For Survival Of The Individual Through Acquisition Of Appropriate Skills, Mental And Physical Abilities And

Competence In Order To Contribute To The Development Of The Larger Society (odewale, 2020). Real Learning Opportunities May Still Be Provided Through Inclusive Adult Education For The Physically Challenged Adults To Become Lifelong Learners By Engaging In Lifelong Learning.

An Adult Constitutionally In Nigeria Refers To Individual From Age Of 18years And Above. Though, Other Criteria Such As Maturity, Responsibilities, And So On, Based On Culture Are Also Used Depending On The Peculiarities Of The Society In Question. This Is Why An Adult May Be Defined As Someone Labelled To Be So By The Society To Which He/she Belongs. Adult Education Is A Discipline Within The Field Of Education Just Like Other Disciplines Such As Sociology Of Education, Philosophy Of Education, Primary Education, Among Others. People Will Continue To Want Education Because It Is Preferred To Ignorance And Investment On It Will Continue By Individuals And Groups Because It Is A Profitable Venture And Great Weapon Against Fears And Ignorance (adeyemo, Folajin&kuye, 2015). This Means That For As Long As A Human Being Lives He Will Always Seek To Update And Upgrade His Knowledge, Skills And Attitudes As The Situation Demands To Be Able To Cope With Life Changes.

Adult Education Is Any Form Of Learning Undertaken By Or Provided For Mature Men And Women. Omolewa And Kumar (1988) Cited In Adeyemo, Folajin And Kuye (2015) Defines Adult Education As A Process By Which Adult Seek To Improve Themselves Or Their Societies By Increasing Their Knowledge, Skills And Sensitivities. The Authors Describe Adult Education As A Process Towards National Development As It Aids Self And State Development As It Is Skill Oriented And Always Problem Solving. Adult Education Contributes To Social, Economic And Political Development Of Not Only Individuals But Also Their Communities And Nation At Large

As It Offers Opportunities For Individual's Improvement And Integration Into The Society. According To Unesco (2015), Adult Education Is Saddled With The Responsibility Of Taking Education To The Marginalized, Disadvantaged, And Physically Challenged Among Others. The Flexibility In Learning Opportunities Allow Everyone Access Lifelong Learning Opportunities For The Acquisition Of Knowledge And Skills While Gaining The Advantage Of Active Participation In The Societies, Regardless Of Their Gender, Age, Race, Ethnicity, Or Disability (unesco, 2015). Adult Education Serves Young And Old, Men And Women, Clever And Less Well-endowed Thereby Making Them Useful And Active Participants In Their Families, Communities And Nation At Large.

Development Can Be Defined As An Encompassing Process Involving The Steady And Systematic Change In The Cultural, Economic, And Political Spheres Of Society In A Way That Increases Production, Empowers The People And Their Communities, Protects The Environment, Strengthens Institutions, Grows Quality Of Life And Promotes Good Governance (ekundayo, 2015). Development Means Economic Growth Plus Change. It Should Therefore Be Seen As Process Evolving Gradually Over Time. In The Context Of A Nation, Development May Be Seen As The Gradual Expansion Of Available Facilities And Resources Both Quantitatively And Qualitatively So As To Produce A Better And Greater State. This Is Why The Federal Republic Of Nigeria (frn, 2013) States That Education Is An Instrument For National Development And Social Change Vital For The Promotion Of A Progressive And United Nigeria Which Also Should Be Compulsory And A Right Of Every Nigerian Irrespective Of Gender, Social Status, Religion, Colour, Ethnic Background And Any Peculiar Individual Challenges. Frn (2013) Also Recognizes That Education Is To Be Qualitative, Comprehensive, Functional And Relevant To The Needs Of The Society.

The Thesis Statement Of This Paper Is Hinged On The Fact That There Should Be Equal Educational Opportunities For All As Nigeria Needs To Ensure Inclusive And Quality Education Of The Physically Challenged Adults For Their Personal, Community And Sustainable National Development. This Is Because There Is No Adequate Social Security Scheme / Programme For The Physically Challenged Adults Who Persistently Face Stigma, Discrimination, And Barriers To Accessing Basic Social Services And Economic Opportunities Especially At Late Adulthood In

Nigeria. The Paper Will Begin By Looking At The National Policy On Education And Efforts Of Government At Providing Inclusive Adult Education For The Physically Challenged Adults, Challenges Faced By The Physically Challenged Adults In The Society, Societal Attitudes Towards The Physically Challenged Adults, Provision Of Inclusive Adult Education For The Physically Challenged Adults And Implications For Sustainable National Development, Conclusion And Suggestions Will End The Discussion.

