

## **USING ADULT AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION TOWARDS ACHIEVING POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA**

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### ***Abstract***

*This article examined the usage of Adult and development education towards poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The study also defined education, adult education, development education, poverty, and poverty alleviation. In the discussion, the researcher extensively explained how education, adult education and development education can help in alleviating poverty in the society. The paper further discussed the goals of adult education, the approaches to development education and how adult and development education can be used in alleviating poverty in the society. Finally, some recommendations were made of which if critically taken into action will help a great deal to reduce the level of poverty in the society, such as government should endeavour to provide all the necessary facilities needed to carry out educational programmes in adult literacy centres.*

***Keywords: education, Adult education, development education, poverty and poverty alleviation.***

### **Introduction**

Nigeria has been classified as one of the poorest in the world despite its abundant human and natural resources. This classification is not unconnected with its inability to tackle most of the social scourges such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, environmental degradation, ill-health, social discrimination, to mention a few. The effects of these scourges will be endless if one attempts to mention them. For instance, the growing evidence and dynamics of poverty in Nigeria have stratified and polarized Nigerian society between the haves and the have not,

between the North and the south, the educated and uneducated. One notable thing is that poor parents beget poor children, illiterate parent beget illiterate children (Ojiaku & Amaefula, 2016).

Nigeria as a developing nation is made up of poverty driven population. The poverty level in Nigeria is outrageous in that many people are really suffering. Many cannot afford three square meals a day due to poverty. Most of the people are illiterates, thus cannot be able to involve in any developmental activities because they cannot read or write. The people involved are mostly the youths and the adults. To be able to reach out to those behind educationally, they need to be exposed to education. Adult and development education is the only way to reach out to them. Thereby help to improve their life styles them. Thereby help them to improve their life styles towards achieving development both on health issues, skill acquisition; agricultural knowledge advancement,, and improve their technical knowhow knowledge (i.e know how to operate and repair tools and gadgets). The above problem inspired the researchers' interest for this topic using adult and development education for poverty reduction in the society. This is because it is known that investing in education in general is a worthwhile venture because the benefits of education cannot be over-emphasized. Education has the capacity to produce unquantifiable benefits for individuals, organizations and the society as a whole (Jegede, 2016).

### **The concept of Education**

The word education comes from the Greek word “educado” meaning a continuous flowing from inside. It also means the impartation of knowledge by studying or research. Education according to Dewey (1963) is a continuous process of experience and revising experiences. It is also a dynamic force in every individual influencing the physical, mental, emotional, social and ethical development. In all modern societies and economies, education has become an intellectual capital of great importance in which great investments must be made. Education is ore than a sellable or marketable commodity. It is also a means of self-liberation on both the individual and national levels (international education network, 2016). To support the above statement, education is said to be power. This is because it enables people to be knowledgeable about things around them and those that can help to improve one's life as well as the world. Education makes people wiser, it makes one more enlightened, it opens doors to gainful employment which leads to change in one's life (development), and makes people to be responsible citizens. Education teaches life skills and values. All these liberate one from ignorance, empower people to be achievers, and enable people to live in peace with one another. So like the Greeks, education is recognized as a life time activity (Jegede, 2010).

Education remains the pivot of national transformation and development. It equips a society with knowledge, values and skills to develop its human capital and promote sustainable human and national development. With the huge natural resources, Nigeria remained in the back water of human development because of the state of the education which is very tasking and

dysfunctional. Due to high cost and unavailability of enough public schools in the rural areas, there exist many who did not go to school and some are out of school. This brought the number of illiterate adults and youths to very high percentage, to the extent that many find it difficult to read, write or even carry out simple arithmetic. This therefore will lead us to adult and development education (Oriaku, Olushola, Akagu, 2016).

### **Adult and development education**

Adult education is a new field of study and practice emerged as an effort to solve problems in the society which arose from events such as the 18<sup>th</sup> century industrial revolution, World War I and II etc. It may be interesting to note that these problems were caused by adults through their various activities in the society. These events created social change and various ways of doing things in the society. The events also led to problems such as environmental pollution, poverty, outbreak of diseases, crimes etc. Other societal problems as experienced in various societies today include population explosion, illiteracy, militancy, terrorism, kidnapping, prostitution, human trafficking, child labour and abuse etc. this problems make life unbearable and uncomfortable for the inhabitants of the societies where they exist (Ugwu and Mbalise, 2016). These emergent negative changes in the society, necessitated the development of adult education as a discrete field of social practice which serves primarily as an instrument of social reform, social recommendation and social progress (that is development) targeted at reorienting people in such societies for a better living.

In a globalized world and knowledge-based economy, the need for adult education increases in order for people to keep up with the pace of technological education, (Prbylska, 2009). Towards definition of adult education, adult education is derived from two concepts namely: adult and education. An adult according to Oduaram (1991), Brown (1979) and Nzeneri (2008) must be somebody who is regarded as to be:

- recognized as such by the society to which he or she belongs.
- physiologically independent
- socially responsible
- politically responsible
- able to choose a spouse and care for his family
- able to become an active citizen.

Adult education therefore according to UNESCO (1976) is the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges, and universities, as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualification or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their

attitudes or behaviours in the two-fold perspective of full personal and development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development”

With the above definition of adult education, it is seen that through adult education, people's life can be changed from poor stage or poverty level to middle class level due to skill acquisition or technical knowledge those adults will acquire.

