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Poverty Alleviation of Adults and Non-Formal Education of Otukpo People in Benue State Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study was embarked upon to establish the extent to which adults and non-formal education could assist to reduce poverty and sustained livelihood in Otukpo people of Benue State. Five research questions and two Null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of thirty three adult instructors and one hundred and twenty adult learners in adult literacy centres in Otukpo Benue State. The instrument was face validated by three experts using weighted mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were analyzed using 6-test statistical tools. The major findings of the study among others showed that in order to reduce poverty, adults and non-formal education need to be provided for the marginalized adults to empower them for income generation. Poverty leads to low quality of education and livelihood, the poor, lacks basic amenities and access to acquire education. The researcher recommends that adult education should be funded by the three tiers of government. The non-governmental organization should partner with the government to enable the instructors implement the curriculum that relates adult education. This will enable the marginalized adults' access to education, the idea of one man to teach one or fund the teaching, should be the responsibility of every person where the Nigerian national council of adult education supervised.

Key words: poverty alleviation of adults, non-formal education and otukpo people

1. Introduction

In the year 2000, the United Nations, International Monetary Fund and World Bank signed up to an international commitment to reduce global poverty by 15% by the year 2015 as one of the ways of achieving Millennium Development Goal (MDGs). Two years later, the World Bank renewed interest in Global call to action against poverty and provided an opportunity for improving livelihood and bringing people out of poverty. In Nigeria, poverty is pervasive and frightening. Poverty may have affected all geographical zones in Nigeria and Otukpo, Benue State in particular. The poor in Nigeria are powerless, voiceless, lacks the basics of life and are deprived (Ugbaja, 2008). Such people have insufficient income, lack access to basic services, political patronage, and family support. The prevalence of illiteracy among the adults widens the poverty gap in Nigeria. The paradox, as described by the World Bank (1999) is that poverty levels in Nigeria contradict the country's immense natural wealths. This particular goal is fundamental and basic, according to Maslow in Obo (2008), when the physiological needs are deprived over time; other needs may fail to appear in the background. Adult Education and Non-Formal Education play a vital role in the life of human beings. As an agent of change, adults and non-formal education presents a solid vehicle for the transformation and empowerment of individuals in the society, by orientating and providing the necessary skills and values that can assist their lives. The Department of International Development (DID) (2005) viewed adults and non-formal education as an effective tool that can be used to reduce poverty by the year 2015. Adult Education refers to any flexible, organized learning experience provided outside the formal school system which has been purposefully designed to meet specific learning needs. Adult Education is an instrument that to provide adults with the skills required for social living. This study therefore attempt to investigate poverty alleviation of adults and non-formal education of Otukpo people in Benue state Nigeria. For poverty to be reduced and to achieve sustainable livelihood, there is need to integrate adult and non-formal education programmes to poverty reduction programmes.

Herzegovina (2002) defines poverty as the lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood, hunger, malnutrition, ill-health, limited or no access to education, increased morbidity, disease related mortality, homelessness, inadequate housing, unsafe environment, social discrimination and exclusion. Herzegovina included restrictions or lack of participation in decision making process in civil, social, cultural society and also violation of human rights as a part of poverty.

Livelihood, therefore, tries to enlarge the capacities of people to live full, productive, satisfying and valuable lives by raising incomes and improving other components of their standard of living such as health, literacy, knowledge and control over their own destiny.

(Ebony and Mbalisi, 2005). This calls for investment in adult education with emphasis on functional literacy, mass literacy and empowerment education through non-formal education. Ker (2000), adult learners are intrinsically disadvantaged in most cultures of the World and Nigeria is not exempted. The major problem with present adult learners especially in Nigeria is their poor educational background. The statistical report from the United Nations Department of Public Information (1995) showed that the World's nearly one billion people are illiterates.

2. The Purposes of This Study Are

- Examine how poverty situations lead to low quality adult education and livelihood.
- Investigate the extent which the poor have access to adult education.
- Determine the influence of existing adult education programmes on poverty alleviation.
- Find out the extent to which adult education can reduce poverty.
- Examine the strategies to improve the educational standard of the poor.

3. Research Question

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

- How has poverty situations led to low quality adult education?
- To what extent does the poor have access to adult education?
- What is the influence of existing adult education programmes for poverty alleviation?
- To what extent can adult education reduce poverty?
- What are the strategies employed to improve the educational standard of the poor?

4. Hypothesis

- H_{01} There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of adult tutors and adult learners on the extent to which adult education reduces poverty for sustainable livelihood.
- H_{02} There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of adult learners and their tutors with regard to how poverty situation leads to low quality education and livelihood.

5. Methodology

5.1. Design

This study is a descriptive survey research aimed at investigating the opinions of adult instructors and adult learners on literacy, poverty and livelihood.

5.2. Area of the Study

The study covers all the adult instructors and adult learners in adult literacy centers in Otukpo Education Zone of Benue State.

5.3. Population

The population of this study comprised thirty three adult instructors and one hundred and twenty adult learners in adult literacy centers in Otukpo Education Zone, Benue State.

