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IMPACT OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION ON POVERTY ERADICATION AMONG ADULT LEARNERS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

¹Abiodun O. OLAWUNI

*Department of Adult and Primary Education
Faculty of Education
University of Ilorin
olawuni.ao@unilorin.edu.ng*

²Tajudeen O. NOIBI

*Department of Adult and Primary Education
noibi.to@unilorin.edu.ng*

Sa'ad A. IBRAHIM

Department of Adult and Primary Education

Abstract

The success of every society depends intensely on the quality and quantity of education of its citizens. Community education was designed to empower the adult learners with basic literacy and functional education needed for their improvement. It has been a bottleneck to improving the implementation of an adult literacy program in the study area. The government and individuals have yearned for a functional Adult Literacy program but to no avail. The study is descriptive survey research. The population of the study comprises of all adult learners in Ilorin metropolis while simple random sampling techniques was used to select 107 respondents that was used for the analysis. Three research questions were raised and answered in the study with frequency counts and percentages. Findings from the selected respondents as a representative sample were generalized to the entire target population. One of the significant findings was that community education has contributed to poverty eradication among adult learners in the Ilorin metropolis at a high level. It exposes participants to different opportunities to depend on their own without relying on the government. It has a positive impact on the socio-economic development of the study area. It was recommended that government and non-governmental invest heavily in community education by budgeting adequate funds for community education in the Ilorin metropolis. The study concluded that community education in the Ilorin metropolis is a viable and good program worthy of encouragement.

Keywords: Impact, community education, poverty eradication and adult learners

Introduction

Education is generally acknowledged as a weapon for development by various scholars (Gerhard 2000 & Preece 2007). It is a tool for the transformation and empowerment of citizens in a country. As a developing country, Nigeria sees education as a catalyst for empowerment that provides communities with the necessary skills required for good social living. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2007) submits that education is an instrument par excellence for effective national

development. This view of development is traced to the economic perspective. Suffice to say that development could be viewed from different perspectives. On the other hand, national development entails all activities engaged by a nation to enhance the standard of living. Adebayo (2012) explains that the primary purpose of national development is the liberation of its citizens from the shackles of poverty.

Community education involves using community learning resources and research to bring about community change and recognition that people can learn through with and from each other to create a better world. Ezimah (2004) added that it aims to raise consciousness, spread understanding, and provide the necessary skills, including the human and material resources, for the community's social, economic, political, and cultural development. The array of definitions of community education points to the fact that it is an organised learning activity directed to communities to improve their standard of living. Interestingly, it is the education for peoples' empowerment over their own lives in order to bring about transformation and change in individuals, communities, societies and nations. Anyanwu (2004) noted that the philosophy of community education is tied up with the idea of enabling people to exploit their resources and use such to increase their competence and confidence in handling their affairs. The attainment of excellence as conceived by the Federal Republic of Nigeria requires diversity in training such as formal, informal and non-formal.

Community education is an aspect of non-formal education. It is an adult education programme geared at empowering community members for enhanced quality of life. Akande (2003) opined that community education as a type of education needed to ensure self-confidence, self-respect and personal independence as well as to safeguard human rights to achieve social equality. It is a veritable tool for stimulating community members to actively participate in social activities that would generate employment, increase their incomes, and improve their quality of life. Two schools of thought have emerged in the definition of community education as conceived by Anyanwu (2004). The first sees community education as a guide to community development activities. In this school, emphasis is placed on the material improvement of communities and the achievement of tangible goals. The second views community education in terms of building up communities. It involves the improvement of learners in the community.

Poverty is a phenomenon that is multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary. The term has been subjected to a variety of interpretations by scholars in different areas of endeavour. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) (2005) classifies poverty to structural, economic, social, cultural and political deprivation. As a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon, Adebayo (2001) explains

that poverty goes beyond the condition of lack of resources and extends to social inequality, insecurity, illiteracy, poor health, and restricted or total lack of opportunity for personal growth self-realization. As a human condition, Preece (2010) describes poverty in terms of sustained or chronic deprivation of resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Some other writers have conceptualized the term in terms of being absolute or relative. As absolute, Ogwumike and Ozughala (2009) submit that it is characterized by inadequate health facilities, poor quality of education and low life expectancy. It is relative when a household possesses per capital of less than 1/3 of the average per capital income of the country concerned. Poverty from this wide range of meaning denotes the deprivation that incapacitates an individual or group of people to effectively and freely exercise their rights on issues of personal and collective concerns. This view corroborates with Adebayo's (2001) stipulation that poverty takes various forms. This includes lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods, hunger, malnutrition, ill-health, limited or no access to education, homelessness, inadequate housing, unsafe environments, and social discrimination and exclusion. It also included restrictions on or lack of participation in the decision-making process in civil, social and cultural life.

