

## **Contributions of Non-Formal Education Programmes in the Socio-Economic Lives of Rural Dwellers: Implication for Social Media-Based Education**

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**Abstract:** The study was focused on the contributions of non-formal education programmes to the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State. Two research questions and two hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The total population of the study was (356) rural dwellers currently undergoing non-formal education programmes in the (9) identified non-formal education centres in Enugu State. A sample size of (210) respondents was selected using purposive sampling technique. The instrument for the study was a questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using mean score while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. The major findings of the study were that helping rural dwellers to understand their historical origin among others are the contributions of non-formal education to the social lives of the rural dwellers and that helping rural dwellers to understand the lucrative economic activities, helping rural dwellers in their trading activities among others are the contributions of non-formal education to the social lives of the rural dwellers. Based on the findings of the study, conclusions were drawn and relevant recommendations were made.

**Key words:** Non-formal education, socio-economic, rural dwellers, Enugu State, social, dwellers

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a very important social institution. As a social institution, the education system is expected to impact positively in the lives of people who receive it. However, the education system that the “school” represents which colonialism imposed on many third world countries including Nigeria has been characterized as an inappropriate education system. According to Ngwu (2011) the school-oriented education system has been shown to have a disruptive effect on cultural values and attitudes which still impede development in many third world countries, Udo observed that the education offered through the modern school system is well known to be most often divorced from the student’s needs aspirations and future life situations and opportunities. He further noted that the problem of cultural relevance as well as school-oriented education to individual work opportunity constitutes the reason for questioning the role of school to both human and societal development. It is important to reiterate, here that before the advent of colonialism, there were well-established systems of education among the various ethnic nationalities in

Nigeria. This education was part of the cultural systems of the people. In other words, in the home interpersonal communication skills and relationships were taught to children in the village group process skills were learned in the farms the children learned vocational skills and methods of agriculture in the age sets social communication and political skills and knowledge were acquired in the markets the children learned economic and marketing skills among others (Ngwu, 2011). Thus, the non-formal form of education is imperative for the social and economic well being of the people.

Ngwu (2011) sees non-formal education as any organized educational activity outside the established formal system whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable clientele and learning objectives. Ngwu went on to distinguish between other forms of education informal and formal, so as to make non-formal vivid. According to Udo, informal education is defined as the life long process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment. Formal education is the institutionalized, chronologically

graded and hierarchically structured education system spanning from the lower level of primary school to the upper level of the university (Ngwu, 2011). This definition implies that while the non-formal education system is less organized and the contents to be learnt are not sequentially taught, the formal system of education is properly organized and contents to be learnt are sequentially arranged at all levels (i.e., primary, secondary and the university levels).

Eya (2009) defined non-formal education as the organized and semi-organized educational activities operating outside the regular structures and routines of the formal education system aimed at serving a great variety of needs of different categories subgroups in the population, both young and old. Some non-formal education programmes cater for the same learning needs as the schools and in effect are substitutes for formal schooling. This definition points out the fact that non-formal education shares some commonalities with schooling and could also cater for the educational needs of the young. Whereas adult education caters for the educational needs of the adults only, non-formal education could cater for both children, young persons and adults but it has to be out of school. This also points out that non-formal education is conceived as an alternative to schooling mostly in developing countries where the high cost of providing universal and basic education makes it difficult and most often, impossible for governments to provide funds for the expansion of formal educational facilities to cater for all children.

The discussion regarding the benchmark for the implementation non-formation education in adult literacy centres are discussed in previous study. The functions of non-formal education as stated by Ngwu (2011) is to provide positive change in attitude and values, provide knowledge and skills necessary for sustainable living to the people and disseminate information necessary for a good life in the society. These functions can be achieved through various non-formal education programmes like professional examination preparations, non-formal education is used to train people for external examination like GCE, JAMB, ICAN, among others.

Refresher courses are type of courses for people already in the profession supporting them with the current trend of knowledge that will make them excel in their various areas as professionals, for example, accountants, teachers, doctors, nurses etc. Educative courses are for people who have little or no formal educational background, for example, farmers, tailors, housewives among others. Vocational courses come in form of short courses used to upgrade workers and which last for

3-6 months. It is for typists, secretaries, public relations, administrators among others. Leisure and cultural programmes is a type of non-formal education which train people in the areas of play and cultural programmes and other recreational activities which people need for relaxation and better use of their leisure. Examples include musical programmes, sports activities, play production, singing among others. Topical issues of the day is for current issues and affairs keeping people abreast with the latest information in their environment and the society such topics include HIV AIDS, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), safe motherhood, childcare programmes, child immunization, etc. Media based programmes is a kind of programme in which the educators give all types of lesson, lectures and enlightenment talks to people through the radio, newspaper, bulletins, newsletters, television, etc.

