

Role of Adult Education Programmes on the Socio-Political Development of Yenegoa, Bayelsa state.

Wobo Temple Queen-Esther¹
Department of Adult Education and Community Development
Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, P.M.B. 5080
Faculty of Education

&

Doreen Kobani Ph.D²
Department of Adult and Community Development
Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, P.M.B. 5080
Faculty of Education
betex2006jj@yahoo.com
kobani.doreen@ust.edu.ng

Abstract

The work examined the Role of Adult Education Programmes on the Socio-Political Development of Yenegoa, Bayelsa State. The concept 'development' and its various dimensions as modernization, change and social change were explored. Socio-political development and Adult Education were also discussed. It also highlighted the role of Adult Education in fostering informed decision-making, promoting active citizenship, and addressing social inequalities. By providing accessible and relevant learning opportunities, adult education programmes have the potential to transform individuals into knowledgeable, engaged, and empowered citizens who actively participate in democratic processes and work towards creating more inclusive and equitable societies. The various tools of Adult Education to be deployed in a bid to promote socio-political development were also discussed. These include: family life education programmes, community development programmes, health education programmes amongst others. The work concluded by making recommendations to maximize the impact of Adult Education and enhance its roles on socio-political development. These include, amongst others, that Government, NGOs and other agencies such should ensure all adults have access to high-quality adult education programmes, regardless of their background, location, or socio-economic status. This may include increasing funding for adult education, expanding the scope of existing programs, and developing new and innovative delivery methods such as online and mobile learning platforms.

Keywords: Adult Education, Adult Education programmes, Development, Socio-political development.

Introduction

Development is an intriguing concept that has evolved over time and is central to the progress of societies. It encompasses various dimensions, from economic growth and infrastructural development to social well-being and environmental sustainability. In line with the aforementioned, Onyeozu (2007) stressed that development should be perceived as a multi-dimensional process which involves the re-organization and reorientation of the entire social, economic and cultural systems. In the same vein, Unanka (2001) graphically averred that development is a problem for public policy makers as well as various coteries of theorists. He further opined that "development is an economic problem, it is also a social, cultural, political and technological problem". Problematic as development were and is, majority of the world population live in abject poverty, hunger, disease, premature death, housing, war, etc which need immediate attention Barnett et al in Unanka (2001). It is best to assert that Development is a human problem despite it being elusive and paradoxical. Achieving true development requires a holistic approach that considers the well-being of all citizens and future generations especially the socio-political aspect of development.

Socio-political development is a multi-dimensional emerging concept used to describe the social and political processes that influence the development of society and culture. Hence, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) noted that socio-political development involves the creation of inclusive institutions that promote economic prosperity, political stability, and social progress, ensuring broad-based participation and protecting individual rights. It refers to the collective progress and transformation of a society's social and political structures, encompassing aspects

like citizenship, governance, social inclusion, and civic participation. As a social concept, it is the gradual alteration of the political and social organizations of a society, its institutions and its processes. It includes changes in the political, social and economic structure of a society including the formation of political systems and social norms.

Ultimately, the aim of Socio-political development is to develop the society that is more just, fair and stable for all its members. In view of this, Putnam (2015) emphasized that socio-political development consists of strengthening social connections, civic involvement and community networks is key to achieving social progress. Putnam highlighted the need for collective action, collaborative effort, and co-operation in order to foster and address societal issues and reach shared objectives, and the improvement of societal well-being and political stability through the promotion of economic growth, reduction of poverty, and the consolidation of democratic institutions, World Bank (2007).

Within the context of Yenegoa, the capital city of Bayelsa State in Nigeria, there exists a unique set of challenges and opportunities for sociopolitical development. The region has experienced various socio-political issues, including inadequate representation, marginalization, and limited civic engagement. It is within this context that the role of adult education programmes become crucial in addressing these challenges and transforming the sociopolitical landscape. It is imperative to shed light on the subject of socio-political development as it a concept which encompasses the processes and factors that shape the social and political fulfillment of the society. A study conducted by the census of 1952 showed that the Ijaws are one of the ten largest ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region, accounting for 0.9 million and Yenegoa accounts for (0.43%) of the population in Bayelsa State. Within the context of this study, Yenegoa is characterized by various social and political activities such as political campaigns and rallies, Community Meetings and Town Hall meetings, Youth Empowerment Programmes, Traditional Festivals and Cultural Celebrations, Student Union Activities, Protests and Demonstrations et cetera. However, aside the social and political activities evident in the city, there are conspicuous lack of social and political development components emanating from environmental degradation occasioned by oil exploration and exploitation, continued neglect of the economic development of the area, political marginalization, Healthcare, reliable provision of basic services, such as clean water, sanitation, and waste management systems, lack of youth empowerment and employment, lack of Civic engagement and participation, lack of gender equality, access to quality education, lack of democratization, human rights advocacy, conflict resolution and peace-building, lack of adequate political structures and knowledge of the area is currently among the least developed in the country, lacking any form of developmental amenity and infrastructure hence, the need for adult education programmes in addressing inadequacies and fostering socio-political development. In today's rapidly evolving world, the dynamics of socio-political development are increasingly shaped by factors such as education amongst others.

