

Exploring The Potential of Non-Formal Education for The Development of Human Capital in India

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Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to present a broad overview of the influence of non-formal education on income generation by analysing the relevant literature of recent times. Reports and articles published in key journals from the concerned field, closely defined by their objective of providing skills for economic and social development and the satisfaction of basic needs, were extensively reviewed and analysed. The paper discusses the expanding boundaries of non-formal education, its influence on human resource development, and the constraints to achieving sustainable development. Suggestions for improvement by various research studies have also been examined. The outcome of this analysis has significant consequences for non-formal education stakeholders, instructional planners, and policymakers, as they can aid in the visualisation, prioritisation, and planning of such programmes.

Key words: non-formal education, human capital development, sustainable development

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INTRODUCTION

Non-formal education is an umbrella term for any scheme of education or training that seeks to systematically remove barriers to learning, whether they are concerned with age, time, place or space, without foregoing its educational missions and functions. UNESCO describes Non-formal education as institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider, with the distinguishing feature of being “an extension, replacement, or supplement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals.” Non-formal education may include programmes that contribute to the literacy of people of all ages as well as programmes on life skills, work skills, and social or cultural advancement. A Non-formal education (henceforth NFE) programme usually is problem-centred, community-centred and learner-centred, ideally focusing on the immediate needs of a specific group of learners or a selected community. It promotes equity of access and outcomes by offering a viable alternative to meet the educational needs of people who, for certain reasons, are not in a position to take advantage of the resources provided by the formal education system. Individuals themselves take responsibility for what, how and where they learn. NFE works best for matured, motivated, well-organised and already accomplished learners. It uses an inclusive mode of persuasion and decision-making to substitute traditions of coercive and authoritative regulations. There are various types of NFE, which may include distance education, correspondence education, continuing educa-

tion, rural education, adult education, dual education, agricultural extension services, vocational training apprenticeship, among others, depending on the settings and organisations that have unique features, typical contents, and characteristic methodology (Hoppers, 2006; Rogers, 2005). In our study, the concept of NFE is less concerned with distinctions between the different forms. They tend to be more closely identified by their objective of economic and social growth and the satisfaction of basic needs by provision of skills.

EXPANDING BOUNDARIES OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

There has been an increased recognition of the diversity of NFE in terms of types of programmes, purposes and beneficiary groups. NFE now provides a plethora of opportunities in a variety of fields ranging from agriculture, health, skill development, environment to microfinance, poverty relief, cultural practices, and personal growth, along with others. Apart from literacy, numeracy and basic education for adults, out-of-school youth and school dropouts, states that the extensive scope of non-formal education ranges from knowledge and skills development in animal husbandry, crop science, forestry, fishing, nutrition, water supply and sanitation, HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning, healthcare, childcare, public safety, gender equity and justice, reconstruction and reconciliation, computing and environmental, ecological and conservation issues to inclusive education for those with special needs who are currently excluded, enabling them to become valued,

contributing members of their communities. Non-formal education may also include imparting information regarding democracy, human and civil rights, constitutional and voting systems as well as community mobilisation, social development and local enterprise skills development.

Zepke & Leach (2006) distinguishes non-formal learning contexts into four broad categories: community development, adult literacy; workplace learning; and personal interest learning. This may include increasing awareness, enhancing individual or collective work performance, planning for self-employment, wage opportunities, or continuing education within the existing educational system. It extends into many other areas of life like religion, philosophy and recreational activities (such as music and sport) and cannot be limited to one sector alone. NFE gives the freedom to take up learning programmes in any field without requiring prior academic experience. In today's world, it places a strong emphasis on understanding and competency. The competencies gained may range from self-learning skills, group work, conflict resolutions, cultural exchange, leadership, problem-solving to improvements in confidence, responsibility and self-discipline.

