Adult Education and Human Capacity Building for Community Sustainability in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *The economic, social and environmental issues threatening humans as well as continual existence of communities in Nigeria, requires the contribution of all. Adult members, constituting greater portion of the country's population, are seen as agents through which the economic, social and environmental challenges facing communities as well as the countries can be addressed. However, solutions to the plethora of issues confronting community sustainability, requires greater number of the adult's population possessing the requisite knowledge and skills through education. Education seen as a powerful instrument for social change, helps reduce social and economic issues like poverty, hunger, crime, unemployment, social inequalities, disease, just to mention but few, and give individuals the opportunities to live fulfilled life. Although, education is categorized into formal, informal and non-formal dimension, this study specifically reviews literatures on adult education and human resources capacity building for community sustainability in Nigeria. From the contents of the literature reviewed, it was indicated that adult education programmes contributes towards sustainable growth, successful employment, self-reliance and access to justice for all in communities in Nigeria. Thus, adult education equips individuals with knowledge as well as skills capable of enhancing their potentials as well as capabilities in making effective contributions towards the social, economic and environmental sustainability of communities in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: Education, adult education, human capacity building, community, sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Unlike other species of animal, humans have continually and deliberately been exploring their environment for survival as well as better standard of living. Notably, in the search for survival, humans utilize resources obtain from the natural environment, and as well, develop and maintain socio-economic relationships. Though, the resources exploited from the natural environment, to a large extent guarantee community as well as national development over time, however, increased economic and commercial activities characterizing modern day society as well as advances in

technology, have continually become a source of concern for rapid environmental deterioration around the world, thus, creating sustainability issues. Notably, German, Colfer, Barrow, Küchli, Blaser and Wardojo (2010) opine that globalization, growing consumption levels, stark inequalities between the rich and the poor as well as competition in the use of resource, creates intense pressure on natural resources around the world. This, to an extent, portends danger to humans' survival, as its effects are visibly observe through deforestation, climate change, biodiversity loss and thus, have the potential of rendering the planet uninhabitable for humans as well as other species of animals.

Extending the views, humans' exploitative and explorative activities in the quest for economic development have severe changes on the biosphere and as well, have negative impact on social welfare. This, observe through extreme weather condition, rising sea level, decline in Arctic sea ice, glacier retreat as well as seasonal time changes. In addition, environmental change brings about land degradation, as it leads to drying soils, increasing temperature as well as higher risk of wildfire (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2019). These, portend great consequences on humans and other living creature, as it is observed through heatwaves and becomes a source of concern to humans' health as well as higher propensity for wildfire respectively. Buttressing, World Health Organization (2021) states that climatic disruption influences social and environmental determinants of health (air, portable drinking water, sufficient food as well as secure shelter) and estimates that about 250, 000 deaths will occur annually from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and stress associated with heat, between 2030 and 2050 respectively.

Although, no country as well as continent is free from the devastating health implication of environmental change, however, as observed, inhabitants of low-income and disadvantage countries as well as communities, whose contributions is minimal to the causes of environmental disruption, are worst hit, due to their inadequacies in protecting their communities as well as countries. Admittedly, countries in Africa are already plagued with the devastating effects of environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and deforestation. This, found in United Nation Climate Change News (2020) which claims that human health and safety, food and water security as well as socio-economic development in the Africa are being threaten due to rising temperature and sea levels, changing precipitation as well as intense weather. With this, it is likely that undamaged environmental services as well as natural resources are becoming unattainable in Africa and Nigeria in particular, thus the need for sustainability.

Over the years, Nigeria's environment as well as natural resources have suffered severe damage due to efforts aim at achieving rapid economic development. This, observed through the decline and changes in environmental quality in the country leading to adverse effects in the lives of both humans and other living creatures that makes up the environment. The adverse effect of changes in the biosphere is highly visible in Nigeria, as millions of inhabitants are reportedly affected with extreme heat condition, rising sea level, erosion and variable (Environment, U.N, 2017). Similarly,

with an estimated population of over two hundred million people, inhabitants of most communities in Nigeria face potential health related threats and poor standard of living, as a result of solid waste generation and improper management. Buttressing, Obiezu (2019) views Nigeria's solid waste generation as the largest in Africa which is estimated to be around 32 million tons annually. Observably, inadequate waste management system attributes to soil and water contamination, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and a deteriorating biodiversity.

