Chike Okoli Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, UNIZIK - Deputy Director (2010 - 2012).

From the SelectedWorks of Prof. Uche J. Obidiegwu

Winter 2006

A STUDY OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES OF THE AGENCY FOR

Dr. Uche J. Obidiegwu

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/druche_obidiegwu/4/
A STUDY OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES OF THE
AGENCY FOR
ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN OYO STATE
Dr. Helen Ebunoluwa Adebola and Mrs. Uche J. Obidiegwu

Abstract
This paper examines the concept of empowerment. It also discusses some of the income generating activities of the Agency for Adult and Non-formal Education (AANFE), Oyo State. This was with the view to determining how income-generating activities have helped adult women to develop skills in their different vocations and how these programmes have made participants to become self-reliant and improved their standard of living. Two hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 significant levels. The survey research design was adopted for the study. A total number of 1,500 women were randomly selected from those who had graduated from AANFE vocational centre. The major instrument utilised for the study was a set of questionnaire titled “Income Generating Activities Questionnaire” (IGAQ) which adopted the modified four-point format. The data collected were collated and analysed using chi-square statistical tool. The findings of the study revealed that: Income generating activities had significantly influenced skills development of adult learners (women) in their various fields of specialization ($X^2 = 133, df = 24; P< 0.05$). The skill developed through income generating activities had significant relationship with improvement in the standard of living of the adult women ($X^2 109.6, df = 24; P<0.05$).

Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Government and Non-governmental Organizations should support and assist women who embark in income generating activities.

Introduction
Moser (1992) opines that, the empowerment approach incorporates an understanding of the concept of gender as a sociological construct and acknowledge of the systematic subordination of women in all social relations with men. Stromquist (1995), defines empowerment as a socio-political concept that has four components, “cognitive, psychological, political and economic”. For the purpose of this paper, empowerment is defined as the ability to direct and control one’s own life. This view is elaborated by Zuniga (1995), who says that empowerment for women involves, “the right to make decisions about their own lives and to influence social change through their ability to gain control over crucial, natural and cultural resources. She contends that an empowered woman has increased her power in terms of her own self-esteem and internal force rather than in terms of domination over others.

Dighe (1995) also describes empowerment in terms of its physical manifestation in the “empowered” individual. She identifies the person as someone with a sense of self-confidence and self-worth, someone who critically analyses her social and political environment and who exercises control over the decisions affecting her life.

The Concept of Income Generating Activities
Aderinoye (1997) sees income generating activities as a process whereby women groups on literacy programme are involved in different vocational skills
acquisition. These range from tie and dye, soap and pomade making, palm oil extraction and palm kernel processing. According to Adebola (1997), income-generating activities are also called life skills. That is, they are skills that one has for life. The aim of these skills is for the learners to be self-reliant self-sustained and also self-empowered.

Income-generating activities began at the Oyo State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education (AANFE) in 1995, when United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) started to fund mass literacy and adult education programmes. Some of the income generating activities of AANFE are crafts (weaving, textile design, knitting, basketry, soap making), cookery (soya beans utilization, use of melon and groundnut, snacks, uses of maize, uses of cassava), agriculture (backyard gardening, snail farming, fish farming), cooperatives, health (health living, how to treat common ailments) and computer training.

Statement of the Problem

When walking through the streets of most markets in Nigeria, especially in Ibadan, one common feature that cannot escape one’s notice is how women do menial jobs like hawking sweets and carrying loads for people. Some of them are even beggars. They do these menial jobs under the scorching sun with their babies tied on their backs. One wonders, how much they earn at the end of the day. It was observed that these women were not empowered and skillful in such areas as cookery, fashion designing, crafts, farming, cooperatives, computer training among others. If these women have access to income generating activities, they will be able to develop and utilize their skills, which will make them, to be empowered economically, politically, socially and educationally.

It is against this background, that the researchers examine the skills acquired by adult women who had graduated from income-generating activity programmes of AANFE and sought to find out how these skills have helped them to become self-reliant and self-directed individuals.

Indigenous Income Generating Activities

There is jubilation at the arrival of a baby. As a tradition among the Yorubas, when a baby is born, the oracle is contacted on the baby’s naming ceremony which usually takes place on the 8th day after her birth to find out the baby’s occupation or what skills to do in life. Usually when the baby is a boy, he would be allowed to follow the occupation, which they practice in their family. In some cases where the oracle directed to the contrary, the girl or the boy had to be sent to a relative who is practicing the recommended occupation to train him or her under the apprenticeship system.

