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By Rachael Tamunotonye Standford & Dr. Doreen Kobani

Rivers State University

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Keywords: *adult education, adult education programmes, poverty, poverty alleviation.*

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Roles of Adult Education Programmes in Poverty Alleviation in Okrika and Port Harcourt City Local Government Area, Rivers State

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Keywords: adult education, adult education programmes, poverty, poverty alleviation.

I. Introduction

In Rivers State, evidence of poverty is visible in most part of the rural communities despite her endowments of human, mineral and material resources. Government in an effort to alleviate the suffering of the people established Commissions such as School-to-land, Songhai farm, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), and so on. These commissions in the blue print designed different adult education programmes for capacity building among the different categories of community members. Capacity building is a process whereby individuals learn to change the status quo. Therefore, building people's capacities changes the myopic view of people about their lifestyles to a widened one and thus they have the view that they have the right to be the authors of their own development and denying them this right leads to poverty and suffering.

Notably among the adult education programmes for poverty alleviation are remedial adult education programme, community education programme, vocational education programme, agricultural and health extension programmes, citizenship education, and so on. Majority of the adult populace at the grassroots level lack adequate education and need capacity building through adult education programmes and this prompt government and non-governmental organisation to design and implement different adult educational programmes for capacity building among the populace in order to alleviate their poverty status. Some of these adult education programmes designed at the rural level and scattered across different communities in Rivers State for the benefit of the people and improvement of their welfare include adult basic literacy, health literacy programmes, vocational skills acquisition programmes, welding training programme, fashion design training programme, interior decoration and event planning, and so on, are. The presence of these adult education programmes and how it has been alleviating the poverty status of the community members in selected communities in Rivers State is what prompts this study.

Adult education trains people with various occupations to enble them improve their working efficiency and increase their productivity. This type of adult education helps people to apply their new knowledge and skills to solve basic economic and social problems. Adult education is rooted in lifelong learning which involves the pursuit of knowledge either for personal or professional reasons (Department of Education and Science in Onyeozu and Okorie 2018). Darkenwald and Merrian in Onyeozu and Okorie (2018) pointed out that adult education is concerned not with preparing people for life, but rather with helping people to live more successfully. Thus, if there is to be an overarching function of adult education enterprise, it is to:

1. Assist adults to increase competence, or negotiate transitions, in their social roles (as worker, parent, retiree, and so on.)

Author α σ: Department of Adult and Community Development, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. e-mail: christokorie2008@yahoo.com

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2. Help them gain greater fulfillment in their personal lives, and to assist them in solving personal and community problems.

The aim of adult education is to involve everyone in life-long learning as it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development but also competitiveness and employability. The implication of this is that adult education is for all; whether having special needs or not. It also implies that learning is not confirmed to childhood, classroom or persons without special needs but to everyone (Gerhard, 2000). In adult education, learning can be seen as something that takes place in an ongoing basis from our daily interactions with the world around us. Adult education becomes a useful tool in freeing people from poverty-ridden situations. Adult education programmes are geared toward empowering beneficiaries to become self-sufficient and self-reliant through skill development for present and future employment. Maulau (2013) observed that is a tool for empowerment and subsequently a tool for raising one's living standard, that lead to poverty reduction not only in persons without special needs but also in people with special needs. Maulau (2013) further asserted that adult education programmes include all activities with educational purposes, carried on by people in the ordinary business of life that use only part of their energy to acquire intellectual equipment.

Ajaikaye and Adeyeye (2001) defined poverty as a situation in which an individual is unable because of economic, social, political and psychological incapacitation to provide for himself, and his family the basic necessities of life. World Bank cited in Olatomide (2012) saw poverty in very broad terms, such as being unable to meet "basic needs" (physical-food, health care, education, shelter, and so on) and non-physical needs (participation, identity, etc) requirements for a meaningful life. Sen cited in Olatomide (2012) related poverty to entitlements which are taken to be the various bundles of goods and services over which one has command, taking into cognizance the means by which such goods are acquired (for example, money and coupons etc) and the availability of the needed goods. Poverty may arise from changes in average income or changes in the distribution of income. Poverty can be conceptualised in four ways which include:

1. These are lack of access to basic needs/goods;
2. A result of lack of or impaired access to productive resources;
3. Outcome of inefficient use of common resources; and
4. Result of "exclusive mechanisms".