According to World Bank 'Education is a powerful driver of development and is one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability.' Education contributes to development by transforming individuals. Through education, people become empowered and their capacities for innovation and productivity are enhanced for their participation in the social, economic and social aspects of society. This means that an educated person is not a recipient of development programmes but a critical and dynamic participant in the development of society. However, as education is a multi-faceted concept which provides wide range of learning experiences and outcomes, it is imperative to be keen on the main focus which is Adult education even though they may have shared goals but Adult education is pragmatic and functionally related to the needs of individuals and society; whether short-term or long-term (Amirize, 1998).

Adult education which is one of the dynamics have emerged as a crucial instrument in fostering socio-political development, helping individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and awareness necessary to actively participate in the political processes of their societies. In light of this, Tugbiyele in Kobani (2018) opined that Adult education does not mean literacy education, it is much more than literacy or remedial education to "fill the gap". It is something people need and want as long as they are alive and regardless of the amount of their previous education. It must therefore, be an integral part of any modern country's educational system. He suggested that this definition of adult education applies to adult education in the context of developing countries and extends the notion of adult education beyond lifelong education to include human and national development.

Furthermore, Nzeneri in Kobani (2016) posited that adult education is any education given to adults based on their social, political, cultural and economic needs or problems to enable them adjust to changes and challenges in their lives, all these can be achieved through adult education programmes which serves as a panacea for discovery, awareness, advancement and innovations in our societies. Adult education programmes have emerged as a crucial instrument in fostering socio-political development, helping individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and awareness necessary to actively participate in the political processes of their societies. The significance of adult education programmes, particularly in their role in socio-political development remains palpable. Adult Education is a wide-ranging field of study that does not necessarily adhere to a single definition. This is due to the fact that

the field of study is constantly expanding, with new forms emerging on a daily basis. Adult Education is a form of education that is provided to individuals who are considered adults in their respective societies.

Adult education programmes such as Citizenship Education Programmes, Political education programmes and Conflict Resolution and Literacy education programmes amongst others are geared towards the attainment of socio-political development within our communities (Ihejirika, 2015). These programmes educate beneficiaries about human rights principles, social justice issues, and strategies for promoting equality and inclusivity. They promote active citizenship by encouraging participants to address social inequalities and work towards a more just society and these programmes provide adults with knowledge about their rights, responsibilities, and the functioning of democratic systems. They aim to develop informed and active citizens who can actively participate in political processes and promote foundational literacy and numeracy and also develop critical thinking. These programmes can vary in their focus and approach, but they all aim to empower adults to become informed, active, and engaged members of their communities and the broader political society.

In addition, it is necessary to acknowledge the various agencies and establishments involved in adult education within the geographical location. In Yenegoa, Bayelsa State, several agencies and organizations are involved in adult education and literacy initiatives. These organizations play a vital role in providing educational opportunities for adults and promoting literacy and lifelong learning. Some of the key agencies involved in adult education in Yenegoa, Bayelsa State include: National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC): NMEC is a federal government agency in Nigeria that is mandated to coordinate and oversee adult and non-formal education initiatives across the country. The commission collaborates with state agencies and local organizations to implement literacy programmes for adults, Bayelsa State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education: The state agency for adult education is responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing adult education programmes in Bayelsa State. It works closely with local communities, NGOs, and other stakeholders to address adult literacy needs in Yenegoa and other areas within the state.

It is important to note that the landscape of adult education in Yenegoa, Bayelsa State is dynamic, and there may be additional agencies, initiatives, and community-based efforts that contribute to adult literacy and education in the area. Therefore, it is the crux of this research paper to examine the role of adult education programmes in socio-political development in Yenegoa, Bayelsa state.

Conceptual Elucidation

1. Development

Development is a complex issue, with many different and sometimes contentious definitions. The concept of development is relative essentially inferring its diverse meaning to different situations, disciplines, professions, countries (developed, developing and under-developing) and nationalities (Kobani and Alozie, 2019). It is a way of growing, advancing, and making positive changes in the economy, environment, society, and demography. In simple terms, it denotes making life better for everyone, a better life for most people include; Basic needs which are often thought to be confined to food, shelter and clothing. The International Labour Organization (ILO) identified five categories of basic human needs which go well beyond these. They are: • basic goods, including food, shelter and clothing; • basic services, including education, health, access to water and transport; • participation in decision making; • the fulfilment of basic human rights, and; • productive employment, that which generates enough income to satisfy consumption needs, this clearly outlines the primary need of individuals and the availability of these resources which leads to development within their understanding. In the early 1970s, the International Labour Organization (ILO) focused attention on the importance of employment in developing countries for providing for basic needs (ILO, 1994). The efforts of the ILO and others led to the emergence of a new meaning, which treated development as the fulfilment or satisfaction of basic human needs. A good measure of development is the extent to which these needs are met.