NFE challenges traditional concepts of education and has influenced formal education, which has embraced many of its theoretical assumptions and pedagogical practices (Romi & Schmida, 2009). It has been repositioned from being 'outside', or 'polar opposite' of formal education to now being placed on a 'continuum of learning,' somewhere between formal learning on one side and informal learning on the other side (UNESCO, 2006), particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic as a majority of formal institutions had adopted this approach and many still continue to do so. In these trying times, NFE has proved to be a powerful tool to help adjust to new circumstances and enable a thriving and inclusive education. It allows learners to cut across formal and informal learning attributes/features and exercise authority over how they learn (Mpungose & Khoza, 2020). The boundaries between the three 'modes of education' ended up being fuzzy rather than distinct fields. The newly acquired amorphous nature and essence of non-formal education is now such that its boundaries cannot be easily demarcated. Even before the pandemic, some studies observed that 'non-formal interventions drew on both formal and informal learning processes, and it was unhelpful to characterise non-formal learning as a discrete class between the two' (Robinson-Pant, 2016). In fact, for the postmodern period, the approach to all education should be of building the bridge between the two modes of education, by 'deformalization' of formal education and 'reformalization' of NFE (Romi & Schmida, 2009).

THE SCOPE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT

It is widely acknowledged that education attainment increases productivity which is conducive to higher output in the economy. For instance, Mayombe (2017) is of the view that education has a strong positive influence on entrepreneurship in terms of self-employment success, while de la Fuente & Ciccone (2003) estimate that increasing average education by one additional year would boost aggregate productivity by at least 5%, with even more significant long-term benefits arising from workplace innovations. Shahbaz et al. (2021), in their study, found that education is an important factor that attracts Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Enhanced FDI flows, in turn, lead to rapid employment growth and improving wage levels (Hale & Xu, 2016). Therefore, an educated population can be a boon for the economy.

The United Nation's Population Division estimates that the percentage of the working-age population of lower-middle-income countries, i.e. those aged 15 to 59, will reach its peak of around 62 per cent by 2030-35 and then steadily decline in the subsequent years. Full exploitation of this demographic dividend has the ability to fuel economic growth and increase actual per capita income over the next few decades. The benefits of demographic dividends are transient and do not last forever. The potential benefits of the demographic dividend have to be achieved over the next few decades before the decline starts. Even though these countries sit on a demographic goldmine, they await a giant leap forward to harvest the demographic dividend.

To fully utilise the benefits of this demographic dividend window, multiple challenges like skewed sex ratio, social and political conflicts, inadequate resources and unfavourable foreign investment climate and policies etc., need to be addressed. However, the most critical challenge that is likely to have a detrimental impact on human capital and the employability of its working population is the level and quality of education. Educating the workforce is a significant issue for any lower-middle-income country due to poverty and scarcity of resources. People cannot effectively participate in the development process as they have not been equipped with the requisite skills and knowledge. An incongruence exists between the formal education systems and learning needs which is geared neither to the economic and social needs of the societies nor to the preparation of youth for the life they are likely to lead. Formal education system tends to discourage independent thinking and the growth of the experimental and inquisitive mind essential for development. It has become an instigator of maladjustment rather than an essential source of growth and development. The educational system

should strive to make the country a better place by focusing on the growth of its human capital. Human capital refers to people who have acquired skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to achieve national development. This can only be accomplished through meaningful education and training.

Unfortunately, the educational institutes of these countries fall well short of global standards. Domestic corporates and multinational companies that employ graduates from different institutes have to incur a significant expense on retraining their employees. Large corporations usually have an in-house academic program to prepare inadequately trained graduates. A World Bank survey found that 64 per cent of the employers are only slightly satisfied with the skill of their newly hired employees (Blom & Saeki, 2011). Emphasis has always been laid on formal education, which produces people who lack practical skills, which is the leading cause of incompetence and unemployment in our society. There is a considerable discrepancy between the aspiration generated by the educational system and its developmental needs. So far, the education system has resulted in the turning out of thousands of young people fitted for routine white-collar jobs, which are practically non-existent.

