

Promotion of a Rights Culture, Equitable Distribution of Resources and Power within Families, Communities and State: Crucial Roles of Adult Education and Learning

Tajudeen Adewumi Adebisi^{1*} Ismaila Bojang²

1. Department of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria
2. Department of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

* E-mail of the corresponding author: tadebisi@oauife.edu.ng

Abstract

The contribution of adult education to the advancement of a rights culture and fair resource distribution in Nigeria is examined in this systematic review. The review looks at the impact of policies, the success of community programmes, and the applicability of educational content, drawing on 32 pertinent studies. The results show that although adult education can promote social justice, inclusion, and democratic engagement, institutional inefficiencies, poor policy implementation, and a lack of funding limit its effectiveness. Although they have potential, community-based projects and rights-focused curricula face difficulties with sustainability and localisation. The study finds that to fully realise adult education's transformative potential for promoting a rights culture and equitable development in Nigeria, a comprehensive strategy combining responsive policies, inclusive content, and robust community engagement is necessary.

Keywords: Adult Education, Rights Culture, Social Justice, Equitable Resource Distribution, Community Development

DOI: 10.7176/JEP/16-12-06

Publication date: November 30th 2025

1. Introduction

Given its capacity to alleviate socioeconomic inequalities and promote fair resource distribution, research on the function of adult education in advancing a rights culture in Nigeria has become an important field of study. Reflecting changes in policy and practice over the past few decades, adult education has expanded beyond traditional literacy initiatives to include lifelong learning and community empowerment (Sule, 2024). Its significance lies in enhancing human capital, social justice, and democratic participation, which are essential for sustainable development in Nigeria (Uzoagu, 2023). Nigeria, for example, has a sizable adult population, but issues like marginalisation and illiteracy still exist, highlighting the necessity of successful adult education initiatives (Ayantunji, 2023). The urgency of this field is highlighted by statistics showing that adult literacy programmes have improved enrolment but still face funding and regional disparities (Sule, 2024). The limited inclusion of adult education in community programmes and policy frameworks that successfully advance a rights culture and fair resource distribution in Nigeria is the particular issue that needs to be addressed (Ojobanikan et al., 2024). Despite the existence of programmes such as Universal Basic Education, their execution frequently disregards adult learners and does not close socioeconomic divides (Sule, 2024). There is still a lack of understanding about the combined effects of community initiatives, policy influence, and adult education content on social equity and resource allocation (Boyardjieva & Ilieva-Trichkova, 2021). Controversies arise around funding inadequacies, corruption within adult education institutions, and the marginalisation of adult learners, which hinder the realisation of educational rights (Olateju, 2024). The consequences of this gap include sustained inequality and underdevelopment, limiting Nigeria's progress toward inclusive growth (Akande & Ogunrin, 2014).

Conceptually, adult education is defined as lifelong learning activities aimed at enhancing knowledge, skills, and civic participation among adults (Okafor & Arikawei, 2020; Elfert, 2019). A rights culture involves awareness and exercise of social, economic, and political rights, which adult education can foster through relevant curricula and community engagement (Olomola & Olumide Ajibola, 2021; Salawu & Aina, 2017). The framework links adult education's transformative potential with policy and community-based approaches to promote equitable resource distribution and social justice (Boyardjieva & Ilieva-Trichkova, 2021).

The purpose of this systematic review is to examine the role of adult education in promoting a rights culture in Nigeria by analysing policy influence, community programmes, and educational content, and to assess their practical impacts on equitable resource distribution. This review adds value by synthesising diverse perspectives and identifying effective strategies to enhance adult education's contribution to social equity and development (Effiom et al., 2022; Uzoagu & Oriji, 2022).

2. Statement of Purpose and Scope of Review

The objective of this report is to examine the existing research on the role of adult education in promoting a rights culture in Nigeria, focusing on policy influence, community programmes, and educational content. Analyse the real-world effects on fair resource distribution to compile the most recent research on the ways in which adult education programmes support the development of a socially just and rights-aware culture in Nigerian communities. This review is significant because it discusses how education, policy, and social equity are intertwined and emphasises how adult education can significantly reduce inequalities in the distribution of resources. The review's objective is to find effective strategies and practice gaps that affect equitable development outcomes by critically examining policy frameworks, community-based programmes, and curriculum content. In the end, it aims to educate stakeholders, educators, and policymakers on how to best use adult education as a means of advancing equitable resource distribution and an inclusive rights culture in Nigeria.

