

Socio-Economic Effects of Women's Participation on Adult and Non-Formal Education in Akoko North West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the socioeconomic effects of women's participation in adult and non-formal education in Nigeria with special attention on Akoko North West Local Government Area of Ondo State. From the pre-colonial era up to the time of independence, little attention was given to the education of girl child and women in Nigeria – be it formal and non-formal. The reason is not unconnected with the belief by many that the best place for women to function is home and kitchen. However, the clamour for girl-child education and women empowerment in the global scene brought about the paradigm shift in the area of education in Nigeria as much emphasis is now being placed on women education as catalyst for socio-economic change in addition, development. This paper identified the socio-economic benefits derivable from women's participation in non-formal education. The descriptive survey method was used, interviews conducted were codified and analysed using SPSS T-test statistical instrument. Suggestions and recommendations were made based on the outcome of the analysis, to suggest better ways for improving the education and empowerment of women in Nigeria.

Key Words: Socio-economic, adult and non-formal education, women, development, Nigeria

Introduction

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 and Non-Formal Education

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.

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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, Akinpelu et al (1988) notes that those to be regarded as adults must have been brought to measure up to two criteria, namely, quantitative and qualitative criteria. Quantitatively, Akinpelu explains that anybody to be regarded as adult must have been chronologically, biologically, legally and physically matured as an adult. Furthermore, Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) cited in Oni (2005:11) 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, 1982) 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 behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development(UNESCO, 2010).

The above submissions on adult education placed more emphasis on community and national development which are crucial societal priorities and adult education is an important means of addressing them. Non-formal education, however, is a form of education that is carried out in a more flexible manner where learner dictates the contents, curriculum and the location of studies. Thus, this type of education is spelt out in the National Policy on Education as that form of education "that encompasses all forms of functional education given to youths and adults outside the formal school system, such as functional literacy, continuing and vocational education (Akinpelu, 2011:14).

Types of Non-Formal Education for Women in Akoko North West LGA of Ondo State

Akoko North-West is a Local Government Area in Ondo State, Nigeria. Created on the 23rd September, 1991 from the defunct Akoko North Local Government, its headquarters is located in the town known as Okeagbe. The communities in the Local Government Area include: Ese, Okeagbe, Ikaram, Arigidi, Erusu, Ibaram, Iyani, Ase, Irun, Ogbagi, Ajowa, Afin, Oyin, Eriti, Igasi, among others. The Local Government Area is rich in terms of organizing non-formal education for its people. The unit of Adult Education in the LGA is saddled with the responsibility of organizing and supervising various non-formal educations which include the following:

1. Basic Literacy

By basic literacy, we mean the education to gain reading, writing and arithmetic skills. This form of education is available for the adult learners who missed the opportunity of the formal school system and it is being organized to remediate the knowledge and skills missed. The basic literacy for adult learners is one of the non-formal education programmes being organized and financed by the Local Government council of the area. One of the interesting things to note is the recent increase in the rate of women's participation in the programmes as many of the nursing mothers, market women and women in farming patronizes the evening classes so as to gain the reading, writing and arithmetic skills. Majority of the participants were motivated based on the need to be able to count money and have a record keeping book, patronize banks and be able to write their names and signatures on cheque leaves, deposit slip and other documents used in banks.

2. Hygiene and Environmental Education

This is one of the most patronized non-formal educational programmes by women in the Local Government Area. Hygiene education assists the participants to be conscious of the importance of a healthy and hygienic environment.

Through this programme, which is mostly organized in form of an open air seminar in indigenous languages and on radio, many women in the community learn the basic precautionary steps in preventing against malaria, cholera, diarrhea, and other environmental diseases. The importance of clean environment and the need to work on the careless attitude of people toward refuse disposal are always emphasized.

3. Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education aims to equip learners with skills, knowledge, and dispositions that can help them develop or implement innovative social and business plans. Because of the importance of wealth creation in the survival of man and society, special attention is given to entrepreneurship education in the LGA in order to reduce the rate of unemployment in by equipping adults with the knowledge and skills for setting up and running small businesses effectively. This form of non-formal education helps women, especially, to develop entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills they could use in addressing personal and social challenges facing their families.

4. Civic Education

Civic education became important because of the fact that citizens need to understand how governments function, and what their responsibilities and rights are. Civic education helps the community people to bring about political awareness, participation in voting procedures. There is need for an educated populace if democracy is to succeed. Without an educated electorate democracy is impossible. This form of non-formal education teaches the participants the rudiments of voting and electioneering, political party manifestoes and aspirations, tax policies, fundamental human rights, among others.

5. Family Planning

This is another very fundamental aspect of non-formal education which addresses family planning, reproductive health pre-birth and post birth cares for women, among others. Through these programmes, community women learn about birth control methods and the need to apply them so as to live a healthy life and have a healthy family. Majority of the family planning educational programmes are being conducted on radio so as to reach out to those who live in a far distance to the Local Government Council Office. The family planning radio literacy programmes have helped majority of non-literate women to maintain healthy family living.

