

**ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AS TOOL FOR ERADICATION OF  
POVERTY AMONG WOMEN IN OVIA NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

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**BENIN CITY.**

**NOVEMEMBER 2025**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ADULT  
AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY  
OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF B.SC/ (ED) DEGREE IN ADULT  
EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL**

**NOVEMBER 2025**

## CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned hereby certify that this study was carried out by **DEBORAH KWASHI** with matriculation number **EDU2202528** of the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of B.SC/ (ED) degree in adult education professional

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## **DEDICATION**

This project work is dedicated to God Almighty for His endless love, mercies, strength, and wisdom and timely provision thus far my academy journey

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Heartfelt gratitude to God for His help, He only made my degree journey a reality.

Special thanks to my project supervisor, Prof. G.A. Adekola for his immense efforts, guidance, corrections and constructive criticism that made the quality of this project work enviable.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examined Adult Education Programmes as a Tool for the Eradication of Poverty among Women in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The purpose was to assess how literacy, skill acquisition, entrepreneurship education, and empowerment derived from adult education contribute to improving women's socio-economic conditions. The study also investigated the barriers that limit women's participation in adult education programmes and explored strategies that can enhance their effectiveness in poverty reduction. A descriptive survey design was employed, and data were collected from one hundred women aged 18 years and above using a structured and validated questionnaire. The data were analysed using means and standard deviations to answer the six research questions.*

*The findings revealed that adult education programmes have a significant impact on women's literacy development, vocational skills, and entrepreneurial capacity. Literacy education was found to improve reading, writing, and numeracy skills, which enabled women to manage finances, run small businesses, and engage more productively in community life. Skill acquisition and entrepreneurship training further strengthened women's economic independence, allowing them to generate income and contribute meaningfully to family welfare and local development.*

*The study concludes that adult education serves as a powerful instrument for women's empowerment and poverty reduction in Ovia North East. By enhancing functional literacy, equipping women with marketable skills, and promoting entrepreneurial thinking, adult education transforms women into active contributors to social and economic progress. It also elevates their confidence, decision-making ability, and participation in family and community affairs, reinforcing their roles as change agents in society.*

*The study recommends that government and stakeholders should provide adequate funding, improve infrastructural facilities, and integrate financial literacy and entrepreneurship training into adult education curricula. Flexible class schedules and community awareness programmes should be intensified to accommodate working women and encourage broader participation. Through these measures, adult education can continue to advance gender equality and serve as a lasting tool for poverty eradication and sustainable development.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the Study**

Poverty remains one of the most persistent challenges confronting many developing nations, including Nigeria. It limits access to education, healthcare, and other social services and undermines the productive capacity of individuals, particularly women. In most African countries, women constitute a significant proportion of the poor due to gender inequality, limited access to formal education, and socio-cultural barriers. Poverty is not only the lack of income but also the deprivation of opportunities to live a decent and meaningful life (World Bank, 2019).

Education has long been recognized as a fundamental tool for human development and social transformation. According to UNESCO (2016), adult education provides lifelong learning opportunities that equip adults with functional literacy, vocational competence, and civic awareness. Through these, adults can improve their economic and social conditions. Adult education also helps to address structural inequalities by empowering women with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully in economic and community life (Akinpelu, 2012; Oduaran, 2020).

Globally, the feminization of poverty continues to pose a major threat to inclusive growth and social equity. Reports by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022) indicate that

women represent a large share of Nigeria's poor population, particularly in rural communities where access to educational and economic opportunities remains limited. Baba (2010) described this situation as "poverty in the midst of plenty," noting that women often bear the heaviest burden of deprivation despite their active contributions to family and community welfare. Similarly, Eze (2008) emphasized that poor literacy among women contributes to economic vulnerability and dependence.

In response to these challenges, the Nigerian government established the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) to promote literacy and lifelong learning. Adult education programmes under NMEC focus on literacy, skill acquisition, and entrepreneurial training to improve the socio-economic conditions of adult learners, especially women (NMEC, 2019). Studies such as Okediran (2018) and OECD (2018) have shown that functional literacy, vocational training, and entrepreneurship education have direct impacts on poverty reduction and women's empowerment. Within Edo State, and specifically in Ovia North East Local Government Area, adult education programmes have been introduced to enhance literacy, financial management, and skill development among women. However, their full impact on poverty eradication in the region has not been adequately assessed. This study therefore investigates the role of adult education programmes as a tool for poverty eradication among women in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Although several initiatives have been developed to promote women's empowerment through education, many women in Ovia North East Local Government Area still face persistent poverty, low literacy levels, and limited economic opportunities. Cultural norms that restrict women's participation in formal education, as well as limited access to credit facilities and skill development programmes, have continued to hinder progress. Many women remain financially dependent on others because they lack the literacy and vocational skills needed to secure sustainable livelihoods (Oduaran, 2020).

Government and non-governmental organizations have implemented programmes aimed at reducing poverty, yet most of these efforts have focused on temporary relief rather than long-term capacity building. Adult education has the potential to bridge this gap by equipping women with literacy, entrepreneurship, and money management skills that can enhance self-reliance. Despite its potential, participation in adult education programmes remains low due to barriers such as lack of awareness, limited funding, domestic responsibilities, and cultural beliefs that undervalue women's education (UNESCO, 2016; Okediran, 2018).

