

**RE-POSITIONING ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD IN ILORIN METROPOLIS OF KWARA STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*Educating adult individual in any society is considered as a vital move towards liberating such individual adult. Thus, adult education programmes need to be readdressed to cater for individual adult needs in terms of economic, welfare and social development. Based on this premise, this paper explored the need to re-positioning adult education programmes for sustainable livelihood status of people in Ilorin Metropolis. Survey research design was adopted for the study and sample of 90 adult learners were randomly selected across three adult literacy centers in Ilorin metropolis. The study made use of a structured questionnaire to elicit relevance data from the respondents. Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between adult education programme and reducing poverty level of adult individual. Also, there was a significant relationship between adult education programme, economic benefits and attitudinal changes of individual adults in the society. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that reliable and available data must be provided for proper planning and implementation of adult education programme. Society must ascribe value and prestige to this system of learning and appreciate it as needed for lifelong Education. Also, relevant and appropriate teaching and learning materials must be provided to adult literacy centres and adult facilitators/instructors must be adequately motivated.*

**Keywords:** *Adult education programme, Re-positioning adult education, Sustainable livelihood status, Social change*

**Introduction**

Education is an instrument for social change or a veritable tool for solving societal problems and for achieving societal goals and aspirations. Education as an agent of change is the backbone of any developing country which provides solid vehicle for the transformation and empowerment of the individuals and the society. Adult education which is an integral part of education is a catalyst for national development and transformation. According to United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2010) in Ugwegbu (2012), adult education is the process by which men and women alone, in groups, or in institutional setting seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skills, their knowledge, their sensitiveness, any process by which individuals, groups or institutions try to help men and women improve in these ways.

According to Egwu (2012), Nigeria is currently undergoing rapid changes economically, socially, politically, culturally and technologically and to meet the challenges in the fast changing world, adult education becomes a vital instrument for a society undergoing such changes. The curriculum of any educational system of a society reflects the subjects and subject matter which the society wants to inculcate in the citizenry in order to attain its needs, goals, and aspirations. The dynamic nature of the society is reflected in the curriculum of the educational system of the society. Changes in the needs and aspirations of the society calls for changes in the curriculum in order to meet those needs and aspirations.

Since education serves the society, and adult education in particular plays important role in nation building and transformation, it is therefore imperative that adult education curriculum be constantly reviewed in order to infuse current societal needs into the curriculum.

Nigeria like most developing countries has placed undue emphasis on formal education while apparently neglecting adult education. The present economic development in the African Region compares very unfavorably with levels already attained by developed countries as well as by a number of developing countries in other regions. This is because 65% of the African populations are illiterates. Adult Education, though taken by the Nigerian society to be a low-cost area of the educational system, but from the point of view of return on investment, it is the most immediately productive and profitable for the national economy. What seems to be needed more in Nigeria today is a development-oriented, non-formal education to ensure the principle of self-reliance both in national and individual terms.

### **Concept and Objectives of Adult Education**

Adult education usually refers to any form of learning undertaken by or provided for mature men and women outside the formal school system. It also includes “numeracy”, problem-solving and life skills, and other knowledge. The notion of adult education is often used interchangeably with other notions such as literacy, adult basic education, lifelong learning, continuing, adult basic and non-formal education, etc.

In line with the purpose of this presentation, adult education is understood as a transmission process of general, technical or vocational knowledge, as well as skills, values and attitudes, which takes place out of the formal education system with a view to remedying early educational inadequacies of mature people or equipping them with the knowledge and cultural elements required for their self-fulfillment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of their societies (Seya, 2014).

Adult education, according to Mbalisi (2010) is “any educative and purposeful learning activity organized for adults to initiate them into a new way of life by providing them with relevant skills, competencies, knowledge, information and attitudes required to excel in that aspect of life”. Sociologically, Dumazedier in Ezimah (2014) defines adult education as an action for the cultural development of the society or its component groups; consciously directed towards the development of the economy of society and of the human personality, by means of a system of continuous or recurrent learning which brings the culture and cultural levels which are mostly capable of encouraging such development.

