

AN EVALUATION OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION IN RIVERS STATE

Adiele, Edward, E.

Abstract

The paper evaluated adult education programme implementation in Rivers State with a focus on Obio/Akpor local government area. 185 adult learners and 14 adult education instructors given a total of 199 were drawn from an estimated population of 370 adult learners and 28 instructors from ten study centers in the LGA. The major instrument used for data collection was an observational chart. The mean was used to analyze the availability and conditions of facilities, while enrollment figures of adult learners and the total number of instructors were used to compute the rate of participation of adults and the adequacy of instructors. The study revealed that: Facilities were not adequately provided for adult learners, most facilities like text books, library, and computer-assisted learning were not available. The study also discovered that though instructors were sufficiently available, adult illiterates were not sufficiently attracted to the programme. The study recommended among others: improved funding and the establishment of more adult learning centers with adult learning facilities.

Introduction

Adult education constitutes an important complement to formal education. It can be used to touch the lives of many people, and when planned well, has the potential for contributing to individual as well as national development. It is for this reason that the Jomtien Conference of 1990, adopted adult education as one of the Education For All (EFA) goals and also as a world millennium goal to be achieved by 2015.

As an UFA goal and one of the world millennium targets for achievement by 2015, it was envisaged that nations of the world should pursue adult education programmes with the following intentions:

1. Ensure that all the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skill programme, and
2. Achieve a fifty percent (50%) improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, and ensure equitable access to basic and continuing education (Obanya 2003).

Pursuant to the implementation of the EFA and millennium goals, Nigeria has embarked on a Universal Basic Education programme (UBE). An important aspect of the UBE scheme is the programme for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education which seeks to:

1. Provide functional literacy education for adults who have never had the advantage of any formal education.
2. Provide functional and remedial education for those young people who prematurely dropped out of the formal school system.
3. Provide further education for different categories of completers of formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills.
4. To provide in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills.
5. To give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civil education for public enlightenment (FRN 2004:25).

Whereas the UBE scheme is in top gear having taken off since 2000, this paper examines the adult education programme implementation in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Statement of Problem

The Obio-Akpor local government area, which is the focus of this study, is the nerve centre of business activities with an estimated population of about 263, 017 (Onuegbu 2003). With the introduction of the UBE and its subsequent take-off since 2000, it is not clearly known how well the adult and non-formal programme of the scheme is being implemented. Are facilities and

teachers adequately provided for full implementation of the programme, are adults attracted to participate in the programme? These are the issues that this study attempts to clarify.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What is the status of existing facilities in adult learning centers in Obio-Akpor LGA of Rivers State?
2. How adequate are the adult educators for adult programme implementation?
3. What is the level of participation of adult learners in adult education programmes in Obio-Akpor local government area of Rivers State?

Methodology

The study involved a random sample of 185 adult learners and 14 instructors drawn from an estimated population of 370 adult learners and 28 instructors of the ten adult learning centres in Obio-Akpor LGA. The drawn sample represents fifty percent (50%) of the research population.

A twenty item observational chart tagged: "Adult education facilities observational chart" (AEFOC) was developed, validated and used for the study.

An r-coefficient of 0.85 was obtained from testing the instrument for reliability. The instrument was personally administered on the sample adult learners and instructors for each of the study centres. The data collected yielded a response rate of 100%. The mean weighting of the responses gathered from the observational chart were computed and interpreted from the data, while the data on adult learners and instructors were tabulated to obtain the adequacy of teachers and the rate of participation of adult learners.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the status of existing facilities for adult learners in Obio-Akpor LGA, of Rivers State?

Table 1: Status of Facilities in Adult Learning Centers in Obio-Akpor LGA of R/S

S/NO	Facilities Items	OBA		AKAHIA		ENEKA		HLKWO		KOKJWF,		p/.IfOBA		KUMUOM ASI		RUMUO KORO		RUMUO KWUTA		I-HALL UJMUO VIASI	
		Availability	Condition	Availability	Condition	Availability	Condition	Availability	Condition	Availability	Condition	Availability	Condition	Availability	Condition	Availability	Condition	Availability	Condition	Availability	Condition
1	Building	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	.0	.0	2.0	3.0	0	2.0	2.0	2.0
2.	Furniture	1.0		3.0	3.0	3.0		3.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	.0	3.0	.0	3.0	3.0	1			.0	
3.	Library	1	-	1	-	1		1		1		1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-
4.	Instructional texts	1	-	1		1	-	1	-	1		1		1		1		1	-	1	-
5.	Teaching Aids	1		1	-	1	-	1	-	1		1	-	1	-	1		1	-	1	-
6.	Electricity	3	2	1	•	1		1	•	1		1	"	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3
7.	Chalk Boards	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
8.	Computer Assisted Instruction	1	-	1	-	1		1		1	-	1	-	1	-	1		1		1	-