Economic development cannot alleviate poverty unless disadvantaged people are able to participate in it, and such a participation can be made possible in no small measure by NFE. Acquisition of life skills through NFE can enhance employability and income generation capacity of such disadvantaged people (Mulyadi et al., 2020). The expected educational targets, as well as national aspirations, can successfully be met by adopting an innovative educational system supplementing conventional education. Therefore, conventional education and non-formal education should be regarded as a supplement to each other rather than competing antagonists. Majority of the educational resources are taken up by formal education. Resources required for NFE have been allocated but insignificant in comparison to FE resources. This can be attributed to the lack of importance given in the policy agenda for education. UNESCO conducted a survey of NFE in seven countries and reports that “Budgets for lifelong learning outside formal education are extremely limited in all the seven selected countries. Governments tend to focus on primary, secondary and higher education; over 99.5% of the education budget is invested in the formal education sector in South Korea in Nepal, the budget for all forms of NFE is between 1% and 3% of the education budget” (UNESCO, 2016). In the context of limited economic resources, it is all the more important to investigate the impacts of NFE to inform a better understanding of these programs’ value. There is a fundamental concern with the manner in which

government policies are regulated to NFE based on their distinct purposes, conditions, and tasks. Greater appreciation and recognition of NFE and its contribution to nation-building is needed. Despite its considerable presence in the field, the literature survey reveals minimal studies, limited subject matter, and a lack of methodical approaches and systematic theorisation. This paucity of studies on NFE is in stark contrast to the diversity and richness of research on formal education. In order to ensure that NFE takes its rightful place alongside the mainstream systems of formal education, it is contended that far more research and assessment is needed to demonstrate its potential and evince quality in its outputs, outcomes and impacts. Therefore, this study was undertaken, and a review of the literature was conducted to explore recent research studies from the last two decades on the influence of NFE on income generation and employment and its contribution to the development of human capital?

METHODS

A qualitative descriptive approach using the available published literature has been used to carry out the present study. The research protocol was developed by setting out inclusion criteria for literature search, search strategy and search terms. The research studies chosen for this literature review focused on the effectiveness of non-formal education and how non-formal education had an influence on human resource development. Google Scholar was used as a database to search for relevant research studies published in English language from doctoral dissertations, journals, articles, research reports, and websites. Since few researches have been carried out in this area in recent times so the range of time period for the research studies was set between 2001 and 2021. The keywords used in searching these databases and websites were: non-formal education, distance education, adult education, continuing education, online learning, human capital development, employability and employment. These keywords were used in different combinations. Studies on non-formal education for school children formed the exclusion criteria. The initial searches identified over 100 items, some of which were actual research studies, while others included descriptive articles or summaries. The list was reduced after reviewing of abstracts to determine their relevance in terms of the aim and scope of our study and subsequent screening based on the accessibility of full text. The present study is not an exhaustive all-inclusive collection but comprises many relevant published reports of the recent past.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Human capital has become the most prized asset of a nation because of the importance of human beings in the development process. A nation with abundant natural resources cannot achieve its potentials without skilled human resources. According to the OECD, "Skills have become the global currency of the 21st century". When more people are able to develop more capacity, individuals and societies benefit on multiple levels. Countries begin to draw on larger populations of workers and investors and become more productive. In time, greater equity can foster more widespread and sustainable growth. The economic benefits linked empirically to the state and society as a whole are a reflection of the individual benefits and relate primarily to increased tax revenues, consumption, productivity and workforce flexibility, along with decreased dependence on governmental financial support.

Together, a robust ecosystem of education and skill development offers the elixir for employment, entrepreneurship and inclusive growth. It is important to note that Hawkes & Ugur (2012) refer to 'human capital' as having an impact on economic growth, not education per se. What contributes to development is not merely providing schools, teachers and materials for learners, but effective and quality education (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008). Human capital development is generally centred around the management of knowledge, skills, competencies and innovative capabilities of the population. Therefore, investing in people through educational activities for skills acquisition, leading to capacity building and skills utilisation, should be emphasised.

Non-formal education is a powerful platform for developing human capacity to achieve sustainable livelihoods in society by providing alternative forms of education. Involvement with NFE has helped develop not only human capital but also, to a great extent, the social and psychological capital of the individual (Komar, 2017; Souto-Otero, 2016). The social benefits for individuals may include improved health and life expectancy, quality of life for offspring, personal status and better capacity for consumer decision-making and pursuit of leisure. The public social benefits associated with higher learning, which serve to strengthen social cohesion and society as a whole, include reduced crime rates and increased technological ability, charitable giving, civic involvement and appreciation of diversity.

