

# WOMEN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE SELF DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract**

Education is the main tool for impacting knowledge and attitudes relevant to the contribution of the individual, concerned to national development. Education is the key for women to move the ladder of society. A woman with knowledge is a respectable woman, she has the power to make people, listen to her and the charisma, that makes people follow her. Women constitute almost half of the population in the world. Women access to education has created the awareness in cultural changes, better health, poverty reduction, marriage, and in politics. The paper stated the role of Women Education in the development of any nation and the importance of guidance and counselling for Women Education. The paper highlight, on the role of women education and the development of female self-esteem. It stresses the important of women education and work, also recommendations and conclusions are stated.

## **What is Education?**

According to Akpochafo (1989:10), "Education is the process of transmitting, the society's culture to the younger generation. It is a process of socialization. It is a vehicle for ensuring that individuals, are prepared well for their roles in society, so that they become useful to themselves and to the society". Again the National Policy on Education (2004:6-7) stated clearly, the national goals of Nigerian education as the building of:

- (a) A free and democratic society
- (b) A just and egalitarian society
- (c) A united, strong and self reliant nation
- (d) A great and dynamic economy and
- (e) A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

Following the national goals of Nigeria – it is believed that these objectives, can only be achieved through education of the citizens. It is believed that every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities, each according to his or her ability.

Following the above statements, the Nigeria philosophy of education is based on the "provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal school system. Without education of the citizens of Nigeria, development will not be sustainable.

## **Education for Sustainable Development**

For sustainable development to be achieved, in the nation, the education of it's citizens must be taken very seriously. Money invested is being put into the educational sector, by all tiers of government. In Akwa Ibom State education is free, compulsory and qualitative for every child, whether male or female in primary and secondary schools.

## **Importance of Guidance and Counselling for Women Education**

Guidance and counselling have a positive approaches towards solving the problem of women education. According to Baker (2003), the sole objective of any counselling is to assist individual in making choices which would lead him or her to self development and conscious of life.

Counselling is a process in which one person assists another in a person to person or face to face encounter, (Cope, 2000). The assistance may be in any form, for instance vocational counseling and life, educational guidance, and personal – social counseling.

When the counseling psychologist is transparently involved, she is expected to find out the causes and factors that keep women out and in school for their education. It is also their responsibilities to identify and handle health, physical and psychological conditions that discourages these women from attending school that will lead to sustainable self development (Cooper and Cooper, 2002).

The role of guidance and counselling for women education can not be over emphasized, because the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004:53) stated categorically the need for the establishment of guidance and counselling unit at all levels of nations education. According to Nwachukwu (2007:50) “guidance and counselling is a psychological help given by a trained person usually called counsellor to a learner in need usually called a client”. Again, Patterson (1966:2) saw counselling as helping “individuals toward overcoming obstacles to their personal growth, whenever these may be encountered, and towards achieving optimum development of their professional duties”. The counsellor in taking care of the clients, undertakes the following services such as orientation, referral, placement, information’s consultancy, counselling research, and follow up. The following are the roles of guidance and counselling in the development of women education.

Source: Bandura (2007)

- Assembling information, Counselors assemble information for women education and career choices.
- Imparting information, counselors impart information to women for their success in the education.
- Prognosticating women aptitudes, advising them on what is good about their character and behaviour.
- Counseling students, counselor counsel the girl child on their success and achievement about educational pursuit.
- Placing the students in school and in a job, counselor places the women in their different classes, school and follow them up, for their success in examination and placement for employment in their respective professions.
- Following up to determined success, counselor follow up women to see about their success in education, culture, agriculture, marriage, politics, health, economic and well being for the sustainability of their self development

### **The Role of Women Education and the Development of Female Self-Esteem**

Education is the process of training and developing knowledge. To educate is to bring up, to rear, by developing the skills, knowledge, mind, character, and growth of an individual (Ayandele, 2000). To show the confidence which the government has in education as a key instrument of change, fundamental change in the intellectual and social out-look, of any society has to be proceeded by an educational revolution.

The federal government of Nigeria intends to use education as a vital force for unity, understanding and progress without bias to any of the genders. The female constitutes a significant number of the population of Nigeria, in the census of 2006. In spite of this, the Nigerian women still suffer from discriminatory tendencies, which range from cultural, social, religious, political, and economic discriminations. Worse still, is the nonchalant attitude of parents in educating the women. This has led females to be gender bias, in the society. No nation can develop effectively without the participation of a greater percentage of women.

Majority of Nigeria women are uneducated and are based in the rural areas where they constitute the peasant working force. Majority of females in the rural areas are farmers. Women emancipation can only come about through education (formal or informal). The most important period for self-worth development ranges from early childhood to middle childhood (ages 3 – 10 years). Bestman (2001) opined that to identify factors that predispose learners self-image, the girl child’s life before entering school must be considered. According to him, women came to school having already acquired, many experiences that have shaped the perceptions or their abilities, competencies and self-worth. This showed the parental role in the development of women self-worth. It is from their parents

### *Women Education for Sustainable Self Development*

that children obtained the basic early education with regards to the kind of persons they are, loving, and accepting posture, gives them the impression of being worthy and loving to them.

It is this self-image, a child acquires within her family and brings to the classroom, that influences her subsequent achievement behaviour. According to Ukpong and Inaja (2005), the early self-image serves as a blue print, for all kinds of activities a girl child will undertake, her expected perception from others and anticipated success or failure in life.