Oyebamiji and Adekola (2008) further noted that in defining development, many words with similar meanings often come to mind. Such words include: social change, growth, evolution, advancement and modernization. They stressed that with the exception of social change; all others imply positive change in a specific direction. The concept of development can be applied not just to biology but to psychology, education, engineering, sociology, healthcare, economy, amongst others. The definition of development varies depending on the context in which it is discussed. In the context of knowledge and learning, it refers to the positive transformation/change of people's ways of living, attitudes and behaviours as a consequence of their access/implementation of relevant, adequate and timely information services as a result of the digital age/revolution. For every researcher, there is an alternative interpretation of the concept of development. Thus, Balogun (2002) noted that development is concerned with change but it is not simply the same as change.

He noted further that development is concerned with those progressive changes which are rooted in, and sprang out of previous situations. This means that development is not making everything new but a new emerging from the old. Furthermore, Akinpelu (1992) noted that development is of man rather than of infrastructures and public works, super markets, sky scrappers and highways, though they are indices. Balogun (2002) agrees with this assertion when he said that the emphasis of development is on the people; as it is they who are thought to appreciate what constitute change. This view likely derives from the opinion of Nyerere (1978) who maintained that "Development is for man, by man and of man' From similar standpoint, Kidd (1978) saw development as the power of the people to solve their own problems, using their own experience, thinking and resources with a view to bringing to an end their hitherto abnormal state of poverty and want. To discuss the concept of Development is to further dissect the different connotations associated with it into subsects; Growth, modernization, change and social change as aforementioned by different authors (Kobani and Alozie, 2019).

Development as Growth: Development refers to the qualitative aspects of change, while growth refers to the quantitative aspects. Development encompasses not just the increase in size or number but also the improvement in function, complexity, and organization which include;

- Quantitative increase in size, number, or extent
- Measurable and observable changes
- Often associated with physical or material aspects
- Can occur without significant qualitative improvements

Development:

- Qualitative improvement in function, complexity, or organization
- Associated with the emergence of new abilities, skills, or structures
- Not always directly measurable or observable
- Requires growth but goes beyond mere increase

Development as change; In the context of change which coincides with the definition given stated by (Balogun, 2002) The concept of change and transformation encompasses any form of alteration in a society. While change is a value-neutral concept, development is a concept that is based on value. In other words, the process of desired change is the process of development. Development, as change and transformation, is a term used to describe the economic, sociological, political and cultural dynamics of change in human societies,

Development as social change; In the context of social change, development refers to the ongoing process of transformation and improvement in societal structures, institutions, and human well-being. It encompasses a wide range of positive changes, including: Structural Changes, institutional changes and human well-being.

There is no single definition of development that is universally agreed upon. Instead, development is a complex and contested concept that is subject to different interpretations. For example, some might define development in terms of economic growth, while others might define it in terms of social justice or environmental sustainability. In conclusion, The definition of this concept can continue to linger as it a multi-dimensional concept, but the most important thing to note is that Development is concerned with progress and improvement, involving positive change that results in the enhancement of people's well-being, encompassing various domains such as economic growth, social well-being, technological advancement, political stability, cultural preservation, personal growth, and environmental sustainability, addressing inequalities, fostering social justice, and ensuring inclusive society, where all individuals have equal opportunities to fulfill their potential and actively participate in shaping their own future (Kobani and Alozie, 2019).

In summary, development involves positive change, progress, and improvement that leads to the enhancement of individuals' well-being and the creation of an inclusive and sustainable society that addresses systemic inequalities and fosters social justice.

2. Socio-Political Development

Socio-political development is an emerging and broad term that encompasses a wide range of changes and improvements in various aspects of human society and the political systems that govern them. It is an ongoing process of transformation and improvement in societal structures, institutions, and human well-being, driven by the collective efforts of individuals, organizations, and movements working towards a more just, equitable, and prosperous society.

Socio-political development is both a concept and a theory. It is a concept in the sense that it refers to a broad and complex phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of changes and improvements in various aspects of human society and the political systems that govern them. It is a theory in the sense that there are a number of different explanations or frameworks for understanding the process of socio-political development.

Sociopolitical development can be conceptualized as an orientation toward social justice, a motivation to transform sociopolitical inequity in one's environment, and the development of a healthy sense of self and feeling empowered to exercise one's agency in the context of structural oppression (Freire, 1973, 1993; Quintana and Segura-Herrera, 2003; Watts, Griffith, and Abdul-Adil, 1999) and has been labelled an antidote to structural oppression (Watts et al., 1999). As a concept, SPD refers to the idea that societies undergo changes in their political and social structures, institutions, and values over time. This concept suggests that development is not a fixed or static state, but rather a dynamic and ongoing process that is influenced by a variety of factors, including economic growth, technological advancements, cultural shifts, and historical events. The concept of socio-political development recognizes that development is not just about economic growth, but also about the promotion of democratic institutions, human rights, social welfare, and the reduction of inequality and poverty. It highlights the importance of understanding the complex interplay between political, economic, and social factors in shaping development outcomes, and it emphasizes the need for sustained efforts by individuals, communities, and governments to promote socio-political development. Overall, the concept of socio-political development provides a framework for understanding and analyzing the complex and multifaceted process of development.

