

## AGRICULTURE AND ADULT EDUCATION: A VERITABLE TOOL IN ADDRESSING THE MENACE OF BULLYING IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Agricultural science in general is linked with the development of any nation in the world. Agricultural science as a vocation and discipline opens and shuts more doors for men and women than any other content area. Despite the importance of agricultural sector to the development of any nation and the frequent campaigns, encouraging the Nigerian populace to harness the potentials in it, the unemployment rate has continued to increase significantly. This study addresses the issue of bullying via agriculture and adult education programmes in Bayelsa State. The concept of bullying, adult education programmes and agricultural strategies were clarified. Bullying in Bayelsa State, the place of adult education and Agricultural science in addressing the menace of bullying was discussed. It was suggested that adult education programme should be improved to accommodate strategies for disseminating agricultural strategies amongst youths.

**Keywords:** Bullying, Agricultural Science, Adult Education Programmes, Menace

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### INTRODUCTION

Agricultural science in general is linked with the development of any nation in the world. Agricultural science as a vocation and discipline opens and shuts more doors for men and women than any other content area. Agriculture was truly the most important economic sector in Nigeria, which accounted for the highest source of provider of employment, highest contributor to gross domestic product and foreign exchange earnings (Nwangwu, 2019).

Despite the importance of agricultural sector to the development of any nation and the frequent campaigns encouraging the Nigerian populace to harness the potentials in in it, the unemployment rate has continued to increase significantly (Aduwari, 2022).

Charles-Owaba (2020) reported that there is a serious lack of awareness and under-utilization of the potentials in the Agricultural sector by citizens, especially the youths in Nigeria generally. He further noted that most youths in Bayelsa see farming as a low-class task, hence they hunt for white collar jobs, thereby making the state to depend on other states for supply of agricultural produce.

Research reports from Akinpade(2020), Olufemi (2019), Alhassan, Safao and Ameyaw(2017) and Kolawole (2014) have revealed some of the causes of lack of awareness and under-utilization of the potentials in the Agricultural sector amongst youths as: lack of visionary leadership, incompetence, policy somersault, a complete absence of project follow-through, a propensity to divert public funds and resources into private use, and lack of a strong commitment to find a sustainable way to provide small scale rural farmers access to seeds, fertilizer, small-scale irrigation and credit. Also, Elfindri and Rezki (2015) and Alhassan, et al., (2017) specifically, pointed out that youth idleness is a major reason behind the

underutilization of agricultural policies. He further noted that most agricultural programmes and policies meant for national development and transformation were not successful, despite quantum of money that had been invested, because they were all in-school in nature and design, which does not accommodate post-school activities such as adult and non-formal education.

The issue on how to reduce unemployment amongst youths via agricultural activities has been comprehensively studied, but almost no research has been conducted to address the menace of youth idleness in Bayelsa State. Therefore, this study is aimed at establishing how the integration of agricultural strategies into adult education programmes can address the issue of youth idleness in Bayelsa State.

### CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

To create a context for a clearer appreciation of the discussion and analysis, the following three major concepts of the study are clarified below.

#### Bullying

Bullying can be described as repeated negative events, which over time are directed at special individuals and which are carried out by one or several other people who are stronger than the victim. Negative events can be aggressive physical contact in the form of fights and shoving, verbal threats and mockery, grimacing or cruel gesturing (Aluede, et al., 2008). Adewale (2004) defined bullying as a hostile behaviour displayed by an individual in order to harm another person or a group of people. According to him, bullies engage in the act in order to establish power and control over their colleagues, whom they consider to be “weaker” world. Bullying, a subcategory of aggressive behaviour, is encountered regularly by children and adolescents in the context of schools, worldwide.

Although bullying is a common experience for students around the world, it is a complex social problem that can have severe negative consequences for both bullies and victims (Hymel et al., 2005), especially as bullying has the potential to cause either physical or psychological harm to the victim. However, the most widely used definition of bullying is that coined by Olweus (1978): a person is being bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Negative actions are considered to be when someone purposefully inflicts or tries to inflict injury or discomfort on another person. Negative actions may be verbal (such as threatening, degrading, teasing or non-verbal (such as hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing, vandalizing property, rude gestures, and making faces). Bullying may be carried out by a single person or by a group against a single person (the victim) or a group of people. Langevin (2000) claimed that this definition requires that negative actions must be carried out repeatedly and intentionally to be considered bullying, which excludes occasional and less serious negative action.

