

## **Level Of Awareness And Availability Of Adult Education Programmes In Rural Communities In Bayelsa State**

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### **Abstract**

*This study on the level of awareness and availability of adult education programmes in Bayelsa State was carried out in twenty communities in four local government areas. While the simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the four local government areas and the twenty communities, the purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the two thousand respondents used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The test-retest method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and a correlation co-efficient of 0.80 was obtained using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics. Research questions designed for the study were analyzed using the weighted mean with a criterion mean of 2.5 used in taking decision while the hypotheses formulated for the study were tested with the one sample t-test using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 26 at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study show that the level of awareness of adult education programmes is very low among rural illiterates in Bayelsa State. The study also shows that there is a scarcity of adult education centres in the rural communities of Bayelsa State. Furthermore, the study shows that there is a significant effect of awareness and availability of adult education programmes on the education of the people in the study area. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that local government councils should be more equipped to carry out its statutory responsibility of providing adult education programmes and centres especially at the grass roots level.*

**Keywords:** *Adult Education Programmes, Rural, Communities, Availability, Awareness*

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### **I. Introduction**

Over the years adult education has played a significant role in the provision of functional skills and educational opportunities to Nigerians. Through the various forms of adult education programmes such as basic literacy, remedial education and vocational adult education among others, a lot of people have acquired basic literacy skills for functionality while others had progressed to attain greater heights educationally.

There is no gain saying that adult education has contributed immensely to human resources development and invariably the overall development of the nation. With the decline in the fortune of the formal educational system occasioned by inadequate funding, insufficient manpower and infrastructure as well as inadequate space to accommodate the teeming numbers of admission seekers at all levels of education leading to increasing number of illiteracy in Nigeria, adult education has stepped-in as an alternative and complementary form of education providing educational opportunities to those debarred or those who dropped out of the formal education system for one reason or the other.

In fact, available record shows an annual increase in the level of illiteracy in Nigeria. For instance, Knoeman (n. d) averred that adult illiteracy increased from 24 million in 1991 to 41.8 million in 2018 growing at an annual rate of 21.41 percent. The number of adult illiteracy has continued to rise over the years in Nigeria. Federal Government of Nigeria (2021) reported that more than seventy-six (76) million adults, representing 38% of the estimated 200 million population of Nigeria, cannot read and write despite increasing efforts to improve literacy level in the country. This has great implication on the development of the Nigerian society as well as the attainment of sustainable Development Goal four (4) of quality and inclusive education.

This is why adult education, more than ever before has a greater role to play in tackling illiteracy in the country as no nation can develop above the level of education of its citizens. This staggering number of adult illiterates requires adult education to enable them function effectively in the society.

Bayelsa State was created on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1996 out of Rivers State and is at the core of the Niger Delta with vast portions of its land riverine and its population predominantly farmers and fishermen despite oil

exploration activities by oil multi-nationals. It is one of the states that is categorized as educationally less developed. This is as a result of several factors including number of educational institutions, number of manpower, and availability of educational infrastructure among other indices. According to a UNESCO (2012) Bayelsa State has a literacy rate of 62.0%. Although recent surveys show some improvement in the literacy level, there are still lots of people especially in the rural communities that cannot read and write. This figure translates to nearly 40% of the population and this implies that a large number of Bayelsans are illiterate. These large numbers of out-of-school children who will soon become adult illiterates require some form of adult education to meet their educational needs and aspirations as responsible and functional citizens in their communities in particular and the state at large. That is why a research of this nature is necessary to find out whether adult education programmes are actually available, functional and the people themselves are aware of these programmes in rural communities of Bayelsa State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Education is the bedrock of every society. The level of education of the people of any society determines the level of its development. No nation can develop above the level of education of its population. Bayelsa State is an educationally less developed state. This is attributed to several factors such as poverty, presence of multinational oil companies, flooding, militancy and oil bunkering activities especially illegal refineries. These factors coupled with the increasing cost of livelihood have trapped most children into child labour over the years. While most young boys are involved in the illegal refineries and militancy most girls dropped out of school prematurely mostly as a result of pregnancy by oil company workers who are like demi-gods because of the money available to them. This has created large armies of illiterate young men and women especially in the rural communities. This large number of illiterate adults requires one form of adult education or other to enable them function effectively and contribute meaningfully to the development of their societies but the question is; are adult education programmes available? If yes are these programmes functional; or are these illiterate adults aware that through these adult education programmes they could acquire functional skills such as reading and writing as well as basic arithmetic for day-to-day calculations or they could even progress to attain higher education. This is the justification for this study.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this research work is to investigate the level of awareness and availability of adult education programmes in rural communities of Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study intends to achieve the following:

1. Determine the level of awareness of adult education programmes among adult populace in rural communities of Bayelsa State.
2. Assess the availability of adult education programmes in rural communities in Bayelsa State.
3. Examine the functionality of adult education programmes in rural communities of Bayelsa State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the level of awareness of adult education programmes among rural populace in Bayelsa State?
2. Are adult education programmes available in the rural communities of Bayelsa State?
3. Are adult education programmes functional in the rural communities of Bayelsa State?