Socio-political development as a theory and research stem from Paulo Freire's (1973, 1993) notion of critical consciousness and liberation psychology perspectives (Martín-Baró, 1994). Socio-political development is an internal resource that oppressed and marginalized individuals may draw on to cope with external inequity, such as a socially toxic environment characterized by structural racism and limited access to resource, Garbarino in Watts, (2003). In short, this construct captures how individuals develop a greater consciousness of and redefine their relationships with socio-political oppression. As socio-political development proceeds, a person becomes increasingly aware of existing social inequities and their history. This includes distinguishing the processes (e.g. policies and practices) and the outcomes (e.g., subjugation, trauma, and social and personal dysfunction) of oppression. Brazilian educator-activist Freire (1990) calls this awareness "critical consciousness" or conscientization, and he describes a liberatory pedagogy for enhancing it.

[it is] . . . learning to think critically about accepted ways of thinking and feeling, discerning the hidden interests in underlying assumptions and framing notions (whether these be class-, gender, race/ethnicity- or sect-based). It means learning to see, in the mundane particulars of ordinary lives, how history works, how received ways of thinking and feeling serve to perpetuate existing structures of inequality.

In addition, Martín-Baró (1994) frequently describe SPD as a product of a synergistic relationship between practice (i.e., liberation behaviour) and reflection. The focal point of socio-political development is linked to the tenets of conscientization by Paulo Freire, critiquing the structures that govern our very existence through critical consciousness awakening dependent on Praxis through reflection and action. Praxis also builds confidence in the confrontation of oppression as one sees the vulnerability of the oppressor and the impact of one's own power. (Watts, et al, 2003). The term socio-political development also encompasses several key dimensions, including:

- Economic development: This refers to the growth and improvement of a country's economy, including increasing productivity, generating employment opportunities, and enhancing living standards. According to Prof. Meier and Baldwin; "Economic development is a process whereby an economy's real national income increases over a long period of time.
- Social development: This focuses on the advancement of social structures, institutions, and relationships within a society. It aims to address social issues such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, and social exclusion, and to promote social cohesion, justice, and equity. According to Cetingok and Rogge (2006),

social development is a "multifaceted process" that involves distributing resources, including economic, social, and environmental, in equitable and sustainable ways.

- **Political development:** This encompasses the development of democratic institutions, processes, and values that promote participation, accountability, and the rule of law. It also includes the strengthening of civil society and the expansion of individual rights and freedoms. Political development is a process by which societies improve their capacity for governance and promote their values through political institutions that are democratic, effective, and legitimate.
- **Cultural development:** This refers to the preservation, promotion, and transmission of cultural heritage, values, and traditions. It also includes the fostering of creativity, innovation, and cultural diversity. Cultural development is the process by which societies, communities, and individuals create, sustain, transmit, and transform their cultures in a dynamic and interactive relationship with their environments.

Denotatively, there are evident key characteristics of socio-political development as a theory which may include that: it is based on a set of assumptions about the causes and dynamics of socio-political change. These assumptions can be based on empirical evidence, philosophical reasoning, or a combination of both, it seeks to explain and predict the patterns of socio-political change. This means that it is not just a description of what has happened in the past, but also a guide to understanding what might happen in the future, it is subject to ongoing debate and revision. This means that it is not a fixed or unchanging set of ideas, but rather one that is constantly evolving as new evidence and insights emerge (Wobo & Kobani, 2024).

There are also several key theories that are associated with socio-political development, each offering distinct perspectives on the factors, processes, and implications of societal and political change. Some prominent theories include:

1. **Modernization Theory:** This theory posits that societies undergo a set of predictable stages of development, progressing from traditional to modern forms. Modernization is associated with industrialization, urbanization, increased education, and a shift towards democratic governance. It emphasizes the role of economic growth, technological advancement, and social change in transforming traditional societies into modern, democratic ones.
2. **Dependency Theory:** In contrast to modernization theory, dependency theory emphasizes the uneven power relations between developed and developing countries. It suggests that the economic underdevelopment of some nations is a result of their subordinate position within the global economic system. This theory highlights the impact of external influences, such as colonization, unequal trade relations, and global economic policies, on shaping socio-political development in developing countries.
3. **World-Systems Theory:** Developed by sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein, world-systems theory examines global inequalities and the interconnectedness of different societies within a world-economic system. It distinguishes between core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral nations and emphasizes the role of economic and political relationships in shaping global socio-political development.
4. **Conflict Theory:** This sociological perspective focuses on power, inequality, and competition in shaping societal structures and relationships. It emphasizes the role of conflict and struggle between different social groups, such as the working class and the ruling class, in driving socio-political change. Conflict theory highlights issues of social injustice, exploitation, and the unequal distribution of resources and power.
5. **Institutional Theory:** This theory focuses on the role of institutions in shaping socio-political development. Institutions, such as government bodies, legal systems, and regulatory agencies, are seen as central to establishing and maintaining social order and stability. Institutional theory explores how the design and effectiveness of institutions impact societal development and political processes.
6. **Structural-Functionalism:** This theoretical perspective emphasizes the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of different social institutions and their roles in maintaining social order and stability. It examines how various societal structures and systems function together to support the overall functioning of society, including its political institutions.
7. **Critical Theory:** Rooted in the works of the Frankfurt School, critical theory examines the power dynamics and ideological foundations of socio-political systems. It critiques existing social structures and emphasizes the need for societal transformation to achieve social justice, equality, and empowerment for all individuals and groups.