This study seeks to examine how adult education can be effectively used as a sustainable approach to improve women's literacy, economic empowerment, and quality of life in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine adult education programmes as a tool for the eradication of poverty among women in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Investigate the influence of literacy programmes on poverty eradication among women.
2. Determine the role of skill acquisition in poverty alleviation among women.
3. Assess the extent to which entrepreneurship programmes enhance women's economic independence.
4. Identify barriers limiting women's participation in adult education programmes.
5. Examine the contribution of money management education to poverty reduction among women.
6. Propose strategies for strengthening adult education programmes for sustainable poverty eradication.

## **Research Questions**

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of literacy programmes on poverty eradication among women?
2. How does adult education facilitate skill acquisition among women?

3. To what extent do entrepreneurship programmes contribute to women's financial independence?
4. What challenges hinder women's participation in adult education programmes?
5. In what ways does adult education influence women's empowerment and decision-making?
6. What strategies can improve adult education programmes for sustainable poverty reduction?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant to policymakers, adult education facilitators, women, and development organizations. For policymakers, it provides empirical evidence on how adult education can be integrated into national poverty reduction frameworks to support sustainable development. The findings will assist the Ministry of Education and the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) in strengthening adult learning policies that specifically target women.

For facilitators and educators, the study highlights effective strategies that can enhance women's participation and success in adult education programmes. It also helps women to appreciate the transformative role of education in achieving self-reliance and improved living conditions. On a broader scale, the study contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 and 5, which aim to eradicate poverty and

promote gender equality (UNDP, 2022). Academically, it adds to the body of knowledge on adult education and poverty reduction, serving as a reference for future research.

### **Scope and Limitation**

The scope of this study is delimited to women in Ovia North East Local Government in Edo State Nigeria. It is concerned with how adult education programs, as literacy classes, skills acquisition schemes, and vocational training affect women's economic empowerment, decision-making ability and overall quality of life.

The study targets at women, especially those living in poverty, that have little or no formal education and within the target group for adult learning programs. Key community stakeholders. Its findings are intended to highlight the potentials of adult education as strategy for improving women's economic well-being and providing a path way out of poverty.

### **Operational Definition of Term**

**Adult Education:** Structured learning activities organized for adults who missed formal education opportunities, aimed at promoting literacy, skills, and socio-economic empowerment (UNESCO, 2016).

**Poverty:** A condition where individuals lack access to basic needs such as income, housing, education, and healthcare, resulting in social and economic deprivation (World Bank, 2019).

**Eradication:** The process of completely eliminating or significantly reducing poverty through education and empowerment.

**Programme:** A planned set of adult education activities designed to equip participants with practical knowledge, vocational training, and financial management skills.

**Women Empowerment:** The process through which women gain confidence, independence, and the capacity to make decisions that improve their economic and social status (Oduaran, 2020).

**Tool:** A means or mechanism, such as adult education, employed to achieve specific developmental goals like poverty reduction.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter reviewed relevant and related literature with respect to the study and they are presented under the following sub-heading

- Concept of Adult Education
- Understanding Poverty and Its Impact on Women
- Adult Education as a Tool for Empowerment
- Relationship between Adult Education and Poverty Reduction
- Socio-cultural Barriers to Women's Participation in Adult Education
- Role of Government and NGOs in Adult Education Delivery
- Challenges of Adult Education in Rural Communities
- Review of Related Empirical Studies
- Summary of Literature Review

### **Concept of Adult Education**

Adult education has been described by UNESCO, NMEC and various scholars as a broad-based approach to lifelong learning that targets youths and adults who missed out on formal education opportunities. It includes literacy, post-literacy, vocational, continuing, women's education, and civic education.

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria places emphasis on the right of every citizen to be educated at all stages of life. In this context, adult education seeks to provide access to education for marginalized groups, particularly women, who have historically faced systemic exclusion. Scholars such as Akpala (2018) argue that adult education is not simply a remedial programme, but a transformative pathway that allows individuals to

engage meaningfully with society, acquire new skills, and participate productively in community and economic life.

Globally, UNESCO's Marrakech Framework for Action (2022) reinforces the concept of adult learning as central to sustainable development, reducing poverty, and achieving gender equity. This underscores that adult education is not only about literacy but encompasses vocational and entrepreneurial skills critical for survival in modern economies. In rural Nigerian communities, adult education is often provided through evening classes, open and distance learning, literacy centres, vocational training workshops, and community-based learning initiatives.

By conceptualizing adult education as both a social right and a developmental tool, scholars have linked it to women's empowerment, national development, and poverty alleviation. In Ovia North-East LGA, where many women are engaged in informal trade and agriculture, adult education programmes can directly influence their economic survival by equipping them with literacy, numeracy, and skills for entrepreneurship.

### **Understanding Poverty and Its Impact on Women**

Poverty has been a persistent challenge in Nigeria, with women disproportionately affected due to structural inequalities, limited access to resources, and cultural practices that marginalize them. Poverty among women is multi-dimensional, encompassing

income poverty, educational deprivation, poor health access, and limited participation in decision-making processes.

In Edo State and specifically Ovia North-East LGA, many women engage in low-income occupations such as subsistence farming, petty trading, and informal services. Lack of education and literacy skills restricts their ability to diversify income, access credit, or compete in more lucrative sectors. National statistics (NBS, 2022) indicate that women are under-represented in adult/basic literacy enrolment, accounting for only 40.6% of participants. This perpetuates gender gaps in access to education and contributes to intergenerational poverty, as mothers with low literacy often cannot support their children's schooling effectively.

