



## ROLE OF DRUG EDUCATION IN SUSTAINING POSITIVE YOUTH CULTURE AS A NECESSARY REQUIREMENT FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** Youths are considered to be an important segment of the society because largely they are regarded as the most productive part of every nation. To attain level of development; societies should properly and adequately orient and socialize their youths so that they conform to the societal positive recommendations and ultimately got integrated into the main developmental society process. One of the means by which youths are properly and adequately oriented and socialized is addressing the issues in youth biological, physical, mental and moral health. To achieve this, positive youth culture has to be sustained, and one of the means of sustaining positive youth culture is Drug Education. Therefore, this paper focuses on the role of drug education in sustaining positive youth culture as a necessary requirement for adult education and community development in Nigeria. Descriptive method was employed, reviewing the relevant literature on the theme of the paper. The paper, among others, found that drug education helps people to develop lifestyle conducive to healthy living, recognise the inimical and devastating effects of substances (drugs) of abuse to the physical, mental and social well-being of a person. The paper therefore recommends among others, that drug education should be in all of the curricula of our schools, promoted and given the proper and commensurate attention and consideration by all those concerned; particularly the government, ministry of education and the society as a whole. This will go a long way in sustaining positive youth culture as an important phenomenon in adult life and community development.

**Keywords:** drug education, youth culture, adult education and community development

### Introduction

Youth are considered to be an important segment of the society because largely they are regarded as the most productive part of every nation. To attain level of development; societies should properly and adequately orient and socialize their youths so that they conform to the societal positive recommendations and ultimately got integrated into the main developmental society process (Zango and Madaki, 2008). One of the means by which youths are properly and adequately oriented and socialized is addressing the issues in youth biological, physical, mental and moral health. To achieve this, positive youth

culture has to be sustained, and one of the means of sustaining positive youth culture is Drug Education. Drug education is a means that equips individuals, particularly young people, with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to make informed decisions about substance use and avoid its harmful effects (Mansouri, 2024). A wide range of active teaching methods are used in teaching drug education, that enable people to learn skills to be safe and healthy, discuss their views, explore their own and other peoples' attitudes and values about drugs, as well as learn key information about the effects and risks of drugs and practice skills to stay safe if involved in a drug-related

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situation. Such activities include role play, discussions, debates, case studies, quizzes, research and games (Anon, nd). Drug is any substance that prevents or cures disease, or enhances physical or mental welfare. It can also be any chemical agent that alters the biochemical or physiological processes of tissues or organisms. It comprises of two classes called Legal Drugs: Prescribed and OTC Drugs and Illegal Drugs: Psychoactive Substances (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes: UNODC, 2010). Therefore, drug abuse is when drug is used in an illegal or abnormal way to bring about intoxication that negatively alters the mental and psychological status of an individual.

### **Adult Education**

Adult education has been understood as the field that makes provision of educational facilities to the adults, who could not undergo the regular course of formal education, during their school years (Kapur, nd). This would promote educational inclusivity and encourage education for all.

Adult education has often been referred to as any voluntary or deliberate effort intended for development of adults, Daskum (1989) in Daskum (nd). It can be conducted by public and private agencies like adult schools, extension centres, settlements, churches, clubs and other similar institutions. Adult education therefore includes series of activities with educational values purely meant "for adults who have never had the advantage of any formal education and those young people who either prematurely dropped out of the formal system" Abdullahi, (1988) in Daskum (nd). Anyanwu, (1987) cited in Daskum (nd), sees adult education to include "all the activities with educational purpose that are carried on by people engaged in the ordinary business of life". It is directed to people with major focus on the local community. Adult education as any kind of education designed for the illiterate population, the formal school drop-outs and the skilled and semi-skilled workers and carried on outside the formal school setting" (Eyibe, 1999 in Daskum, nd ). Based on this definition, adult education involves literacy remedial, skill training and retraining programmes planned for adult population.

### **Community development**

Community development refers to processes and initiatives aimed at improving the social, economic, and cultural conditions of communities). It involves empowering individuals to identify their problems and implement sustainable solutions (Mukhtar and Abdullahi, 2025). According to Soubbotina and Sheram (2000) cited in Mukhtar and Abdullahi (2025), community development improves the quality of people's lives and enhances their ability to shape their future.

Community development has evolved over the past few decades into a recognized discipline of interest to both practitioners and academicians. However, community development is defined in many different ways. Most practitioners think of community development as an outcome – physical, social, and economic improvement in a community – while most academicians think of community development as a process – the ability of communities to act collectively and enhancing the ability to do so (Phillips and Pittman, 2009). Therefore, community development is both a process and an outcome.

### **Concepts of Youth and Youth Culture**

It is imperative to start by making some highlights on concepts of youth and youth culture. Thus:-

#### **Concept of Youth**

Youth, according to Kenniston (1971), refers to a period between adolescent and full adulthood in a post-modern era. In Nigeria, according to the National Youth Development Policy, the youth comprises all young persons of ages 12 to 30 who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FGN, 2001). Berger (1972) says anyone who feels youthful and exhibits such qualities as spontaneity, impulsiveness, energy and so forth is a youth. Adamu (2008) posits that youth refers to people within a particular age band who are neither immature children nor fully fledged adults.

In essence, youth is defined through some angles and in different perspectives, the dominant in explaining the concept of youth is chronological perspective. Thus, youth is a person who is at the ages of early manhood and not yet



at full-fledged adult age. In other words, youth is a beginner adult. At this age, youth is commonly known to exhibit qualities of bubbling with energy, physical strength, naivety, bluntness, crudeness, fashion, metro sexuality and so on. Youths ultimately determine the future of a given society or community. Youths are a treasure and resources that unless they are exploited and redirected, they will pose a serious menace to the society.

