

## CONCEPT OF EDUCATION: A RE-ASSESSMENT

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Education is a tool for social advancement. Education brings about positive changes in the society. The education of any society must be developed, before any successful development can take place within other institution of education in that society. This paper focuses on education in totality from a sociological perspective. The four basic types of education were analyzed and different definition of education discussed. The researcher drew conclusion that education is light and bring about positive changes and major development in any society. It was recommended amongst others that government especially should give education more attention to bring about meaningful development in every ramification in our society economically, culturally, politically etc.*

*Keywords: Education, Re-assessment.*

### **Introduction**

Education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives (Fafunwa in Alumode, 2002). This definition is all embracing and not restrictive. It covers both school and school-less societies. It shows that education is for total development and education most result to positive value and not negative. Education is a process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both.

Formal Education is education provided within the school setting with laid down procedures. It is consciously planned systematic imparting or acquisition of knowledge, which takes place in specially built institutions such as schools and colleges. As swift in Elekwa (2013) puts it, formal education is an official prescribed pattern of rules and objectives, allocating tasks, privileges and responsibilities relating to the achievement of certain goals. Teaching is well structured by means of syllabuses and timetables. Teaching and learning, orderly progression through grades, examination and certification are the distinct features of

the formal education system. It is designed to cover all levels of education from pre-nursery - tertiary institutions (FRN, 2004). Informal education is education we get from outside the school system. It is mostly in form of apprenticeship training, like learning a trade from an uncle or aunt. Here the learning experience method and medium are flexible and not defined by any standards or rules.

Informal education means unplanned and unsystematic acquisition of knowledge. It is the exact opposite of formal education. This education accounts for the largest bulk of the totality of our life time learning. It has no designated venue, takes place anywhere, anytime and teaching and learning are mostly incidental. It is a life-long education which lasts from the cradle to the grave. In fact, informal education takes place at every situation of human life. Like one's interactions with relations, members of the community and even colleagues, present opportunities for learning informally, (Alumode, 2002:12).

Non-formal education is an organized learning experience outside the regular school system. For Farrant in Alumode, it is any organized learning activity outside the structure of the formal education system that is consciously aimed at meeting specific the learning needs of particular children, youths or adults in the community. It is also a type of education which adults received in a popular group. Women group for example which covers a range of activities from literacy programmes to vocational training to consciousness raising and everything which is directly associated with changes in life.

Non-formal education is education outside the formal school system. Okoh (2003:18) sees it as remedial education. The National Policy on Education (2004) defines it as functional literacy, remedial, continuing, vocational, cultural and civic education for youths and adults outside the formal school system. It is aimed at providing functional literacy education for adults who have never had the opportunity of any formal education. It also serves as remedial education for drop-outs. Though not organized within the framework of formal school, so much from formal schooling is provided to non-formal education like government identifies or sees it as added advantage to the economy and so provides it with teaching staff, specially designed materials and programmes. Programmes like adult education which emphasizes reading, writing and arithmetic, vocational programmes like craft-work, cookery, sewing, (tap programme), workshops, seminars, all are part of non-formal education.

### **Concept of Education**

Education may be seen as growth - the cumulative effect of changes in behaviour resulting from experience both planned and unplanned. The educational processes of society reflect its nature and its needs, and as these change, so its educational processes may have to change. Thompson in Arokoyu et al (2004) explains this process when he analyzed the functionability of education in traditional and modern societies. In simple small scale, isolated and self-sufficient societies, where the security and survival of the group; educational practice tend to stress the transfer to new members of the cultural symbols, values, beliefs and sanctions upon which personal relationships, patterns of conduct and customs were based.

