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The Role of Environmental Adult Education in Community Development

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the role of environmental adult education in community development. In this study, the concept of adult education, its objectives and its relevant was properly stated, it also investigates the concept of environmental adult education, its objectives and principles, the concept of community development and its objectives, and lastly the role adult education in community developmental drive. In conclusion, this study discovered that, our environment is full of activities daily by man, industries and other natural occurrences which needed to be properly managed and controlled. In view of the above the following recommendation where made: that Government at every level should ensure that environmental laws are enforced to cut down some of this environmental hazardous activities, the policies of adult education should be pursuit squarely, measures should be put in place for checks and monitoring, the role of every adult in the society should not be under-mind, which calls for mass campaign or sensitization of the need for human capacity development, development of indigenous people in our communities should be paramount in the pursuit of this environmental issues as the only solution or a way out the problems we are facing these days especially in Rivers State and other part of the country

INTRODUCTION

Our environment is deteriorating by the day due to human activities and other natural occurrences' like industrial activities impact that has caused so much hazard and threat to our health, economic, social psychological and even spiritual way of lives. The high cost of goods and commodities is not exception, all these is as a result of effects of human activities in our environment. Pollution is everywhere, waste are not properly managed, wild life and our forest are no more, the rivers and the aquatic lives are all destroyed, before now, that is in years back, our parents depends on the water from the streams and rivers but today, all that is gone. Those in agriculture has little or almost nothing to take home as harvest due to the fact our soil is no longer yielding as it used to before the discovering of oil in southern part this country, the problem of over population and high rate of death in the case of child maternal calls for concern as well. The impact of ozone layer effect on man, plants and animal is alarming these days. Live span has reduced, difficulties in meeting our daily needs is so challenging especially in basic need like food, shelter, clothing, security and education is not left out. Our environment is our community and our community is our environment, a good number of these activities are carried out by man for man and through man and the impact or effect is also bans back on man. And the worst part of it all is fact that the effect of these activities and state of this environment affects our lives in a very high degree, thus: the need for environmental adult education as best and fastest means of managing, sustaining, controlling and restoring normalcy, lost glory, joy and happiness in our communities.

The concept of adult education has no generally accepted definition. According to Omolewa (1981) in Onyishi (2010), adult education is one of the most difficult concepts to define. This according to Fasokun (2006) is because adult education means different thing to different people. The confusion in the meaning of adult education arises from the variations in interpretations of the roles adult education performs in different societies, in different

sectors of the national economy and at different levels of national development (Adekola, 2008). Adekola (2008) further stated that many terms are used interchangeably with the term adult education. For instance, while adult education may mean basic literacy, extra mural studies, or mass education for community development in a developing nation like Nigeria, it may mean workers education or liberal education for relaxation or entertainment in advanced countries.

Irrespective of the seeming diverse view on what is adult education, attempt will be made to considered a few. Omolewa (1981) and Aderinoye (1997) in Onyishi (2010) described adult education as an organized and sequential learning experience designed to meet the felt needs of the adults. Similarly, Onyishi (2010) described adult education as "any education given to adults based on their social, political and cultural and economic needs or problems to enable them adjust fully to changes and challenges in their lives and society. In another definition, Merrian (1982) in Olori (2012) described adult education as concerned with preparing people for life, but more specialties, with helping people to live more successfully. However, the most comprehensive and embracing is UNESCO in Onyishi (2010) definition which describes adult education as the entire body of organized educational process, 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 and bring about changes in the two fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. This definition positions adult education as one of best form of educational activity in this time of when our society or environment is facing huge challenges in so many area of life.

Consequently, Akinpelu (2002) described adult education as the education of the adult which is an affirmation that nobody, however, old, is immune to new knowledge, new ideas and new skills, in

whatever setting that may be thus the saying that old dogs can learn new tricks. This explains that education as an instrument of development gives opportunity for acquisition of new skills and knowledge which are indispensable for socio-economic transformation of human society. This is true in the sense that, we are living in a dynamic society and it is progressive which also need an upgrade and updating education system so as to keep man fit and relevant in need and challenges.