Literacy is an indispensable foundation that enables young people and adults to engage in learning opportunities at all stages of the learning continuum. The right to literacy is an inherent part of the right to education. It is also a prerequisite for the development of personal, social, economic and political empowerment. Literacy is an essential means of building people's capabilities to cope with the evolving challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy and society (UNESCO, 2009).

In fact, no country has achieved or sustained economic growth without attaining near universal basic education (UBE), the goals of which was to universalise access to basic education, engender conducive learning environment and eradicate illiteracy in the country within the shortest possible time. An educated populace is more likely to enjoy higher agricultural productivity, longer life expectancies, lower infant mortality rates and greater political stability (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), 2008; Mylek, 2008; Lind, 2008). Therefore, where the right to education is guaranteed, people's access to and enjoyment of other rights are enhanced (Colclough et al., 2003). Also, the people are better equipped to protect themselves from various diseases particularly HIV/AIDS (BEC, 2004).

Against the backdrop of several educational opportunities like formal and non-formal education available in Nigeria, unequal participation and access continue unabated among the citizens (Federal Ministry of Education (FME), 2003). Nigeria has been involved in various educational activities aimed at increasing

access to literacy education. Adedokun (2012) defined adult education as that education that redresses the imbalance between the education received when one is young and that of later life. For him the earlier education is not adequate to save one from professional as well as cultural obsolescence during the later period of life. This implies that adult education produces a type of satisfying continuing effect for all levels of school leavers, in order to make them stand the test of time in their various professions. It is therefore important that the nation cannot afford to neglect, adult education because it is through it that innovations are supported and brought into the lives of individuals and the nation as a whole. The definitions above reflect an inclination of adult education towards solving societal problems, and hence, fostering necessary social change.

However, the objectives of adult education programmes are:

1. To provide functional and remedial education for those young people who prematurely dropped out of the formal school system;
2. To provide further education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills;
3. To provide in-service and on-the-job vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills;
4. To give the adult citizens of the country aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment.

### **Concept of Sustainable Development**

Literarily, development has been defined as a qualitative increase in the output of a nation from all productive sectors of the economy. It is a state in which the various sectors of the economy are operating at full capacity to provide a better life for the citizens. However, sustainable development goes beyond the qualitative and quantitative increase in output from all sectors of the economy. According to Wikipedia (2013), sustainable development has to do with human development in which resources are used to meet human needs while ensuring the sustainability of natural systems and the environment, so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come. Sustainable development therefore goes beyond meeting the immediate needs of the present generation; it also deals with securing a comfortable future for the future generation. On their part, the International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD) (2013) defined Sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Development is sustainable when the level of qualitative and quantitative output from the various sectors of the economy is able to meet the needs of the present and future generation respectively.

Sustainable development can similarly be said to be development that has maximum importance to both the present and future generation according to their needs. The role of women in ensuring sustainable development in the country cannot be over emphasized. Development in a country is a product of the effort of the productive members of the country. As such, women in the society have important roles to play in sustaining the development of the nation. This role can be effectively achieved when women are given equal opportunity to contribute to the standard of the economy like their male counterpart. Contrary to this, the level of sustainable development that will be recorded in the country will remain far below the optimum capacity of the entire sectors of the nation.

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Heinen (1994), indicated that there is no simple unanimous approach to 'sustainable development' due to variety of scopes, characteristics of protection programs and different types of communities & institutions. In some aspects, sustainable development includes the analysis of condition under which eco-system may presence the regenerating ability, which means making choices in the sense of time and space. Sustainable development encompasses a very important ethical component, a manifested right of every person to the proper and fair share of the planet's resources (Moldan, Dahl, 2007; Giegis, 2008). In wider sense, sustainability is associated with

the equity in distribution, i.e. distribution of possibilities for development between the present and the future generation, thus, sustainable development is better quality of life of present and the future generation.

