

The Role of Adult Education Programme in the Economic Empowerment of Women in Jema'a Local Government of Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria: Toward Enhancing National Economic Recovery

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The paper is particularly focused on examining the role of adult education programme in the economic development of rural women thereby enhancing the process of recovering Nigeria's economy from recession. The study adopted a survey research design and employed the use of questionnaire to collect responses from 60 respondents who are women from Jema'a Local Government Area of Kaduna State Nigeria that have undergone the adult education programme. Responses were collated and analyzed using the mean score. Findings showed that, the programme has a very positive impact in helping the women to change their economic and social status as well as their general wellbeing. It equally provided them with opportunity to acquire skills relevant for self-reliance and to manage their small business as a result, enhancing the process of economic recovery in Nigeria.

Keywords: adult education, economic recession, economic recovery

Introduction

Education is undoubtedly the basis for any meaningful development in any given society. No wonder that the Nigerian government in the *National Policy on Education* (2004) stated that education would continue to be used as a tool for attaining to national development and would be made available for every member of the society regardless of social status, religious, or ethnic background. The policy statement went further to make provision for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education to cater for those citizens who could not have the privilege to attain formal education and for those who wish to acquire additional skills in their profession or vocation. This is in recognition of the role of skilled labor in managing the economy of Nigeria, particularly the role played by women in promoting economic growth through various activities like petty trading, farming, and participating in local industry.

In a bid to effectively eradicate illiteracy and provide sound education to the citizens, Nigeria joined other nations of the world by responding to the call of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reached at Nairobi, Kenya in 1976, under which adult education is given attention to eradicate illiteracy in the world, majorly in the third world countries. In these recommendation, Item A, B, C, D, E, F, and H in Section 2 focuses on developing the ability to grasp adequately the problems involved in the

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upbringing of children and Item K on developing attitude for learning.

Today, women are engaged in the various facet of the adult education programme. Most women are becoming more responsible for household food security, children's welfare and becoming more economically productive and less dependent due to the adult education programme.

In this study, efforts would be made to investigate how the adult education programme can impact into the economic development of rural women, thereby, facilitating the process of recovery from the current economic challenges of Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Education is a necessity for the survival of man. The concept of education suggests development of valuable knowledge and skills in a society. It connotes the process of consciously transmitting skills, values, and attitude necessary for one to function well and be useful to one's self and the society (Oluwadare & Alphonsus, 2014).

The concept of adult education has not enjoyed a single universally accepted definition due to the fact that, it is largely related to the social, political, and cultural conditions of each country. Yet, scholars view about the concept would help toward giving a convincing definition. According to Anowor (2001), adult education is an educational activity that is carried out by people who engaged in the ordinary business of life. Generally, this is carried out as part-time or leisure activity, it may be done at all level of education, depending on the need of the learner, type of community, and age demand. He viewed adult education as a programme for all adults and not necessary for those who are old and cannot read or write. The Programme Committee on the Comparative Study of Adult Education defined adult education as a process whereby a person who no longer attend school on a regular basis undertakes sequential and organized activities with conscious intention of bringing about changes in information and attitude or for the purpose of identification and solving personal problems. However, UNESCO recommendations (1976) on adult education considered it to be,

The entire body of organized educational process, whether the content, level, and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in institutions, whereby, persons regarded as adult by the societies develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, and bring about changes in their attitude or behavior.

To Merriam and Brockett (1997), adult education is an activity, intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception defines them as adult. While sees adult education as the last chance of learning, others sees it as a deliberate move by a matured person to learn something new.

Considering the above definitions, the paper will define adult education as any form of learning deliberately undertake by adults in order to attain some levels of personal fulfillment. It can also be defined as an educational practice, in which people who are legally considered as adult are engaged in learning activities in order to improve upon or acquire new form of knowledge, skills, values, or attitude.