These theories provide diverse lenses through which to understand and analyze the complexities of socio-political development, addressing issues of economic inequality, global interconnectedness, power dynamics, social

justice, and institutional frameworks. Each theory offers unique insights into the processes, challenges, and consequences of socio-political development within and across societies.

In conclusion, socio-political development is both a concept and a theory. It is still an emerging complex and multifaceted phenomenon that is essential for understanding the progress of human societies. While there is no single definition or explanation of socio-political development that is universally accepted, there is a growing consensus that it is a critical factor in achieving sustainable progress and improving the lives of people around the world.

3. Adult Education

The Concept of Adult education has been undeniably popularized and elucidated by different authors over the years because of its evolving and impactful nature. However, it is pertinent to understand who an adult is before progressing into various definitions of the concept of adult education. The term adult is one of the most controversial and misconstrued concept since it usually determined primarily with the categorization of the position of an individual on the chronological age scale (Kobani and Alozie, 2016). Many people directly attribute age to adulthood. The problem with this methodology is that it becomes evident when you interact with people of different cultural backgrounds and circumstances in a sociological perspective, age can be considered as an individual's 'ascribed characteristic', a feature that contributes to defining who an individual/person is, independently from his will, adulthood is not based on age alone but emotional maturity. Thus, Nzeneri (2008) defines an adult as a person who is physically and psychologically mature, one who is socially, economically and politically responsible. This definition of who an "adult" simply emphasizes the multiple dimensions of adulthood, emphasizing that it is not merely a state of age, but a state of holistic development and active participation in various spheres of life. According to the definition, an adult is characterized by physical maturity, psychological well-being, social responsibility, economic autonomy, and political involvement, all of which contribute to the functioning of society. However, based on circumstances, individual experiences and unprecedented events of life, one may be considered, socially, politically, and environmentally responsible and mature irrespective of the age will be referred to as an adult irrespective of their chronological age. Afterall, "Experience is the best teacher" is a proverb, which connotes that the lessons, learned from experiences of life are the most lasting.

This simply means that the individuals, the experiences and circumstances forces a person to mature and become an adult irrespective of his/her age. In this regard, an appropriate definition of adult education would be, United Nation's Education, Scientific And Cultural Organization, UNESCO (1976) in Kobani and Alozie (2016) which posited the adults are persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong. Also, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides eighteen (18) years as age of majority, Therefore, this sheds light on the need to understand the specifics of society to which an individual is born, grows up and gets old influences the way, age and different phases of life are considered and interpreted which buttresses the points made by Akinpelu in Kobani and Alozie (2016) that adults are measured by certain criterias: namely, identification and characteristics. These attributes that identification is a parameter for the recognition of adults, obvious signs of Puberty) while characteristics are qualities of life (behaviours attributed or expected from an adult by others to confirm indications of true adulthood. Jegede in Kobani and Alozie (2016) noted that these definitions are deliberate and conscious dory to enunciate the term "adult" in order to further gain clarity on the concept of adult education , taking into cognizance the adults are the focal point of adult education

In layman's term, Adult education refers to the process of learning and acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes by individuals who are beyond the traditional age of compulsory schooling. This type of education is designed to meet the unique needs and circumstances of adult learners, who often have different learning styles, priorities, and goals compared to traditional school-aged learners. Albeit, this definition is seemingly cliché and hackneyed, limiting its scope and retrogresses its vast meaning, benefits and goals. Ergo, UNESCO (1976) in Kobani and Alozie (2016) redefined a comprehensive definition of adult education;

"adult education" denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in a balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development".

This provided definition of "adult education" emphasizes the comprehensive nature of this field, encompassing various forms of organized learning aimed at the personal and societal development of adults, taking into cognizance the key points of the concept of adult education which include broad scope, life-long learning, personal and professional growth, attitudinal and developmental change, societal growth and full personal development. In essence, adult education is a powerful tool for personal transformation and societal advancement. It empowers individuals to adapt to a changing world, contribute meaningfully to their communities, and lead fulfilling lives. The above international definition reveals the meaning, content and scope of adult education and it has also greatly influenced many nations' philosophy of education, such as Nigeria's National Policy on Education (NPE 1977, reviewed in 1981, 1998 and reprinted in 2004).

Another ground-breaking definition by Houle (1976:32) agrees that:

Adult education is the process by which men and women (alone, in groups, or in institutional settings) seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skills, knowledge, or sensitiveness, or it is any process by which individuals, groups or institutions try to help men and women improve in these ways.