Socio-Economic Effects of Women's Education

Women's participation in education is very critical to the development of any society or nation. The reason is not far-fetched, women plays significant roles in family and nation building. A mother with a few years of formal education is considerably more likely to send her children to school. In many countries for instance, each additional year of formal education completed by a mother translate into her children remaining in school for additional one-third to one and half years. There are numerous benefits and positive effects of women's participation in education. These include the following:

- i. **Self-Reliance:** Education has been proven to increase income of women as educated women tend to create multiple streams of income for themselves and families. Many of them who have attended one form of vocational or entrepreneurship education tend to have motivation to establish small scale businesses which can yield benefits for their families, communities, and society. Hassan & Olaniran (2011) also notes the efficacy of vocational skills acquisition programmes in improving the socio-economic status of individuals and communities.
- ii. **Reduced Vulnerability:** Similarly, women education ranks among the most powerful tool for reducing girls' vulnerability (Ada, Okoli & Okoli, 2013). It slows and reduces the spread of HIV/AIDS by contributing to female economic independence, delayed marriage, family planning and work outside the home as well as greater information about the disease and how to prevent it, as poverty is the major cause of vulnerability (Damas & Md. Israt, 2004).
- iii. **Adequate knowledge of Health Care Services:** Women with education, either formal or non-formal, has been proven to have better knowledge about health care services and are less likely to become pregnant at a very young age, they tend to have fewer and better spaced pregnancies and seek pre and post-natal care.

It is estimated that additional years of schooling for 1,000 women helps prevent two maternal deaths (Maduewesi, 2005). Among the importance of women education is lower infant and child mortality rate.

Women with formal education are more likely to seek medical care, ensure their children are immunized, have better information about their children's infants and children have higher survival rate and tend to be healthier and better nourished.

- iv. **Better Income:** Women's participation in education has always promotes economic growth, national productivity, and innovation. They are more generally better paid and more likely to find employment in the paid section than those with less education (UNESCO, 2013).

Research Hypothesis

- There is no significant difference between the role of educated women (those who participate in adult literacy programmes) and those that are not educated in family and nation building.
- There is no significant difference between women who participate in adult and non-formal education program and those that do not participate in terms of self-reliance.
- There is no significant difference in women vulnerability between those who participate in Adult and literacy program and those that do not.
- There is no significant difference in health care knowledge between women who participate in adult and formal education program and those who do not.
- There is no significant difference between the income of educated women (those who participate in adult literacy programmes) and those that are not educated.

Research Method

The descriptive survey research design was use for the study; the population comprises of women respondents in Akoko North West Local Government Area of Ondo State Nigeria. A 200 sample of the population was randomly selected for the administration of the instrument but only 125 were retrieved in good condition and coded. Test – Retest method was used to ensure the reliability at 0.06 level of significance. T-test method of data analysis was used on the collected and coded data.

Result of Findings

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the role of educated women (those who participate in adult literacy programmes) and those that are not educated in family and nation building.

Education	N	Mean	SD	DF	T-Cal	T-crit	P	Decision
Not-educated	37	6.027	1.92	123	0.375	1.96	>0.05	Not significant
Educated	88	6.171	1.97					

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between women who participate in adult and non-formal education programmes and those that do not participate in terms of self-reliance.

Participation	N	Mean	SD	DF	T-Cal	T-crit	P	Decision
Participated	88	5.94	1.84	123	2.350	1.96	<0.05	Significant
Not participate	37	6.86	2.33					

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in women vulnerability between those who participate in Adult and literacy programmes and those that do not.

Participation	N	Mean	SD	DF	T-Cal	T-crit	P	Decision
Participated	88	5.81	1.77	123	2.358	1.96	<0.05	Significant
Not participate	37	6.70	2.22					

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant different in health care knowledge between women who participate in adult and formal education programmes and those that do not.

Participation	N	Mean	SD	DF	T-Cal	T-crit	P	Decision
Participated	88	4.62	1.40	123	2.410	1.96	<0.05	Significant
Not participate	37	5.35	1.82					

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference between the income of educated women (those who participate in adult literacy programmes) and those that are not educated.

Participation	N	Mean	SD	DF	T-Cal	T-crit	P	Decision
Participated	88	4.78	0.78	123	2.597	1.96	<0.05	Significant
Not participate	37	5.16	0.73					

Discussion

The results of the study show that educational participations in adult literacy programmes has little or no significance when it comes to women responsibilities in nation building and family care. This implies that a female person who does not participate in any adult literacy programme could be more dutiful, responsible and responsive in nation building activities and family care. In terms of self-reliance, the results of the analysis agree with the postulation of Hassan and Olaniran (2011) which reveals that participations in literacy programmes of adult and non-formal education improves socio-economic status of individuals and community wellbeing. From the analysis, self-reliance could be said to be the antidote of poverty and vulnerability as derivable from women participation in adult educational programmes. Damas and Md. Israt (2004) are of the opinion that poverty (information and finance) is generally associated with deprivation of health care, education, food, knowledge and influence over one's environment. This view as revealed by the study is also supported by Muduegesi (2005).

Furthermore, women income could be said to be proportionate to their level of education and participation in literacy programmes of adult and non-formal education according to the results of the analysis. This view is in line with the submissions of UNESCO (2013).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Thus far, the socio-economic effects of women's participation in adult and non-formal education have been examined. The study shows significant impacts of education in the lives of women as education enables them to contribute meaningfully to education, health, agriculture, business and other vital sectors of the economy. Because of the need to better empower women for socio-economic development, especially in a developing nations like Nigeria, the following have been recommended:

- i. More women should be given opportunities to head some key departments in Nigerian government, especially education, at Federal, State and Local Government levels. This will serve as encouragements for other women who give little priority to the girl child education in the country.
- ii. Visual aid and multimedia materials should be developed to enhance the already existing non-formal education in Nigeria. This will attract the attention of adults with little or no prior education.
- iii. Corporate organizations and private individuals should be encouraged to partner with government at Federal, State and Local levels in the delivery of non-formal education especially that can empower women. This will aid socio-economic development in rural and urban communities.

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