Efforts Of Governments At Providing Inclusive Education For The Physically Challenged Adults In Nigeria

Physically Challenged People Are Those Who Are Suffering From A Certain Disease Or In Other Words, Their Affected Body Part(s) Will Still Be Working But Slowly When Compared To Others, As It Is Affected By Disease. Physically Disabled People Are Those Whose Affected Body Parts Don't Work, But Their Brain Works (www.quora.com, 2023).a Disability Becomes A Handicap When It Interferes With Doing What Is Expected At A Particular Time In One's Life (vikaspedia.in, 2022). Physical Disabilities In Adults May Be From Birth, Childhood, Adolescence Or Happens At Adulthood Due To A Number Of Reasons Ranging From Birth Disorders, Diseases, Accidents, And So On.

Globally, The Physically Challenged Individuals Should Be Seen To Be Important Part Of The Workforce. Although, All Of The Countries Have Laws And Provisions Asserting The Right To Inclusive Education, The Ways In Which This Right Is Realised Differs From One Country To The Next. Over And Above These Contrasting Realities, Inclusive Education Has Become The International Benchmark Model For Policies In Favour Of Rights Of Children And Persons With A Disability. For The Scottish Government, For Instance, The Priority Is To Prepare Pupils To Live Independent Lives In Adulthood. In Scotland, The Law Guarantees Pupils With Significant Special Needs A Minimum 18-month Transition Period Before Going To University, As Part Of An Action Plan Called Smart Target. The Transition Period Gives The Pupil An Opportunity To Visit The Universities To Which He Or She Has Applied, To Obtain Information, And To Request That The Necessary Human And Technological Measures Be Put In Place. The Transition Period Is A Legal Requirement, And It Can Be Enforced Through The Courts If Refused (www.education.gouv.fr). In The Basque Country (spain), There Is A Special Scheme Where Pupils With Learning Disabilities Are Able To Remain In School Until The Age Of 18 Or 21. These Young People Are Taught In Mainstream Schools, Alongside Other Pupils (www.education.gouv.fr).

Like Most European Countries, France Has Adopted The Inclusive School Model Of Schooling For Pupils With A Disability. With The Implementation Of The 2005 Law The Schoolroom Doors Have Been Opened Wide For Disabled Pupils Formerly Attending Specialised Institutions Or Separate Classes. In Italy, The Inclusive Model Dates Back To 1977 When Special Classes Were Abolished, And The Inclusive System Revolves Around Co-teaching. In Addition To A "curriculum" Teacher, Classes Also Have A Teaching Assistant Responsible For Supporting Pupils With Disabilities. The Teaching Assistant Is A Specialised, Qualified Member Of Staff. In Quebec, Canada, Disabled Pupils Are Entitled To Remain In School Until The Age Of 21. More And More Pupils With Disabilities Are Being Taught In Mainstream Classes, With The Percentages Varying According To The Type Of Disability Or Needs. In England, New Systems Have Been Put In Place To Support Pupils' Transition To Adulthood, And Support Provision Has Been Extended Until The Age Of 25 (www.education.gouv.fr).

Over And Above Their Differences, In Most Organisation For Economic Cooperation And Development(oecd) Countries There Is A General Move Away From Integration And Towards Inclusive Education - A Model Focused On Adapting The School Environment To Pupils With Special Needs. The Inclusion Of Pupils With Disabilities Takes Place On Three Levels: Legislation; Policy And; Operational Principle. In England, New Systems Have Been Put In Place To Support

Young People's Transition To Adulthood, And Support Provision Has Been Extended Until The Age Of 25 (www.education.gouv.fr).