NFE programmes have promoted capacity building, improved productivity, and provided requisite skills for self-reliance among community members enabling trainees to become productive and valuable citizens (Asiyai, 2018; Onyishi, 2010; Shofwan et al.,

2019; Souto-Otero et al., 2013; Standford & Kobani, 2020). The skills taught in the programs are more practically oriented, and acquisition of these skills has contributed to a significant reduction of poverty among young adults by enhancing opportunities for employment or the capacity to generate income on their own for sustainable development (Akpama et al., 2011; Egbezor et al., 2008; Negassa, 2019; Onyishi, 2010). It plays a significant role amongst the vulnerable and marginalised groups in the society (Olaye & Onajite, 2015) by improving their social and economic wellbeing and raising their general standard of living (Onyishi, 2010).

Asiyai (2018) reported that NFE made the participants more aware of their potentials and how to develop them. They were able to set goals for themselves and take steps towards achieving the set goals. NFE also improved the ability to communicate effectively, work cooperatively with teammates, develop the initiative for starting a business, as well as critical thinking and problem-solving skills, amongst other benefits. It also helps to cope with technological changes (Onyishi, 2010). Islam & Mia (2007) noted that the immediate benefits gained by the graduates are basic education and skill training in a number of trades. In addition, the crucial qualitative contribution of the programme is reflected in the high degree of consciousness of graduates about the importance of education, health and nutrition, and a keen interest in gainful self-employment or entrepreneurship. Other benefits for the community mentioned are that graduates contribute to family income; living conditions of the family improved, and members of the family had increased social awareness, reduction in unemployment and crime, postponement of girls' marriage, empowerment of girls, and an improvement in the overall social environment. They also report that learners are keen to learn skills as long as they perceive the potential economic benefits, the opportunity cost to their advantage and if they can choose the skills of their choice using their judgment.

Several studies report a direct positive link between non-formal education and youth employment (Abdullahi et al., 2012; Pilav-Velić et al., 2019; Souto-Otero, 2016). According to Christopher (2008a), those who had undergone non-formal training had a significantly higher percentage of business plans, kept business records and practised business ethics than those who had not. Evaluations of Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) by researchers (Spaven, 2009; Thamizoli et al., 2011) show that the outcomes can be in the form of more profitable enterprises, greater market awareness, more enterprise development, significantly improved assets, income and household infrastructure, higher levels of empowerment and stronger cognitive, social capital. Porcaro et

al. (2013) found that involvement with NFE programs helped a large proportion of the sample to develop networks and connections (social capital) that can aid in obtaining information about employment opportunities as well as in securing employment. It also stimulated many young participants to undertake more intensive job searches. Also, it broadened the range of occupations and occupational mobility that a large proportion of the sample of young people would consider for their employment. Overall, such aspects significantly improve young people's chances of getting a job.

Debarliev et al. (2020) report that NFE is more oriented toward developing an entrepreneurial mindset, knowledge, and skills, demonstrating a higher impact on human capital assets than formal education. NFE proved to have a more substantial effect on human capital assets. The study also found that while formal education can be more effective in providing more comprehensive knowledge and cognitive skills, through non-formal, more practical skills and abilities, that is, non-cognitive (constructive) skills and creative entrepreneurial mindset is developed. Varying kinds of education affect productivity in different ways. Eric et al. (2014) found that the Extension service had a more significant impact on agricultural productivity than formal education, even though coverage is low. They concluded that education is vital for improving agricultural productivity such that formal education opens the farmer's mind to knowledge. NFE gives the farmer hands-on training and better farming methods, and informal education keeps the farmer abreast with changing innovations and ideas and allows the farmer to share experience gained. Hendrawijaya (2020) examined human resources development mediated by NFE and found that that type of work, income levels, condition of the family and home living, family environment and NFE have a significant effect on human resource development and that NFE was able to mediate the effect of type of work, income levels, condition of the family and home living on human resources development.