Prior to the emergence of Western education in the Ilorin metropolis, Islamic education was comprehensive, effective, and less expensive. It was also community-based, where community members enrolled their words children to Islamic teaching, boys and girls were given Islamic education that enabled them to fulfill masculine and feminine responsibilities in the community. Consequently, the philosophy that undermines community education as relevant to people's needs, aspirations and locally-based was evident. However, with the emergence of western education in Ilorin metropolis, there seems to be a wrong notion among people on what community education actually is and therefore wonders how it could serve as a catalyst for eradicating poverty. These problems emanate from the fact that community education is multi-dimensional, and differ in scope and interpretations by various writers. However, it is doubtful whether community education has contributed to the eradication poverty in Ilorin metropolis. Informed by this, the researchers attempt to assess the level of contribution of community education in eradicating poverty in Ilorin metropolis.

Community education involves all those occupations and methods concerned with running education and development programmes within Ilorin metropolis. The programmes include Agric

Extension, apprenticeship, community mobilization, and vocational skill training for skill acquisition among the people in the communities. But according to Olori (2008), poverty means the inability of a person or household to meet the basic necessities of life. It is a situation where the resources of individuals or families are not enough to support its members. And the conditions are not up to the minimum socially acceptable standard of living. Community education can be traced back to the lackadaisical attitude of the early missionaries and colonial administrators to the traditional community education in Nigeria. The significance of the study term forms the erroneous assumptions that community education has not contributed to the eradication poverty in Ilorin metropolis. The theme of this study is to point out this idea is grossly misleading. They discredited traditional community education because it lacked literacy and proper documentation. Also, it failed to address the issue of poverty. This eventually led to a general acceptance of the Western system of formal education and culture.

One of the characteristics of a third world country is poverty. The majority are so poor that they cannot feed well, live in a good house, have a good education, medical attention etc. Some signs of poverty that can affect Adult learners include mental and physical nutrition, educational deprivation, child and women abuse, hunger and malnutrition, increase in crime and many adult learners mainly do not have shelter over their head. Poverty Alleviation is a plan devised by authority in power to release its citizen from poverty and its attendant problems. Nigeria government introduced so many programmes in order to stop poverty in the country. They initiated and implemented many programmes for alleviating poverty. These programmes are 1972 General Gowon's National Accelerated Food Production programme, 1976 General Obasanjo's Operation Feed the Nation and 1979 Shagari's Green Revolution programme. Mrs. Mariam Babangida brought women to the lime light when she introduced her Better Life for Rural Women programme between 1985 and 1993. The programme was changed to Family Support programme during Abacha's regime which was a pet project of Mariam Abacha.

Statement of the Problem

Community education plays a significant role in reducing poverty by educating the people on using their resources to improve their living conditions. This high level of poverty can be noticed by some indications like high rate of drop-out from schools, low standard of living among the populace, poor feeding and high rate of begging along the streets. However, despite the contribution of

community education, empirical studies to ascertain the extent of contribution of this education in eradicating poverty in Ilorin metropolis to the researchers' best knowledge have not been adequately conducted. Community education is the best way to education and improve the present level of poverty in the study areas. The absence of these studies in Ilorin metropolis has provided a knowledge gap, which this present study intends to fill. Therefore, the problem of this study is to assess the extent to which community education has contributed to eradicating poverty among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess the extent community education has contributed to poverty eradication among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis. The objectives of the study are specifically to:

1. Determine how community education could serve as a catalyst for the eradication of poverty among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis.
2. Find out the inhibiting factors affecting community education from eradicating poverty among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis.
3. To find out the significance of community education in poverty alleviation among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed to guide the study:

1. To what extent has community education contributed to poverty eradication among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis?
2. What inhibiting factors prevent community education from eradicating poverty among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis?
3. What are the factors that are significant of community education in poverty alleviation among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis?