Based on the description above, the following attributes of adult education are deducible;

- There is flexibility of content
- It is a continuous process.
- It considers both individual and groups.
- Adult education also is remedial in nature.
- Its methodology recognizes human dignity and.
- It is change oriented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There exists variance in the objectives of adult education in different countries. This stems from apparent peculiar nature of problems facing each country and what they want adult education to achieve. The objectives of adult education in each country are localized on the root objectives of adult education as conceived by UNESCO. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) articulates the objectives of adult and non-formal education in the National Policy on Education to include:

- a. Provision of functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who never had the advantage of formal education or who did not complete their primary education.
- b. Provision of functional and remedial education for young people who prematurely dropped out of formal school system.
- c. Provision of further education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills.
- d. Provision of in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different

categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills and competence.

- e. Give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment.

The importance of adult education in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. Jorge (1996) states that educational processes like adult education are geared to strengthen popular organization, citizenship movement, the popular economic sector and local community development. Recent studies prove that adult education is the least conventional branch of education, the one with the greatest degree of heterogeneity and the one that is most closely associated with social and political development (Rivero, 1993).

Adult education is an empowerment strategy through which adults can uplift themselves socially and economically to enable them participate fully in the development of their communities. Adult education is therefore, an educational activity which individuals undertake in order to improve their social and economic conditions for the overall benefits of society. The gain of the process has a ripple effect. It benefits the individual(s) and transcends to the entire society. Nzeneri (2002) opined that it is in adult education that emphasis is placed on lifelong learning, education as a process and agent of liberation, a tool for adjustment, for self and national development, for cultural awareness and integration, for conscientization and group dynamism. Adult Education concentrates on programs and strategies that will help reduce poverty and facilitate development.

Human activities as a result of search for quality standard of living through science and technology have brought problems on the environment. Such issues include over population, greater pollution, the death and destruction caused by toxin spills and dumps, the massive deforestation of the world forest for commercial purposes, the harm caused by numerous oil spills, the destruction of wildlife habitats for human development amongst others. These activities also occur in Nigeria and leads to lots of environmental crisis or consequences such as

loss of biological diversity, threat to food security, destructions due to flooding, soil erosion, desertification, poor environmental health, social unrest due to limited water and land rights. However, the Nigeria government proposed various strategies to curb these crises such as abatement measures, legislation and policies but little or no change was realized. This could be attributed to the fact that ignorance, poverty, greed and over population are majorly responsible for human anti-environmental behavior and actions in the country. According to Thathong (2012), those previous strategies proposed were more of control and treatment rather than prevention. Consequently, these environmental crises can be seen to emanate mainly from human activities due to their attitude and behavior towards nature.

Therefore, in resolving such problems, Nigeria among other African countries introduced environmental education. Attesting to this, Erhabora, and Don (2016) opined that in 1990's the Nigerian Ministry of Education embarked on National Environmental Education program in schools towards sustainable development. However, Environmental Education is seen as a process of infusing into the educational system environmental content in order to enhance the awareness of the people on environmental issues at all levels of education (Erhabora& Don, 2016). It is an approach to education which is hoped to bring some solutions to the deterioration relationship between man and the environment. Environmental education is a concept that was first highlighted and developed by Patrick Geddes, who dedicated his life to education and environment and emphasised a holistic approach that has influenced the studying of environmental education, in that many of the elements of the present day informed and enlightened teaching of the present day developed from his thinking (Leketi, in Irwin 1991).

Environmental Education is a process through which people can recognise the environmental values and become able to clarify environmental concepts relating to their environment. Having

understood these concepts, they will be better able to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to deal with environmental problems in their area. This implies that people should at all times be willing to protect their environment and be able to meet future environmental challenges, by focusing on more pro-environmental behaviours; thus recognising their environment as their sole resource base and therefore engaging in activities that mitigate further environmental degradation and enhance the environment rather (Hungerford & Volk, 1990 in Leeming, Dwyer, Porter & Cobern, 1993).