### **Youth Culture**

Youth culture, according to American Psychological Association (APA) Dictionary of Psychology (2007), refers to the distinctive culture of teenagers and young adults, which often involves forms of dress, speech, music and behavior that are deliberately at variance to those of the dominant culture. Youth culture is divided into two, namely: - youth subculture and youth counter -culture.

**Youth Subculture:** - This refers to peculiar life style of the youth, that is mostly exhibited by dress, speech, music, attitude and habit that distinguishes from and defines the youth apart from other social classes of the society that does not categorically go against or tame at the moral standards of the society. Youth subculture is simply referred to as positive youth culture (ibid).

**Youth Counter –Culture:** - This is the second division of youth culture. It means a social movement that maintains its own alternative mores and values in opposition to prevailing cultural norms. The term (counter-culture) is historically associated with the Hippie movement and attendant Drug Culture of the late 1960s and 1970s, which rejected such societal norms as the work ethic and the traditional family unit (ibid). By implication, youth counter- culture refers to the negative peculiarities of the youth culture that connote delinquency and deviance against the morals, values and norms of the society.

Therefore, going by the status of the youth as explained in the concept of youth above and the nature of youth culture as just explained; it is a must for the society to redirect the youth positive culture (youth subculture) towards better

recommendations of the society; against the youth counter-culture. One of those makings is Drug Education.

### **Concept of Drug**

Drug is any substance that prevents or cures disease, or enhances physical or mental welfare. It can also be any chemical agent that alters the biochemical or physiological processes of tissues or organisms. It comprises of two classes called Legal Drugs: Prescribed and OTC Drugs and Illegal Drugs: Psychoactive Substances (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes: UNODC, 2010).

### **Drug Abuse**

Drug abuse simply refers to misuse of drugs to induce intoxication and temper with the mental and psychological situation of an individual.

### **Effects of Drug Abuse on the Youths**

The involvement of youths in drug abuse has taken a wide and frightening dimension. A trek through some streets in most urban centers will reveal scores of vagrants traceable to drug abuse. Beside, findings from studies on drug abuse have revealed that the youths constitute most vulnerable group to drug abuse. Available medical records further show that majority of the patients admitted into mental health institutions in Nigeria fall within 21- 30 years of age bracket, thus, re-iterating the profile of drug abusers as being adolescents and young adults (National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) a, 1998).

It is highly regrettable therefore, to note that Nigerian youths are exposed to the dangers inherent in drug abuse in their formative years. This situation should be a matter of serious concern as this could adversely affect the future of our nation. And any other nation with such gullible experience could be at such a stake.

Drug abuse has the following fatal effects on youth and any other person that indulges in it:-

1. Bringing mental retardation in babies of drug abusers
2. Disturbance in respiratory system
3. Damage to brain tissues, lungs, heart, immune system



4. Genetic damage and mutation
5. Infertility
6. Irregular heart beat
7. AIDS/ HIV
8. High blood pressure
9. Mood changes
10. Depression
11. Passiveness
12. Family disintegration e.t.c.

Therefore, with this menace pose by drug abuse, Drug Education is of paramount importance and an inevitable factor in the formulation of educational policies for national development.

### **What is Drug Education**

The history of human beings has shown that drugs are required to prevent, treat and cure diseases, but when misused, drugs can be harmful to the body (NDLEA b, 1998). The misuse of drugs occurs as a result of ignorance, peer group influence, improper home training and lack of education. Therefore, to make people aware of the dangers of drug abuse, particularly the youth, drug education has to be provided.

Drug education is kind of education that deals with informing, educating and training individuals on when and how to use drugs for positive results and the risks of misusing or abusing drugs.

A curriculum should be developed and infused into the relevant school subjects at all levels of education. E.g. subjects like Religious Studies, Sociology, Psychology, Social Studies, Health Education and Civic Education and so on.

### **Prospects of Drug Education**

NDLEA (ibid) mentions the followings as the prospects or rather the objectives of drug education:-

1. Training people to develop lifestyle conducive to healthy living
2. Identification of what constitutes substance of abuse

3. Recognizing the forces that lead to contact with and eventual dependence on various substances (drugs) of abuse
4. Recognizing the modes of drug abuse and their consequences
5. Recognizing the inimical and devastating effects of substances (drugs) of abuse to the physical, mental and social well- being of a person
6. Recognizing the functions of treatment and rehabilitation centres
7. Recognizing the symptoms and signs of drug abuse
8. Stating the reasons for enacting drug laws and the implications of violating them
9. Learning to say no to drug abuse and trafficking

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, sustaining positive youth culture is a necessary requirement for adult education and community positive development. Because, as the paper examines, youths are the future of any society and the beginner adults, and their culture determines what they will be to the society. Thus, if their culture is positive, they would be very favourable to the society and vice- versa. One of the most viable ways of sustaining positive youth culture is drug education.

### **Recommendations**

Hence, the paper recommends that;

1. Drug education should be in all of the curricula of our schools, including adult education and extramural classes
2. Drug education should be promoted and given the proper and commensurate attention and consideration by all those concerned; particularly the government, ministry of education and the society as a whole.
3. Drug education should be encouraged using social media and any other means of mass communication
4. Legislative backing and groundings should be provided for boosting the status of drug education in the laws of the land



5. Ministry of Education should produce a drug education curriculum in collaboration with the other stakeholders like National Drugs law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE), Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERCD) and the others. This will go a long way in producing better adult population in the society and eradication the menace of drug abuse in the country.

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