Adult Education and Women Empowerment

Traditionally, women have been considered to be in subservient position to men in most societies. Depending on the cultural or religious orientation, the position of women is not more than just mothers and caregivers. Their role in the society is that of subordinating to men rather than complimenting. Politically,

women were disenfranchised and were never part of the decision-making in the society in the African society, the situation was not different until in the late 1950s at the peak of the clamour for independence that a few women were offered political administrative position (Walter, 2010). Socially, Omotola (2001) observed that, they were considered as mere instrument for the satisfaction of the men's sexual urge and desire for male children. He explains further that it usually calls for celebration, while the father becomes disappointed when a female child is born. Worse of it all is if the children in the family are females, the father would stop at nothing to get a male child even if it means marrying other women or even concubines. Economically, there was no place for women. The men dominated in everything, the women were mere consumers and dependents upon the men for virtually everything.

Today, Nigeria have made several attempts to empower women through several programmes, some of these are millenium develop goals (MDGs) under these. The third goal is on promoting gender equality and empowering women to impact on the wellbeing of their families and societies by extension. Other programmes include women in development (WID), gender and development (GAD) (Oliva, 2005). He further observed that although the programmes were with good intentions, they were limited by the fact that they remain within the established parameters of the state-led model of development.

Over the years, adult education has been used as a tool for improving citizens through capacity building. In particular, below are some of the positive impact of the adult education programme on women.

Employment Opportunity

Adult learning can improve employability and income, which is a key pathway to realizing a range of other benefits like choosing the shape and context, in which they live and work, also it can help increase individual's social status. Motschiling (2011) opined that there is a huge economic return to work in terms of productivity of workers when employers provide training to their employees. He also posited that adult education helps in reducing the risk of unemployment on individuals who are not yet employed. This implies that women who are less likely to be employed may gain employment after participating in adult education programme. Sabates (2007) was also of the opinion that adults who further their learning significantly reduce the risk of unemployment.

As regards adult who are employed already, studies in the United Kingdom (UK) showed that work related training gives wages gain of 5%-10% in Austria, a study among adult participants in vocational training found that those who attended a course earned 11% more than they did before attending the course (Feinstein, 2008).

Positive Health Habit

Finland and Mannimen (2008) opined that educated parents continue to influence their children on positive health lifestyle, while maintaining their's. Their view can be said to be true since, adult education can give both transforming and sustaining effects on health. Where the transforming effects could be seen in the life of an adult when he/she changes a bad health behavior (i.e., excessive intake of alcohol), while the sustaining effects can be seen when such a habit newly acquired is maintained by the individual. Therefore, it is expected that people who attending adult education courses are more likely to have healthy lifestyle and more likely to more economically productive. As the saying goes, health is wealth and a healthy nation is a wealthy nation.

Poverty Alleviation

In 2009, UNESCO cited adult education as key in reducing poverty levels around the world, because it has the capacity to positively affect many dimensions of poverty. Evidence abound where adults women who have

undergone the adult education programme were able to acquire, develop, and nurture knowledge and skills, necessary for fend for their selves and withstand the pressure of and challenges pose by poverty. The UK inquiry into the future of lifelong learning as mentioned in Sabates (2008) concludes that participating in adult education can help reduce poverty through enhancing employment prospects of individuals, improving health levels of poor people, and giving better chances of acquiring the right tools to run their own lives.

Creating Awareness for Civic and Social Participation

Education can inspire a change in attitude, which a pre-condition for positive behavior among adult individuals. Studies have shown that learning can promote social cohesion and strengthens citizenship and patriotism. According to Feinstein (2008), adult education can foster civic and social engagement in different ways:

1. Shaping what people know: The contents of education provides knowledge widens individual's perspectives and helping them to see things just the way it ought to be, objectivity in judgment about issues would help citizens to perform their civic responsibility without waiting to be forced;

2. Political education: Enlighten citizens are usually very active with political matters. They influences political decisions and actions through creation of grassroots awareness and development of a very active civil societies in Nigeria.

Undoubtedly, an educated individual is different from one who is not, in terms of having positive attitude toward issues and situation even in solving personal and societal problems. Feinstein (2008) found that, adult education is associated with more open minded perspectives, greater understanding of people from different background, situations, and conditions within the society. Therefore, it increases the chances of one developing positive thoughts toward solving personal and societal challenges and helping others to solve their problems too.