### **Adult Education, Social Change and Sustainable Livelihood Status**

Adult education plays a major role in social change. It is now widely admitted that growth will not reduce poverty unless poor people are able to actively participate in it. Such participation can become effective to a large extent through adult education. Indeed, the African, and of course, Nigerian population will need some kind of formal and non-formal education and training to be able to benefit from basic health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, the development of new medicines, and thus be in a position to free itself from diseases that devastate poor people, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other parasites. Adult education will also be needed to enable the Nigerian poor to really take advantage of programs aimed at protecting orphans and vulnerable children or drastically reducing the number of people without access to safe water and basic sanitation.

The role of adult education in development is not limited only to economic and social spheres. It also has a political dimension. There is a strong link between adult learning and democracy. This is so because, as acknowledged at the UNESCO Fifth International Conference on Adult Education held in Nigeria in 2009, “substantive democracy, and a culture of peace is not given; they need to be constructed” (UNESCO, 2009). For democracy to be achieved, adult education is needed as to inform them of their rights and responsibilities as democracy also requires people to actively participate in local, national and global levels. It is today admitted that the lack of recognition of the need to involve civil society, especially grassroots organizations, by giving them a voice in decision-making and the means to participate effectively in society is one of the major causes of development failure in many African countries. Abuse of human rights and social injustice leading to the exclusion of important segments of society, has also constituted stumbling blocks to economic and social progress on the continent and paved the way to violent conflicts (Seya, 2014).

Adult education may prove to be a powerful tool for favoring inclusive development through democracy, thereby ensuring peace and stability, as a number of studies have shown that prevention (through adult education) is much more effective than intervention. Prevention of political disorders and civil unrest can be made possible through various adult education strategies. A number of adult education policies promote democracy and peace has been proposed during the Fifth International Conference on Adult education (UNESCO, 2009). They tend to attain their objectives through various strategies that promote an active civil society, reinforce gender democracy and help to solve conflicts between different countries and groups to the extent that the world at large is experiencing the effects of multi-faceted globalization with varying degrees of impact on peoples and cultures. It is apparent from the foregoing that adult education is an indispensable vector for social, economic and political progress in any society.

### **Problems of Adult Education in Nigeria**

Adult education taken by the Nigerians society to be a low cost area of the education system (which is not usually funded adequately) if viewed from the point of view of return on investment is the most immediately productive and profitable for the national economy. The need of Nigeria today is a development-oriented education which is provided by adult and non-formal education. When adult and non-formal education is emphasized, the much emphasized self-reliance on the national policy on Education will be realized. It is a fact that where the majority of people has no proper type of education or where the majority are illiterate a nation cannot be strong. Change is manifesting in adult education in many ways and this is why adult education must be well funded and administered. Ewuzie (2012) also stressed that in Nigeria high premium is placed on formal education. Formal education had always been emphasized from time immemorial and this is at the expense of adult and non-formal education. As well as formal education is, it is not known to bring immediate solution to problems facing individuals and

nations. Government must vote in funds for the running and administration of its programs because adult education is the hope of millions.

The challenge of teaching is another problem being faced by adult education and this is in addition to the problem of facilitator. Imhabekhei (2009) is of the opinion that a person that is not a trained adult educator, may not be able to function as expected in terms of teaching the adult and he thus posited that there is a need to differentiate between the method for teaching the young ones (Pedagogy) and the method for teaching adults (andragogy). Facilitators should learn to incorporate methods of learning that prove effective in every learning situation. Combining methods will help both facilitators and learners to achieve. Doing this may however be difficult for an untrained facilitator on whom the effectiveness of adult education lies. The facilitator who is not a trained adult educator may not be conversant with the nature and characteristics of adult learner and may not really understand that adults achieve less when the learning tasks involve too much theory and memorization. It is therefore important for trained adult educators to be employed for the purpose of effective adult education.

In Nigeria adult education suffers from low status. The low status accorded adult education in Nigeria accounts for a lot of misnomer in the programme. Adult education in Nigeria is seen as merely education for the stack illiterates' adults of the populace who lacked the opportunity for regular formal education in their childhood years. It is also treated as a remedial programme for those who dropped out of the regular formal school system. Adult education is therefore regarded as the educational programme for the unfortunate, the pushouts, and the leftouts. The low status of adult education in Nigeria is responsible for lack of proper state control, standardization, and accreditation. This creates problem in the development of adult education curriculum.