5.4. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The entire population of thirty three (33) adult instructors and one hundred and twenty (120) and learners in adult literacy centers in Otukpo Education Zone were used.

5.5. Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire, which was face validated by three experts in adult education and measurement and evaluation, faculty of education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. The Questionnaire was entitled: Adult Education, Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation (AELPA), developed by the researcher. The instrument contains twenty five items arranged under five clusters according to five research questions.

The research instrument was developed on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), and Very High extent (VH) High extent (H), Low extent (L) and Very Low (VL).

5.6. Method of Data Analysis

Mean value and standard deviation were used in addressing the research questions. A criterion mean 2.50 was adopted as an agreed. The hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical analysis $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

6. Result and Discussion

The results of this study are presented in tables 1 to 5 below according to the five research questions and two hypotheses that guided the study. Total number of respondents is one hundred and fifty three adult learners and instructors in adult literacy centers Otukpo Education Zone.

- **Research Question One**

How has the poverty situation lead to low quality of education and livelihood?

S/No	Items	Adult Instructors			Adult Learners		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remark	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	The poor cannot afford to pay school fees.	3.02	2.86	A	2.88	2.68	A
2.	They cannot take educational decisions.	3.96	3.03	A	3.73	1.72	A
3.	The poor adhere to cultural practices that do not encourage education.	3.29	1.88	A	3.25	2.35	A
4.	They cannot afford materials for school.	3.55	2.92	A	3.98	2.35	A
5.	Leads to have low self-esteem that affects their performance.	3.39	3.05	A	3.05	2.92	A
6.	They not attend classes regularly.	3.75	2.98	A	3.67	2.96	A

Table 1: How Poverty Leads to Low Quality of Education and Livelihood

Table 1 above, shows that all the listed items are accepted by both adult education and adult learners as poverty situations which lead to low quality education and livelihood.

- **Research Question Two**

To what extent does the poor have access to adult education for sustainable livelihood in Otukpo in Benue State?

S/No	Items	Adult Instructors			Adult Learners		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remark	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Adult education programmes are close to the poor where they live.	3.04	2.82	A	3.01	2.78	A
2.	Adult education programmes are given to the poor free.	2.01	1.78	D	1.70	1.68	D
3.	Materials for Adult education programmes are provided without cost to the poor.	2.00	1.68	D	1.63	1.17	D
4.	Adult education programmes are designed in line with the needs of the poor.	3.08	2.23	A	3.08	2.23	A

Table 2: The extent which the poor have access to adult education for sustainable livelihood

Table 2 above indicates the view of the respondents on extent to which the poor have access to adult education for sustainable livelihood. The table reveals that both adult educators and adult learners agree that the poor have access to adult education in Otukpo in Benue State in two areas, i.e. because adult education programmes are located close to where they live and the programmes are designed in line with the needs of the poor, whereas they did not accept that materials tuition are free.

- **Research Question Three**

What is the influence of existing adult education programmes for poverty alleviation on the people of Otukpo?

S/No	Items	Adult Instructors			Adult Learners		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remark	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Provision of functional literacy like tailoring, hair dressing etc.	3.36	2.96	A	3.57	3.7	A
2.	Training of adults for income generation.	2.94	2.64	A	1.70	3.49	A
3.	Programmes aimed at developing practical skills in vocational education.	3.15	2.90	A	2.88	2.58	A
4.	Provision of post-literacy facilities like news papers etc.	2.98	2.60	A	3.08	2.58	A

Table 3: Influence of existing adult education programs for poverty alleviation

The table 3 above shows that both adult educators and adult learners agreed with the items provided. These have the means of 3.36, 2.94, 3.15 and 2.89 for adult educators while adult learners have the means of 3.57, 3.49, 2.88 and 3.08 respectively. The summary of the table shows that the respondents agreed that all the items provided by adult education highly influence poverty.

- **Research Question Four**

To what extent can adult education reduce poverty for sustainable livelihood?

S/No	Items	Adult Instructors			Adult Learners		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remark	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Adult education equips the poor with livelihood skills.	3.30	3.33	H	3.57	1.94	H
2.	Adult education provides adequate information against superstitious.	4.01	3.01	V.H	2.97	2.78	H
3.	Adult education provides variety of occupation for the poor.	2.96	1.55	H	3.93	2.71	H
4.	Adult education provides information on ways of preventing diseases.	3.35	3.05	H	4.18	2.39	V.H
5.	Adult education help the poor acquire right attitude of environmental sanitation.	2.72	1.6	H	2.86	1.69	H

Table 4: Extent to which Adult Education can reduce poverty for sustainable livelihood

Data on table 4 revealed that adult educators are of the opinion that four out of the five items can highly reduce poverty for sustainable livelihood. 3.3, 3.35, and 2.75 while adult learners are of the view that the entire items provided with the mean scores of 3.57, 2.97, 3.93, 4.18, and 2.87 respectively can highly reduce poverty for sustainable livelihood.

- **Research Question Five**

What are the strategies to be employed to improve the educational standard of the poor?