The research findings reveal that the utility of non-formal education is many and varied. Agodzo (2010) explored how NFE contributes to improving literacy and income-generating activities (reducing poverty) and community development, especially in rural and poor communities. Findings from the research show that most adult learners in the communities have acquired reading, writing, and calculation skills through the organised literacy class. The learners exhibited these skills in their everyday life activities, including writing down their income and expenses, creditors and debtors, reading the Bible, singing from the church hymnal, writing and reading simple letters and notes, etc. These are educational

achievements made by learners. Through the classes, quite a number of the learners have also acquired income-generating skills and entered into gainful employment, raising their income levels, thereby contributing to the reduction of poverty in the local communities. The learners also gradually became active members of their communities, initiating and executing community development programmes that they have been learning from the classes, which are indications of development efforts. Simac et al. (2019) report that impacts of participation in non-formal programmes tend to be longest lasting on mental health and economic wellbeing where programmes build life-skills and connections to others in the community are delivered by skilled facilitators with significant inputs from young people, and where young people participate for an extended period.

CONSTRAINTS TO HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

In spite of the success stories of NFE, there are still concerns over the quality of the outcomes and limited impact on social and economic development. Education and Policy Data Center (2008) used household survey data to analyse the impact of non-formal education in 28 countries by comparing incomes of households headed by persons with NFE compared to households headed by persons with no schooling or formal primary or secondary education. The results show that the incomes of households headed by a person with non-formal education vary widely - in 10 of the 28 countries, the average income of such households is equal to households headed by a person with secondary education or higher, in seven countries, the average income of households headed by a person with non-formal education is equivalent to households headed by a person with no schooling at all. This result may come from the specific targeting of highly marginalised groups (say in remote, rural areas), or an indication that the non-formal education is not effective at providing skills needed in reducing poverty. Mayombe (2017) informs that adults who face long-term unemployment remain unemployed after completing the NFET programmes. Weyer (2009) argues that such a programme does not affect the scope of activities of young people as long as the participants stay in their village but do improve the way these activities are carried out and widens their employment opportunities as they migrate. Studies are sceptic about its influence on employability. Skills imparted may assure job security and easier transition into the labour market but is generally related to less prestigious jobs with relatively low earnings (Lavrijsen & Nicaise, 2017; Shavit & Muller, 2000). These graduates do not fulfil the basic needs

and requirements of employers as the curriculum is designed only to prepare graduates with basic knowledge and specific practical skill acquisition, while this knowledge may not necessarily be relevant in the industry. Graduates usually master technical skills which are not job-specific but cut across all industries, and consequently, employers feel dissatisfied. Also, it is no longer enough to know the technical aspects of a job, but how this knowledge will transform into output. So, when it comes to transversal competencies or soft skills, despite the popular belief that it can be easily imparted through the non-formal learning environment, graduates usually lack work ethics, conflict management, teamwork capacity, motivational skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills (Mustapha & Greenan, 2002) all of which play an important role in the workplace as well as when looking for a job.

Several other challenges have been reported that inhibit NFE Programme in achieving sustainable development, such as poor infrastructure (Abebe, 2011; Agodzo, 2010; Onyishi, 2010), poor management (Abebe, 2011; Agodzo, 2010), inadequate research facilities for the NFE programme (Abebe, 2011), lack of relevant curriculum that is development-oriented (Ngwu, 2003; Onyishi, 2010), lack of skilled human resource mainly guidance and counselor (Abebe, 2011; Ngwu, 2003), non-availability and late delivery of teaching and learning materials, poor remuneration of their facilitators, inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems, absence of an institutional mechanism for the promotion of adult non-formal education work (Ngwu, 2003), difficulties in time management and political interference (Agodzo, 2010). Kobayashi et al. (2005) revealed that many of these programmes lacked performance indicators, many providers lacked training in research and evaluation, and many local practitioners were reluctant to report on what was occurring on the ground.

There is a lack of understanding regarding the concept and content of NFE programmes by potential clientele and policymakers (Ngwu, 2003; Onyishi, 2010). Oyebamiji (2008) emphasises peoples ignorance of the aims and objectives of adult and non-formal education as an instrument of skills and technological acquisition, also observes that ministry officials, especially in the education industry, lack the knowledge and capabilities of NFE as a tool to transform human being and society apart from promoting literacy.