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will increase the understanding of the level of poverty and how they can be eradicated. It would also be of help to the NGOs and government agencies to effectively cooperate with International and local organizations to increase awareness on poverty eradication. However,

this study is significant in the sense that it will help to highlight the process of collective enlightenment, political awareness mobilization, inculcation of values and necessary skills needed for the better living of adult learners in Ilorin metropolis.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This design aimed to assess respondents' opinion on how community education has contributed to eradicating poverty among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis. The population of the study comprises all the adult learners in Ilorin metropolis. This study used a purposive random sampling technique procedure to select 35 adult learners in each Local Government Area of Ilorin, making 105 adult learners.

The instrument that was used for this study is 16 items researcher designed questionnaire on the features and parameters of community education and poverty which was used to seek responses from the adult learners. The questionnaire consists of sections A and B. Section A was used to elicit information about the respondents while section B consists of closed-ended questions that were used to draw information on the impact of community education on poverty eradication among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis. Respondents are expected to tick created boxes of columns where they Strongly Agree (S.A); Agree (A); Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (S.D) to the given statements. The respondents responses was coded 1-4 where Strongly Agree-4, Agree-3, Disagree-2 and Strongly Disagree-1.

For the purpose of this study, face and content validity was established by giving out the researcher designed questionnaire to the researcher supervisor and two experts in the field of adult education. The researcher distributed the well-structured questionnaires personally by visiting the selected adult literacy centers in Ilorin metropolis. A pilot study was done to ensure the reliability of the data-gathering instrument. The researcher pilot tests the instrument with 20 adult learners in 2 adult literacy centres who are not part of the study's respondents. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.75. The collected data was analyzed using frequency and percentage.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	64	59.8
Female	43	40.2
Total	107	100.0

As shown in Table 1, 64(59.8%) of the respondents were males while 43(40.2%) were females. This shows that more males participated in the study than females. The participants were asked to indicate their marital status as shown in the Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
< 30	77	72.0
31-40	19	17.8
41-50	11	10.3
Total	107	100.0

As shown in the table 2, 77(72.0%) were aged between 30 years, 19 (17.8%) were between 31 and 40 years while 11(10.3%) were between 41 and 50 years. This shows that most the respondents were between the ages of 30 years.

Research Question One

To what extent has community education contributed to poverty eradication among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 3: Level of Contribution of Community Education to Poverty Eradication

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	4	3.7
Medium	13	12.1
High	90	84.1
Total	107	100.0

Results from table 3 show that 90 respondents out of 107 respondents believe that community education has contributed to poverty eradication among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis at a high level. They aimed that if community education is well embraced in the study areas, the level of poverty will be eradicated. The community people will see the need to develop themselves and improve their level of living through doing what will bring food and shelter to them.

Research Question Two

What inhibiting factors affect community education from eradicating poverty among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents Opinion on Inhibiting Factors Affecting Community Education from Eradicating Poverty among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis

Items	SA F(%)	A F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)	Remark
Inadequate funding of educational project in the community	59(55.1)	41(38.3)	5(4.7)	2(1.9)	Inhibit
Corruption among leaders of the community	44(41.1)	54(50.5)	6(5.6)	3(2.8)	Inhibit
Incessant communal, ethics, regional she religions conflicts	47(43.9)	50(46.7)	7(6.5)	3(2.8)	Inhibit
The non-involvement of beneficiaries by community development programs in the decision making for the effectiveness of the program.	50(46.7)	48(44.9)	7(6.5)	2(1.9)	Inhibit
Lack of effective collaboration among the Non-Governmental-Organizations involved in the promotion of community education.	52(48.6)	42(39.3)	9(8.4)	4(3.7)	Inhibit

Results from Table 4 shows that 55.1% of the respondents strongly agree that inadequate funding of educational project in the community is one of the inhibiting factors that affect community education from eradicating poverty among Adult learners in Ilorin metropolis. Also, from the results in table 6, 52 respondents out of 107 respondents strongly agree that lack of effective collaboration among the Non-Governmental-Organizations involved in the promotion of community education is an inhibiting factor that affects community education from eradicating poverty among Adult learners in Ilorin metropolis.