**Ad-hoc programmes:** Here, the people are taught how to organize seminars, workshops, training on issues of urgent concerns and needs which demand immediate attention. Research programme is of two types, the first, involves finding out what problem people have and designing a suitable programme for them. The second one is an established programme for a particular group.

The above non-formal education programmes are very much available and viable both in the urban and rural areas in Enugu State. Similarly, Akubue (2009) confirmed that non-formal education programmes in Enugu State are visible and viable within urban and rural centres. Most of the centres are properly equipped with basic non-formal education facilities like classroom blocks, desk, administrator's office, instructional materials and vehicles to facilitate the administration of non-formal education in Enugu State (Onah, 2012). In view of the above, it could be deduced that the non-formal education programme in Enugu State is functional. Besides, the state has been identified as one of the states in Nigeria that has an adequate number of non-formal education centres which offer different forms of non-formal education programmes that could benefit a wider range of rural dwellers (Akubue, 2009). These include professional examination preparation, refresher courses, vocational courses, leisure and cultural programmes among others.

Ideally, non-formal education programmes are developed to help the individual learner to acquire new and relevant knowledge. This knowledge will help such individual to be useful to himself in particular and contribute meaningfully to the development of the society in general. Thus, it is expected that the organization of non-formal education programmes in any community or society would have a specific and general impact on the

learners in particular and the society in general (Olubode, 2012). In view of the above, noted that the essence of education is to improve the living conditions of individuals and by implication foster development of the society. The above statement anchored on the fact that educated individuals with relevant skills and knowledge in different fields of study will contribute their quota to the development of the society. Odo stressed that non-formal education is directed towards inculcating basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and values considered desirable in the society to the individual learners. It is this desirable knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help the individual learner to be useful to the society through living a responsible lifestyle. Ayodele (2009) further explained that the importance of non-formal education is adequately felt in rural areas where most rural dwellers are uneducated.

Indeed, non-formal education programmes appear to be available in the rural areas of Enugu State. However, the major worry of this study is how has Non-formal education contributed to the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers. The term socio-economic is a combination of two words-social and economic. The social condition of a person means the culture of a society where a person is living and his interaction with the society Mezieobi and Sampson. Economic on the other hand refers to the financial status of a person. Therefore, the socio-economic condition of an individual refers to his society, culture, environment his interaction in the society and his financial status. The socio-economic life of the rural dwellers in the context of this study refers to the social relations and interactions among the rural dwellers as well as their daily economic activities, income and financial capacity.

In Nigeria, particularly in Enugu State, the economic lives of the rural dwellers revolves around agricultural activities such as the production of cassava, vegetable, corn, rice, rearing of pigs, chicken and other domestic animals (Odo, 2012). In most cases as noted by Nwafor (2009), most of the rural dwellers carry out their economic activities with signs of total ignorance of the mechanisms and processes involved in such economic activities. Non-formal education, therefore, presents the rural dwellers with useful opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills. This knowledge and skills will enable the rural dweller to perform their economic activities and by implication improve their living standard. On the other hand, the social lives of rural dwellers are culturally base. That is the rural dweller's social activities revolved around their customs and traditions. Hence, the social lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State are determined by the prevailing customs and traditions of the various communities Nnaji. Onah (2010) explained that

the various communities have peculiar social interaction patterns all of which are directed towards a common social life. The common social life of people of Enugu State includes harmonious co-existence, peaceful resolution of conflict situations, care and concern for one another amongst others (Onah, 2012). Through non-formal education provided for the rural dwellers, the above mentioned common social life of the rural dwellers can be perfected, improved upon as well as popularized in the various rural areas (Akubue, 2009). This if achieved will not only improve peaceful cohabitation of the rural dwellers but will foster national development through active social and economic participation of the rural dwellers.