Environmental Education is an important part of education and thus deserves to be integrated into all subjects and topics and to be taught at all levels of education, since it is regarded as a worldwide socio-ecological phenomenon which has many phases and is quite sophisticated and holistic in nature. Most importantly, it is a concept that needs a sound ecological knowledge and understanding. It also embraces the idea of "people having a relationship with their environment by understanding it, as well as engaging in activities that will enhance its well being through their ethics and politics in order to make informed and coordinated participation in decision making" (Irwin, 1991), so that they can understand and address environmental problems. Its importance is highlighted by the appreciation that the human race is in the process of transforming nature drastically and may cause irreparable damage to our natural environment. This is why environmental education is perceived as a much needed realisation of the importance of natural resources and therefore of the need to use them correctly and wisely.

The objectives of environmental education as highlighted by Sabo (2011) are as follows:

- a. The cultivation of love for the Earth and all elements which are used in them: water, plants, animals, etc
- b. To increase the desire to protect, respect and protect nature by involving children in character and demonstration activities;
- c. Develop skills of research, exploration, environmental investigation;

- d. Knowledge of organism's and phenomenon's from environment and their characteristics;
- e. Enrichment of active vocabulary with words from the environment area;
- f. Acquisition of some conduct rules to ensure the balance between human health, society and the environment;
- g. Knowledge of plants and animals protected by law;
- h. Research remediation methods of environmental state using students in activities of waste recycling, the sanitation of towns, etc
- i. Awareness of the need to save water, electricity, wood, etc... (Natural resources);
- j. Take negative attitudes on those who violate environmental rules and laws.

For the achievement of its objectives, environmental education take into account specific principles such as;

- i. The environment as the common heritage of the humankind. People should realise the importance of their environment as a resource base and a place to live, which should be managed desirably and be well taken care of.
- ii. The common duty of maintaining, protecting and improving the quality of the environment, as a contribution to the protection of human health and the safeguarding of the ecological balance, where the interdependence between human beings and nature should be taken into cognisance, so that both act in solidarity towards sustainable living.
- iii. The need for a prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources so as to ensure sustainability. The notion of Environmental Education sets up an arena for all to become involved and to collectively regard the environment as a project in which all individuals must strive to achieve sustainability as their goal.
- iv. The way in which each individual can, by his or her own behaviour, particularly as a consumer, contribute to the protection of the environment, and engage in activities that will enable future generations to acquire the same benefits (Tlhagale, 2004)

Community Development as a concept is a combination of two independent words; community and development. Eleberi (2012) remarked that, most scholars define community in terms of specific geographic locality while others define it as a psychological construct. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2008) described community as a localized population which is interdependent and which develops and nature's specialized institution that provide on a day-to-day basis a full range of goods and services necessary to meet the common goals and perpetuate its existence on the surface of the earth. On the other hand, development as a concept is like an octopus with its tentacles spread widely to all spheres of life, be it economic, social, political and cultural. Adeyemo (2003) describes development as: "The process of economic and social transformation within countries. Also, Maboguje in Ochogba, Ogide and Ogide (2017) described development as that which includes economic growth, modernization, distributive justice and socio-economic transformation.

Therefore, Mezirow in Oduaran (1994) described community development as planned and organized effort to assist individuals to acquire attitudes skills and concept required for their democratic participation in the effective solution as wide as possible. UNESCO (cited in Onyeozu, 2007) described community development as an educational method by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural condition of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. In this definition, there is emphasis on what the people can do. It recognizes that government requires alleviating the suffering of the people rather, but there should be concerted effort on the part of the people to identify their felt-need, mobilize necessary human and material resources to satisfy it. Consequently, community development is a process which culminates from people's effort to change their living conditions through organized and planned

programmes within the limits of their resources or external assistance.