### **Hypotheses of the study**

With regard to this study, the following hypotheses were formulated

- (i) There is no significant effect of awareness of adult education programmes on the education of rural populace in Bayelsa State.
- (ii) There is no significant effect of availability of adult education programmes on the education of people in the rural communities in Bayelsa State.

### **Adult Education**

The term adult education has been conceived in different ways by scholars, practitioners and institutions. Seya as cited in Obasi (2014) saw adult education as a transmission process of general, technical and vocational knowledge, as well as skills, values and attitudes which takes place outside the formal education system with a view to remedying early inadequacies of mature people or equipping them with the knowledge and cultural elements needed for their self-fulfillment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of their societies. Nzeneri (2013) conceived adult education as that education undertaken by adults who need to make up for what they lost in formal school system or for those who desire to use the leisure more

meaningfully or people who need to acquire new and improved skills in order to adjust to changes and challenges in life, technology and occupation.

According to UNESCO as cited in Okorie and Ibanga (2020) adult education is the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level or method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby person regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualification or turn them into a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced, independent, social, economic and cultural development. This definition according to them takes into consideration the learning aspiration of different categories of adults across the globe thereby helping them to participate actively in the social, economic, political and cultural development of their societies. The goal of this education could be to remedy the previous lapses or gap in education created by circumstances, lengthen the initial skills and knowledge they acquired in formal school system; and to accommodate the desires of those who could not complete their primary and secondary education.

To Aliwa and Onwuhanze (2020) adult education is concerned not with preparing people for life, but rather with helping and assisting people live more successfully as useful and acceptable members of their societies and contribute meaningfully to the development of those societies. Adult education assists adults to upgrade their wealth of knowledge and widen their experiences. It is an indispensable tool for socio-economic, cultural and political development of any society. This is why Nzeneri (2013 ) averred that it is in adult education that great emphasis are placed on lifelong education, education as a process and agent of liberation, a tool for adjustment, for self and national development, for cultural awareness and integration, for conscientization and group dynamism. Adult education, in its ramifications, accommodates all forms of education; formal, informal and non-formal.

### **Goals of Adult Education in Nigeria**

Accordingly, the goals of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria as contained in the National Policy on Education NPE (2012) are to:

- i. Provide functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education. These include the nomads, migrant families, the disable and disadvantaged gender.
- ii. Provide functional and remedial education for those who did not complete secondary education.
- iii. Provide further education for different categories of completers of formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills.
- iv. Provide in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills.
- v. Give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment.

### **Challenges of Adult Education in Nigeria**

The vision of adult education in Nigeria is to make Nigeria a learning society through provisions of literacy to all categories of learners to solve their literacy needs and providing remedial and non-formal education. The mission is to provide development platforms for adults, to enable them participate and contribute effectively in the development of their community. Although, several efforts at promoting the vision and mission of adult education in Nigeria have been made by government at all levels as well as individuals, adult education have failed to achieve its objectives. This according to Hussain (2013) is attributed partly to various factors inhibiting it from thriving as a field of study in Nigeria. These factors include:

- i. Failure of the UBE Act to give adequate recognition to adult and non-formal education as a key factor of basic education.
- ii. Accessibility: In the world of rapid changes, adult education should be established at the door steps of all the interested adult learners so as to avail them the opportunity for learning. In Nigeria, there is serious scarcity of adult education centres.
- iii. Inadequate funding: The budgetary allocation to adult education at all levels of government is grossly inadequate especially when compared to the formal education sector.
- iv. Lack of Mobilization: Many interested learners are not aware of the existence of adult education centres and even the programme in which they are supposed to enroll. This undoubtedly affects efforts at achieving Education for All.
- v. There is also the challenge of Lack of inadequate number of literacy instructors or personnel who possess information and communication technology skills across the non-formal education centres.
- vi. There is the dearth of skilled manpower in the area of monitoring and evaluation.