Evaluating several years' worth of World Bank Information Development programmes, Batchelor et al. (2003) found that the programme proposals and plans were ambitious in scope but imprecise in their

measures of success and by the time they filtered down to the local provider and community levels, the concepts and expectations were neither well understood nor consistently implemented and monitored. Consequently, the analysts and decision-makers struggled to make sense of the varied experience to justify major policy or investment decisions, and the sponsors were growing uneasy about the programmes' value. When the (Office of Inspector General, 2010) audited the multi-million dollar USAID/Philippines Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills Programme (EQuALLS), it was found that the programme had achieved variable success, the targets had not been clearly defined, that crucial documents were not in order, some reports were unreliable and inconsistent with the performance indicator definitions, oversight of the programme's partners was weak, and potential corruption was going unreported.

Efforts made to develop capacities of participants through promoting skill acquisition, self-employment and labour intensive potentials are sometimes bedevilled by corruption and numerous other malpractices. Funds are systematically depleted in the form of projects substitution, misrepresentation of project finances, diversion of resources, and conversion of public funds to private uses (Okoye & Onyukwu, 2007).

Inadequate funding of NFE programmes is another major problem (Abebe, 2011; Ngwu, 2003). There is a perennial complaint about the insufficiency of funds to procure material and human resources and to construct physical facilities in educational institutions.

Another critical aspect that hampers the efficacy of NFE programs is the lack of awareness by the industries and the poor relation/partnership of the NFE institutes with the industries/companies. There is insufficient involvement of the trainers, enterprises and other stakeholders in cooperative training (Abebe, 2011). Porcaro et al. (2013) found that employers were insufficiently aware of what is going on in the NFE programs and acknowledged that this might jeopardise the recognition of experiences in NFE programs during recruitment processes. NFE organisations do not brand themselves effectively to employers, thus creating mistrust. Similarly, Mayombe (2017) reports that most managers do not create institutional centre linkages that could enable graduates to access essential post-training support, community resources, public goods and services. Without linking the NFET programmes to external stakeholders, graduates will continue finding it difficult to be integrated into the labour market, which perpetuates unemployment and chronic poverty.

SUGGESTIONS

For the success of NFE programmes, must enjoy parity with other education agencies. They must be autonomous and secure in their borders, with clear organisational identity, constancy of budget and personnel, and decision-making authority similar to that enjoyed by other educational agencies and to ensure the quality of training, several factors such as materials and facilities, trained human power to supervise the training, standardising the training without violating flexibility characteristics has to be considered (Negassa, 2019). NFE programs should be linked with the national resources and market mechanism so as to make maximum use of the investment made. Planners should work with business houses to identify emerging demands for skills. Mayombe & Lombard (2015) are of the view that a significant correlation should exist between NFE programme objectives, financial resources, trainee selection criteria, the process of training needs assessment, and skills acquisition for successful employment outcomes of graduates. Without these internal enabling factors, adult trainees are likely to continue finding it difficult to integrate into the labour market or participate in economic activities and hence break the cycle of poverty and social exclusion.

Training strategy should be capable of producing reasonably flexible persons who are able to learn new skills quickly and to transfer with some retraining from one specific job to another when changes are needed. Such an effort will minimise the losses to individuals and society from wrong anticipations of future needs and facilitate quick adjustments to the occupational changes sure to come with changing technology. Christopher (2008) suggested that Business skills and Information Technology should be incorporated into training programmes meant for the informal sector. Entrepreneurial skills should be taught at all levels of education, and the government should fund NFE programmes, especially those meant for the informal sector. A linkage should be established between the informal sector and the formal education system.

NFE courses should be planned such that they are compatible with the current level of knowledge and skills of the participants. Patrick & Ijah (2012) recommend the training needs of the learners to be identified and a combination of vocational skill training with entrepreneurship skill and personality development be provided. They endorse that skill acquisition training programmes must be community-based and well embedded to accommodate the diverse training needs of individuals and communities. They also reported that the level of participation and the enthusiasm for participation increased if the programme is

accessible and located within the domain of the target beneficiaries and if the approach is relevant to and intended to address the problems of the poor. The NFE intervention programme for poverty alleviation and community development is most likely to be effective if the pedagogical method is used to promote the active participation of the learners and if the training increased leadership capacity enabling the trainees to regain their self-ego, imbibe the capacity to participate in their community and take the lead in what concern them. If a prior assessment was conducted to identify the target group, their problems and needs and if the design of the programme, the facilities used, the content of the training programme, the duration and instructors were appropriate would increase the possibility of producing a positive outcome.