Poverty according to Walton in Adeyeye (2017) has many dimensions, such as inadequate income; malnutrition; lack of access to social services; and lack of social and political status. This is in line with Oluwakemi (2012) description of the poor as one whose economic dimension centers on nature, and level of material deprivations which afflict them and distinguish them from the non-poor. The poor according to Oluwakemi (2012), are those at the bottom of economic ladder while the non-poor are those at the top of the ladder, and who are not afflicted with material deprivation. United Nation (2005) described poverty as the inabilities by individual in a society of getting choices and opportunities, which includes not having:

1. Enough to feed and clothe one's family
2. Access to education and school to attend
3. The land to grow food for personal consumption
4. Access to medical facilities or clinic to visit
5. The opportunity to hold a job to earn a living

Furthermore, World Bank (2011), also describe the state of been poor to encompass deprivation in well-being which includes low incomes; and the inability to acquire basic goods and services deemed necessary for survival with dignity; poor access to clean water and sanitation; low levels of health and education; inadequate physical security; lack of voice; and inadequate capacity and opportunity to better one's life Dokubo (2017) further maintained that poverty is not only lack of means of providing material needs or comforts, it encompasses lack or denial of opportunities for some category of person in the society. that it is a condition in which a person finds himself unable to maintain a living standard adequate for his physical and mental efficiency. Murktar (2011) identified the following as causes of poverty are:

1. Inadequate access to employment opportunities
2. Inadequate physical assets.
3. Inadequate access to markets.
4. Destruction of natural resources.
5. Lack of power to participate in design of development programmes.
6. Inadequate access to assistance for those living at the margin.

To summarise the causes of poverty, Dokubo (2017) contended that root causes of poverty emanates from the environment in which the individual finds himself. Dokubo (2017), further maintained that in poverty is socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political based. These are explained as follows:

1. In the socio-cultural context, culture, traditions and norms inherent in some society limits certain segment of the society to poverty by denying them access to resources for productive activities. For example, women are the major victims of this kind of poverty.
2. In the socio-economic context, lack of availability of resources, high level of illiteracy, lack of employment, poor infrastructural development, access to micro-credit facilities, and so on.

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3. In the socio-political context, poverty is caused by mismanagement of public funds, bad governance, political instability, bad policies, and so no.

Poverty have serious negative bearing on community and nation at large as pointed out by Ogwudire, Egesi, and Okorouga (2013), they observed that the consequences of poverty include;

1. Loss of confidence
2. Poverty renders people vulnerable to external influence because they are poor there is loss of self-confidence and they are at the lowest ebb of self-esteem.
3. It makes production remain on subsistence level due to lack of capital needed for expansion. Labour becomes intensive but productivity is low.

Therefore, in response to the ever-increasing poverty rate in Nigeria and the need for eradication of poverty as a means of improving the standard of living of the people, led to the conceptualisation and implementation of various target or non-targeted poverty alleviation programmes by successive Nigeria government at federal, state, and local level. Poverty alleviation involves measures put in place to improve the living condition of people who are poor. However, it is sad to observe that all these efforts have not produced the desired results as they have only achieved modest successes while the level of poverty still remain high. Several reasons have been given for the failure of these institutions and programmes (Aliyu, cited in Aluko, 2003).

Adult education remains a fundamental principle for capacity building in a bid to alleviate people from poverty because of its multidisciplinary nature and its various programmes. Adult education provides education for people that need basic education skills and other diverse needs and for whom there is no other place to go for such. As education that provide second chances for adult, the importance lies in its capacity to empower the beneficiaries for greater exploit in life because when one is educated, there is no limitation to what one can do to break out of poverty. Some of the adult education programmes for poverty alleviation in Nigeria include remedial adult education, vocational and technical of adult education, civil, political and community education, self-fulfillment and liberal adult education, functional literacy education programmes and so on.

II. Statement of the Study

Rivers State Government in an attempt to alleviate the poor conditions of community members across the state and as part of state government effort toward the development of the people and the society at large, designed functional literacy programme, vocational skills, technical education programmes, health literacy education programmes, These programmes were mainly capacity building programmes for beneficiaries that will enable them achieve improved quality of lives and status in their respective communities.

