

## THE NEED FOR GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION TOWARDS YOUTH EMPOWERMENT (A case study of Nigeria)

By

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### Abstract

*Globally, youth empowerment happens to be the focus of every leader of a country. This is to achieve a sustainable development for the people, the youths to be specific. The major equipment to be used for this global however is the provision of sound and qualitative education for the people of all ages. Based on this ascertainment therefore, this paper focuses on Geography as a discipline and how its knowledge can help in this regard. Its impact on the process of equipping youths to the maximum cannot be overemphasized. This is, in terms of greater awareness of their environment and spatial distribution of natural resources that abide in this nation. These can abundantly create high percentage on Gross Domestic product (GDP) to the Government. The GDP also adds to the internal revenue which Government uses in maintaining self reliance to numerous youths that littered the surface of every country of the world. This paper made use of focus group discussion with some groups of youth that are out of school. This is to find out ways of encouraging self reliance in them. About 90% of them respondents are interested to be self reliance through government provision of fund to established one business or the other. The varieties of activities were equally discussed at the venue and spatial location of getting land for instance and types of crops to embark upon about 10% of the respondent that are highly interested in the white collar job are of the opinion to do other business that can fetch additional income to them. Recommendations were made for both the government and the youths so as to achieve their goal in life.*

*Keywords: Global, Equipment, Spatial Distribution, Youth Empowerment, Natural Resource.*

### Introduction

Amongst the geographical phenomena the surface of the earth are the people of diverse age. The spatial distributions of these phenomena especially those in (youth age), are increasing every minute on earth surface due to improvement achieved by technology in every sector.

Youth that are most active sector of any country are increasing year-in-year out. It is a sign of progress for a country to have this numerical strength. This cannot be of benefit anyway unless such set of people are properly trained and equipped.

With referencing to this paper however, the writer focuses on the impact of geographical knowledge on youth development and empowerment. The attainment of self reliance needs varieties of disciplines in order to acquire the necessary skill and knowledge so as to be able to

establish economic sustainability. Based on this, the relevance of Geographic education is X-rayed.

Abumere (1995) discussed the relevance of Geography under four sub-heads' namely relevance to individuals, relevance to academics, relevance to society and relevance for commoditization of knowledge product. Individual relevance stretches from training the student to acquiring facts that are interesting, significant and culturally valuable purely to equip youth to acquire the skill or self reliance. It is quite expensive to pay for geographical ignorance particularly when the currency for the payment is tied to one's personality.

At the more sophisticated levels, relevance of geography of self includes a range of specializations that sprang up as off shoots of geographic education such as cartography, meteorology, geomorphology, climatology, urban and regional planning, transport technology, aviation, medical geography and survey with respect to academic relevance. Adejuyigbe (1990) insists that emphasis should be on appropriateness to geographical researches to the discipline of geography.

With regard to societal importance of geography, notably the youths, there had been a compelling need to move with the times. Geographical researchers in the past seem to have shifted emphasis from investigation of concrete, physical phenomena to issues that relate directly to man's life and living. Through the contributions of geographers, the society is now aware of the repercussions or environmental depredation, urban sprawl, deforestation atmospheric pollution, desert encroachment flooding, soil erosion, and other ugly events of human tragedy. Anikweze (2000) referred to this as "lamentation of the Nigerian environment"

### **Youth Empowerment:**

Nowadays, youth in every country of the world, especially Nigeria youth, are facing a lot of challenges. This ranges from unemployment, under employment, insecurity, poverty and hunger. This paper therefore attempts to examine the conceptual meaning of empowerment and the relevance of geographic education on it.

More than half of Nigeria population is under the ages of thirty (30) years according to National Population Commission (2001). Based on this, it can be ascertained that the economy of Nigeria is a youth economic. Undoubtedly, today's youth will become, in a short decade, tomorrow's parents and leaders, so they need to be empowered. As earlier been mentioned, the Nigerian youths are said to be confronted with abject property, Un-empowerment, Urbanization Lackery Capacity and Skills reliance level. This reality leaves them without any meaningful means of sustainable livelihood.

Anayakoha (2006) was of the opinion that an empowered youth is the one who is equipped with money, material and skill to assumes risks, identifies holiness opportunities, gather resources; initiate action and establishes an enterprise to meet market opportunity. An empowered youth effectively utilize his abilities and potential with confidence. He takes risk, he is forced and he is energized by an inner drive. He seeks and exploits empowerment opportunities, applies creativity, aggressively takes initiatives to meet the targeted success.