3. Methodology of Literature Selection

Going by the topic of this paper, the researcher took the research question, “the role of adult education in promoting a rights culture in Nigeria, focusing on policy influence, community programmes, and educational content, examine the practical impacts on equitable resource distribution, and expand it into multiple, more specific search statements. By systematically expanding a broad research question into several targeted queries, the literature search is both comprehensive and manageable. Inclusion criteria prioritise recent research addressing adult education's policy, community programmes, and curricular dimensions related to rights and equity retrieved using ResearchGate and Google Scholar. During this process 197 papers were downloaded. From the assembled pool of 197 papers, relevance ranking gave the study 32 highly relevant papers. This review employs a qualitative synthesis of empirical and theoretical studies, focusing on Nigerian contexts. The findings are organised thematically to elucidate the multifaceted role of adult education in fostering a rights culture and equitable resource distribution in Nigeria.

4. Policy Influence

Policies for adult education are essential for advancing equity and a culture of rights, especially when combined with rights-based approaches and programmes like Universal Basic Education (Sule, 2024). However, a number of studies have found that putting these policies into practice presents serious difficulties. Significant regional disparities, ongoing funding constraints, and limited impact on quality and equity are among the main problems (Sule, 2024). These difficulties could be ascribed to differences in the level of government commitment, discrepancies between the formulation and application of policies, and more general sociopolitical barriers.

Many researches have been conducted, some focusing on policy frameworks, others emphasising practical outcomes. However, these researches continuously demonstrate that while Nigerian adult education policies aim to advance equity and a culture of rights, they frequently fail because of poor funding, poor implementation, and a lack of official recognition (Sule, 2024; Ayantunji, 2023; Olaniyi, 2017).). Ultimately, policy changes that would better incorporate adult education into national development plans and democratic governance frameworks have been demanded by scholars (Okafor & Arikawei, 2020; Kazeem & Oduaran, 2006; Olajide et al., 2013). Furthermore, the literature highlights a recurring discrepancy between the goals of policies and their actual implementation, especially when it comes to socioeconomic rights and enabling legal frameworks (Olumese, 2019).

5. Community Programme Effectiveness

The literature generally agrees that community-based adult education programmes play a major role in women's empowerment, social justice, and general community development (Ogbonnaya & E., 2023; Effiom et al., 2022; Eleberi et al., 2014; Babalola & Fasokun, 2019). These initiatives are renowned for increasing involvement and

supporting peacebuilding initiatives, especially among young people and under-represented groups. Research confirms that programme effectiveness and sustainability typically increase when community involvement and participatory approaches are given priority (Gombe et al., 2016; Eleberi et al., 2014). Variations in the effectiveness of these programmes are commonly documented, though, and are usually ascribed to a number of issues, including a lack of funding, inadequate community support, inadequate monitoring systems, and administrative inefficiencies (Ojobanikan et al., 2024; Ogbonnaya & E., 2023; Gombe et del 2016).

Additionally, some programmes struggle with sustainability and inclusivity, especially in places with low levels of community engagement or inadequate management structures (Okello, 2023; Hussain, 2013). These variations frequently reflect the variety of local contexts, variations in the accessibility of resources, the level of community involvement, and the calibre of programme execution. It is also noted that issues like corruption, persistent funding shortages, and negative public perception severely restrict the impact and reach of community-based adult education programs (Olateju, 2024; Ayantunji, 2023; Olufunke & Adeyemo, 2013). Besides, how programme outcomes are evaluated and interpreted may be impacted by methodological variations, such as the use of survey-based versus qualitative approaches.

6. Educational Content Relevance

The literature places a strong emphasis on the role that adult education content plays in advancing social justice, democracy, empowerment, and rights awareness (Olaniyi, 2017; Okafor & Arikawei, 2020; Olajide et al., 2013; Elfert, 2019). The transformative potential of curricula that include themes like gender equity, social inclusion, and peace education is especially noteworthy (Olomola & Olumide_Ajibola, 2021; Olufunke & Oluremi, 2014). These subject areas support the more general objectives of using adult education to promote civic engagement, democratic values, and social cohesion. Nonetheless, some research points to serious deficiencies in the efficacy and relevance of the curriculum. Many academics contend that in order to better meet the demands of societal change and the tenets of lifelong learning, current curricula need to be significantly redesigned (Okafor & Arikawei, 2020; Elfert, 2019). Additionally, the disregard for under-represented groups and the lack of adaptation of educational materials to local sociocultural contexts and learners' needs are cited as concerns (Olufunke & Ademola, 2012).