In order to be considered bullying, there should also be an actual or perceived power imbalance. That is, the person experiencing the negative actions has trouble defending him/her and is helpless to some degree against the harassing person or persons (Rigby & Slee, 1993). Olweus (1993) classified bullying into direct and indirect bullying. Direct bullying is defined as open attacks on the victim, while indirect bullying consists of social isolation and exclusion from the group. Smith and Sharp (1994) submitted that a further criterion is that bullying must be unprovoked on the part of the victim.

### Youth Idleness

Idleness can be defined according to the International Labor Organization (ILO), cited in Balongo, et al., (2019) as a situation that arises when economically active group of population are without work but available for and seeking work. This group includes those who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (World Bank, 2013). Idleness could also be said to be a situation where members of labour force wish and are willing to work but cannot access the jobs. Therefore, youth idleness can be described as the conglomeration of a group of people with diverse background, who are willing and capable to work, yet cannot access any opportunity neither can they find the type of job they trained to do, or the job they will be proud to do as their area of expertise (Onyeiwu, 2015).

Youth idleness is a serious population phenomenon along with increasing youth underutilization. According to Economist (March, 2013), youth idleness is a potential threat to national economy because they will increase burden on Government (Belfiels & Hendry, 2012).

### Adult Education

The concept of adult education has been faced with hydra-headed definition. It becomes difficult to hinge it on a singular universal definition. In the view of Houle (1972), adult education is a process by which men and women (alone, in groups of institutional settings) seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skill, their knowledge or their sensitiveness; any process by which individuals, groups or institutions try to help men and women improve in these ways. Merrian (1982) in Olori (2012) defined adult education as concerned with preparing people for life, but more specialty, with helping people to live more successfully. However, the most comprehensive and embracing is UNESCO's definition which sees adult education as: " the entire body of organized educational process, whatever they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in the two fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

A cursory look into the above definition reveals that the following attributes of adult education are deducible:

- There is flexibility of content
- It is a continuous process.
- It considers both individual and groups.
- Adult education also is remedial in nature.
- Its methodology recognizes human dignity and.
- It is change oriented.

Adult education is therefore, an educational activity which individuals undertake in order to improve their social and economic conditions for the overall benefits of society. The gain of the process has a ripple effect. It benefits the individual(s) and transcends to the entire society.

### CAUSES OF BULLYING

Aduwari-Ogah (2021) noted that the effectiveness of any remedial action depends on the extent to which it adequately deals with the causal factors of the problems. It is therefore necessary to identify the causes of bullying among secondary school students in Nigeria. Oluremi (2015) categorized the causes of bullying into four namely:

(a) Societal Causes: This comprises early experiences, which influence the behaviour of the

child. They include parental neglect, family instability, and aggression within the home or in the society, family stress, rejection, isolation, and exposure to violent movies, marginalization, child abuse, antisocial acts and inconsistent reinforcements (Asonibare, 2018).

- (b) **Biological Causes:** Science has proved that some individuals behave aggressively due to malfunctioning of the body organs or imbalance in the production of body hormones. Aggressive behaviours such as bullying can also be attributed to poor state of mental health (Jekayinfa, 2004).
- (c) **Peer Group Influence:** Students spend most of their time with their age-mates than they do with their parents and teachers. Salawu (2003) described a peer group as the group that the child interacts and plays with within his/her immediate environment. According to him, while in the group, the child enjoys a free world, more independent in thought and action and Fareo (2015) he/she has freedom to discuss matters of interest, which may be contrary to the interest shared by adults. Thus, the peer group has a considerable influence on a child's actions or inactions.
- (d) **Environment Causes:** Environmental influences such as teachers' attitude behaviour and supervisory routines play a crucial role in determining the extent to which these problems will manifest themselves in a classroom or a school. Lack of appropriate resources within schools is also associated with higher levels of school bullying. Bullying often occurs when there is little or no supervision, such as the school playground (Olweus, 2013; Pepler & Craig, 2017). Bullying often occurs when there is little or no supervision, such as school playground lack of attention and warmth toward the child.