These, become threat to community sustainability, thus require effort in the conservation of water, land, energy as well as reuse and recycling of waste, protection and improvement of local and regional ecosystems and biological diversity, application of strategies and technology aimed at minimizing pollution emission as well as the use of renewable resource not faster than their rates of renewal. In addition to environmental changes, income inequality as well as social justice become threats to ensuring strong and sustainable community around the world and Nigeria in particular. This, Stewart (2014) reports that greater inequality prevents the realization of macro-economic sustainability, environmental sustainability as well as political sustainability. Buttressing, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2010) states that it becomes difficult to integrate the poor and disadvantaged in the growth process because inequality tend to constrain the productive capacity of the poor and their potential contribution to development. Also, there is the contention from the agency (UNRISD), that in a highly unequal society, the poor are more likely to be locked into a subsistence economy, which then, has the propensity of limiting the size of the domestic market and thus retard the potential for sustained growth.

Notably, today's community need to make adequate consideration in their explorative and exploitative activity, so as not to left future generation worst off. This calls for fairness with regards to the treatment of present and future generations. Substantiating, Ashein (2014) avers that, though present generation seems capable of excessively as well as unreasonably exploiting resources, sustainability entails managing the resource base such that the average quality of life it ensures can potentially be shared by all future generations. However, ensuring sustainable community requires the reinvestment of resources in local economy, good employment opportunities for all, provision of avenue for skill acquisition and education for citizens with future labour demand; and the need for adequate health services, safe and healthy housing, quality education to residents of communities, encouragement in community spirit that create sense of place and self-worth as well as creating and maintaining a safe and crime free community (Institute for sustainable community, 2022).

However, supporting the needs of the present and future generations, requires, deliberate actions taken by inhabitants of communities as well as nations in protecting the planet from degradation, improving access to clean and affordable energy, waste management and pollution control initiatives as well as responsible pattern of production and consumption. This, often realize through

laws, policies identification and goals, aimed at strengthening and maintaining the natural environment, economy as well as social well-being. This measures, to a great extent rest on the government at the global, national, state as well as groups and individual organizations within the micro level. Buttressing, Pigou as cited in Krutilla (1967), expressly states that government as a trustee, has the responsibility of looking after present as well future generation through legislation if required, to protect the exhaustible natural resources from reckless damage.

Although, laws as well as policies lay the foundation upon which natural environment, economy and social well-being is maintained and enhanced, however, citizens' awareness and understanding of the policies as well as the extant laws protecting the environment, and their capability of making meaningful contribution in enhancing social, natural as well as economic assets, elicits the need for adult education as well as human capacity building. As opined by Adekola and Abanum as cited in Okorie and Echezu (2019), development is impossible without education, thus, view education as a veritable tool in setting humans free from the grips of poverty, ignorance and underdevelopment as well as diseases.

Notably, adult education as a relevant aspect of education, plays significant roles in achieving community sustainability. This, Nzeneri (2008), states that, it emphasizes on lifelong learning, acts as a process and agent of freedom, an instrument for adjustment for self and national development, for cultural awareness and integration, for conscientization as well as group dynamism. Admittedly, creating environmental, social as well as economic consciousness in inhabitants within the community, provides thorough insight on the best plans of action relevant in promoting sustainability. Notably, Mckeown as cited in Okorie and Echezu (2019) state that education, general awareness, capacity building as well as training, as the foundation for advancing community towards sustainability. Although, education lays the foundation for community sustainability, enhancing individuals' knowledge, skills, abilities, as well as competencies to be more effective and efficient in the performance of task, as well as the need to strengthen governance, and institutional development, including community participation and an enabling environment, give rise to capacity-building. From the foregoing, the study intends to examine adult education and human capacity building for community sustainability in Nigeria.

However, the paper is divided into various sections. The first section dwells on the introduction, the second section focuses on the review of related literature wherein subsections created that focus on the concept of adult education, human capacity building, community sustainability as well as the role of adult and human capacity to community sustainability, while section three conclude and make recommendations.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of Adult Education