This definition emphasizes the proactive nature of adult education, recognizing both the individual's pursuit of self-improvement and the efforts of institutions to facilitate their growth which includes (1) individual Initiative: Adult education is not merely a passive process of receiving instruction; it is driven by the individual's desire to enhance their skills, expand their knowledge, and increase their understanding of the world. This self-directed learning is a hallmark of adult education, (2) collective Learning: Adult education also encompasses group learning experiences, where individuals learn from one another and share their knowledge and perspectives. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of community and enhances the learning experience, (3) institutional Support: Adult education is not limited to individual endeavors; institutions play a crucial role in providing structured learning opportunities, resources, and support for adult learners. These institutions can include community centers, schools, workplaces, and non-profit organizations, diverse Learning Goals: Adult education caters to a wide range of learning goals, encompassing not only skill development and knowledge acquisition but also personal growth, social awareness, and cultural sensitivity, this holistic approach promotes well-rounded individuals, facilitating Growth: Adult education is about empowering individuals and communities to improve their lives. The goals of adult education are diverse and may include improving literacy and numeracy skills, enhancing employability and career advancement, promoting personal and professional development, fostering civic engagement and social inclusion, and supporting lifelong learning and self-directed education. It is a collaborative effort between individuals, groups, and institutions to facilitate personal and societal growth through various adult education programmes.

Adult education programmes can be formal, informal, or non-formal, and may take place in a variety of settings, such as community centers, workplaces, online platforms, or traditional classrooms. Some examples of adult education programmes include literacy and basic skills training, vocational and technical education, professional development and continuing education, and personal enrichment and lifelong learning programmes (Ihejirika, 2015). Adult education programmes are typically designed to be flexible, responsive, and learner-centered, with a focus on practical, relevant, and applied learning. They often incorporate experiential learning, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning approaches, and may also utilize technology and multimedia resources to enhance learning outcomes.

Indeed, a plethora of definitions exist on adult education programmes, its purpose and scope by different authorities and disciplines, However, there exists an unending number of adult education programmes in general but within the context of this paper, it is important to succinctly overt the various adult education programmes which can intrinsically promote socio-political development in Yenegoa, Bayelsa state.

Citizenship Education Programmes: This programme aims to promote political literacy, critical thinking, and civic engagement among citizens. It provides training on topics such as democracy, human rights, and governance, and encourages participants to actively engage in their communities and advocate for their rights

Community Development Programmes: This programme focuses on empowering communities to address local development challenges through education and capacity building. It provides training on topics such as leadership, project management, and community mobilization, and encourages participants to work together on shared goals and issues.

3. Women's Empowerment Programmes: This programme aims to promote gender equality and women's rights by providing education and training to women. It provides training on topics such as leadership, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy, and encourages women to participate more fully in political life and decision-making processes.

Youth Leadership Programmes: This programme aims to empower young people to become active citizens and leaders in their communities. It provides training on topics such as leadership, advocacy, and social entrepreneurship, and encourages young people to work together on shared goals and issues.

5. **Adult Literacy Programmes:** This programme aims to provide basic literacy skills to adults who did not have the opportunity to complete formal education. It provides training on topics such as reading, writing, and numeracy, and encourages participants to continue their education and engage in their communities.

6. **Environmental Education Programmes:** This programme aims to promote environmental awareness, conservation, and sustainability through education and capacity building. It provides training on topics such as environmental science, sustainable development, and community-based natural resource management, and encourages participants to work together on shared environmental challenges.

7. **Health Education Programmes:** This programme aims to promote health awareness, prevention, and management through education and capacity building. It provides training on topics such as health science, disease prevention, and community-based health care management, and encourages participants to work together on shared health challenges.

In summary, adult education is a critical component of lifelong learning and personal development, and plays a significant role in promoting social and economic inclusion, mobility, and participation in society. It is essential that adult education programmes are accessible, affordable, and relevant to the needs and circumstances of adult learners, and that they are supported by appropriate policies, resources, and funding mechanisms.

Role of Adult Education Programmes on Socio-Political Development

Adult education programmes play a crucial role in fostering socio-political development in various ways. By providing adults with opportunities for learning, critical thinking, and civic engagement, these programmes contribute to the development of informed and active citizens who can participate meaningfully in the socio-political life of their communities and contribute to positive societal transformation. One of the key roles of adult education programmes in socio-political development is the promotion of civic literacy and democratic participation. Through these programmes, adults can develop a deeper understanding of democratic principles, political processes, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. This, in turn, empowers individuals to engage in informed and meaningful participation in the civic and political life of their communities, whether through voting, advocacy, or community organizing. By fostering an informed citizenry, adult education programmes contribute to the overall strength and vibrancy of democratic societies.

Also, adult education programmes also play a role in promoting social justice and equity, which are essential components of socio-political development. These programmes can address issues of inequality, discrimination, and social exclusion by providing marginalized and disadvantaged adults with access to educational opportunities. By addressing the educational programmes provide spaces for adults to engage in discussions about current events, public policies, and societal challenges, fostering a culture of informed debate and analysis. Such critical engagement is vital for the development of a politically astute and engaged citizenry that can contribute constructively to the resolution of societal issues and the formulation of effective policies.