The present curriculum content of adult education in Nigeria is too narrow and does not make for functional literacy. A cursory look into adult education programme in many adult education centres in Nigeria reveals that they are merely centres for the teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic (3Rs) and for preparing people for some certificate examinations with which they can get white-collar jobs or gain entrance into another level of education. The programme lack saleable skills for independent living. There is the absence of vocational and technological content as well as other curriculum innovations such as peace education and entrepreneurship education which are indispensable for meaningful living and sustainable national development and transformation.

Coupled with the problem of inadequate provision of the right type of education for the adults in order to fit properly in the contemporary ICT driven world, is the problem of insecurity and violence. Nigeria is currently having a bountiful share of violence and insecurity challenges facing the world. The insurgency of Boko-Haram, Sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace. Every effort and resources expended to achieve developmental feats will be wasted in the midst of war and violence. Since the adult plays vital role in nation building and transformation, this paper therefore elucidates on repositioning adult education curriculum for national transformation.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives guided the study:

1. To identify the role of adult education in reducing poverty level.
2. To establish how adult education will improve the economic benefits of individual.
3. To find out if there is attitudinal change between individual who participate in adult learning programmes.

**Research Questions**

1. Does adult education programme have significant role in reducing poverty level?
2. In what capacity can adult education programme improve the economic benefits of individual adult?
3. Is there any attitudinal change of individual adults who participate in adult learning programmes?

**Methodology**

The study is limited to the geographical area of Kwara State and Ilorin metropolis to be specific. It covers specifically adult learners in selected literacy centres across Ilorin metropolis. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The researcher therefore considered this appropriate, since the study try to examine the strategies for enhancing adult education programme to promote people livelihood status in Ilorin metropolis. The population for the study was adult individual who are mentally, social, physically and emotionally matured, therefore ninety (90) adult learners was selected across three (3) literacy centre in the study area. A simple random sampling technique was used to select and 30 adult learners from each of the literacy centre, thus, a total of 90 respondents made up the sample for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a well-structured questionnaire entitled “Re-Positioning Adult Education Programmes For Sustainable Livelihood Status of People Questionnaire (RAELSPQ). The study employed descriptive statistical tools of means and standard deviation to answer the research questions raised for the study. Percentages and frequency table were used for descriptive inferences.

**Results**

**Research Question 1: Does adult education programme have significant role in reducing poverty level?**

**Table 1: Mean scores of responses on the role of adult education program in reducing poverty level.**

S/N	Description of Items	Mean(x)	SD	Remark
1.	Assist individual through the provision of vocational and professional training for improve living condition.	2.95	1.23	Agree
2.	Enhance economics potential of adult for gainful income generating job.	2.83	1.27	Agree
3	Enhance economics productivity of adult individual.	2.31	1.38	Agree
4	Improve career prospect and expand professional knowledge of adult.	2.58	1.29	Agree
<b>Average mean <math>\sum x^2/N</math></b>		<b>2.55</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Result of analysis depicted in Table 1 shows that respondents agreed to most of the items raised on the repositioning adult education programme for poverty reduction. From the analysis only item 3 which states that adult education enhances economics productivity of adult individual has a mean score below the criterion mean value of 2.50. This implies that the item does not agree with the respondents, all other items (1, 2 and 4) had a mean score above the criterion mean value of 2.50 which implies that the three items were considered to play significant role in addressing poverty level among adult individual through repositioning of adult education programme. Therefore, it can be concluded from the analysis and findings as shown in table 1 above that adult education programme has significant role in reducing poverty level among adult individuals.