Indeed, several forms of non-formal education are in practice in Enugu State. Odo (2012) identified some of the Non-formal education practices to include education for rural farmers, education for rural women, education for rural traders, rural entrepreneur education among others. These forms of non-formal education programmes according to Odo (2012) are established to basically impact on the lives of the rural dwellers both socially and economically. Socially, these non-formal education programmes are expected to contribute to the rural dwellers essentially on the rural cultural practices, mutual human relations and peaceful co-existence. Economically, the non-formal education programmes will contribute to the rural dwellers basically on the acquisition of economic skills through entrepreneur education for rural dwellers. This can be done by teaching rural non-formal education learners how to produce goods like soup, cream etc. other areas of contributions include the ability to identify and participate in lucrative small and medium skills businesses, identification and selection of good yielding crops for planting, crop storage and marketing skills among others. This can be achieved by effective teaching of relevant subjects such as agriculture, economics, commerce, etc. in non-formal education centres.

Though few studies have been done with respect to education and rural dwellers none was on contributions of non-formal education programmes on the socio-economic lives rural dwellers in Enugu State. It is on this obvious gap that the present study was conceived. The essence of determining the contributions which non-formal education programmes have made on rural dwellers lies on the fact that such information and or knowledge will enable the providers of non-formal education programmes in Enugu State to evaluate the non-formal education programmes they provide. It is on this ground that the need for the present study was situated.

Therefore, the problem of this study put in question form it what are the contributions of non-formal education programmes on the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu state. The general purpose of the study

was to determine the contributions of non-formal education programmes to the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu state. Specifically, the study intends to:

- Find out the contributions of non-formal education programmes to the social lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State
- Find out the contributions of non-formal education programmes to the economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State

Consequently, the following research questions guided the study:

- What are the contributions of non-formal education programmes to the social lives of rural dwellers in Enugu State
- What are the contributions of non-formal education programmes to the economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State

The following null hypothesis will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- $H_{01}$ : there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female respondents to the contributions of non-formal education programmes on the social lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State
- $H_{01}$ : there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female respondents to the contributions of non-formal education programmes on the economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. According to Nworgu (2006) this type of design enables the researcher to collect data from the respondents, analyze and interpret the result after which the findings could be generalized. Therefore, this design was considered appropriate for this study that investigates the contributions of non-formal education programmes to the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State.

This study was conducted in Enugu State. Enugu State is located in the South-East zone of Nigeria. The state is bounded in the north by Kogi and Benue States, in the East by Ebonyi State, in the South by Abia State, and in the West by Anambra State. There are (17) Local Government Areas in Enugu State. Enugu State is divided into (3) senatorial zones namely, Enugu North, East and

West senatorial zones, Enugu North have (6) Local Government Areas, East has (5) Local Government Areas while Enugu West has (6) local government areas. The choice of Enugu State as the area of the study lies on the fact that there was an adequate number of non-formal education programmes in the state which could contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers.

The population of the study comprised all the (356) male and female rural dwellers currently undergoing non-formal education programmes in the (9) identified non-formal education centres in Enugu State. A sample size of (210) rural dwellers from a total of 356 rural dwellers currently receiving non-formal education in Enugu State were involved in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select (7) Local Government Areas (LGAs) that have rural dwellers currently receiving non-formal education programmes in Enugu State. The (3) Local Government Area was selected from Enugu North Senatorial zone while Enugu East and West senatorial zones produced two local government areas each. The reason for selecting (3) LGAs in Enugu North and (2) LGAs in Enugu East and West, respectively anchored on the fact that Enugu North Senatorial Zone has more number of Local Government Areas than other zones. The (30) rural dwellers currently receiving non-formal education programmes in each of the (7) selected local government areas were used for the study. The choice of rural dwellers that are currently receiving non-formal education lies on the fact that they are in the position to give reliable data on the contributions of non-formal education to the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers. The instrument was subjected to reliability and consistency tests by administering the questionnaire to (10) randomly sampled adult rural dwellers that are currently receiving non-formal education in two local government areas that will not be involved in the study. The two local government areas include Agwu and Oji-River. Their responses were analyzed using Cronbach alpha reliability method. The following cluster reliability coefficient value was obtained, 0.89 for cluster one and 0.93 for cluster two.

Overall reliability coefficient value of 0.88 was obtained and was considered appropriate for the study. Consequently, mean statistics were used in the analysis of data for the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Research questions one:** What are the contributions of non-formal education programmes to the social lives of rural dwellers in Enugu State.

