

## Influence of Adult and Non-Formal Education on Poverty Reduction among Rural Women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State

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### Abstract

*This study was conducted to examine the influence of adult and non-formal education on poverty reduction among rural women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. Forty (40) rural communities were selected at random from fifty-eight (58) rural communities in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni (ONELGA). Twenty (20) respondents were sampled from each selected community comprising of ten (10) programme beneficiaries and ten (10) non-beneficiaries. A structured questionnaire designed using 5-point Likert scale of were used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using percentage, mean and standard deviation, while a Z-test was used in testing the null hypothesis at 0.05% significant level. The study finds that majority of the rural women's livelihood were farming and trading and most of the beneficiaries earned an average monthly income between ₦50,500 to ₦60,000 as against non-beneficiaries ₦20,500 to ₦30,500. Most adult and non-formal education, literacy education, environmental education, vocational education, aesthetic education etc, were extended to rural women in ONELGA. The study recommended that state government in conjunction with the local government areas should establish and implement more of the adult and non-formal education programmes and other programmes within the rural areas; rural women should be more involved in adult and non-formal education programmes as result shows that they equip themselves with skills, knowledge, aptitude and attitudes that are relevant and will in turn bring about reduction in poverty.*

**Keywords:** *Adult and Non-Formal Education, Rural women and Poverty Reduction*

### Introduction

The National Policy on Education, NPE (2004) describes adult and non-formal education as all manners of functional education given to individuals outside the formal school system, and it includes functional literacy, remedial and vocational education. It is a process by which men and women (alone, in groups or institutional setting) seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skills, knowledge or sensitivity (Nzeneri, 2008). Orobor (2008), perceived adult and non-formal education as an education that attempts to equip the individual and the

community with the valuable and relevant body of knowledge, skills, attitude and aptitude that should make living more meaningful to all.

This type of education is non-formal and a rigid form of traditional schooling, with no special classroom arrangement, no designed syllabus to follow, and no regimented curriculum. It is very flexible and diverse as it is adapted to the specific needs and circumstances of the learners. As asserted by Deekor and Nnodim (2006) adult education is a life-long education, an agent of liberation, a tool for adjustment, cultural awareness and integration, conscientization and for self-reliance and national development. Adult and non-formal education trains individuals, essentially for awareness and action, vocational or occupational skill acquisition and for updating those with inadequate skills to keep pace with changing technology.

Accordingly, Deekor and Nnodim (2006), listed adult and non-formal education programmes to include functional literacy, community development, continuing education, remedial education, aesthetic education and home management respectively. It also includes women education, vocational education, political education, nomadic education, consumer education, civic education and population education among others. The essence of these educational programmes is to empower the youth and adults, especially those in the rural communities who could not benefit from the formal education, and to reduce poverty in the society, especially among women, majority of whom suffered deprivations and are poor.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization- UNESCO (2005), describe poverty as a situation and process of serious deprivation or lack of resources and materials necessary for living within a minimum standard conducive to human dignity and well-being. In the same vein Brown (2006) and World Bank (2006) also describe poverty as a deprivation of means of sustenance, the manifestations of lack of access to basic social services such as education and health, food security, low life expectancy and participation in decision making. While Udosen (2007) sees it is a condition in human development characterized by lack of basic life skills, good education, productive assets, low level energy consumption, poor health, unsanitary condition and lack of economic infrastructure. According to Abiola and Oloapa (2008), the scourge of poverty in Nigeria has resulted to hunger, malnutrition, diseases, low life expectancy and human hopelessness. To mitigate poverty in the rural areas, women should be the