The availability of these programmes motivated the researcher to carry out this study to examine the extent to which the adult education programmes provided by the Rivers State Government in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas for poverty alleviation have been achieving the objectives of poverty alleviation among women in the areas. Thus the question now is to what extent have these adult education programmes improve status, promoted capacity building, promoted productivity, and so on among the community members?. To answer these questions is the problem of the study.

III. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the roles of adult education programmes in poverty alleviation in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas of Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the extent to which remedial adult education programme has promoted capacity building among community member for poverty alleviation in Okrika and Portharcourt Local Government Areas.
2. Investigate the extent to which functional literacy programme has empowered community members for improved productivity for poverty alleviation in Okrika and Portharcourt Local Government Areas.
3. Investigate the extent to which vocational skills and technical education programmes have equipped community members with requisite vocational/ occupational skills for sell-reliance against poverty alleviation in Okrika and Portharcourt Local Government Areas.

IV. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent has remedial adult education programme promoted capacity building among community member for poverty alleviation in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas?.
2. To what extent has functional literacy programme empowered community members for improve productivity in selected communities in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas?.
3. To what extent has vocational skills and technical education programme provided community members with requisite vocational /occupational skills for sell-reliance in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas?.

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V. Hypotheses

HO_1: There is no significance difference in the mean response of respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas on the extent to which remedial adult education programme has promoted capacity building among community member for poverty alleviation.

HO_2: There is no significance difference in the mean response of respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas on the extent to which functional literacy programme has empowered community members for improve productivity for poverty alleviation.

HO_3: There is no significance difference in the mean response of respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas on the extent to which vocational skills and technical education programmes have equipped community members with requisite vocational/occupational skills of sell-reliance for poverty alleviation.

VI. Methodology

The research design that was adopted for this study is analytical survey to investigate the roles of Rivers State Government adult education programmes for poverty alleviation in the area of study. The study was carried out in Okrika and Port Harcourt City Local Government Areas, Rivers State Nigeria, who are beneficiaries of remedial adult education, functional literacy and vocational skills and technical education programmes, constituted the population of the study, out of which 2,828 beneficiaries were proportionately sampled. The instrument used for this study was a 20-item validated questionnaire titled "Roles of Adult Education Programmes in Poverty Alleviation Questionnaire (RAEPPAQ)" designed by the Researcher in a four-point modified Likert response scale format. The instrument has a reliability index of 0.74 and was considered high and reliable for the study. The researcher administered the instrument with the help of two trained Research Assistants. 2,828 copies of questionnaire were distributed and 2772 copies representing 98.02% were retrieved and used for analysis. The data was analysed with mean statistic and T-test statistics. A criterion mean of 2.5 was used for decision taking on the items in the questionnaire. Means above 2.5 were accepted as positive responses while those below 2.5 were rejected as negative responses.

VII. Result

Research Question One: To what extent has remedial adult education programme promoted capacity building among community member for poverty alleviation in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas?.

Table 1: Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Remedial Adult Education Programme for Capacity Building

S/N	Statements	PHALGA		OKRIKA		Decision
		X	SD	X	SD	
1	Through the remedial adult education programme, you are now equipped for effective use of opportunities provided by the programmes for improved standard of living	3.68	0.580	3.74	0.540	Agree
2	Through the remedial adult education programme, you have upgrade your skills for employability and job performance	3.76	0.559	3.61	0.529	Agree
3	Through the remedial adult education programme, you have increased your productivity and income thereby reducing poverty level.	3.62	0.653	3.46	0.604	Agree
4	Through the remedial adult education programme, you have improved your access to economic empowerment	3.59	0.714	3.69	0.694	Agree
5	Through the remedial adult education programme, you are now exposed to different income generating activities	3.57	0.760	3.65	0.773	Agree
		3.64	0.642	3.53	0.628	Agree

Table 1 shows items 1-15 with weighted mean scores of 3.68, 3.76, 3.72, 3.59, and 3.57 with corresponding SD of 0.580, 0.559, 0.653, 0.714 and 0.760 for PHALGA, and 3.74, 3.61, 3.46, 3.69, and 3.65 with corresponding SD of 0.540, 0.529, 0.604,0.694 and 0.773 respectively for Okrika Local Government Area are positive response rates since the means are all greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The overall analysis on the items gave a grand mean of 3.64 for PHALGA and 3.58 for Okrika Local Government Areas, which are also greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and implies that remedial adult education programme provided for poverty alleviation to a high extent have promoted capacity building among community members by equipping them with relevant skills for improved standard of living; access to economic empowerment; employability and job performance, increase in productivity and income; improved access to economic empowerment; and community members exposure to different income generating activities.

