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ADULT EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF PROVIDING EXTENSION EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: MAJOR CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT
Provision of extension services to the communities is one of the functions of adult education. This is achieved through the collaborative efforts of adult educators, community development agents, social workers, and extension agents who go into rural communities to make such services available. The accessibility of these extension programmes/services by the rural communities makes it possible for them to improve in every aspect of development – agriculture, health, politics, education [literacy]. Thus, an extension programme is a key that unlocks the door to community development because it is a means of extending the programmes of the universities to people who do not have access to the formal way of getting such knowledge, skills, and information. This topic looked at the concept of adult education, community development, extension education/programmes, objectives of extension programmes of adult education, and the challenges faced in carrying out extension services as well as the way forward.

Keywords: *Education, adult education, community development, extension programmes, challenges*

INTRODUCTION

The role of adult education in providing extension services to people in various communities for community development cannot be over-emphasized. Extension education can be regarded as an informal means of providing people with the knowledge, skills, and information that will help them influence their decisions and increase their general standard of living positively. The Federal Republic of Nigeria, cited in Ugwuoke, Ozurumba, Ugwunnadi, and Echem (2021), stated that the areas indicating the scope of extension are as follows: increasing efficiency in agricultural production, increasing efficiency in marketing, disbursing, and utilization of agricultural inputs and output, conservation, development, and use of natural resources, proper farm and home management, better family living, youth development, leadership, community, and rural development, improving public affairs for all-round development. Adult and Non-formal Education cover literacy education, functional literacy education distance education, vocational education, women's education, political education, community development education, agricultural education, skill training, and in-service and professional training (National Teachers Institute, 2010).

Extension is an outreach programme designed for individuals who are not ordinarily in close contact with educational institutions. It is concerned with transmission of information and its practical application to help people identify and analyze their problems and also give them assistance in the use of technical knowledge that will improve their lives and occupations. Community development includes changing the relationship between ordinary people and people in position or power so that everyone can take part in issues that affect their lives. In this way, generally community wellbeing is ensured socially, economical, environmentally and culturally.

Some extension programmes of adult education are: Agricultural extension programmes, health education extension programmes, political education extension programmes, commercial services, consumer education programmes etc, there are many challenges which adult education faces in rendering these services such as over population, incompetency, funding, lack of infrastructures etc. It is based on the above that the researcher addressed this topic in order to conscientize individuals on the problems and suggest the way forward for effective result.

Education

Education is a means of acquiring positive skills, knowledge and behaviour which helps an individual to have confidence in carrying out his obligations and be useful in the society, be

self-sufficient, identify his need/problems and know how to approach and tackle them. Tight in Ibe (2016), defined education as an organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding valuable for all the activities of life.

Adult Education

Adult education is one of the unique professions with the aims and objectives of improving the conditions of the members of the society (Daramola, 2015). Wikipedia (en.m.wikipedia.org) defines adult education as a practice which adult engage in systematic and sustained self educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes or values. It can mean any form of learning adults engage in beyond traditional schooling, encompassing basic literacy to personal fulfillment as a lifelong learner. Adult education is that educational program which offers the unprivileged the last opportunity to learn and obtain different skills such as basic literacy skills, functional literacy skills and vocational skills in order to empower them to be able to face their challenges, identity their needs and problems as well as satisfy the identified needs and proffer solutions to those problems and those of the society in which they are.

Extension Education

This is a branch of adult education which aims at providing and extending new knowledge, ideas and latest development to different occupational group by persons who serve as go-between them and centers where new discoveries about the field in question are developed. The essence is to acquaint the members/workers with the latest information and product that will improve their productivity. For instance in the field of agriculture, we have agricultural extension education where farmers are educated on the latest and more improved ways of farming and planting, including the best species of crops that will yield high production and how to get rid of harmful insects and other crops and plants and pests disease. The services are extended to the rural and remote areas through different media by Agricultural extension officer or other personnels.

Extension is the use of adult teaching and learning strategies to make proficient and specialized knowledge and skills emanating from research and other innovative findings accessible and usable to people who need them in order to enlarge their productivity and quality of life. Extension is an educational process which utilizes the findings of the physical and biological science and combines them with the principles from the social sciences to bring about changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices of clients in out-of-school setting for purpose of improved production and higher levels of living (Leagains in Ibe,2021).

