Original Article

REPOSITIONING ENVIRONMENTAL ADULT EDUCATION (EAE) FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

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Abstract

Environmental changes and challenges have been with man from time immemorial. It is the responsibility of man to preserve and protect the environment for sustainability in the ecosystem. Appropriate knowledge of Environmental Education helps to reposition/reform Environmental Adult Education (EAE) to ensure man's sustainable development. Responsible and friendly environmental conditions should create essential response to man's sustainable development. The paper points out some global conferences that recognized the impact of development on the environment and sustainability which involves ecological, environmental, socio-economic, political, cultural, demographic and institutional life. It further looked at man's environmental challenges and how EAE reforms should lead to man's sustainable developmental needs. The paper recommends that, the counsellors and social welfare educators have a role to play by organizing and coordinating periodic meetings with the EAE facilitators, the adult learners and the communities for effective interaction and development of key concepts of EAE; the issues of EAE should be spelt out with all stakeholders for creating an avenue for behavior changes among the Adult indivduals; the Adult Learners should make sure that the environment is part of the sustainable organs that improve the life of individuals. As such, there is needs to strengthen and maintain sustainable development.

Keywords: Environmental challenges; sustainable development; repositioning EAE, Counselling

Introduction

In the universe, man is made to interact with physical or natural environments in order to satisfy some of his insatiable wants, needs and desires. To achieve these, appropriate knowledge, skills of environment helps to take appropriate decision and action about the environment through EAE in order to achieve the best goals, needs or desires. Nzeneri (2017) indicates that the life of an adult is full of changes and challenges as he interacts with his environment, through proper education to satisfy his social, physical, economic, cultural and political needs.

Environmental changes have always posed challenges to humanity. The situation makes it necessary for human beings to adapt to such challenges. Through trial and error, man gathered and ate food without harm, protected life from hard weather conditions,

constructed shelter and developed technologies to improve and sustain life.

It is on this bases the paper explores the Environmental Adult Education with the aim of improving the community for sustainable Development as well as, improving the welfare of the community through several Counselling approaches to individuals. This is aimed at making the community free from environmental issues.

Environment

The environment is defined as the entire external factors and forces individuals interact with right from the time of conception till death (Mbalisi, 2019). That is, the environment of the unborn child is the mother's womb and her health conditions for proper development of the child (Eheazu, 2019). The born child that develops to adulthood is influenced by the socio-economic, cultural, political and other circumstances that surround him. Environment is also seen as a complex web of objects, circumstances and conditions which surround man or organism with an intricate system of physical, chemical, social, biotic (living things), abiotic (non-living things) factors acting upon man/organism within an ecosystem which influences life and living conditions (Eheazu, 2020).

Eheazu (2020) opines that natural environment can be divided into four phases-the atmosphere which is made up of gas layers, the hydrosphere which is made up of water bodies-seas, oceans and rivers; the lithosphere is made up of earth's crust (soil and its associated minerals) and the biosphere is made up of living things; plants, animals and birds, including man. Within these biosphere, which is the external environment there are different forms of natural resources which man exploits for his short-term developmental goals to support his life and living conditions. The natural resources of man's environment include biotic (living) resources and the abiotic (non-living) resources (Eheazu, 2020). Man makes use of these for survival. However, the issue is how sustainable and environmentally responsible are

man's activities in the use of these resources? Other environments available to man to satisfy his insatiable needs (social, physical political, economic and cultural) include teaching and learning environment for EAE, work place environment, recreational etc. The more friendly and conducive these environments are, the better for man's effective participation in the protection and preservation of the environment for his sustainable development.

Environmental Changes:

Climate change is one of the damages done to the environment that involves extreme weather conditions, which affects agricultural products, disasters, rainfall variability, drought, intense solar radiation and rising sea levels (Obeng, 2019 Adebisi, 2020. Climate change is defined by Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2014) as long-term changes of the average weather conditions. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2015) in its definition of climate change saw it as a change in the distribution of climate attributed to man's/human activities that alter the composition of global atmosphere and which in turn brings about natural climate variability observed over a long period of time.