The question is what are the possible challenges that may arise in equipping the youths to acquire skills and idea for the sake of creating employment for themselves and others? In answering this question, this paper examines the concepts of youth empowerment and the impact of Geographic education and skill.

### **The Roles of Geographic Education towards Youth Empowerment.**

The role of Geographic education on the process of youth empowerment shall be viewed in two ways: for the benefits of those that have studied the course and to those youth that need the knowledge for their personal use. This is necessary because, geography is a discipline that has a numerous prospects that each country of world can adopt to sustain economic development and vis-à-vis fight the ill of the youth in any society that is unemployment poverty, lack of self reliance, fear of failure, poor entire premiership to name a few.

There are two distinct types of career specializations that take their root in geographic knowledge, on the first hand that focuses on specific aspects of human use of the environment. On the other hand, there are specialized fields that could be described as offspring of geography and has given birth to quite a number of carrier specialists who scarcely remember that they started with geography. The specialists in question include Aviation, Pilot, Cartographic, Geomorphologist, Geologist, Weather Foresters, Mineralogist Town Planners, Land Surveyors, Oceanologist and environmentalist.

Further still, economic planning in every nation or world relies heavily on accurate and reliable and information about the quantity of available resources. Okhimamne (1969) was connected that information gathered by geographers through remote sensing could generate a solid industrial base and a necessary prerequisite for economic planning. Also Arthur Lewis (1955) in his theory of economic growth argued that, with regard to development, the most potent issue is to understand the process by which a community concert her natural resources in order to use this produce to cater for the development of youths. In various parts of the world, geographical knowledge has been utilized to advantage for positive changes in the life style of the people and enhancement of their economic life.

In United Kingdom, both at national and local government levels, the government has been concerned with regional level, there was the elaboration of regional development polices. One of the objectives was the elimination of serious unemployment in any region of the country at the local level. Government was seriously involved both in physical and regional planning. The former being concerned with taking a complete inventory or land resources especially as repaid the classes of available land and these can be used. This led to the epic work of (Dudley Stauryg), who carried out the land use mapping of Great Britain. This map served as basis of every fact of planning be it industrial, agricultural, urban and regional planning all over their country.

In Sweden, geography has also played a role in the development of the natural policies including youth policy. Geographers as those in Britain carried out a detailed mapping of the physical resources such as land, water, vegetation soil etc. Later, a dot map was prepared and made the

margin of settlement and population distribution possible. In Eastern Europe, the knowledge of geography was used to re-order the national planning (Abumere, 1995)

In Nigeria, with numerous social issues, Geographers were officially recognized in the reconnaissance survey vegetation, geomorphology, population, and settlement types (etc) of the Federal Capital Territory as from 1977 (Areola 1993). Geographers have also been involved in federal national, regional, local transportation re-development and planning. The adoption of this knowledge has in one way or the other assisted the government at all level in Nigeria to empower the youth to react in a self reliance level.

### **Challenges Confronting Geographic Education in Nigeria**

A number of shortcomings confronted the dissemination of Geographic education in Nigeria notwithstanding the invaluable importance to solve numerous issues. Some of these challenges are:

- i. It is very difficult to convince our leaders in adopting geographic Education.
- ii. The school curriculums no longer favour the study of Geography even in the schools.
- iii. The use of ICT and other modern equipment on browsing and the internet has rubbed of serious geographical research in flapper.
- iv. Numerous sub disciplines have escaped out from Geography and do not even identify themselves as geographers any longer.

### **Recommendation**

Having looked into the need of Geographic Education as a way of empowering youth in the world, Nigeria, to be specific, the following recommendations were suggested.

- i. Geographic education needs to be made compulsory at all levels of our institution: primary, secondary and tertiary as the case may be.
- ii. Awareness of the importance of Geographic knowledge must be carried out at all levels in Nigeria.
- iii. Simple pamphlet bearing geographic information's such as location of some features, rivers, mountains, soil types and their uses should be made available to any youth programme.
- iv. Geography as a subject must be made compulsory for science and social science students in all secondary schools in Nigeria.
- v. Open seminar of geographic knowledge needs to be regularly carried out by the geography department especially within their region.

### **Conclusion**

As already been mentioned in the paper, the value of geographic education to national development and empowering the youths in a country anywhere in the world cannot be overemphasized. Numerous challenges are day-in-day-out confronting the youths of every nation; therefore, empowering these young ones is paramount to every leaders of the world if they are interested in the security of the people. Based on that, geographic education and skill can be of help to achieve this here in Nigeria and the world at large.

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