The Aims/Purposes of Extension Progrmme

The major aim of extension programmes, example, agricultural extension education is to help the members of a community achieve social and economic development through an educational process. This educational process requires people or individuals to be aware of their situations, their latent abilities (potentials) and limitations. The process also requires an individual to be dedicated or committed in order to utilize the available opportunities and resources.

Community Development

Development in this context means improvement or growth in every aspect of peoples life be it economic, social, cultural or political. It is increase or gain in the quality of life of the people in the society through increase in access for better life. Community development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems (United Nations, Wikipedia). The International Association for Community Development (2016) defines community development as a practice based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice through the organization, education and empowerment of people within their communities whether these be of locality, identity or interest in urban and rural settings. In other words the purpose of community development is to work with communities to achieve participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunities equality and social justice. The Community Development. Challenge Report defines community development as a set of values and practices which plays specific roles in overcoming poverty and disadvantage, knitting society together at the grassroots and deepening democracy.

Community development is a conscious and deliberate effort aim at helping community, recognize their responsibilities of solving their problems there by increasing their capacities to participate and contribute fully in improving their standard of living and the life of the nation at large.

Yunma (2019) defines community development as a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Therefore community development includes changing the relationship between ordinary people and people in positions of power so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives. In this way, generally community wellbeing is ensured socially, economically, environmentally and culturally.

Adult Education Extension Programmes/Services.

These include

- **Agricultural Extennsion Programme**

This is a programme meant for farmers to expose them to the improved method of farming, crops that yield better product, how to apply manure and fertilizers, how to control harmful crop pests, parasites etc. This is achieved by organizing seminars and workshop for the rural farmers. Rivera cited in Ugwuoke (2021) asserted that extension services in agricultural sector perform educational function with the cardinal principle of providing information which improves the knowledge, skills and positive attitudinal change towards agricultural innovations. This will increase agricultural production, make food available for consumption thereby reducing starvation, hunger, and high cost of living and in this way, agricultural sector is improved. Food and Agricultural Organization (2012) opined that agricultural extension service is an effective mechanism and system or services which directly help farmers to help themselves. Anderson, Wilson, Mwansan. and Osei-Hweide cited in Ugwuoke et al stipulated that in agricultural extension services, farmers are exposed to various educational approaches, procedures, techniques and methods to equip them towards utilizing improved farming practice, production capacities and enhance their income level and in the long-run uplift their social, economic, psychological and political status.

- **Health Extension ProgrammE/Service**

In the area of health, adult education has educated individuals, families and communities in the area of hygiene by organizing and carrying out health extension programmes through seminars and workshops (Ibe, 2021). Unhealthy person cannot contribute anything to development. Thus, health is an important part of the life of the people.

Through adult education programmes like environmental education people have been made to be aware of the importance of environment sanitation. People in the community and Nigeria at large have understood that unhealthy environment causes sickness. Every last Saturday of every month is now generally recognized as environmental sanitation day. From time to time people also willingly do clean up around their surrounding this has reduced health hazards caused by air born diseases from dirty environment which is very hazardous to human health. In this way the high mortality rate which is one of the problems of a developing nation is reduced.

Adult education has taken care of ignorance and negative beliefs through enlightenment campaign and programmes, awareness creation through community education and seminars etc. This has made people of the community to know the appropriate measures

to take during sickness thereby reducing the high mortality rate caused by sicknesses and diseases. Thus, in the past, in cases of illness for instance, certain religious beliefs, faith, doctrines which are negative have done more harm than good for instance, some parents did not know the appropriate things to do in the case of illness. Many go to local dibia or witch doctor (spiritualist) when their children have simple disease. Besides, some people do not take medicines or seek for medical advices when sick because they think that sickness could be cured only by faith or by the gods of healing. These caused a lot of death when the sicknesses became worst.

Adult education has contributed a lot in the areas of pregnancy and immunization through pregnancy health talks and seminars on immunization; through adult education health programmes, expectant mothers now understand the need for going for antenatal and post-natal care (Ibe,2021). Nowadays, after birth , children are given proper immunization by their mothers to ensure their good health and development. The above has reduced pre-natal death and high rate of polio and communicable diseases respectively.