Moreover, studies by Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova (2021) affirm that adult education curricula often encompass core themes of capacity building and social justice, but also stress the need for more inclusive, context-sensitive content that reflects contemporary societal challenges. Weaknesses in curriculum delivery such as inadequate monitoring, corruption, and misalignment with the lived realities of learners, are frequently cited as barriers to impact (Okello, 2023; Olateju, 2024; Olufunke & Adeyemo, 2013). Divergences in findings across studies may result from differences in curriculum evaluation methodologies, the scope of content analysed, or the complexities of integrating global human rights frameworks into locally grounded educational practices.

7. Impact on Resource Distribution

The literature emphasises the importance of adult education materials that foster social justice, democracy, empowerment, and rights awareness (Olaniyi, 2017; Okafor & Arikawei, 2020; Olajide et al., 2013; Elfert, 2019). Similar emphasis is placed on curricula that address issues like gender equity, inclusion, and peace as being crucial to societal change (Olomola & Olumide-Ajibola, 2021; Olufunke & Oluremi, 2014). The need to redesign curricula to address modern issues, embrace lifelong learning principles, and foster inclusivity is a common argument across studies (Okafor & Arikawei, 2020; Elfert, 2019; Olufunke & Oluremi, 2014). However, there are issues with the curriculum's inadequate localisation and disregard for under-represented groups (Olufunke & Ademola, 2012). Some criticisms highlight shortcomings in content relevance brought on by inadequate oversight, corruption, and a failure to align with the needs of learners (Okello, 2023; Olateju, 2024; Olufunke & Adeyemo, 2013). These differing viewpoints are frequently caused by different approaches to curriculum evaluation, variations in the emphasis of educational content, and the difficulty of incorporating international rights-based frameworks into regional realities. Most studies concur that by giving adults the skills they need to participate in the economy and have fair access to resources, adult education helps to reduce socioeconomic disparities (Akpama et al., 2011; Adedokun & Oluwagbohunmi, 2015; Babalola & Fasokun, 2019; Festus & Adekola, 2015; Uzoagu, 2023). It is commonly associated with reducing poverty and promoting social justice (Akande & Ogunrin, 2014; Boyadjieva & Ilieva-Trichkova, 2021).

However, other research shows that regional disparities still exist and that systemic issues like inadequate

funding, poor policy implementation, and corruption frequently erode the usefulness of adult education (Sule, 2024; Olateju, 2024; Olumese, 2019). The non-justiciability of socioeconomic rights has been identified as a significant limitation that impedes enforcement mechanisms and restricts equitable distribution of resources (Olumese, 2019). These variations in findings can be attributed to whether research focuses on policy intentions, programme outcomes, or systemic and institutional barriers. It should also be noted that the effectiveness of adult education is shaped by regional contexts, the quality of data sources, and the robustness of legal and institutional frameworks.

Adult education significantly reduces resource access disparities, especially for women, marginalised groups, and those living in rural areas, according to the study (Uzoagu, 2023; Uzoagu & Oriji, 2022). Additionally, it promotes equitable resource management and socioeconomic participation at the local level (Festus & Adekola, 2015). Due to unequal program delivery and inadequate support networks in different regions, persistent disparities still exist (Sule, 2024; Ayimoro, 2019; Olumese, 2019).

8. Implementation Challenges

According to a large body of research, poor monitoring systems, corruption, and a lack of funding are major obstacles to the successful execution of adult education programmes in Nigeria (Ojobanikan et al., 2024; Olateju, 2024; Olufunke & Adeyemo, 2013; Hussain, 2013). Stronger government commitment and anti-corruption measures are frequently called for because of these financial and governance limitations, which compromise the impact and continuity of the programme (Olateju, 2024). Several studies highlight more complex issues that go beyond these structural obstacles. These consist of poor facilitator training, unfavourable public opinions of adult education, and a general disregard for policy (Ayantunji, 2023; Olajide et al., 2013). In studies that concentrate on programme and institutional dynamics, monitoring challenges and inadequate sustainability strategies are also prevalent (Okello, 2023; Gombe et al., 2016).