Education is seen as a powerful instrument for social change and a major tool through which the socio-economic development and growth of nations is achieved. Notably, education afford individuals the opportunity to develop the skills and traits required to set themselves free from the shackles of poverty, ignorance, misery, exploitation, unemployment and many other aspects of social inequalities as well as issues. Although, the process of learning begins at birth when the human infant spends time and energy struggling to structure urge (like hunger, expression) into skills as well as strategies, however, formalize learning also known as education deals with the process of teaching, training and imparting knowledge, skills as well as attitudes for effective participation and contribution to economic as well as social development. it affords humans the requisite skills and knowledge required to enhance life and prepare for change. This Ugwu and Mbalisi cited in Ugwu and Nwaiwu (2019), view it as the process of transmitting as well as holding onto a body of knowledge, skills and attitude which eventually results into a behavioural changes. Education, known as a lifelong learning, enhances humans understanding and promote peaceful co-existence among group of people in the society. It affords individuals the ability to properly communicate through the process of learning how to read, write, speak and listen effectively. Basically, the main aim of education is to support humans find their way through life and make positive contribution to issues confronting man. Notably, countries strive to ensure that all citizens (both children and adults) have easy access to education, as it helps reduces many social malaises such as poverty, hunger, crime, unemployment, social inequalities, disease, just to mention but few, and give individuals the opportunity to live productive life. This craving, championed by UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank, committed to ensuring quality education for all children, youth as well as adults in 1990, later, transformed into enhancing learning opportunities for children, adult as well as adults in the year 2000, whose aim is ensuring humans' survival, as well as developing their full potential, to live and work in dignity, to enhance the quality of lives, to make informed decision as well as learning continuously.

Although, the need to learn and have access to education is an inalienable right of humans through-out their existence in life, however, at a particular period, the need or desire to acquire basic literacy transcend the traditional schooling age. This period or age later in the life of the individual at which the desire to acquire basic literacy or skills required for personal fulfillment, is often known as adult education. Observably, enshrined in the list of goals put forward by World Education Forum in 2000, specifically, goal 3, emphasizes the learning needs for all young people and adults through equitable access to proper learning and life-skills programmes by the year 2015 (World Education Forum, 2000). Affording young individuals as well as adults the opportunity in acquiring knowledge and as well, develops the values, attitudes and skills required for social and economic development is highly important, as no country is capable of competing and surviving the rapid

environmental changes characterizing modern economy and society, with large number of illiterates as well as unskilled young and adult population.

Observably, the idea behind the emergence of adult education as a form of learning is aimed towards providing a second chance or opportunity to the indigent members of the society or those who do not have access to basic literacy as well as skills and knowledge required to attain social justice and equal access to learning. For instance, the need to frequently communicate in English language for non-English speaking residents or immigrants in countries wherein the lingua-franca is English language, create the opportunity for enrolling in adult educational programme for the purpose of learning how to interact in English language.

More so, based on the idea of categorization of education into formal and non-formal education dimension (Ogwo & Oranu, 2006), it states that the non-formal education creates the means through which youths and adults acquire functional education like functional literacy, remedial as well as vocational studies outside the confine of a formal schooling environment, as opposed to formal education, characterized by a well-structured and hierarchical graded educational system that ranges from primary, secondary to university as well as other general academic institutions, specialized programmes and institutions engaged in fully equipping technical as well as professional skills. Furthermore, adult education being distinct from the general as well as childhood education encompasses the idea of self-directed learning and andragogy. As opined by Loeng (2013), the concept of andragogy conceptualized by Rosenstock, indicates a vital shift or departure from pedagogy and demagogy. Notably, andragogy, which deals with the techniques and principles employed in adult education indicates a new form of teaching in which the main objective is proffering solutions to so many social problems in order for adults to attain a better future as well as ensure prosperous society.

Adult education as a form of education plays a crucial role in the development of community, as its outcome most often supports in modifying individuals' behaviour in the community, contributes towards the development of economic activities, provides awareness for effective participation in political and economic activities as well as provide a means for peaceful co-existence among individuals and communities. As stated in UNESCO conference (2015), adult education aims at providing adults with literacy and basic skills; ensure continuous training and professional development as well as the need for encouraging active citizenship through community, popular or liberal education. Furthermore, it plays a critical role in the economic, health, civic engagement as well as social cohesion, attitudinal changes, decrease in crime, parenting, poverty reduction and enhances individual as well as overall societal well-being.