Research Question Two: To what extent has functional literacy programme empowered community members for improve productivity in selected communities in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas?.

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Table 2: Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of functional literacy for Improve Productivity

S/N	Statements	PHALGA X	PHALGA SD	OKRIKA X	OKRIKA SD	Decision
6	Knowledge gained from the functional literacy programme have helped me to grow my trade	3.73	0.540	3.70	0.527	Agree
7	Knowledge gained from the functional literacy programme have helped me do better ion my agricultural production	3.69	0.551	3.61	0.649	Agree
8	Knowledge gained from the functional literacy programme have helped me to access loan for my occupation	3.64	0.622	3.46	0.637	Agree
9	Knowledge gained from the functional literacy programme have helped me do my business in a more profitable way	3.71	0.736	3.69	0.564	Agree
10	Knowledge gained from the functional literacy programme have helped me to grow my trade	3.74	0.540	3.65	0.743	Agree
		3.7	0.597	3.62	0.624	Agree

Table 2 shows that functional literacy programme have empowered community members on improve productivity skills for poverty alleviation. The result is shown on the table where all the weighted mean scores on all the items are 3.71, 3.73 3.74, 3.71 and 3.62 are all greater than 2.5 which is the criterion mean and implies positive response rate. Their corresponding SD deviations are all positive too. The overall analysis on the table gave a grand mean of 3.70, this is also greater than the criterion mean and implies that respondents were of the opinion that RSSDA agricultural development programme have equipped community members with relevant knowledge and skills to grow their trade, agricultural production, access loan for my occupation of a more profitable way of doing business, and how to earn more income.

Research Question 3: To what extent has vocational skills and technical education programme provided community members with requisite vocational/ occupational skills for sell-reliance in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas?.

Table 3: Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Vocational Skills and Technical Education Programme and Vocational /Occupational Skills for Sell-Reliance

S/N	Statements	PHALGA X	PHALGA SD	OKRIKA X	OKRIKA SD	Decision
11	You are an employer of labour due to empowerment you gained from the government vocational skills acquisition programmes	3.67	0.632	3.63	0.567	Agree
12	You no longer depend on people for money due to your ability to work out money from the training I received	3.68	0.690	3.74	0.565	Agree
13	You are gainfully employed now due to your ability to produce things on my own form the skill I acquired.	3.71	0.789	3.73	0.628	Agree
14	You can now train other people due to the skills you have acquired	3.68	0.844	3.23	0.651	Agree
15	Through the skill acquisition programme, you now have other sources of income	3.62	0.588	3.33	0.714	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.64	0.709	3.53	0.625	Agree

Table 3 shows that the respondents were of the opinion that government vocational skills prgramme to a high extent have equipped PHALGA and Okrika local government area community members with relevant skills for sell-reliance. This is indicated on the table where all the weighted means on the items 11-15 for PHALGA respondents gave mean scores of 3.67, 3.68, 3.71, 3.68 and 3.62 are all greater than the criterion mean of 2.5, and also their corresponding standard deviations which are 0.632, 0.690, 0.789,0.844 and 0.588;and that of Okrika local government area respondents also gave mean scores of 3.53, 3.74, 3.73, 3.23, and 3.33 with corresponding positive SDs of 0.567, 0.565, 0.628, 0.652, and 0.714 respectively which are all positive response rate.

HO_1: There is no significance difference in the mean response of respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas on the extent to which remedial adult education programme has promoted capacity building among community member for poverty alleviation.

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Table 4.7: T-Test Result on the difference in the mean response of respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas on the extent to which remedial adult education programme has promoted capacity building among community member for poverty alleviation.