S/No	Items	Adult Instructors			Adult Learners		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remark	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Creation of awareness and mass mobilization of the people.	3.27	3.17	A	3.03	2.09	A
2.	Provision of practical skills for self-help employment.	3.74	3.01	A	3.43	2.76	A
3.	Each one teaches one or funds the teaching of one.	2.92	1.47	A	2.88	2.62	A
4.	Provide free education for adult learners and bring education closer to their homes.	3.56	2.31	A	2.96	2.70	A
5.	Provision of free instructional materials.	3.33	2.96	A	3.56	3.21	A
6.	Conducive environment for learning and functional education.	2.96	2.76	A	2.78	2.25	A

Table 5: Strategies for improving the educational standard of the poor

Table 5 above reveals that the respondents agreed with all the items provided as the strategies to be employed in improving the educational standard of the poor.

- **Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Instructors and Adult Learners on the extent to which adult education reduce poverty for sustainable livelihood.

S/No	No of Respondents	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Calculated	Table Value of Critical	Decision
Adult Instructors	33	3.49	2.79	151			
					0.58	1.96	Not Significant
Adult Learner	120	3.43	2.50				

Table 6: T-test Analysis of Significant Difference between Mean Ratings of Respondents

Table 6 indicates a mean of 2.97 for adult instructors and a mean of 2.86 for adult learners. This was further subject to t-test analysis to determine if there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of the two groups. The t-test result shows that the t-calculated 0.58 is less than the t-critical, 1.96 hence the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of adult instructors and adult learners on the extent adult education reduces poverty.

- **Hypothesis 2**

There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of adult Instructors and Adult Learners on how poverty lead to low quality education and livelihood.

S/No	No of Respondents	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Calculated	Table Value of Critical	Decision
Adult Instructors	33	3.49	2.79	151			
					0.18	1.96	Not Significant
Adult Learner	120	3.43	2.50				

Table 7: T-test Analysis of Significant Difference between Mean Ratings of Respondents

Table 7 above reveals a mean of 3.49 for adult instructors and a mean of 3.43 for adult learners. The t-test analysis shows that the t-calculated of 0.18 is less than the critical value of 1.96; hence the null hypothesis is accepted. This is to show that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of adult instructors and adult learners on how poverty situations lead to low quality education and livelihood.

7. Discussion

The findings showed that both adult educators and adult learners accepted that the valuable are poverty situations that lead to low quality of adult education and livelihood. This finding is right, because if one cannot afford to pay one's school fees, and adheres to cultural practices that do not encourage education, has low self-esteem which affects performance, and cannot attend classes regularly etc. the obvious will be low quality education which will in turn result to low quality of live. Finding two revealed that the instructors and adult learners agreed that they have access to items one and four while variables two and three are not accessible to them. The findings are also correct, because in most states of Nigeria, adult education centres are located in areas that can be easily accessed by everybody, so also the content of the programme is designed in line with the needs of the learners. The truth is also that the programme and material being provided freely are far fetched, because of these problems; adults are not in programme because they cannot afford it. These findings agree with the findings of Ugbaja (2008) which says that lack of access of basic services affects the poor from utilizing adult education to improve their livelihood.

The findings on existing poverty alleviation programmes indicated that all the variables are part of poverty alleviation on ground to address poverty. The fact that the adult members of the state are not utilizing these programmes may not be unconnected with the findings on research question two which showed that they cannot afford to pay school fees, and they adhere to cultural practices that do not encourage education etc.

Finding on the extent adult education can reduce poverty revealed that all the items are ways adult education programmes can reduce poverty and enhance sustainable development to high and very high extents. These findings are in agreement with the findings of DFID (2005) which sees adult as an effective tool that can be used in the present attempt to reduce poverty by the 2015. The results on strategies for improving the educational standard of the poor showed the provision of all the variables will enhance the educational standard of the poor and be co-relate of a better livelihood. This finding is in line with Obo (2008) for poverty to be reduced and to achieve sustainable livelihood, there is need to integrate adult education in poverty reduction programmes.

The two null hypothesis were upheld which showed that both the instructors and learners shared the same views virtually in all the findings. The obvious here, is that, given all the potential of adult education, if rightly and properly utilized, will reduce poverty and improve the standard of living. On the other hand, if poverty is not property addressed, it will lead to low quality of education and low quality of live too.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered.

- Adult education should be adequately funded by participants, government, non-governmental organization and development partners. This will enable the adult educators to implement the available curriculum that relates to adult education and also help to provide post literacy materials to adult learners.
- The federal government should make adult education compulsory for adults that are illiterate in their various localities. This will help to impact knowledge and skills that can reduce poverty.
- Policy makers should emphasize Adult Education in the universal basic education programs, so as to show its relevance on the present adult learners in the various literacy centers in Otukpo Educational Zone.

- Federal government should make adult education free for all illiterate adults. This will enable the marginalized adults to have access to education.
- Free instructional materials and free post-literacy follow up materials should be provided for adult learners by the three arms of government. This will further encourage them to show much interest in adult education.
- The issue of each-one-teach-one or fund the teaching of one should be everybody's business with NNCAE super-heading it.

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