#### PREVALENCE OF BULLYING IN BAYELSA STATE

Bayelsa State, created twenty-one years ago, is one of the youngest states in the Nigerian Federation. Korikiye (2017) noted that as a young state, it is faced with numerous problems ranging from lack of infrastructure, violent conflicts, to gross deficiency in manpower especially, qualified manpower in the various fields of endeavor. He further noted that the biggest of all the challenges is youth idleness. Also, the current Deputy Governor, of Bayelsa State, in a press statement published in Bayelsa Watch of March 6, 2021, noted that "...The growing trend of youth idleness and dependency is a simmering time bomb that would explode to worsen the insecurity and economic backwardness in Ijaw nation" Charles-Owaba (2020) submitted that the scenario was most disastrous in our rural areas where youth spend the whole day playing draft, involving in sport betting and other forms of gambling and violence. It is a situation where most educated and vibrant young men would prefer to go about shouting "I'm loyal" "the boss" "find us something" instead of engaging in fruitful ventures like farming and trading.

Bayelsa State has a chunk number of youths with enormous potentials which, when harnessed could bring tremendous national development but these youths are confronted with a lot of challenges for which idleness is not an exception (Aduwari, 2021). A Policy like Diri Boost Entrepreneurship Programme which was initiated by the Governor Douye Diri as part of his prosperity agenda to enable the youths to have more job opportunities in all sectors, especially in areas such as agriculture, education, forestry, resource mobilization and other sectors in the

country is a pointer in the right direction. Additionally, the government has also introduced the Disability Bill to address the employment needs of young persons with disability and the enactment of a demand driven law for the establishment of Technical and Vocational secondary schools (Charles-Owaba, 2021). Yet all these efforts proved futile to achieve the targeted goal which has led majority of the youth to be unemployed thereby impelling them to commit crime. Ironically, Kusi (2015) alludes that what has escalated the situation is the recent embargo placed on employment due to the economic recession of the national economy. Unfortunately, the rise of youth idleness has led to the recent formation of a group known as an Unemployed Graduates Forum of Bayelsa which could further exacerbate the menace of idleness amongst youths. According to Donjor (2011), youth idleness is coupled with poverty, crime and inequality which could serve as fertile grounds for crime that can lead to social chaos, conflicts and instability that might hamper the development of the state. Hence the need for active measures to curb the menace of youth idleness cannot be overemphasized.

#### ADDRESSING THE MENACE OF BULLYING VIA ADULT EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE IN BAYELSA STATE

The agricultural sector has received considerable attention to the extent that if youths will engage in it, there will be drastic reduction in unemployment and idleness which in turn will reduce bullying generally. Adult and non-formal education can serve as platform to equipped these youths with the needed skills. The ideas of innovative farming technique can be disseminated through the adult education platform to youths that does not have agricultural science background, thereby giving them a reason to pull out of unemployment and idleness.

Adult education should be the platforms for acquiring other entrepreneurial skills to meet the demand of the labour markets. No doubt, reforms are going on in the education sector of Nigeria with a view of meeting the demands of the society such as introduction of free Compulsory Basic Education (UBE) for Nigerians and the licensing of private universities (Ijaya, 2007). There should be relationship between curriculum and societal needs of the labour market. The curriculum should be constantly tailored in such a way that adult education can serve as a means for solving youths' unemployment because things are not static.

Provide small business school that will be manned by adult education experts with the aim of encouraging interested youths to participate and acquire managerial skills. The process can also accommodate internship programmes whereby interested youths can be matched with locally successful entrepreneurs for mentorship within a stipulated period of time.

Establishing a non-formal enterprise college aimed at fostering the specific skills sets for the youths in order to find solution to youths' unemployment and idleness.

#### CONCLUSION

There is no contention that investment in our youths is investment in our future. Bullying is a menace in Bayelsa State and constitutes a real threat to tangible development. This paper therefore posits that a conscious integration of adult education programme with agriculture can reduce the menace of bullying in Bayelsa State.

#### SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions were given:

- 1) Adult education programme should be improved to accommodate strategies for disseminating agricultural innovations amongst youths.
- 2) The government should engage the services of adult and non-formal education experts to address the issues of youth idleness in Bayelsa State.

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