In addition, adult education programmes contribute to the development of necessary skills for active citizenship and community leadership. These programmes can provide training in areas such as communication, advocacy, community organizing, and leadership, empowering individuals to become effective agents of change within their communities. By nurturing these leadership skills, adult education programmes help to cultivate a cadre of individuals who can work towards positive socio-political development at the local, national, and global level. Also, adult education programmes can be instrumental in promoting intercultural understanding and social cohesion, particularly in diverse societies. By offering opportunities for intercultural exchange, dialogue, and learning, these programmes can help to bridge cultural divides, foster respect for diversity, and promote social cohesion. This is essential for building inclusive and harmonious societies where individuals from diverse backgrounds can work together towards common goals, including the advancement of socio-political development.

It is also important to note the role of adult education programmes in promoting human rights awareness and advocacy. These programmes can help adults understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, as well as advocate for the rights of marginalized groups within their societies. By fostering a human rights-oriented perspective, adult education programmes can contribute to the creation of a more just and rights-respecting socio-political environment. Adult education programmes have the potential to significantly impact socio-political development through its roles by promoting political literacy, critical thinking, social cohesion, empowerment of marginalized groups, and community engagement (Wobo & Kobani, 2024). These roles include;

Political Literacy

Political literacy refers to the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and navigate political systems. Adult education programmes have been shown to significantly improve political literacy among participants. Similarly, a study by Kabeer (2018) found that a women's empowerment programme led to significant improvements in participants' knowledge of politics and governance.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking refers to the ability to evaluate information critically and make informed decisions. Adult education programmes have been shown to significantly improve critical thinking skills among participants. Kabeer (2018) revealed in his study that a women's empowerment programme led to significant improvements in participants' ability to think critically about political issues.

Social Cohesion

Social cohesion refers to the degree to which individuals feel connected to their communities and society as a whole. Also, a study by Alam et al (2019) found that a social cohesion programme led to significant improvements in participants' sense of community belonging and social connectedness.

Empowerment of Marginalized Groups

Adult education programmes have the potential to significantly empower marginalized groups by providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for their rights and participate more fully in political life. Similarly, a study by Kobani and Ibis (2022) found that adult education programmes led to significant improvements in the empowerment of participants, and encourage decision making. Other roles of adult education programmes in community development include but are not limited to:

Promoting Civic Engagement and Participation:

Adult education programmes promote active civic engagement by raising awareness of civic rights and responsibilities, encouraging participation in community activities, and fostering an understanding of democratic principles. Individuals learn to advocate for their interests, engage in constructive dialogue, and contribute to the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Empowering Individuals and Communities:

Adult education programmes empower individuals by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to take control of their lives and improve their circumstances. Through education, individuals gain access to better employment opportunities, enhance their earning potential, and contribute to the economic well-being of their communities.

Furthermore, this review has provided an overview of the existing research on the role of adult education programmes in socio-political development, focusing on their impact on political literacy, critical thinking, social cohesion, empowerment of marginalized groups, and community engagement. The evidence suggests that adult education programmes can significantly improve political literacy, critical thinking, social cohesion, empowerment of marginalized groups, and community engagement among participants. These findings highlight the importance of investing in adult education programmes as a critical component of socio-political development efforts around the world.

Conclusion

In the dynamic web of human progress, education is the foundation that empowers individuals and societies to navigate the complexities of the world. Adult education programmes in particular have proven to usher in change and pave the way for socio-political development. Carefully tailored to meet the diverse needs of adult learners, these programmes play a critical role in developing informed, engaged, and active citizens and laying the foundation for a thriving democracy in Yenegoa, Bayelsa state A city known for its major contributions to the nations' economy, lush rainforests, abundant natural resources, founded in 1912 as a colonial outpost, and it has since grown into a bustling Metropolis with a population of over 350,000 people (NBS, 2006) that need to be fully identified, explored and involved in adult education programmes as aforementioned which promotes socio-political development within these communities.

Adult education programmes continues to stand as a cornerstone of socio-political development, empowering individuals, nurturing informed citizens, and fostering inclusive and prosperous societies. By investing in adult education, nations invest in their future, paving the way for a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. Adult

education is not merely a means to an end; it is an end in itself, an ongoing journey of lifelong learning, empowerment, and transformation.

Recommendations

To maximize the impact of adult education and enhance its roles on socio-political development, several strategies can be adopted:

1. **Expand access to adult education:** Government, NGOs and other agencies such should ensure all adults have access to high-quality adult education programmes, regardless of their background, location, or socio-economic status. This may include increasing funding for adult education, expanding the scope of existing programmes, and developing new and innovative delivery methods such as online and mobile learning platforms.
2. **Integrated Civic Education:** Adult education programmes should include comprehensive civic education components to equip learners with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective democratic engagement.
3. **Tailored Outreach:** Organizations involved in adult education should design targeted outreach programmes to reach marginalized and underserved communities, ensuring that all segments of society have access to educational opportunities that strengthen their socio-political agency.
4. **Technology Integration:** Embracing technological tools and digital literacy training in adult education can facilitate wider dissemination of socio-political information and enhance civic participation, particularly in the digital age.
5. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Collaboration between adult education providers, government agencies, civic organizations, and community leaders can foster synergies in promoting civic awareness, engagement, and political participation among adults.
6. **Policy Support:** Governments and policymakers should recognize and support the role of adult education in socio-political development through favourable policies, funding, and institutional frameworks that prioritize adult learning and civic empowerment.