Community development aims at enhancing a sustainable socio-economic development with effort of the people as a fulcrum. However, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) stated that the objectives of adult education in the National Policy on Education to include the following:

- i. Provision of functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who never had the advantage of formal education or who did not complete their primary education.
- ii. Provision of functional and remedial education for young people who prematurely dropped out of formal school system.
- iii. Provision of further education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills.
- iv. Provision of in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills and competence.
- v. Give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment.

Also, Anyanwa (1981) summed up its objectives as follows:

1. To educate and motivate the people for self-help.
2. To develop responsible local leadership.
3. To inculcate among the members of a community a sense of citizenship and spirit of civic consciousness.
4. To introduce and strengthen democracy at the grassroots level, through the creation and revitalizations of institutions designed to serve as instrument for local participation.
5. To initiate a self-generative, self-sustaining, and enduring process of growth.
6. To enable people to establish and maintain co-operative and harmonious relationship.
7. To bring about gradual and self-chosen changes in the life of a community with a minimum stress and disruption.

Role of Adult Education in Community Development

Adult Education has good and important roles to play in achieving community development. Seya (2005) defines adult education as any form of learning undertaken by or provided for mature men and women outside the formal schooling system. The main targets according to Seya are specifically defined as youths (girls and boys) over fifteen years of age, but sometimes younger as well, women and men, generally poor or socially disadvantaged. Although literacy continues to be at its heart, adult education also includes numeracy, problem solving and life skills and other knowledge which bring about sustainable development.

The concept of adult education which has wide acceptability is a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular full-time bases unless full time programmes (specially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, skill, appreciation and attitudes or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems. Adult education is meant to improve the individual and subsequently, the society in which the individual lives in (Umezulike, 2006). The improvement of individual here implies acquisition of skills, values and knowledge which will sustain him in future, thereby bringing about sustainable community development. However, adult education plays the following roles in community development:

Change in Behaviour of the Individuals in the Community

Adult education is an instrument for change which is evident in the change in behaviour of individuals that make up the community. Galadima (2012) stated that adult education helps to improve the critical thinking quality of individuals. It modifies behaviours of people towards production through acquisition of knowledge and skills in relevant occupations. It develops individuals respect for standard. It modifies individual's moral quality to

an acceptable level by community members. It helps to reduce the menace or criminal behaviour of individuals resulting from ignorance and illiteracy. It also helps to develop individual's creativity and independent living. It makes individual to become an acceptable member of his community through systematic adjustment (Galadima, 2012).

Development of Economic Activities in the Community

Economic activities in certain communities are pluralistic and require certain level of knowledge and skill development for success. Pluralistic economic activities in a community involve many diverse skilled jobs for deriving wealth for living by individuals. Some of these are in form of business interest, that is, movement of goods and services from one community to another which involves mobility of people from one community to another for exchange of goods and service to sustain life (Galadima, 2012). This mobility may involve clear understanding of needs of customers, pricing of commodities, effective bargaining to make profit, understanding of language of others, respect for others culture, traditions, privacy and other behaviour typical of community members. Ability to achieve success in business difficulties in the above diversities requires certain level of civilization resulting from adult education.

Effective Participation in Political and Economic Matters in the Community

Good political and robust economy is some of the factors responsible for community development. Adult education contributes in good political and robust economy through the development of individuals. An educated individual is expected to exhibit the thinking habit, acceptable attitude, developed initiative, management skills towards decision-making in economic and political matters affecting his community and beyond (Oreh, 2001). The individual should be able to manage his own economy to reduce wastage and help to direct the thinking and behaviours of others towards political benefits of the community. He should be able to

assist the community in planning for economic and political gains beyond his immediate environment. Adult education should be able to develop him to be sensitive to the economic needs of others and to help reduce poverty among the less privilege in his environment.

Maintenance of Good Understanding and Healthy Relationship with other Communities

This is another role of adult education in community development. In order to maintain these understandings and relationship among diverse groups of specific interest between one community and the relationships among diverse groups of specific interest between one community and the others, members of these communities must be provided with that level of education that could help foster cordial relationships, peace, unity and progress without much bias to diversity in principles and beliefs.