Positive attitude toward Nigeria's present economic challenge is the key to the process of recovering the economy from sinking into complete recession. If all rural women would engaged in vocational training through adult education, then in no longer time would Nigeria address the issue of massive rural-urban migration, a situation that characterizes high poverty and unemployment in the rural areas as well as the nation by extension; and reduce over dependence of women on their husbands, thereby giving the women a chance to contribute toward building a strong economy through establishment of small, medium, and large scale business.

Role of Adult Education on National Economy Recovery

Empirically, there is a very strong correlation between education and the economy of every nation. This explains why the *National Policy on Education*, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) considered education as a tool for the achievement of the nation's goals, which include among others, a great and dynamic economy. This connection between education and the economy could be described as being symbiotic in nature. The education looks up to the economy for it capital needs since it is capital intensive, while the economy, in turns, depends on education for transmission of appropriate skills, competencies required for a more rapid growth of the economy, and provision of the right knowledge to the citizens of Nigeria. The place of education in the economic development of any countries cannot be over emphasized, that is why Ahupa (2010) posited that a country with a high number of uneducated citizens will experience a very low level of per capital income. In this regard, skilled labour is necessary for the growth and development of any countries' economy, no matter the amount of wealth (resources) of Nigeria, without adequate skilled labour to harness and ensure prudent

allocation of such wealth to the right channel, in the right proportion and time, such wealth would only be wasted or better still be used by only a few citizens at the expense of the many. The result of which is the hunger, poverty, unemployment, restiveness as well as the deteriorating state of the economy.

Therefore, it is expedient for Nigeria to ensure the education of adult women and the girl child in order to close the gap existing between men and women in the economy, to increase the amount of skilled labour force of Nigeria. According to Ahupa (2010), Nigeria's most valuable asset that need to be mobilized developed and empowered to participate fully in all programmes of socio-economic development. Also, to change the orientation in the minds of most women that their role is only in the kitchen and other rooms at home. They should realize that through education they will develop the right mindset to needed to be economically productive and never to depend on the government or an individual.

The Purpose of the Study

The study intends to investigate into the role of adult education in the process of recovering Nigeria's economy from recession through its impact on women empowerment. The study specifically is aimed at achieving the following:

1. To find out the role of adult education programme to the economic development of Nigerian women;
2. To investigate how women benefit more on the adult education programme;
3. To determine how adult education programme has brought about the empowerment and enlightenment of women;
4. To determine the effectiveness of adult education in facilitating the recovery of Nigeria's economy.

Research Questions

There are the following research questions as below:

1. What are the roles of adult education to the economic development of women in Nigeria?
2. How do women benefit more on the adult education programme?
3. How has the adult education programme empowered and enlighten the Nigeria women?
4. How effective can the adult education programme be in facilitating the recovery of Nigeria's economy?

Methodology

The study has adopted the descriptive survey research method, so as to enable the researcher to find out different views from respondents, which will lead to the right findings.

The population of the study is generally women who have undergone the adult education programme. It is made up of 60 women who were randomly selected, using the simple random technique from six districts within the Fanstuan chieftdom in Jema'a Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The population can be categorized into: widow (25%), divorced (25%), and married (50%), and all between the age of 25-45 years.

The study employed the use of structured questionnaire on a point Linkert scale where the respondents were required to react to the items on the questionnaire by ticking either "Strongly agreed (SA)," "Agreed (A)," "Disagreed (D)," or "Strongly disagreed (SD)."

The mean score (*Mean*) was used in analyzing the data collected from the respondents to test the degree of acceptance or rejection of the items in the questionnaires. The criterion for acceptance is 2.5 and above while rejection is below 2.5.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1

Item 10 (Adult education programme empowered women with essential literacy and numeracy as well as relevant skills for self reliance) was used to illicit opinions from the respondents on the role of adult education on women economic development. Table 1 shows the response of the respondents regarding the question above.