Substantiating, studies indicates that work-related training acquired during adulthood guarantees clear wage increase of 5-10 percent in the United Kingdom and, also 11 percent higher wage increase for Austrians after embarking on vocational training during adulthood (Feinstein et al.;

OIEB; cited in Motschilnig, 2012). Similarly, learning at a later period of adulthood decreases the propensity of one being unemployed, as the new knowledge as well as the skills acquired gives individuals the opportunity to be at par with technological advancement and social changes characterizing the environment. Most adult in the society often achieve physical and mental well-being as an outcome of the skills and competence acquired through adult education. Social cohesion and enhanced citizenship is being encouraged through adult education, as adult learners possess the knowledge to support shared norms, trust and improved civic co-operation. As opined by Schuller (2009), general education and training acquired at later age, decrease the tendency of engaging in crime related actions as well as offenses.

Basically, Olori cited in Eleberi, Mbadiwe and Owede (2014), view adult education as the process of equipping individuals for life, specifically with the intention of assisting them live fulfilled life or achieved their dreams. Ogwo cited in Asabe (2012) views adult education as the education acquired by adults who are unable to attend formal academic education, in order to support them attain the required knowledge and vocational skills capable of contributing productively to the development of society. Notably, Adetuyi and Ajibade (2016) take a broader view of the concept of adult education, as it cut across wide range of human endeavor in the form of literacy education, civic education, agricultural extension education, health extension education, mass education, population education, nomadic and migrant education, peace education/international education, vocational education, consumer education, women education, prisoners' welfare education, distance education, rural transformation, community development and so on. However, the skills, potentials, talents, knowledge, opportunities and productive capacity of adults can be expanded and enhanced through adult education and its programmes.

Human Capacity Building
Before embarking on the conceptual clarification of the construct of human capacity building, it is absolutely important to clearly explain the concept of "capacity", in relation to human capacity building in order to have a broader perspective of the construct. Capacity denotes ability or skills to execute something. It implies the competency, qualification, the strength as well as talent required to accomplish a particular task or duty. Highly, notable in the explanation is individual's understanding, his will and motivation which cannot stand without the resources, condition, knowledge as well as the effective handling of rules and relations, control and understanding of the relevant methods. In other words, it involves the skills required to execute a task, as well as the effectiveness of the task, and the authority, productivity and resources that accompanies it. Notably, Morgan cited in Ugwu, Eneh and Igwegbe (2018) view capacity as the organizational and technical ability, relationships and values which support countries, organizations as well as people accomplish specific task and achieve their developmental goals over a period. However, emergence and relevance of the concept "capacity" anchors on individuals', organizations' as well as community/societal development. Thus, over the years, capacity is seen to have played

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complementary role to other ideas in terms of development, be it on the individual, organizational, societal/community as well as national and international level.

Notably, capacity building is viewed as the enhancement in humans' or organizations' assets in order to produce, perform or operate successfully. United nation, as well as European commission, view the concept of capacity building on the basis of five different parts. These include: sustainability, citizens/democratic participation and oversight, a clear legal framework, institutional development as well as legal framework, and human resource improvement (like education and training). Although, viewing the concept in a narrower perspective of just training or human resource development seems inadequate (Heslop, 2010), emphasis on capacity building by international organizations in the 1970s, lies on technical skills training in rural communities as well as in the administrative sectors of developing countries. Yamoah (2014) views human capacity building in relation to the acquisition of education, training and human resources development. As opine by European Action Plan (2015) on capacity building, view education/training, professional development and public awareness as the efforts aimed at building human capacity. Buttressing, the acquisition and enhancement of knowledge in a rapidly changing environment characterizing today's economies, leads to the improvement of innovative potentials as well as the creation of new employment opportunities. Thus, human capacity building creates the skills and knowledge required for innovation and as well, enhanced and guarantees individuals' employability.

Community Sustainability

Community is seen as a geographical area, involving human beings, animals, plants, and resources such as soil, water and air, financial resources as well as the structures (like roads, bridges and buildings) found in it. In other words, the concept of community implies a geographically defined area involving both living things and other resources as well as structures. Although, community is define based on its physical location, however, it extends beyond such territory-based conceptualization and include social groupings as well as networks. For instance, business community, academic community as well as the internet community all span across geographical location. Community either territory-based settlement or territorial free, is subsumed in the environment in which humans' activities plays crucial roles in determining its existence. Thus, the need for its sustainability.