For Moghalu (2018), climate change means when extreme weather is occurring more frequently. It indicates that African nations are exposed to ever growing risks of drought, floods and cyclones which result from climate change. These have been wreaking havoc in African communities. It is worthy to note that in 2011 and 2012, East Africa experienced severe drought which led over 9.5 million people to experience harsh food shortage, which triggered refugee crisis. Statistical figure of this environmental damage was given by Moghalu (2018) that 20,000 homes were destroyed by storm Diano in Mozambique.

In addition, Nigerian National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) reported that the financial cost of the 2012 flooding disaster in the country amounted to 2.6 trillion naira. This impact

affected mostly housing and agriculture - the basic necessities of man's life. This huge financial loss highlights the danger, damage and scale of natural disaster resulting from climate change. Since climate change is a natural phenomenon and a global issue, human beings must be ready for the risk and develop all measures to control the happening through educational reform, awareness creation and sustainable environmental behaviour (UNESCO, 2014).

Natural disaster is a global issue, which does not affect Nigeria or Africa alone. For instance, the Caribbean Islands and the costal regions in the Gulf of Mexico were recently devastated by hurricanes and several storms that caused death and damages (Dombrowski, 2018). According to him, in 2013, Asia experienced Typhoon Haiyari which killed 6,300 Philippinos. For Dombrowiski (2018), the Island's power supply collapsed, many of its 3.4 million people had no access to sufficient food, good drinking water and medical services. These huge disasters and environmental damages are a big burden on the affected communities who will remember this experience for the rest of their lives. Adequate and proper Environmental Education (EE) are required by adult men, women and youths to effectively participate in facing environmental challenges in their lives (Uba, 2020).

Global Environment Concern and International Conferences and Declarations on Environment:

The world is concerned and worried about environmental damage caused by environmental factors and forces such as earthquake of great magnitude, disaster caused by devastating Tsunamis which destroy life and property, ecology and global warming in the Asian-regions, climate change that threatens many cities and homes with storm and floods among others. These led to a global call for action and international conferences on environment and sustainable society. This global concern led to the treaty on Environment Education for Sustainable Societies and global responsibility and this was

rectified in 1992 in Rio de Jenero at a conference that was held parallel to the Second United Nations Conference on Environment and development, Community Journal Editorial content (2011). By this global concern and call for action, it is hoped that thousands of local initiatives can develop awareness, which will help to translate into action on the bases of mutual respect and respect for the environment and also for the disadvantaged to take part in society, and global culture based on care and solidarity (CJE, 2011).

This translated into a calls for action of NGOs from the Philippines, India, Korea, New Zealand etc. to join forces in an initiative they call "climate" in order to focus attention and action on climate change of ecological disasters that threatens their existence. Again, in Africa, there is a call for children and young people in Zimbabwe's rural communities to shine in the midst of erosion, diminishing biodiversity and complex social problems. In Latin America, the global concern for environment called for action and this triggered the acronym (Red de Educacao Embionatal de Jovens e Adultos, (REAJA). This means a call to react and take action on a network for environmental education for young people and adults. The above global concern and international conferences on environment is based on the real fear of what nature of disasters are coming next due to environmental factors and forces which threaten world communities. Hence the need for repositioning EAE for all (children, young people and adults) for environmental protection, preservation and for man's sustainable development (Shertzer &Stone, 1980)

Environmental Adult Education (EAE): Environmental Adult Education (EAE) is defined as a product of the blend of the principles and goals of environmental Education (EE) with those of Adult Education (AE) (Eheazu, 2016). Haugen (2009) defined the role of EAE as one that combines EE and adult learning theory to provide meaningful educative enterprises to learners with the purpose of bringing about genuine environmental changes. Adult

education is any form of learning experience given to adults based as their social, economic, political and cultural needs/problems to enable them adjust fully to changes and challenges in their lives and society (Nzeneri, 2015a; Mbalisi, 2020).

Environmental challenges are problems of adults that require attentions and EAE is a subset of Adult Education. Environmental Adult Education can be seen as a process of creating for the adults (learners) awareness and understanding of the importance of repositioning EAE which involves a process that requires full participation of all citizens (children, young people and adults) at the local, regional and global levels for the protection and preservation of environment. EAE is also defined as a process of developing in the adults, skills, attitudes and knowledge that enables them successfully interact and live in harmony with the forces and elements that surround them, as they engage in their day-to-day activities for survival (Eheazu, 2016).