focus of all poverty reduction programmes. Women constitute about 75% majorities of the rural poor, less educated and majority (70%), are involved in small scale agriculture and petty trading (UN Women, 2012). Rural women are key agents in economic transformation, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development, yet they have limited access to credit facilities, health and education (UN, 2012). The role women play in family well-being has led credence to the persistent call for their empowerment through vocational education and other forms of adult and non-formal educational programmes in Nigeria and most developing countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area is a host to many multinational companies, such as Agip, Elf, Saipem, Total, among other subsidiary oil companies. These companies, through their co-operate social responsibility efforts have complemented the efforts of both the state and local governments in providing different education programmes to the women in their areas of operations. Among such educational programmes were vocational education, through which women were trained in various skills like bead making, hair dressing, weaving, soap making, bakery among others, (Onyishi, 2004). The women were also trained in health/sanitation, nutrition and family planning, and adult literacy programmes to improve their arithmetic and linguistic skills. Environmental and political education were also extended to them to improve their decision making abilities in relation to their well-being and formed the perception that adult and non-formal education could be capable of ensuring gainful employment opportunities for rural women who participated in the programmes. In the light of this, it becomes pertinent to assess the influence of adult and non-formal education extended to the women in the study area, determine the knowledge and skills gained and ascertain how the knowledge and skills gained had impacted on the participants of the programmes extended.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study was to examine the influence of adult and non-formal education on poverty reduction among rural women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the socio-economic characteristics of rural women in ONELGA.

2. Examine the types of adult and non-formal education programmes extended to the rural women.
3. Examine the knowledge and skills acquired by rural women from the adult and non-formal education programmes.
4. Determine the influence of knowledge and skills acquired from adult and non-formal education programmes on women socio-economic well-being.

### **Null hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of adult and non-formal education programmes in their income generation capacity.
2. There is no significant influence in the mean responses of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of adult and non-formal education programmes on their socio-economic well-being.

### **Methodology**

The study was conducted in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA) of Rivers State. The local Government Area is bounded by Ahoada East Local Government Area, Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, and Ohaji Egbema Local Government Area of Imo State and Ndokwa in Delta State respectively. The National Population Commission (2006) estimated the population of women in the area to 137,968. The study was a descriptive survey that sought the opinion of the people on the impact of adult and non-formal education on poverty reduction among rural women. The sample size was eight hundred (800) women systematically sampled from forty (40) communities out of the total of fifty-eight (58) that made up the local government area. Twenty women were selected (*10 beneficiaries and 10 non-beneficiaries*) from each community selected for the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire designed in the pattern of Likert 5-point rating scale of agreement (SD-5, A-4, UN-3, D-2 and SD-1). The instrument was complemented with interview schedule for those who could not respond to the questionnaire on their own. Data collected were analyzed with percentage, mean and standard deviation with an acceptable minimum mean value of 3.00.

### **Results and Discussion**

**Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of rural women in ONELGA**

s/n	Variables	Beneficiaries Frequency(%)	Non-beneficiaries Frequency(%)
1.	Age (years)		
	20-30	60(30%)	48(24%)
	31-40	32(16%)	51(25.5%)
	41-50	24(12%)	37(18.5%)
	51-60	49(24.5%)	18(9%)
	61-70	19(9.5%)	20(10%)
	71 and above	16(8%)	26(13%)
2.	<b>Marital status</b>		
	Single	42(21%)	54(27%)
	Married	97(48.5%)	84(42%)
	Separated	36(18%)	12(6%)
	Widowed	25(12.5%)	50(25%)
3.	<b>Educational attainment</b>		
	PhD	-	-
	M.Sc/M.Ed/MBA	7(3.5%)	2(1%)
	B.Sc/B.Ed	20(10%)	30(15%)
	NCE	40(20%)	17(8.5%)
	TCII	31(15.5%)	14(7%)
	SSCE	66(33%)	51(25.5%)
	FSLC	21(10.5%)	57(28.5%)
No formal education	15(97.5%)	29(14.5%)	
4.	<b>Livelihood activities</b>		
	Civil servants	45(22.5%)	37(18.5%)
	Farming (crop & livestock)	70(35%)	97(48.5%)
	Tailoring (Fashion designer)	36(18%)	42(21%)
	Nanny	26(13%)	4(2%)
	Hair dresser	35(17.5%)	11(5.5%)
	Pottery making	16(8%)	3(1.5%)
	Computer operators	27(13.5%)	23(11.5%)
	Trading	67(33.5%)	53(26.5%)
	Gathers of non-timber product	23(11.5%)	15(7.5%)
	Fishing/fish production process	17(8.5%)	10(5%)
	Hired labour	39(19.5%)	45(22.5%)
	Traditional birth attendance	15(7.5%)	31(15.5%)
	Others	33(16.5%)	47(23.5%)
	5.	<b>Monthly income (₦)</b>	
Less than 10,000		27(13.5%)	40(20%)
10,500 – 20,000		15(7.5%)	61(30.5%)
20,500 – 30,000		12(6%)	31(15.5%)
30,500 – 40,000		16(8%)	29(14.5%)
40,500 - 50,000		53(26.5%)	14(7%)
50,500 - 60,000		12(6%)	11(5.5%)
60,500 – 70,000		36(18%)	9(4.5%)
70,500 and above	29(14.5%)	5(2.5%)	

