



Role of Adult Education Programmes in Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women in Port Harcourt Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the role of adult education programmes on socio-economic empowerment of women in Port Harcourt Metropolis. To achieve the purpose of this study, the researcher formulated two (2) specific objectives, research questions and null hypotheses respectively that guided the study. The study made use of descriptive survey design. The population of the study consists of 1,250 registered members of community based organization in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The sample size of the study was 250 registered members of community based organizations which is 20 percent of the total population. The study made use of simple random sampling technique. A well-structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated using 2 experts in Department of Adult Education and Community Development and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was achieved using test-retest method while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.72. The data gathered were analysed using weighted mean and standard deviation for research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significant. Based on the data analysis, the findings of the study revealed that adult vocational training, women education, contribute to socio-economic empowerment of women in Port Harcourt Metropolis. However, the researcher recommends that: Government should establish more vocational training centres to enhance it contributes to economic self-reliance of women in the society, multinational companies should open more women education centres in their host communities to ensure quality family life of women in Rives State hence it contributes to political well-being of women.

Keywords: Adult Education Socio-economic, Empowerment, vocational Education, Women Education.

Introduction

Women play significant roles in the economic development of any nation be it developing or developed. The economic contribution of women has been recognized worldwide as it was reported that women produce half of the food in some parts of the developing countries (Adesanya, 2011). Alamgir and Penuccio (2012) that rural women are the major food producers in developing countries who generate a large part of the family's cash income. According to (Adesanya, 2011), in many African countries, rural women account for 60 percent of the agricultural labour force and up to 80 percent of total food production. The role of women in the work force and, therefore, in the economic development of Nigeria, has been one of great significance.

In the light of this, Mbabazi and Lilian (2015) observed that women usually invest a higher proportion of their earnings in their families than their male counterparts. Yet there is a great temptation as well as manifest tendency to overlook and sweep these economic contributions of women under the carpet. Apart from being mothers taking care of the domestic sector, women farmed alongside their husbands and children and were dominant in trade and distribution through a network of local and distant markets (Yesufu, 2016). In pre-colonial Nigeria, according to Yesufu, women led in some local crafts and industry such as cloth weaving, pottery making and food processing. While, like today, men cut the palm fruit and its processing for palm oil and kernels devolved mainly on the women. Indeed, Effa-Attoe cited in Yesufu added that in pre-colonial Nigeria, a woman who was without a craft or trade, or who was totally dependent on her husband was not only rare, but was regarded with contempt.

The manifest tendency of discrimination suffered by women under the colonial Nigeria was derived essentially from prevailing cultural norms. In Yesufu's submission, the enactment of a law precluding women from inheriting land merely legalized the social system which was predominantly

matrilineal. Thus, although rural women in developing countries account for 60 percent of the agricultural labour force and up to 80 percent of total food production, these rural women constitute the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world (Jazairy, 2012).

Thus, the international community has been expressing very vocal concern about the relative debility under which women are alleged to live and work all over the world. Special attention is focused on the underdeveloped countries where it is felt that women suffer most. An instrument for the identification and analysis of the resources of any nation, as well as seeking to provide solutions to, or amelioration of, the problems and impediments that beset the people in practically all their endeavours which is education – is therefore necessary. This instrument which will develop the capacity of women according to Orlukwu (2019) has such components as skill training, enlightenment and mobilization programmes, empowerment programmes, workers education, on-the-job training, apprenticeship programmes and extension programmes all geared towards women empowerment and emancipation. All these programmes in unequivocal terms fall under the umbrella of adult education.

As Orlukwu posited, women's empowerment means increasing women's authority and control over the resources and decisions that affect their lives. As women exercise real choice, they are empowered having the capacity to deal with matters affecting their lives economically, politically, socially, spiritually and otherwise (Akanbi & Jekayinga, 2011). Empowerment programmes are therefore meant to translate to socio-economic development through improved income, improved basic needs and security, improved quality of life, and higher political awareness and participation. But the investigator could not locate any micro-level study focused on adult education as a tool for rural women's socio-economic empowerment among the rivers people to either validate or falsify.