Through non-formal education and training, the citizens are educated on how to benefit from primary/basic health care, reproductive and sexual health care-services, prevent certain harmful and devastating diseases and sickness like tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, malaria, polio, typhoid etc

- **Nutrition Extension Services**

Nutrition wise, in recent times people have started giving much attention to their food through information they get from non formal adult education programmes such as radio and television programmes (Ibe, 2021). Through such programmes, certain negative and careless attitude and neglects have been taken care of. Moreover, adult education has taken care of certain superstitious beliefs that affect the amount of nutrition intake of the people in the community, for instance in the past, many communities did not give children eggs because they believed that when they eat eggs it would make them steal. Again, in some areas, pregnant women did not eat pork meat and snails so that when they give birth, the baby would not misbehave as he grows. But it is not a gain say that these are proteinous foods which their absence affect child's development and the health of the mother. Obviously good and balanced meal build up the body and makes the immune

system strong while poor nutrition and unbalanced meal render the body system weak and make it vulnerable to diseases and sickness in recent times. In recent times, people have started giving much attention to their food through information they get from non formal adult education programmes such as radio and television programmes. Through such programmes certain negative and careless attitude and neglects have been taken care of.

- **Adult Basic Literacy Extension Programmes**

The optimum level of illiteracy in the rural communities has been reduced by extending adult basic literacy programmes to the rural communities where illiterate adults are given the opportunities to acquire basic literacy skills (reading, writing and arithmetic). Many illiterate farmers, traders and artisans can now read, write and do simple calculations. These skills acquired are applied in their various occupations. One of the characteristics of development is high literacy level and adult education has contributed in increasing the literacy level of the communities.

Similarly, through women education many women of our communities today have become more functional either as house wives, traders, farmers or any other occupation they are involved in.

- **Political Extension Programme**

These are programmes meant for conscientizing people on political issues. According to Yilben, (2014), for democracy to be achieved, adult education is needed to inform the citizens of their rights and responsibilities as democracy also requires people to actively participate at local, national and global levels. Prevention of political disorders and civil unrest can be made possible through various adult education strategies. Adult education has improved political development through conscientization education and awareness creation. Conscientization involves sensitizing people in order to liberate them, therefore, it is education for liberation. Through this, individual citizens and the society are transformed by equipping them with a lot of information which give them privilege to be able to take decisions in political matters concerning them, their lives and their society. Conscientization involves dialogue, reflection, communication of ideas, knowledge and skills with the facilitator guiding.

Through awareness creation, the citizens are sensitized about the importance of voting and active participation during election as well as the disadvantages of not voting or participating during election.

Through civic and citizenship education, the citizens are made to understand their rights and roles as bonafide citizens. In this way, the dwindling interest in politics from our younger generation which has negative effects on our democracy and political system is taken care of. Adult learning has a strong link with democracy.

- **Vocational Adult Education Extension Programmes**

Vocational education is one of the programmes of adult education and an integral part of extension education; adult education has extended vocational skills to communities by organizing workshops and seminars where people are taught and empowered with skills that will help them become employers and employees (Ibe, 2021). Examples of such skills are baking, fashion and designing, bead making, textile production skills, soap making, poultry and fishery management etc. This will make them to be able to take care of their needs indicating increase in their social status. This will also improve the general standard living of the people of the community; reduce prostitution, stealing and other social menace in the nation. Self-help is an effective weapon for combating unemployment, dependency, stealing, low standard of living, suffering, premature/untimely death, bribery and corruption, all sorts of crime and for poverty reduction in the light of this adult education becomes a means people can be empowered to gain control over the above mentioned calamities which affects development.