In Nigeria, One Of The Goals Of Education Is The Development Of Appropriate Skills, Mental, Physical And Social Abilities And Competencies To Empower The Individual To Live In And Contribute Positively To The Society. The Quality Of Instruction Shall Also Be Oriented Towards Inculcating Acquisition Of Functional Skills And Competencies Necessary For Self-reliance (frn, 2013). The Physically Challenged Adults Fall Under The Different Categories Of Special Needs Persons Such As The Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired, Physical And Health Impaired, Locomotor Disability, And So On, As Recognized By Frn (2013).

The Physically Challenged Adults In Nigeria May Be Categorized Into 3: Those Born With The Disability; Those Who Developed Disability After Birth Or During Childhood, And; Those Who Became Physically Challenged At Adulthood For Reasons Ranging From Ageing, Illnesses, Diseases, Violent Conflicts, Religious Crises, Terrorist Activities Or Invasion, Farmers/ Herders' Clashes, And So On. According To Martinez And Vemuru (2020), While There Is Not A Clear Estimation Of The Number Of People With Disabilities In Nigeria, Data From The [2018 Nigeria Demographic And Health Survey](#) Revealed That An Estimated 7% Of Household Members Above The Age Of Five Years (as Well As 9% Of Those 60 Years Or Older) Experience Some Level Of Difficulty In At Least One Functional Domain - Seeing, Hearing, Communication, Cognition, Walking, Or Self-care. Similarly, 1% Either Have A Lot Of Difficulty Or Cannot Function At All In At Least One Domain. The Duo Posits That The Government Of Nigeria, Both At The State And Federal Level, Has Taken Some Steps To Address The Needs Of Persons With Disabilities. In March 2009, The Senate Passed A Law Outlawing Discrimination Against People With Disabilities In Nigeria. At The Time, Many Considered The Law A Major Milestone On The Rights Of The Physically Challenged In The Society. But Nothing Seems To Have Changed (thisday, 2020). One Significant Step Came In January 2019 With The Ratification Of The Discrimination Against Persons With Disabilities (prohibition) Act 2018, Though Implementation Is Yet To Materialize. In Addition, Nine States In The Federation Have Enacted Disability Laws To Safeguard The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities To Varying Degrees Of Implementation (martinez And Vemuru, 2020).

The Physically Challenged Act In Nigeria Prohibits All Forms Of Discrimination Against Persons With Disability. If An Individual Is Found Violating This Law, He/she Will Pay A Fine Of N100,000 Or A Term Of Six Months Imprisonment (premiumtimes, 2019). It Is Observed That The Few Vocational Training Centres Set Up By Government Are Ill-equipped And Ill-maintained So That Many Physically Challenged Adults End Up In The Streets As Beggars Or Constitute Social Nuisance And Security Risks By Their Various Criminal Activities Or Other Socially Unacceptable Behaviour.

Societal Attitude Towards Physically Challenged Adults In The Society

Physically Challenged Adults Face Societal Stigma, Discrimination, And Neglect Especially At Late Adulthood Partly Due To Some Cultural Beliefs, Ignorance And Poverty, Among Others, And Majorly Due To The Fact That They Face Barriers To Accessing Basic Social Services And Economic Opportunities And Lack Of Social Welfare Scheme Provision For The Aged In Nigeria. Many Physically Challenged Adults Are Regarded By Their Families As A Source Of Shame And Treated As Objects Of Charity (thisday, 2020). Martinez And Vemuru (2020) Posits That Institutions Are Manned By Individuals And Individual Attitudes Shape The Environment And Institutions. So, When The Attitudes Of A Community Are Negative Towards A Particular, Vulnerable Group, They Will Struggle Much More To Realize Their Potential. The Duo Posited That Persons With Disabilities Are More Likely To Experience Extreme Poverty In Nigeria Than Those Without A Disability Because Persons With Disabilities May Experience Negative Attitudes At Family And Community Levels, Including Name-calling, Negative Beliefs, And Misconceptions Surrounding

The Causes Of Disabilities (usually Associated With Religious Or Cultural Norms, And Beliefs). The Physically Challenged Act In Nigeria Prohibits All Forms Of Discrimination Against Persons With Disability. If An Individual Is Found Violating This Law, He/she Will Pay A Fine Of N100,000 Or A Term Of Six Months Imprisonment (premiumtimes, 2019).