The global attention is now on the education of women and the girl-child. The reason is not far-fetched, women play significant roles in the socio-political and economic development of any nation, be it developing or developed. The World Bank recognizes the economic contribution of women worldwide as it was reported that women produce half of the food in some parts of the developing countries (Adesanya, 2011). Women's participation in adult and non-formal education in Nigeria has been seen as giant step in the quest to achieving sustainable development in the country. Adult and Non-formal education is a participatory, grassroots approach to helping people to clarify and address their own needs. In many ways, Non-formal education addresses the needs of non-literate adults, market women and out-of-school youths. It gives respect for local knowledge, a faith in the wisdom of the people, and a humble awareness of one's own strengths, gifts, and challenges. The paper, therefore, discusses the socio-economic benefits of non-formal education targeted toward women in the rural communities. In doing this, an analysis of key components of non-formal education such as basic literacy, entrepreneurship education, health and hygiene, family planning education, among others, were extensively discussed in this paper with a view to establishing the importance of these concepts to socio-economic wellbeing of our societies.

Adult Education is one of the numerous concepts that do not accede to a universal definition. The reason is simple; the scope is limitless, with new forms springing up on daily basis. Adult education is that forms of education given to those that are regarded as adults in their societies. The concept of adulthood is a controversial one, Akimpelu (2012) notes that those to be regarded as adults must have been brought to measure up to two criteria, namely, quantitative and qualitative criteria. Quantitatively, Akimpelu explains that anybody to be regarded as adult must have been chronologically, biologically, legally and physically matured as an adult. Future more, Darkenwald and Merriam (2012) cited in Oni (2015) said this about adult education.

Adult education is a process whereby persons whose major social roles are characteristic of adult status, undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or skills (Darkenwald and Merriam, 2012). The most comprehensive definition of adult education as an entity or enterprise was suggested in 1976 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization. This organization defines adult education as: The education which denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level, and method, whether formal or otherwise, whatever they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development (UNESCO, 2010).

Women's empowerment is encouraged in all aspects of economic and intellectual development to its fullest extent besides women are the mainstay of Nigeria's agriculture. Empowerment of women therefore means giving them the same rights and opportunities as their male counterparts and liberating them from the strings that have always taken shape tradition, culture, religion and environmental static condition. It will therefore mean that the rights of aspiring higher in all spheres of life are being granted to them.

Adult Education was introduced to facilitate empowerment of women in the area and relinquish the struggle for freedom. Education is as old as man himself and has followed various patterns in different communities throughout the ages. Education as a tool required for skills acquisition and consequently, to increase the competitiveness of women, which geared towards national needs and objectives. This automatically means that education at its inception has been seen as what makes women gain more control over resources as prelude to having more say in the family decision.

Adult Education as a means of socio-economic change is of the tremendous importance to better socioeconomic life, so the place of women in the aspect of empowerment cannot be overemphasized. The impact of education on women makes them aware and to appreciate the need for change, facilitates the process of departure from the tradition crude system that women are not supposed to be heard but rather be seen. Empowerment from the dictionary means the act to grant political, social or economic power to an individual or group and it could also mean a type of social change which means new ideas are into a system to produce higher per capital income and level of living, through more modern methods and improved social organization.

According to Oni (2015), the empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of development of countries all over the world. The international women's day celebrated on 8th March every year has become a demonstration for equal opportunity and solidarity, but the question arises how relevant is celebration of women's Day in view of the fact that their position in the society has not changed much. They are still marginalized and treated as weaker sex who needs to always follow orders and be under a man. The new women and the woman of substance in true terms are just words in books because men do not truly want women to participate or to be truly involved in decision making. As earlier said women constitute about half of the total population if not more of a country, but they suffer from many disadvantages as compared to men in terms of literacy rate, labour participation, earning rate, social, economic and political empowerment.