Table 1: Contributions of non-formal education programmes to the social lives of rural dwellers in Enugu State

Items	Decision
Non-formal education has helped rural dwellers to be aware of the social issues in their community	Accepted
Non-formal education has helped rural dwellers to know their historical origin	Accepted
Non-formal education has helped rural dwellers to be active in social activities such as cultural dance in the community	Accepted
Non-formal education has helped rural dwellers to contribute meaningfully in decision making of their social life	Accepted
Non-formal education has helped rural dwellers to be socially relevant	Accepted

Table 2: t-test analysis of the significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female respondents to the contribution of non-formal education programmes on the social lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Std.	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	105	3.4279	0.29078	208	0.02643	3.641	0.000	Reject
Female	105	2.2649	0.19223					H <sub>01</sub>

Table 3: Contributions of non-formal education programmes to the economic lives of rural dwellers in Enugu State

Items	Decision
Non-formal education has helped rural dwellers to know lucrative economic activities	Accepted
Non-formal education has helped rural dwellers in their trading activities	Accepted
Non-formal education has helped rural dwellers to be eligible for employment	Accepted
Non-formal education has helped rural dwellers to acquire entrepreneur skills	Accepted
Non-formal education has helped rural dwellers to learn how to manage their resources	Accepted

Table 4: t-test analysis of the significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female respondents to the contributions of non-formal education programmes on the economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Std.	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	105	2.9173	0.23652	208	0.01893	4.823	0.000	Reject
Female	105	2.5472	0.09564					H <sub>02</sub>

The result in Table 1 shows the contributions of non-formal contributions to the social lives of the rural dwellers. The result of the analysis in Table 1 indicated that all the items were accepted by the respondent as contributions of non-formal education to the social lives of the rural dwellers. This is because all the items obtained mean scores above 2.5.

- H<sub>01</sub>: there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female respondents to the contribution of non-formal education programmes on the social lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State

Table 2 shows the t-test analysis of hypothesis one. The result of the hypothesis analysis shows that the t-cal value is 3.641 which is higher than the t-crit value put at 0.00. This implies that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female respondents to the contribution of non-formal education programmes on the social lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State

**Research questions two:** What are the contributions of non-formal education programmes to the economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State.

The result in Table 3, shows the contributions of non-formal contributions to the economic lives of the rural dwellers. The result of the analysis indicated that all the items were accepted by respondents as contributions of

non-formal education to the economic lives of the rural dwellers. This is because all the items in the obtained mean scores above 2.5:

- H<sub>02</sub>: there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the male and female respondents to the contributions of non-formal education programmes on the economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State

Table 4 shows the t-test analysis of hypothesis two. The result of the hypothesis analysis shows that the t-cal value is 4.823 which is less than the t-crit value put at 0.000. This implies that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female respondents to the contributions of non-formal education programmes on the economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State.

The finding of the study with respect to research question one showed that helping rural dwellers to be aware of the social issues in their community, helping rural dwellers to know their historical origin among others are the contributions of non-formal education to the social lives of the rural dwellers. This finding is supported by Adesina (2008) who stated that non-formal education contributes to the social lives of the rural dwellers by helping the rural dwellers to be aware of the social issues in their community and to know their historical origin among other things. Thus, various social media platforms may be utilized to help reach out to many adult learners in adult education centres in hard-to-reach zones.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study, the following conclusions were made, the respondents agreed on the suggested contributions of non-formal education programmes to the socio-economic lives of the rural dwellers in Enugu State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made Enugu State Government through the ministry of education should ensure adequate recruitment of teaching personnel in all non-formal education centres, the government should give adequate support to non-formal education programmes, the government should ensure adequate provision of infrastructure like building, desk, etc., for the effective running of non-formal education programmes and the government through the ministries of education and communication should ensure that the rural dwellers are adequately made aware of the benefits of non-formal education which will encourage them to value and participate in non-formal education programmes.

## IMPLICATIONS

The implication is that non-formal education can be delivered using online media and social media platforms to rural dwellers to prepare them to meet the challenges of globalization.

The findings of the study with respect to research question two showed that helping rural dwellers to know the lucrative economic activities, helping rural dwellers in their trading activities among others are the contributions of non-formal education to the social lives of the rural dwellers. The above finding agrees with Osigwe (2009) who noted that non-formal education contributes to the economic lives of the rural dwellers by helping rural dwellers to know the lucrative economic activities and helping rural dwellers in their trading activities among other things.

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