Groups	N	X	SD	Df	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Sig. level	Decision
Okrika LGA	1355	3.63	0.6472					
		3.53	0.628	2770	4.429	1.96	.000	Reject HO_2
PHALGA	1417							

The table shows that the calculated t-value obtained is 4.429, while the critical table value t-crit at degree of freedom of 2 (2770) is 1.96. Since the t-cal value is greater than the t-crit value, we reject the null hypothesis and accept that there is significance difference in the mean response of respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas on the extent to which remedial adult education programme has promoted capacity building among community member for poverty alleviation.

HO_2: There is no significance difference in the mean response of respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas on the extent to which functional literacy programme has empowered community members for improve productivity for poverty alleviation.

Table 4.8: T-Test Result on Difference in the Mean Response of Respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt LGAs on the Extent to which Functional Literacy Programme has Empowered Community Members for Improve Productivity for Poverty Alleviation.

Groups	N	X	SD	Df	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Sig. level	Decision
Okrika LGA	1355	3.7	0.598					
		3.62	0.624	2770	3.483	1.96	.001	Reject HO_3
PHALGA	1417							

Table 4.8 shows that the calculated t-value obtained is 12.182, while the critical table value t-crit at degree of freedom of 2 (2770) is 1.96. Since the t-cal value is greater than the t-crit value, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude there is significance difference in the mean response of respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas on the extent to which functional literacy programme has empowered community members for improve productivity for poverty alleviation.

HO_3: There is no significance difference in the mean response of respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas on the extent to which vocational skills and technical education programmes have equipped community members with requisite vocational /occupational skills of sell-reliance for poverty alleviation.

Table 4.9: T-Test Result on Difference in the Mean Response of Respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt LGAs on the extent to which Vocational Skills and Technical Education Programmes has Equipped Community Members with Requisite Vocational /Occupational Skills of Sell-Reliance for Poverty Alleviation.

Groups	N	X	SD	Df	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Sig. level	Decision
Okrika LGA	1355	3.64	0.709					
		3.53	0.625	2770	2.174	1.96	.030	Reject HO_3
PHALGA	1417							

The table shows that the calculated t-value obtained is 2.174, while the critical table value t-crit at degree of freedom of 2 (2770) is 1.96. Since the t-cal value is greater than the t-crit value, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significance difference in the mean response of respondents in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas on the extent to which vocational skills and technical education programmes have equipped community members with requisite vocational /occupational skills of sell-reliance for poverty alleviation

VIII. Discussion of the Findings

Finding also reveals that remedial adult education programme have promoted capacity building have promoted capacity building among community member by equipping them with relevant skill for poverty alleviation and is in line with Adedokun and Oluwagbohunmi (2015:263) conclusion that:

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Adult education remains a viable tool in building people's capacity for sustainable development and bringing about transformation in the lives of people. It is also a strong tool for empowering citizens and hence a tool for poverty reduction. That Livelihood oriented adult non-formal education initiative should be embarked upon for poverty to be alleviated.

Finding also reveals that Functional literacy programme have empowered community members for improve productivity. Accordingly, Ihejirika (2011) asserted that agricultural extension education or Agricultural Development Project aimed at improving the efficiency of rural farmers and that with improved farm production, the rural poor farmers are not only assured of food and nutrition for the family, but have enough products for sale to live improved life.

Finding also reveals that Vocational skills and technical education programme have provided community members with requisite vocational /occupational skills for sell-reliance. This is in support of Adekola and Okpara (2013) findings in which they established that adult learning upgrades the skills of participants to increase their employability and job performance, leads to an increase in productivity and income thereby reducing poverty level. The essence of vocational skill education, as observed by Olajide, Okemakinde and Okemakinde (2008) is to enable the citizens to acquire appropriate vocational / occupational skills that will make them better people, live in peace with others and relate well in their day-to-day life. Such skills, if properly acquired can enable recipients become self-sustained or obtain paid jobs to improve their standard of living.

IX. Conclusion

The study concluded that Adult education programmes designed for poverty alleviation in Okrika and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas have promoted capacity building among participants by equipping them with relevant skill for poverty alleviation; knowledge and skills for improve productivity and how to earn more income; requisite vocational /occupational skills for sell-reliance; and health information and skills for healthy living.

X. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Provision of adult education programmes for poverty alleviation in any community should be based on felt needs of the people not generalisation.
2. In order to sustain capacity building skill gained, community members should be engaged in re-training programme.
3. Soft packages should be given to community to enhance their developmental activities.

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