The process of women empowerment is conceptualized in terms of personal assertions, self-esteem and confidence, ability to protect themselves as women attaining socio-political participation and economic independence ownership of productive assets and provide leadership in women or women empowerment means giving the literate women in the society, their rights, positions and opportunities, with their male counterparts, in respects of social, economic and political aspects of life in relation to national development. Women empowerment therefore means giving the literate women in the society, their rights, positions and opportunities, with their male counterparts, in respects of social, economic and political aspects of life in relation to national development.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the introduction of adult education programmes and the empowerment of women some identifiable problems, like deprivation of women in the society, high rate of poverty, lack of women empowerment and lack of women awareness and participation on political matter have being major problems affecting socio-economic empowerment of women in Rivers State. As a result the literate Nigeria women in Rivers State in particular are not given the privilege to show case their potentials and contribute their quota to their communities and develop their societies.

Despite the efforts of the Ministry of Women Affairs, wife of governors, Non-Governmental Organizations, etc. to provide socio-economic empowerment programmes women still have issues on vocational training, skill acquisition programmes like catering services, catfish farming, fashion and designing, akara tying, capital formation entrepreneurship business, health seminars, workshops, providing loan to widows for their small scale business at low or no interest rate, adult literacy classes, to alleviate poverty, improved literacy level thereby increasing employment rate, reduce death rate, better their standard of living which will transient to better level of participating in community development, it is still observed that women in these local government areas are backwards in community development.

Also, irrespective of the efforts made by government to encourage adult education and women empowerment, most women today believe that their place in the society are not honoured in terms of nation building. women liberation programmes have been designed but its problem lies on full implementation, rural women resist change even when they are for their welfare and it takes years to concretize such group of people, and also women's inability to work under their follow women, rather prefer to work or be led by a man are some of the problems associated with the influence of adult education on the empowerment of women.

Nowadays, lack of education is one of the major problems that influence all sides of the earth, particularly the poor nations. It has no restrictions and it exists in every race and ethnicity, age group, and economic class. Overall numbers, 774 million adults lacked basic education in 2011. Of all these, 493 million or 66 percent, were women. Among youth, 123 million are unskilled; out of this, 76 million are women. Despite the fact that the extent of uneducated population is shrinking, the female extent has remained virtually steady at 63 percent to 64 percent (UNESCO, 2008). It was against this problem that the study sought to examine the role of adult education programmes on socio-economic development of women in Rivers State

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the role of adult education programmes on economic empowerment of women in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the extent to which adult vocational training contributes to economic empowerment of women in Rivers State.
2. Determine the extent to which women education contributes to social economic empowerment of women in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The researcher posed the following research questions that guided the study.

- 1 To what extent does adult vocational training contributes to economic empowerment of women in Rivers State?
- 2 To what extent does women education contributes to social economic empowerment of women in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were developed to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the extent adult vocational training contributes to economic empowerment of women in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the extent women education contributes to social economic empowerment of women in Rivers State.

Methodology

The research design that was adopted in this study is descriptive survey and the study was carried out in Rivers State, The population of this study consists of Two Hundred and Fifty (250) registered women of community based organizations in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The sampling technique used was a census method of sampling, the entire population size of Two Hundred and Fifty (250) members of community based organization in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor were used for the sample size because of the manageability of the population size. A structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. It was titled "Role of Adult Education Programmes on Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women Questionnaire (RAEPSEEWQ), the questionnaire contained 25 items which was prepared in sections according to the research questions that guided the study. The response to each of the items in the questionnaire was based on four (4) response options modified liker scale with corresponding numbers or points from Very High Extent (VHE) to Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument was validated using the research supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Adult Education and Community Development, and Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, The corrections from the researcher's supervisor were used in drafting the final copy of the questionnaire. The reliability of an instrument was an estimate of its consistency and ability to measure a given trait over time. The researcher employed test-retest method to obtain the reliability of the research instrument. The scores obtained from the two tests were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) at 0.05 significance level. Thus, a reliability coefficient index of 0.72 was obtained. This confirmed that the instrument was reliable enough to be used for data collection for this study. The research instrument was administered to the respondents in the study area with the help of three trained research assistants. The trained research assistants was used to administer and retrieve the questionnaire the same day. The respondents was located during their meetings in their various communities in area of the study. This was made possible by the help of their leaders who disclosed their meeting days to the researcher. The data collected was analysed using weighted mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The criterion decision rule is that any mean score that was from 2.50 and above was accepted, while the mean score that was less than 2.50 was rejected. The null hypotheses was tested using z-test statistical tool at a significance level of 0.05.