Notably, a community or town is seen to be sustainable when its inhabitants work together in producing a high quality of life that they ensure to sustain as well as continuously improve upon, thereby guaranteeing prosperity of all. Observably, communities prosper because of their ability to develop and maintain a jointly supportive as well as dynamic balance between social well-being, economic prospect and environment quality. In the views of Hertnon (2009), sustainability is being supported by ethics and values in ways that humans need to live within the Earth's limits; new equilibriums amongst people and amongst species is constantly sought; there is value in reducing

the consumption of carbon through local community and cooperation; nature has intrinsic value as well as being respected; and values of fairness and equity form a main root of sustainability. In other words, protecting future generation, requires present generation making deliberate efforts in discouraging unsustainable practices, there lies the foundation of sustainability. This Bradlow (2007) reiterates that for the capacity of the community's future not to be compromised only for the benefit of the present generation, effort must be put in place to ensure that their operations and outcomes need be enduring and self-sustaining.

Communities becomes sustainable when inhabitants identify policies and goals aimed at enhancing and maintaining their economy, social well-being and the natural environment. In other words, sustainable communities pay attention to the interconnectedness of economic, environmental as well as social issues in a bid of completely solving them. They promote resources conservation as well as pollution control; focus on enhancing community health and the quality of life; promotes overall stakeholders' collaboration and citizens' participation as well as create value-added products and services in the local economy

Adult education, human capacity building for community sustainability in Nigeria
 Studies have been done severally in ascertaining the role of adult education and human capacity building on community sustainability in Nigeria. Observably, adult education and human capacity building have been seen as relevant contributors to the economic as well as social well-being, and the enhancement of environmental quality of communities in Nigeria. This, supported by Ekpenyong and Uba (2019) who empirically examine the role of adult education in attaining sustainable development in Akamkpa local government area of Cross Rivers state, Nigeria. Quantitative technique was employed in the study and finding reveals that sustainable growth, productive employment as well as individuals' self-reliance and access to justice for all were achieved as a result of promoting adult education programmes in the local government area. Also, it was revealed that lack of relevant curriculum, inadequate understanding of the concepts and contents of the programme, inadequate facilitators as well as insufficient budgetary allocation for programme are challenges facing the programme, thereby minimize the rate of its contribution to the achievement of sustainable development goals in the L.G.A.

Similarly, Adelokun, Adeyemo, Agboola and Kayode (2020) examine the role of adult education in sustaining cities and communities in Nigeria and the impact of fourth industrial revolution. It made use of qualitative technique wherein review on relevant document as well as authors was done. The review, indicates that adult education with technological innovations have the capacity of making a positive difference in the lives of both young and old in cities and communities to the extent that cities and communities would be remolded, thereby improving the outlook of communities and living standards of individuals in the communities. More so, Aruma (2015) examines adult education strategies for promoting sustainable societal change in Nigeria. The review found that adult and non-formal education stimulate provision of relevant knowledge, skills

and attitudinal change through conscientisation, awareness creation and social action which help people to respond positively to societal change in Nigeria.

Ogheneakoke and Benike (2015) in their review, examine the role of social studies and human capacity building on sustainable development in Nigeria. The review reveals that human capacity building nourished by the Social Studies core objectives, provides the needed strength to ensure sustainable development in Nigerian society. Similarly, Nwankwo and Okorie (2015) in their study examine human capacity building and sustainable development in the 21st century, the implications and challenges in Nigeria. The study adopts qualitative research design in which descriptive as well as explorative technique were employed. Findings from the study reveals human capital as the key in any development planning because of its roles in coordinating other resource capitals towards sustainability. Furthermore, the study also views government's policies and programs especially in critical sectors of the economy such as human capacity building, infrastructure development and financial policy accessibility as the basis for achieving meaningful development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examines the role of adult education and human capacity building on community sustainability in Nigeria. From the contents of the review, it was clearly observed that adult education considered as a non-formal education, equips adults and youths who are unable to acquire basic literacy as well as vocational skills at an earlier schooling age and in schooling environment, the knowledge as well as skills capable of enhancing their potentials as well as capabilities in making effective contributions towards the social, economic and environmental sustainability of communities in Nigeria, From the conclusion, the study recommends that:

1.   Government and its relevant educational institutions should recognize and monitor adult education programmes, as it has the capability of enhancing and transforming the lives of adults in making meaningful contribution to the economic, environmental and social sustainability of communities in Nigeria.
2.   Government at the federal state and local level should allot adequate funds to adult education programmes and, also ensure that the funds allocated are properly utilize in running the programme effectively. This will provide the required resources (both professional facilitators and other resources) necessary for imparting the requisite knowledge and skills capable of improving human capacity for community sustainability in Nigeria.

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