The impacts of poverty on women are far-reaching: reduced income opportunities, limited bargaining power in households, vulnerability to exploitation, and exclusion from community leadership roles. In rural Edo, women's unpaid care burdens childcare, cooking, farming support compound their limited access to education. Scholars such as UNICEF (2016) have emphasized that women's literacy correlates directly with improved child welfare, health outcomes, and community development. Thus, addressing women's poverty requires not just financial support but sustained educational empowerment.

## **Adult Education as a Tool for Empowerment**

Adult education is widely recognized as a mechanism for empowering women, enabling them to gain knowledge, confidence, and autonomy. Empowerment goes beyond economic benefits; it includes improved decision-making power, participation in community governance, and enhanced self-esteem.

Studies in Nigeria have shown that adult education improves literacy and numeracy, giving women the ability to manage finances, read contracts, and participate in civic processes. More importantly, when combined with vocational training, adult education equips women with skills for microenterprise and small business management. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes, as highlighted by Oasis (2019), reduce barriers of time, distance, and childcare responsibilities by providing flexible learning options.

For women in Ovia North-East, empowerment through adult education can mean transitioning from subsistence farming to small-scale agribusiness, from petty trading to organized cooperative enterprises, or from illiteracy to active participation in local political forums. In this way, adult education programmes serves both as an economic strategy and a social empowerment tool that strengthens women's agency and voice in society.

## **Relationship between Adult Education and Poverty Reduction**

Empirical evidence supports the relationship between adult education and poverty reduction. Literacy and skills development directly enhance employability and income-generating capacity. In Edo State, Aigba (2024) and other scholars have shown that adult education interventions, particularly when linked to vocational training, reduce unemployment and improve livelihoods.

In Etsako East and West LGAs, functional literacy programmes have enabled women to manage small businesses, access credit, and keep records. Similar initiatives in Northern Nigeria have improved women's ability to engage in agricultural processing and cooperative societies.

The key mechanism linking adult education to poverty reduction is human capital development: women acquire not only literacy but also financial and entrepreneurial skills that increase productivity and household income. However, literacy alone is often insufficient programmes that integrate vocational and entrepreneurial components show stronger poverty reduction impacts.

Thus, in Ovia North-East, adult education programmes has the potential to reduce poverty if properly designed and linked to practical livelihood opportunities, such as agro-processing, trading, or artisan skills development.

## **Socio-cultural Barriers to Women's Participation in Adult Education**

Despite its benefits, women's participation in adult education faces numerous barriers. Cultural beliefs in many Nigerian communities view women's roles as limited to domestic responsibilities, discouraging their engagement in formal or non-formal learning.

A study by IJRIS (2025) on Benin women highlighted that gender ideology and self-concept were strong determinants of adult education participation. Women often internalize societal stereotypes that devalue their learning aspirations, which can reduce persistence in programmes. Other barriers include spousal disapproval, lack of family support, childcare responsibilities, and evening safety concerns when classes are scheduled after work. Financial barriers also persist transportation costs, learning materials, and opportunity costs of attending classes reduce enrolment. Moreover, women in rural areas may prioritize household contributions over personal development, limiting their access to educational programmes. These cultural and socio-economic barriers underline the importance of designing gender sensitive adult education programmes in Ovia North-East.

## **Role of Government and NGOs in Adult Education Delivery**

The Nigerian government has institutionalized adult and non-formal education through NMEC, which provides policy direction, coordinates state-level agencies, and partners

with NGOs. The Policy Guidelines for Mass Literacy (2011, 2019) emphasize expanding access, especially for marginalized groups such as women.

NGOs play a critical role by providing flexible, women-focused literacy and vocational programmes. Many NGOs operate savings groups, cooperative learning, and functional literacy tailored to women's daily realities. In Edo State, NGOs have often filled gaps in service delivery where government programmes are underfunded. However, weak coordination between government agencies and NGOs undermines impact.

Effective delivery in Ovia North-East requires robust collaboration between NMEC, Edo State agencies, local government, and civil society organizations. Sustainable funding, continuous training of facilitators, and community sensitization campaigns are crucial for reaching more women.

### **Challenges of Adult Education in Rural Communities**

Adult education in rural communities like Ovia North-East faces systemic challenges that reduce its effectiveness. Chief among these is chronic underfunding, which results in inadequate learning centres, insufficient instructional materials, and poor facilitator remuneration. This leads to low morale among educators and weak programme outcomes.

Other challenges include lack of awareness campaigns, politicization of programme delivery, and weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Rural infrastructure

deficiencies such as poor transportation and limited electricity also discourage women from attending classes.

Women-specific challenges include lack of childcare support, safety concerns for night classes, and the burden of domestic responsibilities. Addressing these challenges requires innovative approaches such as integrating adult education with community centres, providing mobile literacy units, and leveraging technology-enabled learning (e.g., mobile-based literacy apps).

### **Review of Related Empirical Studies**

Empirical studies in Edo and other regions of Nigeria reinforce the relationship between adult education and poverty reduction. In Ovia North-East, studies on N-Power indicated that government programmes are perceived as effective for poverty alleviation but suffer implementation challenges. Other grey literature projects suggest that women's education contributes to community development and household poverty reduction, though rigorous empirical evidence is limited.

In Etsako LGAs of Edo State, adult education programmes improved women's participation in microenterprise, record-keeping, and cooperative societies. Studies also show that when adult education is paired with microcredit, women's entrepreneurial outcomes are stronger. Oasis (2019) on ODL emphasised that flexible learning enhances accessibility for women, leading to empowerment and poverty reduction.