Akpama et al. (2011) urge that graduates of these non-formal programmes be provided with credit facilities to facilitate the establishment of businesses outfit for self-employment and job creation. Militaru (2018) is of the view that community-based education programmes should involve the beneficiaries so that they feel that they have ownership of the developmental process, grow in self-confidence and master the knowledge and skills needed to do the job. The researcher emphasised the importance of ensuring quality in the learning methods and materials and that all of these measures demanded significant investments in staff, time and resources.

Training in itself solves nothing. In its crudest form, training without due consideration to other factors that make the youth employable merely results in making them more frustrated and more prone to anti-social action than before training. This places a heavy premium on gearing all training programs realistically to the social, economic, institutional, administrative or political environment and prospects and being organised as a crucial part of an integrated development process. Islam & Mia (2007) advocate for an integrated approach so as to ensure that continuing education leads to gainful employment. Appropriate market research and market analysis using sufficient and relevant data must be carried out to identify marketable skills, local barriers, and other problems associated with self-employment. Training should be carried out following well-thought-out curricula and syllabus prepared by persons with appropriate conceptual insights, practical knowledge about the skills and market mechanisms. The trainers and resource persons should have extensive expertise to work upon the individual's poor motivational level and social and cultural predicaments. They should also be well-oriented about the poverty scenario, the complexity of factors involved in poverty alleviation efforts and the interacting processes between the in-

dividual and the more significant social contextual elements in poverty. The trained people must have access to raw materials, essential equipment and marketing know-how. During the training, the learners must have the opportunities to be involved in practical work, and the poor learners should be supported to earn by marketing their products. They recommend that after completion of continuing education with an emphasis on vocational training, a probation period of 3 to 4 months would be very useful for the trainees to gain confidence about their capacity and enhance the chances for their acceptance in the employment market situation. This would be useful also for building up motivation and capability to start self-employment.

There is a great need for accountability, quality assurance, measuring benefits in terms of outputs, outcomes and impacts and substantiating the claims that non-formal education fosters development and represents value for money (Latchem, 2014).

CONCLUSION

While reviewing the reports and papers, it was observed that the literature on NFE is distinct from that of general education. Researchers of non-formal education use different research frameworks. They make different assumptions, ask different questions, and use different methods. Non-formal education studies are usually done at the micro-level, within or across communities. Most are qualitative and descriptive. Many of the research reports on NFE are related to specific countries, mostly from the third world.

This literature review was designed to elucidate the existing state of the evidence regarding the role and importance of non-formal education to human and national development in order to provide grounded evidence for successful adoption of NFE programs that have the potential to propel economic growth and reduce poverty and identify gaps that need to be addressed by education planners and policymakers. Several “tentative conclusions” can be made from the research studies identified and reviewed in this paper. Non-formal education in this modern era has great potential for helping a wide range of learners achieve more desirable and rewarding circumstances for themselves and their communities. It encompasses a commitment to open opportunity and level inequalities that changes the balance of capital and labour to create a more efficient system. Therefore, this form of education promises far better returns to public and private institutions for money invested in education and training. The credibility and “potential success of NFE” cannot be ignored. However, this potential success is threatened by the rejection and neglect it has received in the past, the danger of being under-

funded, understaffed, poorly designed, and poorly managed. These constraints and frustrations from past experiences provide valuable insights for future efforts. More needs to be done to demonstrate how this mode meets the needs of learners and society so that it can take its rightful place alongside formal education system. Professionals need to have a well-grounded understanding of the associated costs and the need for substantial investment, training, reorganising of administrations, monitoring and evaluation of learning as well as the support of learners. It is crucial to have a careful long-term planning and designing of new and innovative delivery systems for implementing high-quality, high impact NFE programs and courses.

Future opportunities for NFE are limitless. Clearly, NFE programs and courses are here to stay and will, more than likely, increase in the years to come. Through these programs, individuals can be given adequate opportunities to harness and develop their skills for living a self-sustained life and to make a maximal contribution to the development of their nation.

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