References

- Abuiyadu, Reem (2018). Traditional Development Theories have failed to Address the Needs of the majority of people at Grass root Levels with Reference to GAD, International Journal of Business and Social Science, Vol. 9, No. 9September 2018, Doi: 10.30845/ijbss.v0n0p12.
- Acemoglu, D. & Robinson, J. A. (2012). *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Adult Education and Development: Lessons from Somaliland Purity M. Nthiga, Gatitu E. Kiguru & Phyllis W. Mwangi.
- Akinpelu, J.A. (1992). Influence of Leadership Style on Participatory Management for Information Processing in a Dynamic Society: A Philosophical Perspectives. Paper Presented at a Workshop on Information Dissemination and Crisis Management in Organizations by the Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Alam, M. Z., Ahmed, A., & Rahman, M. (2019). Impact of social cohesion program on community belonging and social connectedness. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 47(3), 375-388.
- Amirize, B. (1998). *Liberal Education and Community Development*. Port Harcourt: Osia Int'l Publishers Ltd.
- Balogun, F. (2002). A Critical Analysis of the Concept of Andragogy as Applicable to Later Human Life, in MAIL Omole and A. Sarumi (eds) 50 Years of Adult Education at Ibadan. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Burke, R., & Grootaert, C. (2018). Political literacy through adult education: The case of the citizen engagement program in Morocco. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 61, 18-28.
- Cetingok, M. & Rogge, M. (2006). Democratic modelsandsocial development. *SocDev Issues* 28(3):1-15
- Economic Development* by Gerald M. Meier, Robert E. Baldwin.

- Federal Republic of Nigeria (4th ed.) (2004). National policy on education, Lagos: Nigerian Education Research and Development (NERDC).
- Hopper, K. (1999). John Berger and Erick Holtzman. *Social Policy*, 30(2). 13-21
- Houle, G.C. (1976). *The Design of Education*. Washington: Jossey Bass Publishers
- Ihejirika, J.C. (2015). *Adult and Non-formal Education Practice in Nigeria*. Uyo: Abigab Associates Ltd.
- ILO. (1994). World Labour Report. Office, 1994.
- Kabeer, N. (2018). Political literacy training as women's empowerment: Lessons from India. *Development and Change*, 49(4), 1012-1045.
- Kidd, J.R. (1978). An Urgency: Adult Education in and for Development, B.C Hall and J.R. Kidd (eds) *Adult Learning: A Design for Action*, Oxford: Program Press.
- Kobani, D., & Alozie, K. (2019). *Essentials of Community Development in Nigeria*. Second Edition. Owerri: Beauty Concepts.
- Kobani, D., & Alozie, K. (2016). *Adult Education: Principles and Practice*. Owerri: Beauty Concepts.
- Kobani, D. and Iyalla, I. (2022). Role of Adult Education Programmes in Socio-Economic Empowerment of women in Port Harcourt Metropolis, *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 3(7): 2195-2201.
- Martin-Baró, I. (1994). Writing for a liberation psychology. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- NBS Bank Limited (NBS.mw). 2006 annual report.
- Nyerere, J.K. (1978). Development is for Man by Man, and of Man: The Declaration of Dares Salaam, B.L. Hall and I.R. Kidd (Eds)
- Nzeneri, I. S. (2008). *Handbook on Adult Education: Principles and Practices*. Uyo: Abigab Associates Ltd.
- Onyeozu, A. M. (2007). *Understanding Community Development*. Port Harcourt: Davidson Publishers.
- Oyebamiji, M.A.& Adekola, G.(2008). Fundamentals of Community Development in Nigeria. Port Harcourt. University of Port Harcourt Press.
- [Overview of Bayelsa – Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group](#) (2023).
- Putnam, R. D. (2015). *Our kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster
- Quintana, S. & Segura-Herrera, T. (2003). Developmental Transformations of Self and Identity in the Context of Oppression. *Self and Identity - SELF IDENTITY*. 2. 269-285. 10.1080/714050248.
- Unanka, G. O. (2001). National development, approaches and perspective. Owerri: All Ages Publishers.
- Watts, Roderick & Williams, Nat & Jagers, Robert. (2003). Sociopolitical Development. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 31.185-94. 10.1023/A:1023091024140.
- Wobo, Q.E. & Kobani, D. (2024). Family Life Education Programmes in reducing drug abuse among Youths in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, *IJO - International Journal of Educational Research*, 7(5): 46-65.
- World Bank (2007). World Development Report 2001: Attacking Poverty: New York: Oxford University Press.