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Multiple responses

Findings in table 1 show that majority of the beneficiaries were aged, between 31 to 40 years old (30%), most of them were married (48.5%), most were Senior School Certificate holders (33%). Livelihood was agriculture (farming) (35%), followed by trading (33%). Finding also shows that majority of them earn between N50,500 to N60,000 average monthly income which is relatively above one dollar per day on the average. Whereas, majority of non-beneficiaries were aged between 31 to 40 (25.5%), marital status (42%), most were FSLC holders (28.5%), major livelihood was farming (48.5%) and trading (26.5%), while average monthly income were N20,500 to N30,000 (30.5%) which is relatively below one dollar on daily basis which is still at the poverty level in the society. The findings corroborated the findings of Udosen (2007); UN (2012) and Nnodim et al (2013) that rural women lack basic skills and good education to earn decent livelihood, resulting to their engagement in small scale farming and petty trading with relatively little income.

**Null hypothesis 1.** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of adult and non-formal education programmes in their income generation capacity.

**Table 2: Z-test difference of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of adult and non-formal education programmes in their income generation.**

Category	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	Sign. Level	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Beneficiaries	400	45491	23345.23	798	0.05	8.33	1.96	Rejected
Non-beneficiaries	400	27900	18624.98					

Table 2 shows the result of analysis of Ho1 that sought to know if any difference exists in income generating capacity between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of adult and non-formal education programme by rural women. The Z-calculated of 8.33 was greater than Z-critical of 1.96, an indicator that women who benefited from the adult and non-formal education had increased income generating capacity than non-beneficiaries.

**Research Question 2.** What type of adult and non-formal education programmes were extended to the rural women?

**Table 3: Mean responses on type of adult and non-formal education programmes extended to rural women in ONELGA.**

s/n	Variables	BENEFICIARIES			NON-BENEFICIARIES		
		$\bar{x}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	Decision	$\bar{x}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	Decision
1.	Functional literacy education	3.55	1.06	Accept	3.55	1.08	Accept
2.	Environmental education	3.37	1.09	Accept	3.21	1.04	Accept
3.	Aesthetic education	2.74	1.05	Reject	2.51	1.09	Reject
4.	Home management education	3.51	1.11	Accept	3.10	1.03	Accept
5.	Consumer education	2.52	1.06	Reject	2.05	1.05	Reject
6.	Vocational education	3.67	0.97	Accept	3.50	0.97	Accept
7.	Population education	3.95	0.98	Accept	3.49	1.04	Accept
8.	Rural development and rural transformation programmes	2.48	1.01	Reject	2.36	1.01	Reject
9.	Health extension education	3.41	1.13	Accept	3.37	1.00	Accept
10.	Public enlightenment education	3.78	1.03	Accept	3.51	1.03	Accept
	Grand mean and SD	3.30	1.05		3.07	1.03	

Source: Field survey, 2015

$M \geq 3.00$ , Accept otherwise reject

Table 3 shows adult and non-formal education programmes extended to rural women, respondents (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) agreed that functional literacy education (3.55 & 3.55), environmental education (3.37 & 3.21), home management education (3.51 & 3.10), vocational education (3.67 & 3.50), population education (3.95 & 3.49), health extension education (3.41 & 3.51), public enlightenment education (3.78 & 3.51) respectively. Whereas programmes such as aesthetic education (2.74 & 2.51), consumer education (2.52 & 2.05), and rural development and rural transformation programmes (2.48 & 2.36) were rejected by both respondents. This according to Akinpelu in Deekor and Nnodim (2006), adult and non-formal education programmes which includes environmental education, vocational education, political action/education, functional literacy education, continuing education, peace education, aesthetic education, home management education and so on were available for out of school adults and youths in the society where they can enroll to acquire skills/knowledge. Orobor (2008) asserted that such programmes equip the individuals and the community with the valuable and relevant body of knowledge, skills, attitude and aptitude that should make living more meaningful to all.