**Research Question 2: *In what capacity can adult education programme improve the economic benefits of individual adult?***

**Table 2: Mean scores of responses on the capacity of adult education on economics benefits of adult.**

S/N	Description of Items	Mean (x)	SD	Remark
5	Promote competencies, knowledge and information required to excel in the society.	3.42	1.10	Agree
6	Assist individual adult gainful knowledge towards solving society problem to fostering necessary social change.	2.72	1.20	Agree
7	Help to developed valuable skills in an adult for economic emancipation of the community.	2.51	1.38	Agree
8	Increase the chance of adult member participation in economic development of the community and the state at large.	2.88	1.33	Agree
<b>Average mean <math>\sum x^2/N</math></b>		<b>2.60</b>		<b>Agree</b>

**Source: Researcher's survey work 2019**

Result of analysis depicted in table 2 on the question: In what capacity can adult education programme improve the economic benefits of individual adult? Shows the level of respondents' responses in relation to all the items. From the Table 2, respondents agreed to all the 4 items for having some kind of impact on improved economic benefits of individual adult, as all items (i.e. 5,6,7 and 8) had a mean score above the criterion 2.50 mean value which implies that the five items were consider to has some significant on improved economic benefits of individual adults. Therefore, it can be concluded from the analysis and findings as shown in Table 5 that repositioning adult education programme has strong capacity to improve the economic benefits of individual adult.

**Research Question 3: *Is there any attitudinal change of individual adults who participate in adult learning programmes?***

**Table 3: Mean scores of responses on the change of individual adult who participate in adult learning programme**

S/N	Description of Items	Mean (x)	SD	Remark
9	Provide functional and remedial education for adult to improve their knowledge and skills.	2.92	1.12	Agree
10	Developing literacy and numeracy skills in individual adults to reach their full potential.	2.62	1.24	Agree
11	Create useful awareness to adult individual on democratic processes in the community for their mutual benefits	2.21	1.56	Agree
12	Promote adult members decision making process and help in their political liberation.	2.38	1.31	Agree
<b>Average mean <math>\sum x^2/N</math></b>		<b>2.58</b>		<b>Agree</b>

**Source: Researcher's survey work 2019**

Result of analysis depicted in Table 3 on the question: Is there any attitudinal change of individual adults who participate in adult learning programmes? As shown in Table 3, items 11 and 12 had mean values lower than the criterion mean score which implies that respondents did not agree to repositioning adult education programme has a capacity on attitudinal change of individual adult. While the other two items (9 and 10) were considered significant, which implies that there is provision of functional and remedial education for adult to improve their knowledge and skills. Also, it developed literacy and numeracy skills

in individual adults to reach their full potential with the means score above the criterion mean score of 2.50. Therefore, the findings from the analysis as shown in Table 3 revealed that participation in adult education programme promotes attitudinal change of individual has any significant impact on teachers job efficiency in secondary schools.

### Discussions

From Table 1, 60(66.7%) and 18(20.0%) of the respondents were strongly agree and agree that assist individual through the provision of vocational and professional training for improved living condition, while 8(8.9%) and 4(4.5%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively. On item 2, 50(55.6%) and 20(22.2%) strongly agree and agree that adult education enhance economics potential of adult for gainful income generating job as against 15(16.7%) and 5(5.6%) who disagree and strongly disagree on the item respectively. Item 3 state that adult education enhance economics productivity of adult individual, 55(61.1%) were strongly agree, 25(27.8%) agree and 10(11.1%) disagree while none were strongly disagree, in response to item 4, 40(44.5%) of the respondent strongly agree that adult education improve career prospect and expand professional knowledge of adult, 20(22.2%) agree and 18(20.0%) disagreed with 12(13.3%) strongly disagree.

Result from Table 2, 56(55.6%) and 28(31.1%) of the respondents were strongly agree and agree that adult education promote competencies, knowledge and information required to excel in the society, while 12(13.3%) of the respondent were disagree. On item 2, 48(53.3%) and 26(28.8%) strongly agree and agree that adult education assist individual adult gainful knowledge towards solving society problem to fostering necessary social change, as against 12(13.3%) and 4(4.5%) who disagree and strongly disagree on the item respectively. Item 3 state that adult education help to developed valuable skills in an adult for economic emancipation of the community, 60(66.7%) were strongly agree, 20(22.2%) agree and 10(11.1%) disagree while 5(5.6%) were strongly disagree, in response to item 4, 50(55.6%) of the respondent strongly agree that adult education increase the chance of adult member participation in economic development of the community and the state at large, 25(27.8%) agree and 10(11.0%) disagreed with 5(5.6%) strongly disagree.