Provision Of Inclusive Adult Education For The Physically Challenged Adults And Implications For Sustainable National Development

Education For All (efa) Is An International Initiative First Launched In 1990 To Bring The Benefits Of Education To Every Citizen In Every Society. Efa Is To Ensure Among Others That The Learning Needs Of All Young People And Adults Are Met Through Equitable Access To Appropriate Learning And Life-skills Programmes; Also, To Improve All Aspects Of The Quality Of Education And Ensure The Excellence Of All So That Recognized And Measurable Learning Outcomes Are Achieved By All Especially In Literacy, Numeracy And Essential Life Skills (world Bank, 2014). Education Is An Important Factor Necessary For Not Only National Development But Sustainable National Development.

Adult Educators Are Change Agents Who Should Be Able To Actively Manage Not Only The Different Categories Of Learners But Their Diversities Such That They All Feel A Sense Of Belonging Within The Learning Environment. The Educator Should Be Able To Meet Their Individual And Collective Needs Through Adequate Motivation, Respect, Participation, Team Work, Equal Right And Opportunities, Among Others. Although, Adult Education Has Traditionally Positioned Itself As An Avenue Through Which Marginalized Groups Of People Can Empower Themselves, It Has Largely Not Been Able To Reach Out To Persons With Disabilities (pwds). This Is Despite The Fact That Many People With Disabilities Have Limited Opportunities In The Formal Education System During Their Childhood And Could Therefore Become A Huge Target For Adult Education Provision. Through Adult Education, Pwds Can Enhance Their Knowledge, Attitudes And Skills Not Only To Improve Their Livelihoods And Advocate For Their Rights But Also To Facilitate Their Inclusion In Development Processes (nuwagaba, 2012).

Development Which Signifies Growth Plus Change Is A Process Which Evolve Over Time. It Concerns People And Affects Their Ways Of Life. According To Adeyemo Et Al Cited In Abiodun And Kuye (2020), In The Context Of A Nation, Development Has Come To Mean The Gradual Expansion Of Available Facilities And Resources Both Quantitatively And Qualitatively So As To Produce A Better And Greater State. It Connotes Progress From An Earlier To A Later Stage Characterized With Better Resource Allocation And Utilization And Greater Effectiveness. The Authors Went Further To State That, In Order To Determine Whether A Society Is Developing Must Go Beyond Criteria Based On Indices Of Per Capital Income As Well As Those Which Concentrate On The Study Of Gross Income. The Basic Elementary Criterion Is Whether Or Not The Society Is A 'being For Itself', That Is, Its Political, Economic And Cultural Decision-making Power Is Located Within (abiodun & kuye, 2020). Therefore, A Developed Nation Is That Whose Population Is Endowed With Necessary Skills That Will Enable It Stamp Out Ignorance And Is A Reflection Of The Economic Welfare And High Standard Of Living For Every Citizen Irrespective Of The Challenges They May Be Having.

Sustainability Focusses On Equal Economic Growth, That Generates Wealth For All, Without Harming The Environment. Investment And An Equal Distribution Of The Economic Resources Will Strengthen The Other Pillars Of Sustainability For A Complete Development (<https://www.acciona.com> › Sustainable-development). Sustainability According To Investopedia (2019) Is Most Often Defined As Meeting The Needs Of The Present Without Compromising The Ability Of Future Generations To Meet Theirs. The Sustainable Development Of Society Refers To Three Major Components Of Human Existence: Economical, Ecological And Human ([sciencedirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com), 2020). Ezele, Bonga And Tedjere (2020) Also Identify The Three Dimensions Of Sustainable Development As Economic, Socio-political, And Environmental.

The Sustainable Development Goals (sdgs) Capture The Essence Of Development In Any Nation And Have As Its Slogan To “leave No One Behind” Which Also Adequately Describes The Need And Importance Of Inclusive Adult Education For The Physically Challenged For Sustainable National Development. Two Out Of The Ten 2030 Targets Of Sdg 4 Which Emphasizes Inclusive Education For National Development According To United Nations (2016) Are:

- Eliminate Gender Disparities In Education And Ensure Equal Access To All Levels Of Education And Vocational Training For The Vulnerable, Including Persons With Disabilities, Indigenous Peoples And Children In Vulnerable Situations.
- Build And Upgrade Education Facilities That Are Child, Disability And Gender Sensitive And Provide Safe, Nonviolent, Inclusive And Effective Learning Environments For All.