- vii. Poor remuneration of facilitators is another serious problem as most states and local government councils do not pay the facilitators regularly. In some cases, some facilitators are not being paid for so many months.
- viii. Inadequate number of qualified facilitators: Appointment of non-professionals and untrained facilitators who do not understand the use of andragogical principles is another serious challenge facing adult education in Nigeria.
- ix. Poor record keeping: There is a problem of poor record keeping in non-formal education programmes in Nigeria.
- x. Poor attitude of the target group: Yearly statistics by NMEC have shown that most of the target groups have not shown any serious commitment toward non-formal education programmes.

Brown (2019) outlined the following as challenges confronting adult education.

- i) Poor recognition of adult education by government, communities and individuals.
- ii) Lack of adequate funding.
- iii) Problems with budgetary allocation for adult education among various countries of the world.
- iv) Lack of awareness and sensitization of the existing adult education programmes in some countries.
- v) Social stereotype among adult learners or communities.
- vi) Shortage of adequate and qualified management staff and facilitators.
- vii) Lack of proper monitoring and management adult education programme.
- viii) Inaccessibility of adult education in rural and remotes areas.
- ix) Poor reviewed of policies across many countries of the world.
- x) Resistance to change among many rural communities.

To Ikwuegbu and Ike-Obioma (2009) the problems of adult education in Nigeria include:

- 1) Frequency of programmes: Most adult education programmes are rarely organized and carried out. Most adult education programmes takes place once or twice a year thus depriving the beneficiaries of such programmes the needed skills and knowledge for better living.
- 2) The numbers of field workers involved in adult education programmes are inadequate hence their services could not be reached by many people who require their services.
- 3) Bad roads and poor transportation system tend to militate against the effectiveness of most adult education programmes.
- 4) Adult education in Nigeria is poorly funded.
- 5) Many adult education centres are located too far away from most adults hence many are discouraged because of distance.
- 6) There is this problem of poor and insufficient supply of equipment in the area of functional literacy programme where adults are trained in various skills yet equipment are not provided to them.
- 7) Most instructors in adult education programmes are part-time teachers, volunteers, community leaders or change agents hence have little or no training in working with adults.
- 8) There are problems with the use and acquisition of audio-visual devices such as radio, television, motion pictures, etc.
- 9) Lack of seriousness both on the part of government including their agencies as well as on the part of the facilitators since most of them are employed on part-time bases with little or no incentives.
- 10) There is the general problem of lack of instructional materials for teaching and learning of adults.
- 11) Most adult education programmes are very expensive and there are few books available for adult learners.

## **II. Methodology**

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all adults in the four local government areas used for the study which is five hundred and fifty four thousand, one hundred and thirty two (554,132) persons. The sample for this study is two thousand respondents drawn from twenty communities in four local government areas spread across the three senatorial districts in the state. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the four local government areas used for the study namely; Sagbama Local Government Area, Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, Ogbia Local Government Area and Nembe Local Government Area as well as the communities used for the study. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the two thousand respondents used for the study.

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The test-retest method was used in ascertaining the reliability of the instrument. Scores obtained were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and a correlation co-efficient of 0.80 was obtained. The administration and collection of the instrument was done by the researchers with the help of four research assistants. Out of the two thousand copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, one thousand nine hundred and ninety five were

successfully retrieved from the respondents. The weighted mean was used in analyzing the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.5 was used in making decisions. Hence any item response that receives mean equal to or greater than 2.5 was considered to be positive response while any item that receives below 2.5 was considered to be negative. Finally, the one sample t-test was used in analyzing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.

### III. Results

The results of the mean analysis are as follows

**Research Question One:** What is the level of awareness of adult education programmes among rural populace in Bayelsa State?

**Table 1: Mean Analysis of Level of Awareness of Adult Education Programmes.**

S/N	Items	Responses						Remark
		VH E	HE	LE	VLE	Total	$\bar{X}_W$	
1	I am aware of adult education programmes	140 560	264 789	863 1726	728 728	1995 3803	1.9	Negative
2	I am aware that through adult education programmes one can acquire vocational skills for functionality in society	257 102 8	291 873	689 0378	758 758	1995 3532	1.9	Negative
3	I am aware that through adult education one can achieve the highest level of education	32 128	42 126	885 1770	1036 1036	1995 3060	1.5	Negative
4	I am aware of the importance of adult education to the development of man and society	171 684	185 555	703 1406	936 936	1995 3581	1.7	Negative
	Grand Mean						1.77	Negative

Item one on the table above reveals that out of the 1995 respondents, 140 are aware of adult education programmes to a very high extent, 264 are aware to a high extent, 863 to a low extent while 728 are aware of adult education programmes to a very low extent. This response gave a mean score of 1.9 which is lower than the criterion mean of 2.5. Thus the response of the respondents is negative. This means that level of awareness of adult education programmes in rural communities in Bayelsa State is very low.