Worthy of note is the UNESCO (1977) Tiblisi Declaration of EAE as a learning process which increases peoples' knowledge and awareness of the Environment and its associated challenges, develop necessary skills to address the challenges and fosters the attitudes, motivations and commitments to make informed decisions and to take responsible action. This definition exposes the scope of EAE. Repositioning EAE demands participatory approach in the management, and maintenance of Environmental challenges that threaten man's existence (Denga, 1980).

Repositioning EAE for Man's Sustainable Development: To reposition EAE demands that it accommodates global changes, agenda and reforms in the protection and maintenance of natural environment and management that adversely impact on sustainable development of man on earth, participation of all at all levels is required in the global environmental regulations for EAE to curb environmental challenges. This will contribute to overall development of the society. Repositioning

EAE for both the young people and adults should involve inculcating human values that emphasize solitarily, dialogue, and respect for all aspects of life as well as principles inherited from tradition. These are necessary in facing the realities of Environmental challenges that the baffle socio-environmental changes and challenges we observe in the global societies today.

To reposition the Environmental Adult Education for improving the human community, all hands should be on deck to engage community members to commit and participate in the implementation of required-changes that will ensure environmental safety and sustainability for all and the future of all life species. The treaty on Environmental Education for sustainable societies and global responsibility is an outcome of the first international conference on environmental education which took place in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (Community Edition, 2011, p. 96). This indicates the worlds' concern for environmental challenges and the need for EAE to provide necessary awareness, willingness and commitment to secure the future of earths' environment (Crider, et. al., 2016).

The treaty document provided not only guidelines for EAE, but stimulates and mobilizes creation of NGOs, civil society organizations and a framework for EAE. Treaty document outlined 16 principles for the work of EAE for global initiatives. Some of these principles according to Viezzer (2011) include among others:-

i.   Education is the right of all, we are all learners and educators.

ii.   Environmental education whether formal, non-formal or informal should be rounded in critical and innovative thinking in any time or place, promoting the transformation and reconstruction of society.

iii.   Environmental education is both individual and collective. It aims to develop local and global citizenship with respect to self determination and the sovereignty of nations.

iv.   Environmental education is not neutral, but is value based. It is an act for social transformation.

v.	Environmental education must involve a holistic approach and thus an interdisciplinary focus in the relations between human beings, nature and the universe.

vi.	Environmental education must integrate knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and actions. It should convert every opportunity into an educational experience for sustainable societies.

vii.	Environmental education should empower all peoples and promote opportunities for grassroot democratic change and participation. That means that communities must regain control of their own destiny.

viii.	Environmental education must help develop an ethical awareness of all forms of life with which humans share their planet, respect all life cycles and impose limits on human exploitation of other forms of life (p.102), among others.

The above principles of global treaty and international conferences' guidelines should be followed by individuals, groups, local, regions and the world, if realties of the danger of environmental and unsustainable activities of human beings can be managed to ensure sustainable societies and environmental responsibility (Bulus, 1990).

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development emerged from the concept "our common future" which emerged from the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report of 1978. Development, therefore, is sustainable if it meets the needs of the present generation of people without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs which may be social, economic, political, cultural and environmental. According to Redeh (2000) and Viezzer (2011), an environment is sustainable if it has the following characteristics: - It

i.	Does not waste financial resources.

ii.	Does not exhaust natural resources or degrades environmental resources.

iii.	Values and protects nature.

iv.	Utilizes local resources to satisfy community needs.

v.	Values domestic work and recognizes gender needs and the different roles of men and women in the implementation of public policies.

vi.	Increases livelihood and income generating opportunities for everyone.

vii.	Seeks to diversify local economies.

viii.	Protects the health of its inhabitants by placing emphasis on preventive medicine.

ix.	Promotes universal access to housing and environmental sanitation services (water supply, sewage, drainage and vector control, refuse collection and disposal).

x.	Guarantees universal access to public transportation.

xi.	Ensures food security and supply for the population.

xii.	Guarantees and improves education, training and recreation opportunities.

xiii.	Reserves historical patrimony and local culture and finally,

xiv.	Guarantees society's participation in decision making processes (p. 210).