Results

The results for the study were presented thus:

Research Question 1: To what extent does adult vocational training contributes to socio-economic empowerment of women in Rivers State?

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on the Extent Adult Vocational Training Contributes To Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women in Rivers State.

S/No	Questionnaire	Executives = 35			Members = 215		
		Means	SD	Remarks	Means	SD	Remarks
1.	Preparing the women to learn job-specific and employability skills helps for women empowerment in the society	2.55	0.80	High Extent	3.10	0.88	High Extent
2.	Giving the women opportunities to use their acquired skills through work experience programme that connect them with the business community help for women empowerment.	2.60	0.81	High Extent	2.90	0.85	High Extent
3.	Vocational training offers students an incentive for thinking creatively	2.80	0.84	High	3.05	0.87	High

	thereby leading to women empowerment in the society.			Extent			Extent
4.	Vocational skill or training help women to be industrious and broaden their understanding of the career opportunities afforded in the industry.	2.55	0.80	High Extent	2.90	0.85	High Extent
5.	Vocational training is the skills and occupations that women gain towards becoming knowledgeable in a specific trade or profession thereby helping for women's empowerment	2.60	0.81	High Extent	2.90	0.85	High Extent
Grand Total		2.58	0.80		2.87	0.85	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that the respondents accepted the view that preparing the women to learn job-specific and employability skills helps for women empowerment in the society. The table still indicated that the respondents agreed on the point that giving the women opportunities to use their acquired skills through work experience programme that connect them with the business community help for women empowerment. It was also observed from the analysis that the respondents accepted the fact that vocational training offers students an incentive for thinking creatively thereby leading to women empowerment in the society. The analysis also showed that the respondents agreed on the view that vocational skill or training help women to be industrious and broaden their understanding of the career opportunities afforded in the industry. The analysis also showed that the respondents agreed on the view that Vocational training is the skills and occupations that women gain towards becoming knowledgeable in a specific trade or profession thereby helping for women's empowerment.

Research Question 2: To what extent does women education contributes to quality family life of women in Rivers State?

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on the Extent Women Education Contributes to Quality Family Life of Women in Rivers State.

S/No	Questionnaire	Executives= 35			Members = 215		
		Means	SD	Remarks	Means	SD	Remarks
6.	Adult education has given women greater reputation and recognition in the society.	2.90	0.85	High Extent	3.00	0.87	High Extent
7.	Through adult education women can participate in the decision making process of their community.	2.70	0.82	High Extent	2.90	0.85	High Extent
8.	Adult education programmes are geared toward women empowerment and liberation from marital and parental suppression.	2.65	0.81	High Extent	2.85	0.84	High Extent
9.	Through adult education programmes women are given rights to partake in matters concerning them in the society.	2.80	0.84	High Extent	2.95	0.86	High Extent
10.	Adult education has given women greater opportunity in the society.	2.60	0.81	High Extent	2.70	0.82	High Extent
Grand Total		2.66	0.82		2.80	0.84	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The data analysis in Table 2 indicated that the respondents accepted the view that adult education has given women greater reputation and recognition in the society. The analysis also showed that the respondents agreed on the point that through adult education women can participate in the decision making process of their community. It was still noticed from the analysis that the respondents accepted the fact that Adult education programmes are geared toward women empowerment and liberation from marital and parental suppression. The analysis still showed that the respondents accepted the point that through adult education programmes women are given rights to partake in matters concerning them in the society. Also observed in the analysis is that the respondents agreed on the view that adult education has given women greater opportunity in the society.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the extent adult vocational training contributes to socio-economic empowerment of women in Rivers State.

Table 3 Z-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of the Respondents on the Extent Adult Vocational Training Contributes to Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women in Rivers State.