Item two shows that 257 respondents are aware that through adult education programmes they could acquire vocational skills for functionality in society to a very high level, 291 to a high level, 689 to a low level and 758 to a very low level. The response of the item produced a mean value of 1.7. This means that the response of the respondents on this item is negative. Hence the awareness that through vocational adult education one can acquire vocational skills for functionality in society is very low.

Item three on the table shows that 32 respondents are aware to a very high extent that through adult education programmes one can progressed to achieve the highest level of education, 42 are aware to a high extent, 885 respondents are aware to a low extent and 1036 are aware to a very low extent. This gave a mean of 1.5 which is far below the criterion mean of 2.5, hence the response is negative.

Item four also gave a negative response. Out of the 1995 respondents 171 are aware of the importance of adult education in the development of man and society to a very high extent, 185 are aware to a high extent, 703 are aware to a low extent while 936 are aware to a very low extent.

From the analysis on the table above, it was discovered that vast majority of rural dwellers in Bayelsa State are not aware of adult education programmes and its importance to man and the community. This is indicated in the grand mean of 1.7 which is lower than the criterion mean of 2.5.

**Research Question Two:** Are Adult Education Programmes available in the Rural Communities of Bayelsa State?

**Table 2: Mean Analysis of Availability of Adult Education Programmes.**

S/N	Items	Responses					Remark	
		SA	A	D	SD	Total		
5	There are adult education centres in my community	135 450	312 936	856 171 2	692 692	1995 3880	1.9	Negative
6	Adult education centres in my community is owned by the state government/local government	08 32	09 27	688 137 6	1290 1290	1995 2725	1.3	Negative
7	Adult education centres in my community are owned by NGO's or religious organizations	744 2976	698 209 4	321 642	232 232	1995 5944	2.9	Positive
8	Adult education centres in my community are owned by individuals	568 2272	746 223	389 778	292 292	1995 5580	2.7	Positive

			8					
	Grand Mean						2.2	Negative

Table two shows that 135 strongly agreed that there are adult education centres in their communities, 312 agreed, 856 disagreed while 692 strongly disagreed. This produced a mean of 1.9 which is below the criterion mean of 2.5; hence the response of the respondents is negative.

Similarly, the respondents also gave a negative response to item 6 on the table. The item shows that 08 respondents strongly agreed that adult education centres in their communities is owned by the state or local government councils, 09 agreed, 688 disagreed while 1290 strongly disagreed.

Item 7 on the table shows that 744 respondents strongly agreed that adult education centres in their communities are owned by NGO's and religious organizations, 698 agreed, 321 disagreed while 232 strongly disagreed. This produced a mean score of 2.9 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5 hence the response of the respondents is positive.

Item 8 on the table two reveals that 568 strongly agreed that adult education centres in their communities are owned by individuals, 746 agreed, 389 disagreed while 292 strongly disagreed, the statement is supported by the mean score of the item which is 2.7 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5.

**Research Question Three:** Are Adult Education Programmes Functional in the rural communities of Bayelsa State?

**Table 3:** Functionality of Adult Education Programmes

S/N	Items	Responses						
		SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\bar{X}_W$	Remark
9	Government owned adult education centres in my community is functional or functioning	7 28	12 36	697 1394	1279 1279	1995 2734	1.3	Negative
10	Adult education centres operated by NGO's or religious organization are functional	602 2408	781 2343	354 708	258 258	1995 5917	2.8	Positive
11	Adult education centres operated by individual are functional in my community	541 2164	611 1833	387 774	456 456	1995 5227	2.6	Positive
	Grand Mean						2.2	Negative

Table above shows that 7 respondents strongly agreed that government owned adult education centres in their communities are functional, 12 agreed, 697 disagreed while 1279 strongly disagreed. This item gave a negative response of 1.3 which is below the criterion mean of 2.5.

Item 10 produced a positive response of 2.8 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5. This item shows that 602 respondents strongly agreed that adult education centres operated by NGO's and religious organization are functional in the study area, 781 agreed, and 354 disagreed while 258 strongly disagreed.

Item 11 also shows that adult education centres operated by individuals are functional in the study area. This item produced a mean value of 2.6 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5.

Finally, the grand mean analysis of functionality of adult education programmes in the study area gave a negative response of 2.2 which is below the criterion mean of 2.5.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant effect of the level of awareness of adult education programmes on the education of rural populace in Bayelsa State.