It is worthy to observe that the sustainable characteristics listed above involve so many elements such as environment, ecosystem, demographic institutions, socio-cultural, economic and political aspects of the life we are living in our societies. All aspects of the list demands participatory approach by all in the society (young, adults and children) to ensure environmental protection for man's sustainable development. It is therefore absolutely necessary for all individuals to secure balance and harmony between human existence and nature. EAE, if repositioned, should ensure not only awareness, but also commitment, full and active participation for sustainable societies and environmental responsibility (Abdullahi, 2014).

Counselling

Counselling as a professional field of endeavour tailored towards assisting individuals who realize the need to improve their strengths and weaknesses in order to function effectively in various settings. It has

a number of services meant to facilitate human development. Counselling creates a relationship between professionally trained persons willing to assist, direct or shed more light and guide other persons who cannot function in the desired direction due to circumstances beyond their control (Abdullahi & Dukawa, 2015). Counselling, as a service within guidance programme is not only meant to ensure success of individuals in various settings but also an important segment in positioning individuals to attain various successes in life pattern and his environment (Abdullahi, 2008).

Through the use of counseling techniques, Environmental Adult Education can effectively work to assist individuals to identify several ways of maintaining and improving the environment for sustainable development of the eco system.

Wren (1934) conceives that counselling as a purposeful relationship between two persons in which procedures vary with the students' need but in which there is always active participation by the counsellor and the student, the Adult instructor can use the various ways available to point the available ways of improving the environment from degeneration using Environmental Adult Education. Tyler (1986), on the other hand views counseling as an assisting process with the aim of empowering persons to utilize their resources in order to cope with life situations in the community, this gives a room as counseling serves as a medium to improve the immediate community through Environmental Adult Education as a technique for enlightening the community (Abdullahi, 2016).

It is on the basis of the above, that one can conclude thus, counselling is tailored towards guiding, positioning, assisting and broadening the outlook of persons regarding their endeavours, environments, realization and utilization of potentials and goals' attainment.

Conclusion

Environmental challenges like climate change, which cause extreme weather arw still occurring and frequent. This and other environmental challenges are real and they are happening in Nigeria, Africa and the world. Nigeria, African nations and the world are exposed to ever growing risk of the climate change and environmental challenges that threaten the society and man's existence. The Global environmental concern has been a burning issue which was discussed at the national and international conferences for the purpose of enlightening individuals about the serious danger of climate change and the environment. Also, many declarations were set by many countries in order to improve the conditions of their environment. Through serious enlightenment and teaching, people would be aware about the dangers coming to their environment due to poor management and the conditions that would come through environmental improvement and development. Through environmental development and improvement, the environment would become sustainable for individual and global use at large.

The reality is that, disasters are recurring and the fear is that they are likely to happen again and again to human beings in the society. There is need to avoid unsustainable production and consumption and to ensure a sustainable society and environmental responsibility. Several initiatives, reforms of environmentally friendly strategies by international conferences, treaty commissions and conventions have provided EAE strategies and principles that will guarantee sustainable development. The guidelines and sustainable strategies have facilitated and motivated local, regional and global environmental stakeholders to imbibe and be committed to sustainable society and environmental protection and conservation.

The solution requires constant renewal, reform and repositioning EAE, be it permanent or continuing to disseminate regularly information on current environmental strategies in the management of disasters and climate change effects. There is need for

national governments, states, NGOs etc to disseminate information on current and updated local, regional and global best environmental protection practices or strategies.

Recommendations

The paper recommends the following:

i. The counsellors have a role to play by organizing and coordinating periodic meetings with the EAE facilitators, the adult learners and the

communities for effective interaction and development of key concepts of EAE.

ii. The issues of EAE should be spelt out with all stakeholders for creating an avenue for behavior changes among the Adult Learners.

iii. The Adult Learners should make sure that the environment is part of the sustainable organs that improve the life of individuals, so there is need to strengthen and maintain it for sustainable development.

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