Perception	N	Mean \bar{X}	Standard Deviation	Df	Std. Error	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Executives	35	2.58	0.80	248	0.17	1.29	1.96	Accepted
Members	215	2.87	0.85					

The analysis on table 3 reveals that the z-cal of 0.13 is less than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance since it is smaller than the given critical value of z-ratio. So, the hypothesis 1 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the extent adult vocational training contributes to socio-economic empowerment of women in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the extent women education contributes to quality family life of women in Rivers State.

Table 4 Z-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of the Respondents on the Extent Women Education Contributes to Quality Family Life of Women in Rivers State.

Perception	N	Mean \bar{X}	Standard Deviation	Df	Std. Error	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Executives	35	2.66	0.82	248	0.17	2.24	1.96	Accepted
Members	215	2.80	0.84					

The analysis on table 4 indicates that the z-cal of 0.16 is less than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance since it is greater than the given critical value of z-ratio. Therefore, the hypothesis 2 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the extent women education contributes to quality family life of women in Rivers State.

Discussion

The findings of research question one revealed that adult vocational training contributes to socio-economic empowerment of women to a high extent in Rivers State. This finding is in collaboration with Akinade (2015), who observed that preparing the women to learn job-specific and employability skills helps for women empowerment in the society. It still indicted that the respondents agreed on the point that giving the women opportunities to use their acquired skills through work experience programme that connect them with the business community help for women empowerment. It was also observed from the analysis that the respondents accepted the fact that vocational training offers students an incentive for thinking creatively thereby leading to women empowerment in the society. The analysis also showed that the respondents agreed on the view that vocational skill or training help women to be industrious and broaden their understanding of the career opportunities afforded in the industry. The analysis also showed that the respondents agreed on the view that Vocational training is the skills and occupations that women gain towards becoming knowledgeable in a specific trade or profession thereby helping for women's empowerment. However, the null hypotheses one was accepted and it was concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the extent adult vocational training contributes to socio-economic empowerment of women in Rivers State.

The findings from research question two indicated that women education contributes to quality family life of women to a high extent in Rivers State. This study is in the same view with Nwankwo (2017), admitted that adult education has given women greater reputation and recognition in the society. The analysis also showed that the respondents agreed on the point that through adult education women can participate in the decision making process of their community. It was still noticed from the analysis that the respondents accepted the fact that Adult education programmes are geared toward women empowerment and liberation from marital and parental suppression. The analysis still showed that the respondents accepted the point that through adult education programmes women are given rights to partake in matters concerning them in the society. Also observed in the analysis is that the respondents agreed on the view that adult education has given women greater opportunity in the society. In other words, the null hypotheses two was accepted and it was concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the

respondents on the extent women education contributes to quality family life of women in Rivers State.

Conclusion

The role of adult education programmes on economic self-reliance of women in Port Harcourt Metropolis cannot be over emphasized. However, the study concludes that; adult vocational training, women education, contribute to political social well-being of women in Rivers State. The study still deduced that Education has been regarded as a veritable force for nation development. It is that immeasurable index that determines the level of prosperity of any nation, and categorizes it into developed, developing, underdeveloped or even primitive. In view of these and other reasons many nations of the world strive to provide educational opportunities for all its citizens. In the light of the foregoing, the federal government of Nigeria through its national policy on education stressed the need for equal educational opportunities for all her citizens. Though it has been affected by many factors especially in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State where women education is not given the priority. It needs and this has greatly affected their view in politics. There is need to check this trend, most especially when one considers the role women play in contemporary societies. Women can be described as an indispensable group in the development of any nation. Women's empowerment creates a powerful influence on community, family and the nation at large. Thus women empowerment can be seen as a vital strategy for any development effort. In a nutshell, there is the need to provide educational opportunities for women, so that they may not only discover themselves, but also contribute their quota to the overall political development of the nation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby put forward to ensure that this study achieve its objectives.

1. Government should establish more vocational training centres enhance it contributes to economic self-reliance of women in the society.
2. Multinational companies should open more women education centres in their host communities to ensure quality family life of women in Rivers state

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