Recognition of Community Rights

Adult Education helps in training individuals of a community to be more competitive in development, more jealous about what other communities possessed but they are denied. Individuals are taught how to demand for their right from government. In line with this, Galadima (2012) stated that with education, community members know how to communicate directly with their government for provision of basic needs. Educated adult members of the community are interested in demanding from the government either through individuals or delegation of members to government officials for provision of electricity, water, good roads, security, markets, housing, communication equipment, higher education, agricultural technologies among others as their right from government.

Concept of Environmental Adult Education

Environmental adult education is an integral part of adult education, which blends the basic principles and goals of environmental education with those of adult education. Environmental adult education focuses on adults as regular users of the

environment based on their daily activities, and emphasizes on acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudinal change which is the foundation of environmental sustainability. Environmental adult education has been described by several authors. Betiang (2008) opine that environmental adult education is the process of developing in adult individuals certain skills, attitude, behavior, knowledge to enable them interact successfully and live in harmony with the external forces which include physical, chemical, biological, psychological and socio-cultural characteristics and everything that falls within the context of the environment with which individuals interact. Eheazu (2016) described environmental adult education as a process of developing in adults knowledge, skills and certain attitudes that will enable them to successfully interact and live in harmony with the forces and elements that surround them as they engage in their daily activities for survival. Moreso, Essien and Anthony (2017) described environmental adult education as that type of education which creates a relationship between the adults and their environment to enable them understand the problems which occur within their environment and at the same time develop skills and knowledge in solving such problems. Ezebube (2010) described it as a process of developing in the adult, certain attitudes; skills and knowledge that will enable them live successfully within their environment. Furthermore, Mbalisi in Essien and Anthony (2018) described environmental adult education as an application of the theories, principles, programmes, methodologies, approaches and resources (human and material) of adult education educating adults about the happenings in the environment and its associated resources with the intention of helping to develop in adult knowledge, skills and attitude required to show a sense of responsibility and commitment towards solving present and future environmental problems. An individual has to exhibit those values, attitudes, skills and knowledge acquired through environmental education. Among the best ways to achieve positive rural community attitude towards their surroundings and places where they reside is

through environmental education programmes. From the foregoing, there is a degree of commonality in that, the definitions above emphasizes on skill, knowledge and acquisition of the right attitude which is the foundation in environmental sustainability. Objectives of environmental adult education according to Eheazu in Oduru-Mensah (1992) are as follows:

- i. To develop knowledge and understanding of the environment, the forces that contribute to its deterioration.
- ii. To identify specific chemical, biological, physical and socio-cultural characteristics of the environment that constitutes potential hazards to life and health.
- iii. To develop skills for solving environmental problems and improving environmental quality.
- iv. To develop appropriate attitude and sense of responsibility that will enable man to live harmoniously with his environment.
- v. To develop appropriate curricular for environmental education and train personnel for the management of natural resources.
- vi. To develop aesthetic values that will encourage a culture of environmental beautification and maintenance.
- vii. To plan appropriate action programme and mobilize citizens to actively participate in the protection and restoration of the quality of our environment.
- viii. To promote among adults the practice of sustainable development to ensure a continuity of resource base.

Also, Betiang (2008) highlighted the following objectives of environmental adult education

1. To develop in adults the skills for solving environmental problems
2. To help adults implement appropriate curriculum for environmental adult education.
3. To develop aesthetic values that will encourage adults appreciate culture of beautification of their environment.
4. To develop appropriate action programmes to mobilize adults in the protection and restoration of the quality of the environment

The above objectives clearly show that adult learning is a relevant instrument in raising environmental awareness and promoting environmental sustainability. Thus, awareness creation about the environment can also be achieved through environmental adult education strategies.