However, most existing studies are cross-sectional and perception-based, lacking robust statistical analysis to establish causality. This gap highlights the need for context-specific, evidence-based research in Ovia North-East.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

The literature establishes adult education as a credible tool for women's empowerment and poverty reduction. However, in Ovia North-East, evidence remains limited, with most studies being perception-based or grey literature. Barriers such as cultural norms, underfunding, and weak infrastructure hinder women's access to adult education. The gaps suggest a need for rigorous, gender-sensitive studies in Ovia North-East to measure adult education's impact on women's income, empowerment, and poverty alleviation. Strengthening programme design, integrating vocational training, and enhancing monitoring and evaluation systems are essential for maximizing outcomes.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter focused on the description of the procedures that were involved in the conduct of the study. It includes the methods aim to gather valid, reliable and relevant

information about how adult education can reduce poverty among women in Ovia North east.

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Techniques
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis.

### **Research Design**

The design adopts a descriptive survey design combined with elements of qualitative exploration. The descriptive survey design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to gather factual information about the present situation of women, their poverty status, and their exposure to adult education programmes.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study consists of all women aged 18 years and above residing in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. This population includes women

who have never attended formal school, those who dropped out of school early, as well as those who have heard about or participated in adult education programmes in the past. In addition, adult education facilitators. The specific figure of the population of the participants in the study include 100 altogether.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

Given the size of population, it is impractical to study every woman in Ovia North East. Therefore, a sample was drawn to represent the population adequately. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents who are directly relevant to the study. Specifically women who are within the age bracket of 18 years and above and either currently engaged in, or aware of, adult education activities in the community. The specific figure to be used is 100

*Table 1: Distribution of sampling technique*

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>
<b>1</b>	18 years	25
	26 years	25
<b>3</b>	36 years	25
<b>4</b>	46 and above	25
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Research Instrument**

The main instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire, designed to collect information on demographic characteristics, poverty status, access to education, participation in adult education programs, and perceived impact of such programs on their economic well-being. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, Section A and B. section A focuses on the demographic or personal data of the respondents, while section B contains respondents determinants of adult education programmes tool for eradication of poverty. The Likert Scale response to be use is pattern of SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree were adopted

### **Validity of the Instrument**

The research instrument was validated using the expert judgment approach. In this view, copies of the constructed questionnaire for the study is presented to the project supervisor, Faculty of Education, Department of Adult Education, University of Benin for item selection and wording. After which necessary corrections were made as required and it was re-written before administered by the researcher.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, a split half method was carried out. The reliability coefficient of the method was a measure of the internal consistency on the degree of reliability among items. The questionnaire was divided into two parts with the odd number item separated from the even number. To establish the reliability, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula correlated the two scores of the halves, the coefficient ( $r$ ) obtained was 0.78 which indicates that the research instrument is reliable.

### **Method of Data Collection**

After obtaining approval from the relevant authorities and Validity of the Instrument to ensure validity, the questionnaire will be reviewed by a lecturer, specifically Professor Adekola in the department of adult education university of Benin City. The questionnaire

was administered on all the respondents by the researcher. The data collected were analysed to establish the findings of the study

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores were used to analyse the responses. Cross-tabulations was used to compare variables such as education participation and income levels. This process involve identifying patterns, recurring ideas, and key issues raised by participants, which were compared with the quantitative results to produce a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, the results and discussions of the findings from this study are presented. The data collected through the administered questionnaires are analysed to answer the research questions and provide evidence on the role of adult education as a tool for the eradication of poverty among women in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State.

#### Presentation of Results

The data analysis was based on responses from 100 women, all resident in Ovia North East. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed and 100 were retrieved, giving a 100% response rate. The analysis is organised with tables, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to present both demographic and research-variable results clearly for decision-making. Items in Section B were rated on a 4-point Likert scale (SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2, SD = 1). A criterion mean of 2.50 was used to judge agreement on each construct.

**Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Female</b>	100	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1 shows that all respondents (100%) were female. This agrees with the study's focus on women in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, since the research was specifically designed to assess the role of adult education in reducing poverty among women.

**Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents**

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>18–25</b>	25	25.0
<b>26–35</b>	25	25.0
<b>36–45</b>	25	25.0
<b>46 and above</b>	25	25.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2 shows that 25.0% of the respondents fall within each of the four age ranges: 18–25, 26–35, 36–45, and 46 years and above. This indicates an even distribution across age categories, ensuring fair representation of women at different life stages within the study area.

**Table 4.3: Marital Status of Respondents**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Single</b>	46	46.0
<b>Married</b>	38	38.0
<b>Widowed</b>	8	8.0
<b>Divorced</b>	8	8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.3 indicates that 46.0% of the respondents were single, 38.0% married, while 8.0% each were widowed and divorced. This shows that a large proportion of participants are either single or married women who are actively engaged in adult education programmes as part of their personal and economic development.

**Table 4.4: Literacy Background of Respondents**

<b>Literacy Background</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>No Formal Education</b>	5	5.0
<b>Primary Education</b>	24	24.0
<b>Secondary Education</b>	29	29.0
<b>Adult Education/Skills Training</b>	29	29.0
<b>Drop-out</b>	13	13.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.4 shows that 5.0% of the respondents had no formal education, 24.0% had primary education, 29.0% each had secondary education and adult education or skills training, while 13.0% were school dropouts. This suggests that the majority of the respondents have benefited from one form of adult or continuing education, supporting the relevance of adult education as a means to reduce poverty.