It is the contention of this contribution that a child's attitude to learning and life generally, and what she will and can become in the future are more likely, to be directly influenced by the quality of her early education (formal and informal).

#### **Education: A New Awareness and Change of Attitude Towards Women.**

Education is a stimulus to the development for the marginalized females in the society. The aim of education should be, geared towards preparing citizens, to take up innovation roles in their own communities. The knowledge and skills that can be imparted, in the newly reformed styles of education are like seed, of the future, capable of transforming the communities in which they are planted. On the other hand, like seeds, they can not grow well without good soil, water and fertilizer. Education alone can not transform under-developed communities, unless it is integrated with social and economic change and create awareness, which will pull more resources and power, into the hands of the marginalized women in the society (William 2000).

Women are part of the human resources of any nation, and no nation can develop without fully mobilizing its women, through effective skills acquisition in formal and informal school. There must be a belief in the women participation for total development and sustainability of the nation.

Education has shown itself as a dynamic element, which has liberated women from their traditional, narrow vision of themselves and illiteracy. Such liberation contributed to the female's new awareness and qualified them to participate actively, creditably and freely in developing human resources. With the doors of all educational establishments open to them, Nigerian women entered the new economic dispensation as individuals. They realized in their right to work outside the home, and to receive equal pay for equal work. These in turn, has improved their standard of living (Uchendu, 1995).

#### **Importance of Women Education and Work**

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2007), 1.2 billion of the 2.9 billion workers in the world in 2006 were women. According to Steers (1981), he opined that work is seen as an activity that produces, value for other people and is undertaken in return for payment of reward in money or in kind. Akpala (1982) stated that work refers to the participation of an individual in the labour process or employment.

Women's participation in the labour sector, in Nigeria was given a boost by the demise of colonialism and the subsequent accelerated efforts, at national development until the late 1960s. Women's first emergence as contenders in the formal labour or economic sector in Nigeria occurred in the area of teaching particularly at the primary school and secondary school level.

Women education is seen generally as an investment, that yields high return in terms of social and economic gains. Women are home builders; they are the indispensable weapon of progress. The idea that women are inferior to men, has been embedded in our culture (Akerkar 2001).

A woman with knowledge is a respectable woman, she has the power to make people listen to her, and the charisma that makes people follow her. Women constitute almost half, of the population in the world. The rise of feminist ideas have, however led to the tremendous improvement of women through out the world in recent times. Access to education has been one of the most pressing demands, of these women's rights movements. Women education in India has been a major pre occupation, of both the government and civil society as educated women can play very important roles, in the development of the country.

Everybody has the right to education, which has been recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The right to free and compulsory primary and secondary education without discrimination and a good quality, has been reaffirmed in all major international human rights conventions. Education plays an important role in enabling girls and women to secure other rights in

- ❖ Cultural changes
- ❖ Better health
- ❖ Poverty reduction
- ❖ Politics
- ❖ Social gathering
- ❖ Marriage

According to (Akerkar 2001), levels of education. For instance, in the United States in 2005/2006 women earned 62% of Associate's degrees, 58% of Bachelor's degrees, 60% of Master's degrees and 50% of Doctorate.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that: adequate counseling services in and out side the school can stop the problem of women education, and encouraged them for sustainable self development.

Promotion of women is a development policy imperative. It is no longer out of place to see a woman with enviable academic qualification, end up in the kitchen because she married a business man or trader who does not see any reason why his wife should work. When he has enough resources to keep the whole family comfortable.

Women Education is seen as an investment, that yields high returns in terms of social and economic gains. The paper also talk about the importance of guidance and counselling for the development of Women Education. It also stressed the role of Women Education and the development of female self-esteem.

### **Recommendations**

- ❖ There should be provision of more educational opportunities from primary to tertiary level of women.
- ❖ The general public, parents and communities should be educated, to bring a change in attitudes towards women educational programmes especially in science and technology.
- ❖ More professional women should be considered for positions of leadership, managerial positions in the state civil service and in politics.
- ❖ Women should be sufficiently empowered politically, economically, and other relevant areas in order to enhance sustainable development of the state and the nation.
- ❖ Conferences, seminars, and workshops should be organized to sensitize women for active participation in matters of interest to them.
- ❖ Government should encourage and promote full participation of men, women, boys and girls by involving both the public and private sectors as agents of development. Programmes which enable women to stay healthier, well-informed and more economically viable throughout their lifespan should be established.
- ❖ The federal and state government should enforce laws guaranteeing women's equal right in all spheres of life.
- ❖ More women, especially Muslim would should be encouraged to go to school, and register in social organizations.
- ❖ Professional counsellors should be re-trained and employ to work in schools.
- ❖ Women should be provided with scholarship facilities to study, male dominated courses within and outside the state and country.
- ❖ Women need to be provided with more opportunities to exhibit their hidden talents especially during club activities, social gathering, politics and in sciences.

### Women Education for Sustainable Self Development

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- ❖ There is need for the advancement in the use of information technology to provide computer based co-ordination and communication in the school system for an effective recording system in all educational institutions.
- ❖ The incorporation of ICT training for all key categories of persons (in every teacher training programmes) in colleges and higher institutions is urgently important.

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