**Research Question 3** *What knowledge and skill did the rural women acquire from the adult and non-formal education programmes extended to them?*

**Table 4: Knowledge and skills acquired through adult and non-formal education extended to rural women in ONELGA.**

S/n	Variables	BENEFICIARIES			NON-BENEFICIARIES		
		$\bar{x}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	Decision	$\bar{x}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	Decision
1.	Writing, reading and speaking skill	3.55	1.08	Accept	2.51	1.09	Reject
2.	Hair dressing skills	3.10	1.00	Accept	2.48	1.09	Reject
3.	Cloth weaving skills	3.36	1.15	Accept	2.49	1.04	Reject
4.	Improved farm practice	3.21	1.04	Accept	2.10	1.03	Reject
5.	Tailoring skills	3.48	1.09	Accept	2.10	1.00	Reject
6.	Tie and dying skills	3.30	0.14	Accept	2.29	1.02	Reject
7.	Knowledge on decision making	3.37	1.09	Accept	2.02	1.17	Reject
8.	Bead and hat making skills	3.31	1.08	Accept	2.31	1.08	Reject
9.	Family planning knowledge	3.37	1.00	Accept	2.32	0.98	Reject
10.	Soap and cosmetic making skills	3.41	1.05	Accept	2.02	1.17	Reject
11.	Baking of confectionaries	3.50	0.99	Accept	2.78	1.03	Reject
12.	Crop processing techniques	3.49	1.04	Accept	2.95	0.98	Reject
13.	Knowledge on effective marketing	3.33	1.07	Accept	2.37	1.00	Reject
14.	Knowledge on ICT operation	3.26	1.04	Accept	2.30	1.14	Reject
15.	Knowledge on healthy living and health	3.02	1.17	Accept	2.53	1.01	Reject
Grand mean and SD		3.34	1.07		2.37	1.06	

Source: Field survey, 2015

$M \geq 3.00$  Accept, otherwise reject

Results in Table 4 show that beneficiaries agreed in knowledge and skills acquired were writing, reading and speaking skill (3.55), hair dressing skills (3.10), cloth weaving skills (3.36), improved farm practice (3.21), tailoring skills (3.48), tie and dying skills (3.30), bead and hat making (3.31); soap and cosmetic making (3.41), knowledge on ICT operation (3.26) respectively. Whereas response of non-beneficiaries on knowledge and skills acquired were writing, reading and speaking skill (2.51), hair dressing skills (2.48), cloth weaving skills (2.49), improved farm practice (2.10), tailoring skills (2.10), tie and dying skills (2.29), bead and hat making (2.31), soap and cosmetic making (2.20), knowledge on ICT operation (2.30) and the likes. This complements Onyishi (2004) findings which asserted that adult and non-formal education provide women with various skills such as tailoring, bead-making, hair dressing, weaving skills etc which is to empower them and are all important in poverty reduction and participation in adult and non-formal education is a vital key to reducing poverty as women will acquire skills that will make them self-reliant. Whereas non-beneficiaries had little knowledge on

such skills but not as compared to that acquired by beneficiaries through adult and non-formal education programmes extended to them in Onelga.

**Table 5: Influence of the skills and knowledge acquired by rural women on their social and economic empowerment in Onelga**