Research Question Three

What are the factors that are significant of community education in poverty alleviation among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 5: Distribution of factors that are significant of community education to alleviate Poverty among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis.

Items	SA F(%)	A F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)	Remark
Community education helps to in advocating policy that helps the economic in the community.	81(75.7)	18(16.8)	5(4.7)	3(2.8)	Significant
Established of harmonious relationship in the society	44(41.1)	50(46.7)	10(9.3)	3(2.8)	Significant
Community education leads to growth and development of the society.	64(59.8)	31(29.0)	11(10.3)	1(20.9)	Significant
Community education improves the standard of living of members of the community.	54(50.5)	43(40.2)	8(7.5)	2(1.9)	Significant
Community education provides employment opportunity for the teeming youth in the society.	62(57.9)	30(28.0)	12(11.2)	3(2.8)	Significant
Community education develops responsible leadership among adult learners.	54(50.5)	35(32.7)	14(13.1)	4(3.7)	Significant

Results from Table 5 shows that community education helping in advocating policy that helps the economic in the community is a significant factor in alleviating poverty among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis. Another significant factor in alleviating poverty among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis is that community education leads to growth and development of the society, this was strongly agreed to by 59.8% of the respondents in this study.

Discussions of Findings

The study focused on the impact of a community of education on poverty eradication among adult learners in the Ilorin metropolis. Shown in Table 1, 77(72.0%) were between 30 years while 19(17.8) were aged 31-40 years 11(10.3%) were 41-50 above. This shows that most of the respondents were between the ages of 30 years. The implication is that the youths that suppose to be the backbone of the economy in the study areas were lying idle and jobless. Instead of being engaged in reasonable

and economic activities, they were nowhere to be found and this will eventually give room for high level of poverty in the study areas.

The findings revealed based on Table 3 provided an answer for the research question one. It was said that community education has significantly contributed to poverty eradication among adult learners in the Ilorin metropolis.

Findings in research question one showed that the extent to which community education has contributed to the eradication of poverty among communities in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State was high. Supporting the findings, respondents indicated that the rate at which of Ilorin metropolis enrolls in community education was very high. There was adequate publicity of the community education in the study area. This is not unconnected with the fact that enlightened community members tend to make positive contributions to developing their environment. This further corroborates with Akande (2003) stipulation that community education is capable of ensuring self-confidence, self-respect, and personal independence and safeguarding human rights for the attainment of social equality. Anyanwu (2004) added that it introduces and strengthens democracy at the grassroots level.

Research question two revealed various factors inhibiting community education from eradicating poverty among adult learners in the Ilorin metropolis. As indicated by respondents, some of these factors included corruption among the leader of the community, incessant communal, ethics, and religion conflicts, and the non-involvement of direct beneficiaries in decision-making. The findings further noted that inadequate funding of projects, non-involvement of professionals, and poor maintenance culture were also identified as contributing factors. This finding is supported by Akande (2003), who identifies lack of political will as one of the challenges facing community education. The significant difference further shows that the respondents have similar views regarding the extent to which community education has contributed to eradicating poverty among adult learners.

Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of community education on poverty eradication among adult learners in Ilorin metropolis. The finding revealed that community education has contributed to the poverty eradication in Ilorin metropolis. This high-level contribution of community education was associated with several factors. If these inhibiting factors were taken care of effectively, poverty will be eradicated to the minimal level in the study areas. These will lead to the improvement of the

standard of living of members of the community, provision of employment opportunity for teeming youth in the community, established harmonious relationship in the society and it will encourage transparency among some of the leaders in the community. The beneficiaries should be involved in decision-making and professionals in community education affairs should be employed with high educational attainment of most community members and maintenance culture of existing projects.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The services of professionals in community education affairs should be more employed in organising and coordinating community education activities.
2. Sensitisation on the importance of community education should be made through awareness campaigns.
3. More adult education programs should be established to accommodate the varying needs of the communities.
4. Beneficiaries of projects should be encouraged to participate in decision-making affecting their well-being in the community.
5. Synergy between the government and community leaders should be intensified for better implementation of policies affecting the communities.
6. Adequate funding should be allocated to community education.

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