Key:

1. Availability of Facility
 - i. Available- 3points
 - ii. Temporary use — 2point
 - iii. Not available - 1 point
2. Conditions of Facility
 - (i) Good Condition - 3points
 - Bad condition - 2points
 - Out of use — 1 point

Table 1, shows that, for availability of buildings for adult learning activities a mean s 2.0 was recorded indicating that buildings used for learning activities in the 10 study centre temporary buildings. The mean score for the condition of the buildings shows that five of tin centres had mean score of "3.0 while the rest live had 2.0, This is an indication that half of the centres were in bad conditions. The data further reveal that furniture was available and ii condition in seven study centres with mean score of 3.0 respectively and were not available in centres.

The data-further reveal that adult learning library, instructional texts, teaching aids computer assisted instruction were not available in all the study centres (see mean scores Electricity was however, available in five study centers with mean scores of 3.0, out of which condition for three centers were bad, while only two centers had good condition of electricity mean scores of 3.0. The rest five centres had mean scores of 1.0 for electricity indicating the } not available. Chalkboards with mean scores of 3.0 were found to be available and in good condition in all the study centres.

Research Question 2: How adequate are Adult educators for adult education programme implementation?

Table 2: Adequacy of Adult educators for Adult education programme implementation

S/No	Study Center	No of Atliilt learners	No of instructors	Remarks
1.	Choba center	37	2	Adequate
2.	Alakahia corner	35	2	7
3.	Jlneka center	35	2	/
4.	Elelenwo center	40	4	7
5.	Oroigwc center	30	2	^
6.	Ozuoba center	35	2	/
7.	Rumuomasi center	40	4	7
8.	Rumuomasi-J-Hall	37	3	•/
9.	Rumuokwuta	43	4	•/
10.	Rumuokoro center	38	3	^
	Total	370	28	

Source: Rivers State Agency for Adult Education. No 1 Bernard Carr, Port Harcourt.

The data in table 2 reveal (hat the ten study centers have a total of 370 adult learners a total of 28 instructors. The data, further reveal that the adult learner enrolment for the various cei range between 30 and 43 with a teacher distribution which range from 2 to 4 per study center.

The result shows that the least center (Oroigwe Center) had a student-teacher ratio of 3 while the highest (Rumuokwuta) had a ratio of 43:4. The result indicates, that adult educators reasonably adequate for the available adult learners.

Research Question 3: What is the rate of participation of adult learners in adult education programmes.

Table 3: Level of participation of Adult learners in adult education programmes in Obio-Akpor LGA of Rivers State.

S/No	Geographical Area	Estimated number of adult illiterates	No of adult learners
1.	Choba area	7,000	37
2.	Alakahia area	5,000	35
3.	Eneka area	6,000	35
4.	Elelenvvo area	8,000	40
5.	Oroigwe area	8,000	30
6.	Ozuoba area	7,000	35
7.	Rumurnasi acix	18,000	77
8.	Rumuokwuta	10,000	43
9.	Rumuokoro	9,000	38
	Total	66,000	370

Source: Rivers State for Adult education; No 1 Bernard Carr Street Port Harcourt.

The data in table 3, show that for an estimated adult illiterate population of about 66,000, actual number of adults participating in adult education programme is 370. The result indicates poor participation of adults in adult education programme in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State.

Discussion

The findings from the study reveals that buildings for adult education programmes in Obio-Akpor Rivers State were mostly temporary structures either located in village Halls or existing primary schools. Besides, the study also revealed that half of the study centers were in bad conditions. The finding showed that furniture for learning were reasonably available in seven (7) study centers and lacking in three (3). Our observation showed, that, the available furniture were those designed for pupils in the primary schools and therefore were not conducive for adult learners.

Teaching and learning materials such as library, adult texts and computer-aided instruction were completely not available. The present findings have serious implications for successful adult education programme implementation in River state. With the poor state of facilities, it is doubtful if the programme can attract the required adult population.