Formally, education was seen as an instrument for promoting social stability and continuity, it increasingly became tool for promoting and controlling changes and transmitting new national values and skills. "Education is the key that unlocks the door to

modernization" (Harbison and Myer in Okeke, 2002: 191). Durkheim in Okeke (2002:191) sees education as "an instrument through which society perpetuates itself". He believes that educational change is not only an important reflection of the underlying structural and cultural changes but also an agent in that process. Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know, rather, it means teaching them to act, think and to behave as they were not accustomed to act, think or behave before. Also, it is worth noting that the aims of education are strongly related to the social economic and political structure of a country (Uchendu in Okeke, 2002:192).

Education is the social institution responsible for the systematic transmission of knowledge, skills and, cultural values within a formally organized structure (Kendall, in Elekwa, 2013:56). Education is a powerful and influential force in contemporary societies. As a social institution, education impacts values, beliefs and knowledge considered essential to the social reproduction of individual personalities and entire cultures (Bourdieu and Paaseron in Kendall, 2003). Education grapples with issues of societal stability and social change reflecting society even as it attempts to shape it today. Education is very significant that an entire subfield of sociology – the sociology of education is devoted to its study. It serves as important purpose in all societies. At the micro level people must require the basic knowledge and skills they need to survive in society. While at the macro level, the social institution of education is an essential component in maintaining and perpetuating the culture of a society across generations. Thus, cultural transmission which is the process by which children and recent immigrants become acquainted with the dominant cultural beliefs, values, values, norms and accumulated knowledge of society, occurs through informal and formal education. However, the process of cultural transmission differs in preliterate, pre-industrial and industrial nations.

People across the country are asked their reasons for getting education and their answers were "to get a better job or a better paying job" (42%). In fact, 57% believed that schools are not doing enough to develop job skills. Only very few people think the reasons to attend school is "to acquire knowledge" (10%), "to learn basic skills" (30%), "to develop an understanding and appreciation for culture" (1%) (The Call Up Report, 1994 in Tischeler, 2002).

Lester F. Ward believed the main purpose of education was to equalize society, while Herbert Spencer, believed education was only important if it has practical value and prepare people for everyday life. Education is a tool for social advancement. In Nigeria traditional society where education was through apprenticeship, any man who successfully completed his learning either as a black smith, hunter, fisherman or craftsman got initiated into, as it were and thereby acquiring a new status in the society. Today education is still accorded a high premium to the extent that any person who is well educated is highly valued and respected by the society.

Education has been seen as valued by all, as the process of improving the societal life of a person in the society, which he or she belongs. Education therefore is a means through which the individual can develop socially and economically. It is through education that the individual who acquires different skills may be promoted in his or her chosen career.

In this study, education may be seen as a process. Surely education means different things to different people. It is seen as the process of skill or knowledge, trade or profession. It is also a kind of schooling, instruction and discipline in general, the academic discipline, dealing with teaching and learning methods in schools. Ezewu (1983:137) also sees education in itself as a cultural process. Education helps the individual to bring about change in the society without education there is no society. The education one gets in the educational institution or system helps to fit the individual properly into his society. The individual through the curricular and extra-curricular activities learnt in school and home, comes in contact with social changes in the school and society at large, for example, the individual learns how to speak well, read well, dress more appropriately, respect and greet elders well and even sit properly in case of the ladies in school and home which is an embodiment of educational process.

### **Conclusion**

Education helps people or individuals to improve on themselves and the nation at large both socially and economically. Education brings about positive changes in the society. The education of any society must be developed, before any successful development can take place within other institution of education in that society. Education promotes development of an individual to be useful to him or herself, state and the society at large.

### **Recommendations**

- Special scholarship scheme should be provided in Nigeria to enable more individuals to go to school.
- Schools in rural areas should be well-equipped to attract qualified teachers and to give quality education to the rural dwellers.
- Government should provide appropriate information dissemination strategies for programmes targeted at rural dwellers.
- Well-meaning individuals should try and provide scholarship scheme to the less privilege in our society to enable them get the basic education and improve on their lives.
- The oil companies in our communities should also provide scholarship scheme to help more children to get education etc.

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