Role of Adult Environmental Education in Community Development

Adult environmental education plays very significant roles in community development. Essien (2019) opined that adult environmental education plays the following roles in community development: Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE): The word (CAMPFIRE) is an acronym of a programme for resource conservation, which means communal areas management programme for indigenous resources. However, this programme is well known internationally for its success in helping rural communities to sustain their environments especially in the area of wildlife conservation and forests. The aim of this programme is to decentralize the management of natural resources specifically wildlife to indigenous communities. The idea is to help indigenous communities to have a sustainable livelihood from wildlife management. This programme could be adopted in Nigeria to stop further deterioration of our natural resources, especially the disappearance of endangered species of plants, animals and forests. Eheazu (2014) explained that rural communities, no doubt are the real owners of the natural ecosystem, but with lack of local environmental awareness and the danger of unfriendly behaviour in the exploitation of these resources, thus, the need for indigenous education, control by government became an alternative to manage these resources sustainably.

Community Participation

Community participation is another strategy of environmental adult education in sustaining the Nigerian environment. Participation is one of the goals of environmental management. Therefore

involving members of various communities in managing their resources will go a long way, as members of these communities are regarded as bonafide members of the ecosystem as they depend on the environment for survival.

Community Environmental Education

Community environmental education is another strategy which environmental adult education advocates in sustaining the Nigerian environment. The Nigerian environment could be sustained if adequate information on environmental problems is given within the community. Community environmental education is an educational process that addresses environmental problems in the community. It is that type of education that raises the consciousness of its members on the dangers of unsustainable environmental practices, and sensitizes on the need to conserve the natural environment. It is a traditional non-classroom learning which focused on the development of its members and the community.

This is so important in sense that most of the urban dwellers /living, survived through produced from our rural areas (communities) especially in agricultural produced and other materials needed for manufacturing companies. Nigeria as nation is facing a very high rate of insecurity, inflation in high cost of commodities and threat of life, how did it come about? its from the community, hence: the need for community environmental education as the best and fastest means.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study ascertain this fact that man as a social being is always occupied with activities that has influence our lives either negatively or positively in so many aspect of human endeavours and that of our environment. We can attest of this fact in the hazards caused by pollution from cars, industrial activities, agricultural activities such as the system of fishing, hunting, forestation and other domestic activities like improper waste management, illegal oil draining which is one of reason for black sots, problems of oil spillage is also part of it, all these put together has

cause a lot pain and challenges to man health and happiness, thus, the need for environmental adult education as a means of a resting the situation and safe our community from devastating state.

When it come to the issue of our environment issues and community development, the main focus should be man, the environment is occupied by man, community development activities is by man, from and through man, and more so the beneficiaries of the outcome of the environmental activities and even education of form including adult education is also man. As such, the need in ensuring the active or concrete planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these educational programmes shouldn't be over looked at any point in time. If there is love among ourselves and also running a true democratic or leadership system and also striving for the betterment of her citizen, then, will environmental adult education into the activities of the indigenous communities at this time we are facing environmental health issues be made compulsory at every level our educational sector be it basic, primary and secondary education and a semester course at every level in the tertiary institutions just to create consciousness in individual/sensitivity on important of lives today, tomorrow and how to live and care for ourselves and environment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Federal government should sensitize the education so that people will be aware and enrol to acquire skills that would be necessary for community development.
2. Universities should support in strengthening these programmes by setting up satellite campuses that would be used for the operation of these programmes for it to be properly organized to achieve its objectives.
3. Environmental education should made compulsory in every school at every level of the formal and non-formal sorts of educational activities
4. There should a committed body for monitoring, supervising and that evaluating of the

impact of the outcome of environmental adult education in our environment

5. Enforcement of environmental law and prosecution of offenders without bias or sentiments should be uphold

6. Local and state government should be involved in these programmes by providing building and other learning facilities so as to motivate adults to enrol and to build confidence in adults who would not doubt the authenticity of the programme

FURTHER STUDY

Further investigation could be done in the following areas

1. Influence of environmental adult education programmes on Community Development
2. Impacts of adult literacy programmes on community development

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