Income generating activities is a part of a wider education process in which the indigenous societies of Nigeria passed on their cultural heritage from one generation to the next. That is the reason it is called “life skills” (Adebola, 1997). Evidence of the passing on of skills within families is a continuous process. It continues even after a person’s demise. According to Omolewa (1981), in ‘most traditional societies of Nigeria, vocational skills in agriculture and industry were acquired through the apprenticeship systems. This means that a family whose profession is weaving would pass on the skills of that profession to’ their children. It would be passed on and on to the upcoming generations.
**Income Generating Activities in, Modern Time**

Due to the poverty level of most people in Nigeria, many people if not all, now engage in one skill or the other in order to complement the salary received at the end of the month. Bachelors and spinsters would not marry somebody who is a liability unless the person has a lucrative job or skilled in one vocation. Many parents especially the literates ones send their children to learn skills or vocations like catering, carpentry, computer training among others during the long holidays. Other income generating activities are fish farming, tie and dye, weaving, interior decoration, hat making and bead making.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purposes of the study among others are to:
- determine whether income generating activities could guarantee women skill development in their various areas of specialization;
- determine the relationship between skill development and improvement in the quality of lives of women; and
- suggest ways by which income generating activities can be promoted to aid women empowerment for improved socio-economic development of the community.

**Hypotheses**

- **H0₁**: There is no significant relationship between income generating activities and skill development of the adult women.
- **H0₂**: There is no significant relationship between income generating activities and improvement in the quality of life of the adult women economically, socially and educationally.

**Methodology**

The survey research design was adopted for the study.

**Population and Sampling Technique**

The simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 1,500 adult women out of 5,000 total estimates of adult women that participated in the income generating activities of AANFE in year 2005.

The main instrument used was a structured questionnaire titled “Income Generating Activities Questionnaire” (IGAQ) in line with the two hypotheses postulated for the study.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The chi-square statistical tool was considered. The findings of the study are shown below:
- **H0₁**: There is no significant relationship between income generating activities and skill development of adult women.
Table 1
Chi-Square Analysis on Relationship Between Vocational Training Programmes and Skill Development of Adult Women

The Table above showed that, the chi-square calculated value of 133.0 is greater than the critical value of 25.0, which was significant at 0.05 alpha levels. The result of the analysis indicates that a significant relationship exists between income generating activities and skill development of adult women. The finding of the study implies that, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between income generating activities and skill development of adult women could not be confirmed, while the alternative hypothesis is upheld.

HO2 There is no significant relationship between income generating activities and improvement in the quality of life of the adult women economically, socially and educationally.

Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis of the Relationship Between Income Generating Activities and Improvement in the Quality of Lives of Adult Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>F0</th>
<th>Fe</th>
<th>(fo-fe)^2</th>
<th>(Fo-fe)^2 / Fe</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>X^2 value</th>
<th>Critical value</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income generating activities</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>36100</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>109.6</td>
<td>21.05</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life of women</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>-190</td>
<td>36100</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>109.6</td>
<td>21.05</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 revealed that, the calculated chi-square of 109.6 is greater than the critical value of 21.05, which was significant at 0.05 alpha level. This indicates that there was a significant relationship between income generating activities and improvement in the quality of life of adult women. This also showed that the null hypothesis earlier postulated in this study could not be confirmed while the alternative hypothesis is upheld.

Results
The findings of the study revealed that income-generating activities had enhanced the ability and skill development of the trainees. This findings of the study corroborates that of Mullins (1996), who asserts that:

*Income generating activities involves training, education as a means of developing skills and utilization of the skills, which tend to improve job performance and productivity, providing confidence, motivation and commitment and services to community* (p38).

The findings of the study showed that the quality of life of the adult women had been really enhanced as the women were utilizing their acquired skills, The findings, tallies with Egenti (2002), who contends, that the quality of life of the community could be effectively enhanced through income-generating activities and
development of the community members. In essence, the skills they acquired through income-generating activities could provide changes in their quality of life in terms of improvement in their standard of living.

**Recommendations**

This study has established the importance of income generating activities, which is an inevitable tool for women empowerment. Based on this, it is recommended that:

1. Government and Non-government organizations should create more vocational training programmes for women.
2. Women who are housewives or women who do menial jobs should go for the training of these income-generating activities in order not to be a liability to their husbands.
3. Graduates that are roaming about the streets seeking for white-collar jobs should be encouraged to take up these activities and engage in them. Also parents, widows should be encouraged to do so.
4. Government should provide vocational facilities as much as possible for the Junior Secondary School level (JSS). Many of the Junior Secondary Schools do not have facilities, which spell out different vocations for the students.
5. Parents should encourage their children to take up one vocation or the other during the school holidays.

**References**