**Table 4.5: Occupational Distribution of Respondents**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Trader</b>	36	36.0
<b>Farmer</b>	21	21.0
<b>Artisan</b>	20	20.0
<b>Unemployed</b>	12	12.0
<b>Others</b>	11	11.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.5 reveals that 36.0% of respondents were traders, 21.0% farmers, 20.0% artisans, 12.0% unemployed, and 11.0% engaged in other forms of occupation. This shows that most women in the study area are involved in small-scale trading and informal sector activities, reflecting the economic realities that adult education programmes aim to improve.

### **Answers to Research Questions**

Data collected to answer the research questions was answered using mean and standard deviation. The results are shown below.

**Research Question 1: What is the impact of literacy programmes on poverty eradication among women?**

**Table 4.6: Impact of Literacy Programmes on Poverty Eradication**

<b>Item</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Adult literacy classes have improved my reading, writing and numeracy skills.	100	3.17	0.775	Agreed
Being able to read and write has helped me manage my business and personal finances.	100	3.09	0.722	Agreed
Literacy education has created new opportunities for me to earn income.	100	3.24	0.736	Agreed
Through adult education, I have become less financially dependent on others.	100	3.28	0.634	Agreed

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Decision rule:** Criterion mean = 2.50 ( $\geq 2.50$  = Agreed;  $< 2.50$  = Disagreed).

Table 4.6 presents respondents' views on the impact of literacy programmes on poverty eradication among women in Ovia North East. The mean scores, which range from 3.09 to 3.28, indicate that participants generally agreed that literacy education has greatly improved their ability to read, write, and manage finances effectively. The findings suggest that adult literacy classes have enhanced women's financial independence and created opportunities for income generation. This implies that literacy programmes serve as a vital foundation for self-reliance and poverty reduction among women in the study area.

## Research Question 2:

**How does adult education facilitate skill acquisition among women in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?**

**Table 4.7: Adult Education and Skill Acquisition**

Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Adult education programmes offer useful vocational and technical training.	100	3.38	0.692	Agreed
The skills I acquired from adult education have helped me start a small business.	100	3.35	0.705	Agreed
Skill training from adult education has improved my productivity and confidence.	100	3.31	0.741	Agreed
The skills learned through adult education have enhanced my family's living standard.	100	3.32	0.664	Agreed
Cluster Mean		3.34		Agreed

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Decision Rule:** Criterion mean = 2.50 ( $\geq 2.50$  = Agreed,  $< 2.50$  = Disagreed)

Table 4.7 reveals that respondents agreed that adult education programmes have significantly contributed to skill acquisition among women. The mean scores, ranging from 3.31 to 3.38, indicate strong agreement that vocational and technical training through adult education has empowered women to start small businesses, improve productivity, and enhance family living standards. The cluster mean of 3.34 confirms that

adult education serves as a major platform for equipping women with relevant entrepreneurial and livelihood skills that promote self-reliance and poverty reduction.

**Research Question 3:**

**To what extent does entrepreneurship education contribute to women’s economic independence?**

**Table 4.8: Entrepreneurship Education and Women’s Economic Independence**

Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Entrepreneurship training in adult education has encouraged me to start a business.	100	3.29	0.724	Agreed
Adult education has helped me identify profitable business opportunities.	100	3.25	0.761	Agreed
I have learned how to manage a small business effectively through adult education.	100	3.24	0.689	Agreed
Knowledge gained from adult education has reduced my dependence on financial support from others.	100	3.26	0.687	Agreed
Cluster Mean		3.26		Agreed

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Decision Rule:** Criterion mean = 2.50 ( $\geq 2.50$  = Agreed,  $< 2.50$  = Disagreed)

Table 4.8 shows that respondents agreed that entrepreneurship education has strengthened women’s economic independence. The mean scores, ranging from 3.24 to 3.29, indicate that adult education programmes have improved entrepreneurial knowledge, business management skills, and the capacity for self-reliance. The cluster mean of 3.26

signifies that entrepreneurship-oriented content in adult education enhances women’s income generation and reduces their dependence on external financial support.

**Research Question 4:**

**What challenges hinder women’s participation in adult education programmes?**

**Table 4.9: Barriers to Women’s Participation in Adult Education**

Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Cultural beliefs discourage women in my community from attending adult education classes.	100	3.31	0.732	Agreed
Household and childcare responsibilities prevent regular class attendance.	100	3.35	0.709	Agreed
Transportation and safety issues discourage me from attending evening classes.	100	3.28	0.754	Agreed
The cost of learning materials and registration limits women’s participation in adult education.	100	3.18	0.721	Agreed
Cluster Mean		3.28		Agreed

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Decision Rule:** Criterion mean = 2.50 ( $\geq 2.50$  = Agreed,  $< 2.50$  = Disagreed)

Table 4.9 shows that respondents generally agreed that certain challenges hinder women’s participation in adult education programmes in Ovia North East. The mean scores, which range from 3.18 to 3.35, indicate that family responsibilities, cultural expectations, and financial constraints remain relevant factors. However, since the cluster mean of 3.28 is only slightly above the criterion mean, it reflects a moderate level of

concern rather than severe limitation. This suggests that although barriers exist, most women are increasingly overcoming these challenges through greater awareness, flexible learning schedules, and improved community support.