From Table 3, 50(55.6%) and 25(27.8%) of the respondent were strongly agree and agree that adult education provide functional and remedial education for adult to improve their knowledge and skills, while 10(11.1%) of the respondent were disagree. On item 2, 40(44.5%) and 26(28.8%) strongly agree and agree that adult education developing literacy and numeracy skills in individual adults to reach their full potential, as against 20(22.2%) and 4(4.5%) who disagree and strongly disagree on the item respectively. Item 3 state that adult education create useful awareness to adult individual on democratic processes in the community for their mutual benefits, 52(57.8%) were strongly agree, 21(23.3%) agree and 12(13.3%) disagree while 5(5.6%) were strongly disagree, in response to item 4, 40(44.5%) of the respondent strongly agree that adult education promote adult members decision making process and help in their political liberation, 30(33.3%) agree and 20(22.2%) disagreed.

From the findings, it can be deduced that repositioning adult education has been cited as a key to reducing poverty levels around the world this is supported by (UNESCO-UIL, 2009 in EAEA, 2010) as it has the capacity to positively affect many dimensions of poverty. Results also show that adult education has a role to play in nurturing the skills and knowledge necessary to both reducing the risk of poverty, but also for providing the capacity to withstand poverty-inducing pressures.

It was revealed from the analysis that participating in adult learning can help substantially to reduce poverty through enhancing employment prospects, improving health levels of poor people and giving better chances of acquiring the tools needed to run their own lives. Therefore, it should be a part of any approach to reducing poverty, as multiple initiatives are needed to lift people out of poverty. According to the result from the analysis, it can be stated that Adult learning can improve employability and income,

which is a key pathway to realizing a range of other benefits. For example, it enables people to some extent, choose and shape the context in which they live and work and even increase their social status. Results also supported that individuals who participate in adult learning may differ from the ones who do not in terms of prior attitude. This can be supported by Feinstein (2003) that adult learning is associated with more “open-minded” perspectives on race and authority, greater understanding of people from different backgrounds, challenging previously held beliefs and with a sustaining effect on non-extremist views.

### Conclusion

The adult populace forms the human resource for the development of any country. The adults may not function effectively and efficiently if not given the prerequisite education. Nigeria is a nation with many illiterate adults. Most of the manpower (adults) of the country are either unskilled or semi-skilled. The few skilled and highly skilled adults are threatened by obsolescence due to fast technological changes in the work environment (Eyibe, 2005). According to Anyanwu (2010), ICT skills have not been mastered by many Nigerian adults and youths who ought to employ them in their day-to-day activities. This ugly scenario therefore calls for the repositioning of adult education through the inclusion of ICT in adult education programme in Nigeria to enhance total development of an adult individual.

Since Adult Education is central to the individual’s survival and contribution to the progress of the State and nation; it should be adequately funded by the government. It is worthy of note that the 26% budgetary allocation to education recommended by UNESCO has never been met;

### Recommendations

Based on the Findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Reliable and available data are needed for proper planning and implementation, data on the needs of learners, the number of those out of school, the required classrooms and instructors needed to enhance active adult learners engagement;
- ii. Change in societal attitude, society must ascribe value and prestige to this system of learning and appreciate it as needed for lifelong education;
- iii. Counselling programmes, just as in the formal system of education, counsellors should be posted to the learning centers to assist the learners and encourage them take active participation in the learning programme;
- iv. Policy documents like the NPE and Nigerian Constitution should be clear as to what specific roles the different levels of Governments, Federal, State and Local Governments should play in the implementation of adult education programme.
- v. Relevant and appropriate learning materials must be provided to adult literacy centre and adult facilitators/instructors must be adequately motivated.

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