Another definition of adult education which confirms its ability to help in reducing poverty in the society is that adult education is regarded as action for the cultural development of the society or its component groups; consciously directed towards the development of the economy of the society and human personality, by means of a system of continuous current learning which brings the culture of a member of society into contact with those of cultural and cultural levels which are mostly capable of encouraging such development.(Nzeneri,2008). So continuous learning by adult and youth members of society will help to open the eyes of the people to be engaged in one beneficial activity or other. This will help bring in social change and reduce the poverty level in the society. This can also be deduced from the goals of Adult Education as studied by UNESCO below:

### **Goals of adult education**

International goals of Adult education as recommended to UNESCO during its general conference in 1976 should be to:

1. developing a critical understanding of major contemporary problems and social changes with a view to achieving social justice.
2. developing an understanding of the problems involved in the upbringing of children
3. developing the ability to critically use mass communication media, in particular radio, television, cinema and the press so as to be able to interpret the various messages addressed to modern men and women by society ( UNESCO,1976 cited in Nafuko, Amutabi and Otunga, 2005).

It can be deduced from the above goals the positive impact of adult education to the society. Therefore, adult education involves some criteria i.e the activity that is being referred to as adult education must be educational in nature, it must be relatively organized, purposeful and the target clientele must be adult. It must be voluntary, need-oriented, situationally relevant, learner-centered and flexible. Hence any form of education that satisfies the above criteria is adult education. It can be basic literacy, post-literacy, continuing education, remedial education, extramural studies, and functional literacy among others (Jegede, 2010). At this juncture, it is pertinent to also expatiate into development education as a way towards poverty reduction in the society.

Development can be seen as a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy Ojukwu (2013) submits that development is a generic term which means it has many uses and variants. For the purpose of this study, development is defined as a permanent condition of positive growth, resulting in a higher level of condition, which is better than the previous stage or position (Iheanacho, 2012).

Development Education is an education aimed at giving an understanding of developing countries and their place in the global socio-economy situation. Development education is concerned with knowledge ideas and understanding of issues that relate to global poverty and underdevelopment. It is an educational process based on learner-centered. It is an active and creative educational process to increase awareness and understanding of the world (Trocaire, 2018).

Development education is an approach to learning that questions dominant paradigm of development and inspires citizens-and community-driven change towards a world of greater social justice.

Development education aims to raise awareness and understanding of how global issues affect everyday lives of individuals, communities and societies. It is about teaching and learning about awareness of issues related to development, the environment and sustainability and understanding the personal, local, national and global significance of these issues. It raises questions about people's role and responsibilities in an increasing unequal world where millions of people are denied their rights (Development Education Centre South Yorkshire (DECSY) (2017). In the same vein, DEV ED BLOG (2018) explained that development education is empowering the individual to become more globally aware of not just the community he belongs in but also to understand its relationship in a wider context. It incorporates related global issues to concepts of traditional classroom subjects in order for the students or learners to apply what they are learning and connect them to other more humanistic understanding of the world they live in. educating people using real world problems will increase their awareness as global citizens, thus, modifying their behavior towards a more holistic understanding and distribution of the common good.

As noted recently about development education, Krause suggested the following approaches:

- Development education as public relations for development aid
- Development education as awareness raising public dissemination of information
- Development education as global education focusing on local-global interdependence.
- Development education as enhancement of life skills-focusing on the learning process and critical thinking (Krause, 2010)

The aim of development education and awareness raising is:

- to enable everybody to have lifelong access to opportunities.
- to be aware of and understand global development concerns and the local and personal relevance of those concerns.
- to know about people's rights and responsibilities as inhabitants of an interdependent and changing world by effecting change for a just and sustainable world (Bourn, 2014).

The above approaches and aims of development education shows that it is aimed at making people i.e adults to be aware of global issues, their human rights and also be aware of their environment such as their health, surroundings, agriculture and political environment in order to live peacefully and participate maximally in all the activities. Development education is like using campaigning/advocacy approach that aims at bringing in concrete changes in an individual behavior. Thus development education can be useful in reducing poverty in the society, if these vulnerable ones can be encouraged to participate in development education, poverty level will automatically reduce in the society.

### **Poverty and Poverty Alleviation**

Merriam Webster Dictionary (2017) defined it as a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials to enjoy a minimum standard of life and well-being that is considered acceptable in society.

Poverty reduction or poverty alleviation is a set of measures, both economic and humanitarian, that are intended to permanently lift people out of poverty. These are intended to raise ways of enabling the poor to create wealth for themselves as a means of ending poverty forever (Wikipedia, 2018).

### **Using Adult and development education towards poverty alleviation**

Through adult and development education stated above, it is possible to alleviate poverty in the society in the following ways:

- these educational systems will expose adults who are farming on how to use modern agricultural technology to avoid food shortages, this will therefore lead to economic growth.
- through the education, many adults form local cooperatives whereby they made notable savings towards setting themselves up in a good business. they carry out on their own.
- through the education, people will be conscious of their health issues or standard. In such education programme people will be exposed to how to handle or help eradicate any infectious diseases rather than spreading it.

Adult and development education will always expose the youths and the adults to more knowledge in their farming skills in that it will help them to know how to raise farm incomes as

they will be exposed to the use of modern technology in farming. These educational systems will help in building opportunities for self-sufficiency. Making employment opportunities available is just as important as increasing income and access to basic needs. People who have passed through these educational systems are employed (Wikipedia, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

Using adult and development education is a perfect way towards poverty alleviation in the society. This is because when people are engaged in this educational programme, they will acquire knowledge, skills and values they will need to set themselves up in the society. This knowledge acquired will boost their morale to become self fulfilled and self actualized in life, thus making them to contribute positively to the society thereby helps in poverty alleviation both individually and community wise. This means economic, cultural and political growth to the nation.

## **Recommendations**

- The government should encourage the adults to participate in the educational programmes by providing the structures where people can stay and learn.
- Those who could not go to formal education system should take it upon themselves and participate in this educational programmes by attending adult literacy classes.
- The government should endeavour to provide every facilities or instructional materials needed to carry out these educational programmes.

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