**Research Question 5:**

**In what ways does adult education enhance women’s empowerment and decision-making?**

**Table 4.10: Adult Education and Women’s Empowerment**

Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Adult education has increased my confidence to make independent decisions.	100	3.27	0.705	Agreed
I now contribute more to family and community discussions due to adult education.	100	3.31	0.742	Agreed
Adult education has enhanced my social recognition and self-esteem.	100	3.33	0.693	Agreed
I am now more financially independent because of adult education.	100	3.28	0.675	Agreed
Cluster Mean		3.30		Agreed

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Decision Rule:** Criterion mean = 2.50 ( $\geq 2.50$  = Agreed,  $< 2.50$  = Disagreed)

Table 4.10 shows strong agreement that adult education empowers women and enhances decision-making. With mean scores between 3.27 and 3.33, respondents affirmed that adult education improves confidence, leadership, and social inclusion. The cluster mean

of 3.30 indicates that adult education fosters self-reliance and strengthens women’s voice in family and community development.

**Research Question 6:**

**What strategies can improve adult education programmes for poverty eradication among women?**

**Table 4.11: Strategies for Improving Adult Education Programmes**

Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Government and NGOs should provide better funding for adult education centres.	100	3.26	0.713	Agreed
Adult education should include entrepreneurship and money management training.	100	3.25	0.721	Agreed
Flexible class schedules (e.g., weekend or mobile classes) will improve participation.	100	3.20	0.756	Agreed
Community sensitization campaigns will encourage families to support women’s learning.	100	3.22	0.770	Agreed
Cluster Mean		3.23		Agreed

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Decision Rule:** Criterion mean = 2.50 ( $\geq 2.50$  = Agreed,  $< 2.50$  = Disagreed)

Table 4.11 reveals that respondents agreed on the need for better strategies to enhance adult education programmes. Mean values ranging from 3.20 to 3.26 show that improved funding, entrepreneurship training, flexible schedules, and community sensitization are essential for increasing women’s participation. The cluster mean of 3.23 reflects a strong

consensus that strengthening programme delivery and accessibility will enhance the role of adult education in poverty eradication.

### **Discussion of Findings**

This section discusses the findings of the study, linking them with relevant literature and theories to provide a deeper understanding of how adult education contributes to poverty eradication among women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. The discussion follows the sequence of the six research questions and interprets the results in light of previous studies, empirical evidence, and global perspectives.

#### **Research Question 1:**

##### **What is the impact of literacy programmes on poverty eradication among women?**

The findings revealed that literacy programmes significantly influence the socio-economic advancement of women in Ovia North-East. Respondents agreed that adult literacy classes improved their reading, writing, and numeracy skills ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ) and enhanced their ability to manage businesses and household finances ( $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ). These results support Omolewa (2020), who argued that literacy empowers individuals to participate productively in society and make informed financial decisions. Similarly, Akinpelu (2019) described functional literacy as the foundation of self-reliance and a pathway to overcoming economic deprivation.

The finding that literacy education creates new income opportunities aligns with Oghuvbu (2018), who reported that rural women who participated in literacy programmes increased their access to micro-enterprises and cooperative loans. Lawal and Oduaran (2021) also emphasized that literacy enhances women's capacity to manage resources, access healthcare, and participate in civic life. In a broader context, UNESCO (2022) confirmed that literacy contributes to national poverty-reduction goals by strengthening employability and social inclusion. Conversely, Abidoye (2020) cautioned that literacy alone may not eradicate poverty without complementary vocational education. Taken together, this study demonstrates that literacy serves as both an empowerment and a poverty-reduction tool, especially when integrated with skill-based learning.

### **Research Question 2:**

#### **How does adult education facilitate skill acquisition among women?**

Results from Table 4.7 showed that respondents strongly agreed that adult education programmes provide useful vocational and technical training that promote self-employment (Cluster M = 3.34). This finding confirms Aderinoye and Rogers (2019), who maintained that skill-oriented adult education improves productivity and equips learners for lifelong income generation. Jegede (2020) likewise observed that adult education graduates who received training in tailoring, hairdressing, and craft production experienced improved household income.

The study also supports Emeh and Nwogu (2020), who discovered that combining literacy with practical skill training enhances the capacity of women to engage in entrepreneurial ventures. In the same vein, Oduaran (2018) stated that non-formal skill acquisition instils confidence, independence, and problem-solving ability among rural women. Furthermore, UNESCO (2022) highlighted that skill acquisition through adult education directly contributes to sustainable development by linking education with decent work opportunities. Akinyemi and Omolewa (2017) further argued that vocational training embedded within adult education fosters innovation and social inclusion.

Hence, this study affirms that skill acquisition through adult education is a vital mechanism for transforming women's economic conditions and achieving household stability.

### **Research Question 3:**

**To what extent does entrepreneurship education contribute to women's economic independence?**

The findings indicated that entrepreneurship education meaningfully enhances women's economic independence (Cluster M = 3.26). Respondents agreed that entrepreneurship courses helped them start small businesses, manage finances, and identify profitable opportunities. This corroborates Adepoju (2021), who found that entrepreneurship training nurtures creativity and innovation among women entrepreneurs. Akinola and

Onyenemezu (2020) also asserted that entrepreneurship-focused adult education increases resilience and competitiveness among women managing microenterprises.

Ibrahim (2019) reported that entrepreneurship education improves women's access to credit and strengthens decision-making autonomy in financial matters. Similarly, Emeh and Nwogu (2020) found that women who received entrepreneurship training through adult education experienced a notable rise in business sustainability. World Bank (2022) emphasized that entrepreneurship education integrates women into value chains, reduces dependency, and drives inclusive economic growth. Okojie (2020), however, warned that such success requires enabling conditions such as start-up capital and mentorship. The present study thus confirms that entrepreneurship education embedded within adult education serves as a proven instrument for women's financial empowerment and long-term poverty reduction.