Challenges involved in carrying out Extension Progamme/services

Extension services are faced with myriad of challenges. Semi, Turiman and Ismi (2016) summarized the challenges as follow:

1. **Political System:** The greatest challenge of extension education in Nigeria is the political system. The system has the following faulty features and it remains in that condition for long which leads to total decay of the whole system. The system is unstable, turbulent, selfish, corrupt, infected with chronic and deeply rooted with tribalism, nepotism, unpatriotic and sectionalism. In schools cultism and sexual harassment (Uzoagulu, 2009), kidnapping in the Niger-delta region and presence of Boko Haram in the North-east (Sani, 2014); misplacement of priorities such as placing more value to political office holders at the mercy of intellectualism, paying senators house of a reps members more than a professor who train citizen to be good. Inability and start afresh syndrome which leads to non-continuation of programs and projects started by predecessors due to different political parties or political rivalry no matter

how important the project is to the citizens. All the above conditions are not conducive for extension education.

2. **Population:** Rapid increase in the number of youths and adults in the communities is another challenge in extension education especially towards community development. Ugwuoke, (2021) citing World Bank stated that, the ration of extension personnel to client or participant should not exceed 1-800 or 1000 all things being equal. Presently, in some Nigeria states, the ratio is up to 1- 4000 and even above, which resulted to poor management by the available extension workers (Kalusam, 2013)
3. **Manpower and lack of Competency:** Another prominent challenge in extension work is the inadequacy of the manpower available and their competency. Public extension departments or units in most of the states and local government in Nigeria are no longer employing graduates as extension workers with the complain that their pay is high, rather the agencies employ Diploma or High school certificates that has lower capacity to do the job. Moreover, they hardly cope with the challenge attached to the task which results to poor projects implementation due to low competency as a result of their half hazard training.
4. **Training & re-training:** Another major challenge in extension education is pre and post training of the baseline service provider (extension workers). In Nigeria context this aspect is neglected at all levels except one undertaken by international development partners like UNICEF, UNDP, MDGs, and FAO. Moreover, majority of the extension personnel cannot perform a simple task of group formation, teach a simple transplanting of seedlings, counsel clients or even organize a simple demonstrations of new innovation (Sani, Turiman, Ismi & Zohara, 2015). This is directly associated with insufficient exposure to technical content and process during training.
5. **Dearth of extension facilities and infrastructure:** Infrastructure and facilities available for extension service in Nigeria is grossly inadequate. Laboratories, libraries. Workshops, viewing centers and demonstration plots are in short supply and generally ill-equipped. Moreover the training institutes and colleges expected to produce competent personnel for the task are also battling with overcrowded student-teacher ratio with results into producing half-based graduates with no technical skills at all.
6. **Funding:** Funding of extension activities has been neglected by the concern authorizes through lack of adequate legislation that directly identity who is responsible for what, the extension service was left in the Ministry of Agriculture at the state level with only a unit in Federal ministry of Agriculture, in some instances some state government push

the extension activities to local governments education and social services department. Moreover, private extension services are been undertaken by some organizations in Nigeria but studies show that they link the services with advertising their products (seeds, fertilizer, drugs etc) and only those who show interest to buy benefits from the scheme. Sani et al (2015) recommended funding of extension service to be included in the exclusive list of Nigeria budget as this will strengthen its significance in empowering majority of the citizen especially those in the rural communities who are more in need of the services. Moreover, linkages between public and private agencies in funding extension work will open more opportunities for the beneficiaries and empowerment sustainability will be ensured.

CONCLUSION

Extension education has a very great impact on community development. It is a surest way of reaching to people who do not have such opportunities to acquire skills, knowledge and information through a formal way. It should be given much attention because the traditional/formal system of education cannot do it alone. This paper looked at the meaning of adult education, extension education, aims of extension education, concept of community development, adult education extension programmes and the challenges faced by extension education.

The Way forward

To ensure the effectiveness of extension education in communities, the following are suggested.

1. The government should pay adequate attention to extension education by providing fund for rendering the services.
2. Rural people should be made to understand the benefits of extension programmes through awareness creation, using radio, television and other necessary media so that they will take it seriously and grab the opportunity anytime they have it.
3. Infrastructural facilities and instructional materials should be made available to the extension agents, social workers, community developers, adult educators and others who render the extension services in the communities to ensure the smooth running of the programmes.
4. Extension education centers should be established in strategic areas by the Government for carrying out extension programmes/services.

5. Training and re-training of extension workers should be reconsidered as it has been long neglected by the government.

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