This is true because most of such adults already have their children in private institutions with better facilities and may not be willing to submit themselves to centers located in public schools or village halls with little or no facilities.

The use of public schools and village halls as adult education centers need to be reconsidered as it will continue to have negative impact on intending adult learners.

The findings, also reveal that, instructors for adult programme implementation were reasonably adequate given the present enrolment figure of 370 adult learners against 28 instructors. This gives a ratio of 13 adult learners to 1 instructor. The findings on the rate of participation of adult learners in adult education programme reveal that for an estimated adult population of about 66,000, only 370 adults were registered for literacy programme across the geographical area. This is a grossly poor turnout.

Given the poor rate of turnout, it is doubtful if the adult education programmes in Rivers State have started making any serious impact with regards to the avowed "mass literacy" envisaged in the policy statement.

Literacy for adults revolves around the acquisition of basic skills in reading, writing and computation. And within the framework of the policy provisions for adult and non-formal education, it was envisaged that adult programme should be able to inculcate basic literacy skills, functional literacy skills; post literacy skills and remedial education. It is however, observed that, only one aspect of this programme (the basic literacy) is pursued (howbeit shabbily) in Rivers State.

The reason for the lopsided and shabby implementation of adult education programmes is not far from the problems, which characterize the Nigerian education system, being that of poor funding. It has been difficult for the government to adequately fund all aspect of the adult and non-formal education programmes. For this reason, only skeletal services are provided. Stipends and allowances for instructors are owed for several months. For this reason, most of the instructors have abandoned the programme. Records from the office of the Agency in Rivers State, show that, the government has not been able to fulfill its counterpart-funding obligation with donor agencies. For this reason most donor agencies are no longer willing to release more fund.

Poor funding is also responsible for the poor infrastructural base of adult education programmes in Rivers State. For example, (he study observed that, fifty percent (50) of the adult learning centers do not have electricity. And since learning activities take place in the evenings, teaching and learning has often been disrupted due to the absence of electricity or epileptic power supply.

It was also discovered that monitoring of adult education activities across the state has not been very effective. This is due to lack of logistics. Evidence on ground, when this research was conducted show that the Agency for adult education has only one vehicle. To make matters worse the only one vehicle is out of use. This has made it difficult for the coordinators to effectively monitor the programme in the various local government areas.

Inadequate enlightenment campaign was also discovered to be a major hindrance to the pool-participation of adult literacy programmes. The government has not reasonably demonstrated any seriousness in this direction. What constitute the programme and strategies for its implementation are mere documents and policy papers. Not much has been done to enlighten the populace.

It was also discovered that data for the planning of adult education in Rivers State were another major problem for effective programme implementation. It has been difficult for the agency and the Supervising Ministry lo extrapolate (lie real adult illiterate population from the overall population. At most what cxi.st arc mere estimates. In addition to the existing lapse in available statistics, the urban-rural, urban-urban and rural-rural distribution of adult population is not statistically known. This is compounded by lack of skilled manpower that posses the technical capacity for data collection and analysis required for adult programme implementation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made by (he study;

1. More adult education centers should be established with facilities for adult learners. The arrangement of using public primary schools and community halls as centers should be discarded and discontinued.
2. Skilled manpower should be recruited in the Agency that are sufficiently qualified on data collection and analysis.
3. There is need to develop accurate database for adult education planning. The data should reflect the urban-rural, urban-urban and rural-rural distribution of the illiterate population to enable the proper planning and distribution of adult education centers.
4. Funding of adult education should be taken serious like any other aspect of the UBE programme.
5. Qualified instructors who posses training in adult education should be recruited in sufficient quantity and placed on pensionable employment.

This will make the instructors to be committed to their job.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it is the position of this paper that much has not been done to sustain the adult .education programme as envisaged in the National Policy on education in Rivers State, And for the EFA and millennium goals to be achieved in Rivers State, more serious commitment need to be showed by the government and the agencies involved in (he funding of adult education or else the project will remain one of the millennium dreams.

References

Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). *Implementation guideline for the UBE programm*
NERDC Press.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos; NERDC Press.

Onuegbu, B.A (2003). The challenge of Ikwerre Ethnic Nationality in the 21st century. Public lecture presented in Ikwerre Local Government March 2003.

Pai Obanya (2003). Focus on UNE. *The Teacher Magazine* pp33-32.

Rivers State Ministry of Education (2004). *Newsletter*. Vol.1No1.