#### **Research Question 4:**

##### **What challenges hinder women's participation in adult education programmes?**

The results indicated a moderate level of agreement (Cluster M = 3.28), implying that while barriers exist, they are not insurmountable. Respondents identified family responsibilities, cultural restrictions, financial limitations, and transportation difficulties as major constraints. These findings are consistent with Oduaran (2018), who documented that traditional expectations, household duties, and resource scarcity limit

women's access to adult learning. Akinyemi and Omolewa (2017) likewise found that domestic workload and patriarchal attitudes remain deterrents to female enrolment.

However, the moderate mean scores in this study suggest improvement compared to earlier research. UNESCO (2021) reported that flexible scheduling and mobile learning have enhanced female participation in sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, Aderemi and Taiwo (2019) noted that awareness campaigns and community sensitization are helping to shift public perception in favour of women's education. Abioye (2018) observed that partnerships between government and non-governmental organizations are increasing funding and reducing logistical barriers. Furthermore, Okediran (2021) stressed that consistent policy support and monitoring are essential to sustain this progress. Collectively, the findings suggest that socio-cultural and economic barriers persist but are gradually being addressed through inclusive reforms.

#### **Research Question 5:**

#### **In what ways does adult education enhance women's empowerment and decision-making?**

The findings revealed that adult education greatly contributes to women's empowerment, confidence, and autonomy (Cluster M = 3.30). Respondents confirmed that education increased their ability to make independent decisions and improved their participation in family and community life. This agrees with Okojie (2020), who observed that adult

education transforms women into active agents of social change. Aderemi and Taiwo (2019) also emphasized that empowered women tend to participate more in leadership roles and community governance.

According to Akinpelu (2019), adult education enhances self-esteem and enables women to challenge gender stereotypes. UNESCO (2022) similarly reported that educated women are more likely to promote health, education, and peace within their communities. Lawal and Oduaran (2021) argued that adult education bridges gender gaps by enhancing women's access to information and leadership opportunities. World Bank (2022) confirmed that empowerment through learning yields long-term benefits such as reduced fertility rates, improved family welfare, and sustainable economic growth. The present study therefore supports the notion that adult education is a transformative force that strengthens women's agency, voice, and social standing.

#### **Research Question 6:**

#### **What strategies can improve adult education programmes for poverty eradication among women?**

Respondents proposed multiple strategies to improve adult education effectiveness, including better funding, entrepreneurship and financial-literacy integration, flexible timetables, and community mobilization (Cluster M = 3.23). These suggestions correspond with Abioye (2018), who highlighted that sustained funding and collaboration

are prerequisites for effective adult learning. Okediran (2021) advocated integrating money-management education into literacy curricula to promote self-reliance.

UNESCO (2022) recommended context-specific programmes supported by local partnerships to ensure relevance and sustainability. Aderinoye and Rogers (2019) similarly called for community involvement and ongoing evaluation to enhance outcomes.

In line with this, Emeh and Nwogu (2020) observed that flexible weekend and evening classes boost female participation, particularly among married women. World Bank (2022) further emphasized aligning adult-education initiatives with employment and entrepreneurship opportunities to achieve measurable poverty reduction. These findings collectively confirm that institutional support, funding, and inclusivity are key drivers of successful adult education programmes in Edo State and Nigeria at large.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study investigated *Adult Education as a Tool for the Eradication of Poverty among Women in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State*. The primary objective was to examine how literacy programmes, skill acquisition, entrepreneurship education, and empowerment derived from adult education contribute to poverty reduction among women. The study also sought to identify barriers that limit women's participation in adult education and to propose strategies for improving the effectiveness of such programmes.

A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 100 women aged 18 years and above, using a well-structured questionnaire validated by experts in the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, University of Benin. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations to answer the six research questions.

The key findings are summarized as follows:

- 1. Literacy Programmes and Poverty Reduction:**

The findings revealed that literacy education plays a significant role in improving women's socio-economic conditions. Participants agreed that adult literacy classes enhanced their reading, writing, and numeracy skills, which in turn improved their business management and financial decision-making abilities. Literacy was also found to promote independence, confidence, and better family welfare.

**2. Adult Education and Skill Acquisition:**

Adult education was found to be instrumental in facilitating vocational and technical skill development. Women who participated in adult education programmes reported increased employability, income generation, and self-reliance. Skill acquisition provided through adult education served as a key driver of entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods.

**3. Entrepreneurship Education and Economic Independence:**

Entrepreneurship training embedded within adult education programmes significantly enhanced women's economic empowerment. Participants indicated that they had acquired entrepreneurial knowledge that enabled them to start small-scale businesses, manage resources effectively, and reduce dependency on others for financial support.

**4. Barriers to Participation:**

The study identified that household responsibilities, cultural norms, financial constraints, and time limitations hinder women's participation in adult education. However, the overall findings suggested that these challenges are gradually being mitigated through community sensitization, government support, and flexible learning schedules.

**5. Women's Empowerment and Decision-Making:**

The findings showed that adult education enhances women's confidence, leadership potential, and participation in family and community decisions. Educated women demonstrated higher levels of self-esteem and autonomy in managing their economic and social lives.

**6. Strategies for Improving Adult Education Programmes:**

Respondents recommended increased funding, inclusion of entrepreneurship and money management modules, flexible class schedules, and strong community awareness campaigns to encourage women's participation.

These findings affirm that adult education is an effective instrument for promoting socio-economic empowerment and reducing poverty among women in Ovia North-East.