**Level of Awareness**

Item	N	Mean	Std
1	1995	1.9078	0.87740
2	1995	2.0236	1.02033
3	1995	1.5338	0.62241
4	1995	1.7950	0.92907

**T-test of the effect of awareness of adult education programmes on education of rural populace**

N	One sample statistics		One sample test		
	Mean	Std	t	df	Sig-2-tailed
1995	7.2602	2.40632	134.761	1994	0.000

The t-test calculated 134.761 is greater than t-table value of 1.96 and the sig.2-tailed test of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Therefore, there is a significant effect of awareness of adult education programmes on the education of rural populace in Bayelsa State.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant effect of availability of adult education programmes on the education of the people in the rural communities in Bayelsa State.

***Availability of Adult Education programmes***

Item	N	Mean	Std
1	1995	1.9449	0.87823
2	1995	1.3629	0.21201
3	1995	2.9794	0.99954
4	1995	2.7970	1.01216

***T-test of the effect of availability of adult education programmes on education of people in rural communities***

One sample statistics			One sample test		
N	Mean	Std	t	df	Sig-2-tailed
1995	9.0872	2.18535	185.730	1994	0.000

The null hypothesis is rejected because t-calculated 185.730 is greater than t-tab value of 1.96 or the sig.2-tailed of 0.000 is less than 0.05 hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant effect of availability of adult education programmes on the education of people in the rural communities of Bayelsa State.

**IV. Discussion Of Findings**

Findings from the study show that there is a very low level of awareness among illiterates and semi-illiterates in rural communities of Bayelsa State about adult education programmes and its importance in human and social development. This finding is in line with the submission of Hussain (2013) who opined that many adult learners are not aware of the existence of adult education centres and even programmes in which they are supposed to enroll and this has undoubtedly affected efforts at achieving Education for All. This finding is also in agreement with the opinion of Brown (2019) and Ikwuegbu and Ike-Obioma (2009) who also expressed concern about the low level of awareness about adult education and its tenets in Nigeria.

Findings from the study also shows that adult education programmes are rarely available in the rural communities of Bayelsa State. Where they are available they are either owned by individual, religious organizations or Non-governmental organizations. The study further indicated through focus group discussion that the state and local government do not have adult education centres in the rural communities of Bayelsa State to provide for the educational needs of adult who dropped out of schools or those who never had the opportunity to attend formal schools when they were young. This finding supports the assertion of Ikwuegbu and Ike-Obioma that there is lack of seriousness on the part of government in providing adult education programmes. The finding also supports the views of Hussain (2013) when he declared that “in a world of rapid changes, adult education should be established at the door steps of all interested adult learners so as to avail them the opportunities for learning. In Nigeria, there is a scarcity of adult education centres”.

Furthermore, findings of the study also reveal that most adult education centres are non-functional in the study area. This is partly because of the distance of these centres from the people, lack of qualified facilitators, and lack of funds among others. Further findings shows that the adult education centres that are functional are either owned by private individuals, NGO’s or religious organizations. This finding is in agreement with the opinion of Hussain (2013), Brown (2019) and Ikwuegbu and Ike-Obioma (2009).

Finally, the study revealed that there is a significant effect of the level of awareness and availability on the education of adult education programmes on the education of the people in the rural communities in Bayelsa State.

**V. Conclusion**

The role of adult education in the development of man and his society cannot be over-emphasized as it has been significantly utilized in providing education and skill manpower to vast number of people who never had the opportunity of any formal education or dropped out of school prematurely. Adult education has over the years played a great role in meeting the educational needs of adults both young and old thereby empowering them to achieve their educational aspirations. This is why more than ever before, there is need to effectively strengthen, sensitized and make adult education programmes available in the rural communities to accommodate the large number of illiterates and school dropped out so they could progress educationally. This is the sure way to achieve Education for All and the Sustainable Development Goal four (4) of quality and inclusive education.

## **VI. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Government at all levels should make more and sincere commitments to the education of adults especially those who never had the opportunity of formal education as well as those who dropped out of school.
2. Local government councils should be more equipped to carry out its statutory responsibility of providing adult education programmes especially at the grass roots level.
3. The state agency for adult education and the state ministry of education should collaborate in providing adult education centers in the state.
4. Public spirited individuals should be encouraged in providing free adult education programmes to members of their communities.
5. Community leaders should sensitized members of their community on the importance of adult education.
6. Community Based Organizations and religious bodies should also play a significant role in the provision of adult education programmes especially for adult illiterates.
7. Government should enforce the compulsory education to reduce the number of out-of-school children
8. Lastly, government at all levels should increase funding of adult education programmes.

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