s/n	Variables	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries			
		$\bar{x}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	Decision	$\bar{x}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	Decision
1.	Enhancing healthy and sustainable environment	3.51	1.03	Accept	2.18	1.08	Reject
2.	Playing more active roles in community development	3.29	1.02	Accept	2.23	1.11	Reject
3.	Can read and write	3.85	0.97	Accept	3.49	1.04	Accept
4.	More socialization than before	3.32	0.98	Accept	2.23	1.03	Reject
5.	Increase in decision making about self and families	3.36	1.15	Accept	2.05	1.05	Reject
6.	Consciousness of hygiene	3.62	1.07	Accept	2.00	1.04	Reject
7.	Increase and effective flow of vital information	3.49	1.09	Accept	2.38	1.01	Reject
8.	Becoming more involved in political matters	3.68	1.01	Accept	2.15	1.06	Reject
9.	Becoming more creative in thinking and skills	3.37	1.00	Accept	2.30	1.14	Reject
10.	Generate more income	3.50	0.97	Accept	2.31	1.08	Reject
11.	Less dependent on their spouse and relatives	3.70	1.00	Accept	2.73	1.12	Reject
12.	Being more productive and self-reliant	3.53	1.01	Accept	2.55	1.08	Reject
13.	Encourages family planning/ control in child birth	3.65	1.01	Accept	2.36	1.01	Reject
14.	Improvement in health/family nutrition	3.66	0.94	Accept	2.96	1.02	Reject
15.	Applying safety rules in all activities	3.21	1.04	Accept	2.55	1.11	Reject
16.	Having alternative means of livelihood	3.48	1.09	Accept	2.10	0.92	Reject
17.	Developing greater sense of self initiative	3.31	1.08	Accept	2.15	1.06	Reject
18.	Have improved in my livelihood activities	3.10	1.09	Accept	2.51	1.03	Reject
	Grand mean and SD	3.45	1.03		2.60	1.06	

Source: Field survey, 2015

M ≥ 3.00 Accept, otherwise reject

Table 5 shows that response of beneficiaries on the impacts of the knowledge and skills acquired from adult and non-formal education programmes on their socio-economic well-being were accepted where enhancing healthy and sustainable environment (3.51), generate more income

(3.50), having alternative means of livelihood (3.48), have improved in my livelihood activities (3.10), Increase in decision making about self and families (3.36), less dependent on their spouse and relatives (3.70), developing greater sense of self initiative (3.10), encourages family planning/control in child birth (3.53), respectively. This complements Orobor (2008), who stated that, knowledge and skills acquired through adult and non-formal education enhance healthy and sustainable environment, control child birth, improve family planning, provide alternative means for livelihood, create relative peace and cooperation, become more creative, participate more in government, be in better position to make decision for self and families, better environmental management etc, in turn will reduce poverty because the opposite of better life is poverty that is to say, with functional literacy, poverty can never be small around. Whereas, responses of non-beneficiaries were not accepted in enhancing healthy and sustainable environment (2.18), generate more income (2.31), having alternative means of livelihood (2.10), have improved in my livelihood activities (2.51), encourages family planning/ control in child birth (2.36), less dependent on their spouse and relatives (2.73), developing greater sense of self initiative (2.15), increase in decision making about self and families (2.05) respectively.

**Null Hypothesis 2:** *There is no significant influence in the mean responses of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of adult and non-formal education programmes on socio-economic well-being of the rural women in ONELGA.*

**Table 6: Z-test responses of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries on the influence of adult and non-formal education on the social - economic programme on their socio-economic well-being.**

Category	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	Sign. Level	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Beneficiaries	400	3.45	1.03	798	0.05	8.13	1.96	Rejected
Non-beneficiaries	400	2.60	1.06					

Table 6 show that beneficiaries have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.45 and 1.03 while non-beneficiaries have mean and standard scores of 2.60 and 1.06. At an alpha level of

significance 0.05 with a degree of freedom 798, the z-cal value of 8.127 is greater than the z-crit value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant differences in the socio-economic well-being between the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of adult and non-formal education programmes in the study area were not accepted. By implication, there is a significant difference in the socio-economic well-being of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of adult and non-formal education programmes in ONELGA.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was deduced that rural women are in dire need of adult and non-formal education programmes for the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The acquisition of such needed skills would enhance their capacity for improved productivity and create opportunities for alternative income generating activities. These would result to increased income to the beneficiaries of such educational programmes, more contributions to the development of the society and improvement on the overall well-being of women.

## **Recommendations**

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

1. The Local Government Authority and other agencies should make adult and non-formal education a permanent programmes for rural women integration as this will give more opportunity to more rural women to be trained with requisite skills and knowledge that will better their lives.
2. The state in conjunction with the local government authorities should establish more adult and non-formal education programmes within other rural areas and make them functional. This would enable the women in such areas benefit from such programmes and enhance their well-being.
3. Rural women should be enlightened on the relevance of adult and non-formal education in the development of self, community and national economy as it will increase self-reliance as well decrease dependency.

4. Government should include other relevant programmes like computer education to the existing programmes as the world of today is a globalized world for rural women to be acquainted with the use of networking in business and other related activities.

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