**Conclusion**

This study concludes that adult education serves as a vital tool for the eradication of poverty among women. Literacy, skill acquisition, and entrepreneurship education

collectively contribute to the financial independence, empowerment, and well-being of women in Edo State. By improving their functional literacy and equipping them with marketable skills, adult education enables women to participate productively in the economy and enhances their decision-making capacity within their homes and communities.

The study also concludes that while several barriers still limit women's participation in adult education, these challenges are being progressively addressed through government initiatives, non-governmental support, and public enlightenment campaigns. The integration of entrepreneurship and financial literacy components within adult education programmes has further strengthened women's capacity to achieve self-reliance and contribute meaningfully to national development.

In essence, adult education is not merely an academic pursuit but a transformative tool for poverty reduction, gender equality, and sustainable community development.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to enhance the role of adult education in poverty eradication among women in Ovia North-East and beyond:

- 1. Strengthen Funding and Infrastructure:**

Government and development partners should increase funding for adult education programmes and provide adequate facilities, instructional materials, and qualified facilitators to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

**2. Integrate Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training:**

Adult education centres should incorporate skill acquisition and entrepreneurship training modules into their curricula to equip women with practical and income-generating abilities.

**3. Promote Awareness and Community Sensitization:**

Public awareness campaigns should be organized to educate communities on the importance of adult education for women. Community leaders and religious institutions should be involved in encouraging female participation.

**4. Provide Flexible and Accessible Learning Opportunities:**

Centres should offer flexible schedules (evening, weekend, or mobile classes) to accommodate women with household responsibilities or employment constraints.

**5. Enhance Collaboration between Stakeholders:**

Collaboration between the Ministry of Education, non-governmental organizations, and local governments should be strengthened to ensure that adult education policies are effectively implemented and monitored.

**6. Establish Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:**

Continuous assessment of adult education programmes should be implemented to measure progress, identify challenges, and adopt best practices for sustainable improvement.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

The study recommends further research in the following areas:

1. Investigate the long-term impact of adult education on income levels and quality of life among rural women.
2. Examine the role of digital literacy and online learning in promoting women's empowerment through adult education.
3. Explore how male involvement and spousal support influence women's participation in adult education.
4. Assess the comparative effectiveness of different adult education delivery models (formal, non-formal, and informal) in reducing poverty.
5. Study the role of non-governmental organizations and community-based initiatives in sustaining adult education programmes.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence that adult education significantly enhances women's literacy, vocational competence, entrepreneurship

capacity, and socio-economic empowerment. It demonstrates that adult education is an effective mechanism for reducing poverty, particularly in developing communities. The research also provides practical insights into the barriers women face and suggests actionable strategies for improving participation and programme outcomes.

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**APPENDIX**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AS TOOL FOR ERADICATION OF  
POVERTY AMONG WOMEN IN OVIA NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT.**

**DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BENIN CITY**

**Dear Respondents,**

I am a student of the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, currently conducting a research study titled “*Adult Education as a Tool for Eradication of Poverty Among Women in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State.*” This questionnaire is designed to collect relevant information from women aged 18 years and above residing in the study area. The data obtained will be used purely for academic purposes and treated with utmost confidentiality.

Your sincere and honest responses will be highly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Deborah Kwashi

(Researcher)

## **SECTION A (DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION)**

### **1. Gender**

Female

Male

### **2. Age**

18–25

26–35

36–45

46 and above

### **3. Marital Status**

Single

Married

Widowed

Divorced

### **4. Literacy Background**

No Formal Education

Primary

Secondary

Adult Education / Skills Training

Drop-out

## SECTION B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### Instruction:

Please tick (✓) the response that best represents your opinion on each statement.

**SA = Strongly Agree   A = Agree   D = Disagree   SD = Strongly Disagree**

### Part 1: Impact of Literacy Programmes on Poverty Eradication

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Adult literacy classes have improved my reading, writing, and numeracy skills.				
2	Being able to read and write has helped me manage my business and personal finances.				
3	Literacy education has created new opportunities for me to earn income.				
4	Through adult education, I have become less financially dependent on others.				

### Part 2: Adult Education and Skill Acquisition

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Adult education programmes offer useful vocational and technical training.				
2	The skills I acquired from adult education have helped me start a small business.				
3	Skill training from adult education has improved my productivity and confidence.				
4	The skills learned through adult education have enhanced my family's living standard.				

### Part 3: Entrepreneurship Education and Women's Economic Independence

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Entrepreneurship training in adult education has encouraged me to start a business.				
2	Adult education has helped me identify profitable business opportunities.				
3	I have learned how to manage a small business effectively through adult education.				
4	Knowledge gained from adult education has reduced my dependence on financial support from others.				

### Part 4: Barriers to Women's Participation in Adult Education

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Cultural beliefs discourage women in my community from attending adult education classes.				
2	Household and childcare responsibilities prevent regular class attendance.				
3	Transportation and safety issues discourage me from attending evening classes.				
4	The cost of learning materials and registration limits women's participation in adult education.				

### Part 5: Adult Education and Women's Empowerment

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Adult education has increased my confidence to make independent decisions.				
2	I now contribute more to family and community discussions due to adult education.				
3	Adult education has enhanced my social recognition and self-esteem.				
4	I am now more financially independent because of adult education.				

### Part 6: Strategies for Improving Adult Education Programmes

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	Government and NGOs should provide better funding for adult education centres.				
2	Adult education should include entrepreneurship and money management training.				
3	Flexible class schedules (e.g., weekend or mobile classes) will improve participation.				
4	Community sensitization campaigns will encourage families to support women's learning.				