Inclusive Adult Education Means Carrying Everybody Along; Not Leaving any Person, Part Or Group Out In Its Delivery. That Is, Not Excluding Any Individual In The Provision, Access To And Benefit Of Adult Education. Inclusive Adult Education Should Provide An Environment Of Respect For Each And Every Learner In Adult Education Especially The Physically Challenged. Though, When Physically Challenged Children Are Adequately Taken Care Of From Youth They Tend To Grow And Become Responsible Individuals Thereby Contributing Their Little Quota To Society And National Development. The Question Is What Happens When Disability Occurs At Young, Middle Or Late Adulthood? Physically Challenged Adults Face Societal Stigma, Discrimination, And Neglect Especially At Late Adulthood And Inclusive Adult Education Can Help To Reduce Prejudice And Discrimination In The Society. Inclusive Adult Education For The Physically Challenged Is To Contribute Decisively To The Full Participation Of All Adults In Their Own Development And To Their Active Control And Contribution To Social, Economic, Political And Cultural Changes, And Sustainable National Development.

Adult Education Being An Effort To Ensure A Process Of Equalizing Educational Opportunities Is An Agent Of Change And Of Social Equality And Democratic Living. This Is Because Some Physically Challenged Adults And Aged Persons Wish To Enjoy Learning Opportunities To Make Them Continue Being Active, Involved, Relevant, Significant And In Constant Touch With Both The Present And Future. Inclusive Adult Education For The Physically Challenged Adults Will Help Reduce Drastically To The Barest Minimum Adult With Physical Disabilities Using Their Children Or Wards To Beg For Alms On The Streets Thereby Preventing Them From Attending School And Having Education, Exposing Them To Risks Such As Sexual Abuse, Ritual Killing, Murder, Drugs Use And Abuse, Easy Recruitment Into Terrorist And Bandit Groups, And So On. In A Case Where Such Physically Challenged Adults Also Have Children With Special Needs It May Become A Generational Problem.

Conclusion

The Physically Challenged Adults In Nigeria Must Be Empowered Through Inclusive Adult Education To Help Themselves And Their Families And Also Contribute Their Bit To The Sustainable Growth And Development Of The Society. By So Doing, They Will Be Captured In The Human Resource Development Of The Country And This Will Prevent A Situation Where The Physically Challenged Adults Become Burdens And Constitute Nuisance On The Streets By Their Alms Seeking Activities Which Will Also Affect The Training And Education Of Their Children Who Are Used As Guides In The Alms Seeking Or Begging Activities. The Multiplier Effect Could Be Higher Population Of Illiterates, Street And Out-of-school Children Who Should Be The Future Of The Country.

Suggestions

The Following Suggestions Are Given Based On The Above Conclusion.

-  Government As A Matter Of Policy Must Create A Conducive Atmosphere For Education, Social, Economic And Political Integration Of The Physically Challenged Adults In Our Society.

- ~~Adult~~ Provisions Should Be Made To Capture The Special Needs Of The Physically Challenged Adults Right From Policy Formulation Through Implementation And Evaluation Stages In The Provision And Delivery Of Inclusive Adult Education.
- ~~Discrimination~~ Against Persons With Disabilities (prohibition) Act 2018 Should Be Enforced To The Latter To Give The Affected Persons A Sense Of Belonging Resulting From Non-discrimination And Non-stigmatisation.
- ~~The~~ Should Be Regular Public Orientation And Awareness Creation Through The Media And Other Sources On The Challenges Of Ageing To Correct The Superstitious And Erroneous Beliefs Of The Citizens With Respect To Some Challenges Faced Especially By The Old Adults.
- ~~Inclusion~~ Of The Physically Challenged Adults Should Be Encouraged And Segregation Discouraged In The Provision And Access Of Inclusive Adult Education To Ensure That No One Is Left Behind In The Sustainable National Development Process.
- ~~Non~~governmental Organisations (ngos) Should Not Be Left Out Rather, There Should Be Collaboration Between Government And Ngos In The Provision Of Inclusive Adult Education For The Affected Citizens. Education Is A Shared Responsibility Between Government, Community And Private Sectors.
- ~~Government~~ Should Provide More Funding For Education Generally And Adult Education Specifically.

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