From Table 1, 40 respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 19 respondents agreed with the statement while of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and none of the respondents strongly disagreed. The decision of the researcher is to accept the statement since the mean score from Table 1 is 3.6 and it is above the criterion for the test.

Table 1

Response of the Respondents Regarding the Research Question 1

| Item response | <i>X</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>XF</i> | <i>Mean (X)</i> | Decision |
|---------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------|----------|
| SA | 4 | 40 | 160 | 3.6 | Accepted |
| A | 3 | 19 | 57 | | |
| D | 2 | 1 | 1 | | |
| SD | 1 | 0 | 0 | | |

Research Question 2

Table 2 elicited responses from the respondents to answer the above question. Women who successfully complete the adult education programme have acquired vocational skills, which help to build up their income, societal status, and increase their chances of being employed

Table 2 shows 43 respondents strongly agreed to the above statement, 17 respondents agreed to the statement, while none of the respondents disagreed nor strongly disagreed. The analysis shows that the mean score is 3.71, and therefore, the research accepts the statement above.

Table 2

Response of the Respondents Regarding the Research Question 2

| Item response | <i>X</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>XF</i> | <i>Mean (X)</i> | Decision |
|---------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------|----------|
| SA | 4 | 43 | 172 | 3.71 | Accepted |
| A | 3 | 17 | 51 | | |
| D | 2 | 0 | 0 | | |
| SD | 1 | 0 | 0 | | |

Research Question 3

Item 13 (Adult education has helped successful completers to own and run their businesses, participate in politics and partake in decision making in the society) was used to answer the third research question.

From Table 3, 39 respondents strongly agreed with the statement above, 20 respondents agreed with the statement, while one respondent disagreed with the statement. The analysis from the table shows that the mean score is 3.63.

Research Question 4

Table 4 shows the responses of respondents regarding the statement below. Item 14 (Women who successfully completed the adult education programme can manage businesses and become employers)

labour, thereby reducing the unemployment rate of the nation) was used to answer the third research question. Below is the response gathered from the respondents as regards the statement above.

Table 3

Response of the Respondents Regarding the Research Question 3

| Item response | <i>X</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>FX</i> | <i>Mean (X)</i> | Decision |
|---------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------|----------|
| SA | 4 | 39 | 156 | 3.63 | Accepted |
| A | 3 | 20 | 60 | | |
| D | 2 | 1 | 2 | | |
| SD | 1 | 0 | 0 | | |

Table 4

Response of the Respondents Regarding the Research Question 4

| Item response | <i>F</i> | <i>X</i> | <i>FX</i> | <i>Mean (X)</i> | Decision |
|---------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------|----------|
| SA | 4 | 30 | 120 | 3.5 | Accepted |
| A | 3 | 28 | 84 | | |
| D | 2 | 2 | 4 | | |
| SD | 1 | 0 | 0 | | |

Table 4 reveals that 30 respondents strongly agreed, 84 agreed, while two disagreed with the statement. The analysis of Table 4 shows that the mean score is 3.5 and the decision is to accept the statement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the analysis of responses from the respondents, each research question has shown a particular way that the adult education programme helped in improving the life of its beneficiaries through empowering them economically, thereby, contributing to the economic activities in Jema'a Local Government Area and by extension, Kaduna State and Nigeria at large.

The research has established that the adult education actually one of the ways out of economic recession in Nigeria and can help in sustaining the economic growth.

Having established that women contribute a great deal to the economic development of Nigeria, it is therefore worthy to recommend that:

1. There should be a nationwide campaign to encourage women especially those in rural areas and the girl child to seek education notwithstanding their age, religion, and ethnic or cultural influence. The girl child should be encouraged by giving equal admission opportunities with their boys counterpart and special courses should be given to them, too.

2. Government should encourage and ensure that the adult education programme is continued in all local government areas of Nigeria, rural areas should always be the focus so as to give room for those who could not afford the formal education.

3. Government and private employers of labour should encourage their workers to pursue higher educational qualification through adult education programme to improve productivity and add to the economy.

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