According to this review, the main obstacles to attaining successful adult education outcomes are inadequate funding, corruption, shoddy monitoring systems, and lax enforcement of current regulations (Ojobanikan et al., 2024; Olateju, 2024). Additionally, it emphasises the negative consequences of political neglect, the low public regard for adult education, and the lack of qualified facilitators (Ayantunji, 2023). To address these enduring issues, a number of academics support, greater institutional capability, more public-private collaborations, and more robust community involvement are necessary (Halliru & Aganah, 2023).

9. Conclusion

Although the body of research on adult education in Nigeria highlights its critical role in promoting a culture of rights and fair resource distribution, it also highlights important complexities and enduring difficulties. In general, adult education policies seek to incorporate social justice and rights-based principles into educational frameworks in order to foster democratic values, empowerment, and inclusivity. However, implementation gaps, inadequate funding, and lax enforcement often limit the effectiveness of these policies, making it difficult to translate them into real benefits. Policies that lack political commitment, inadequate funding, and systemic corruption hinder access and quality improvements, especially for rural and marginalised communities.

Programmes for community-based adult education become essential means of advancing literacy, social justice, and self-determination, particularly for women, under-represented groups, and rural residents. These programmes' needs-based and participatory methods promote community ownership and capacity building while improving engagement and sustainability. The reach and long-term effects of these programmes are, however, compromised by issues like insufficient funding, poor coordination, and misunderstandings among the general public. The research shows that combining adult education with community empowerment techniques reduces poverty and improves resource management at the local level, among other favourable socioeconomic effects.

Themes of social justice, peacebuilding, rights awareness, and capacity building are frequently incorporated into educational content in adult education programmes, which aligns curricula with objectives of inclusion and empowerment. However, curriculum reform is clearly needed to better address modern issues like lifelong learning, digital literacy, and economic empowerment. Poor monitoring, misalignment with learners' socio-cultural realities, and malpractice can occasionally compromise the relevance of the content, undermining the legitimacy and transformative potential of adult education. Although uneven, the practical effects of adult education on fair resource distribution are encouraging. Especially in underprivileged communities, adult education helps to improve access to resources, increase socioeconomic participation, and reduce poverty.

However, because of uneven policy enforcement, resource misallocation, and institutional flaws, regional disparities and systemic injustices continue to exist. Thus, to maintain programme quality and accountability, monitoring and evaluation systems must be strengthened.

All things considered, the body of research supports an integrated strategy that blends strong institutional capacity, strong policy frameworks, successful community engagement, and pertinent instructional materials. Maximising adult education as a transformative tool for fostering a rights culture and attaining sustainable equitable development in Nigeria requires addressing financial limitations, political neglect, and corruption in addition to encouraging public awareness and inclusive participation.

Limitations of the Literature

Several studies rely heavily on qualitative or descriptive survey designs with limited use of rigorous experimental or longitudinal methods. This methodological constraint reduces the ability to establish causality and limits the robustness of evidence on adult education's impact.

References

- Adedokun, M. O., & Oluwagbohunmi, M. F. (2015). Capacity building through adult education programmes for poverty alleviation in Nigerian communities. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)*, 6(7), 259–264.
- Akande, J. O., & Ogunrin, A. B. (2014). Empowering the poor in Nigeria through adult and community education: Implications for education policy reform. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137438508_5
- Akpama, S. I., Asor, L. J., & Erim, C. M. (2011). Adult and non-formal education as a veritable tool for attaining Millennium Development Goal 1: Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 10(2), 85–91. <https://doi.org/10.4314/gjedr.v10i2>
- Ayantunji, M. M. (2023). Adult education in Nigeria: Issues, perspectives and challenges. *Edumania*, 01 (02), 172-187. <https://doi.org/10.59231/edumania/8982>
- Ayimoro, O. D. (2019). *Attaining a lifelong and equitable literate society: The challenges of national policies on education for all*. American International Journal of Education and Linguistics Research, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.46545/aijeler.v2i2.109>
- Babalola, A. C., & Fasokun, T. O. (2019). Literacy education and social capital: A study of women's involvement in community development projects in southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Research*, 9 (1), 91-117. <https://doi.org/10.3126/JER.V9I1.28827>
- Boyadjieva, P., & Ilieva-Trichkova, P. (2021). Equity for whom, to what and where: The multi-dimensional character of social justice in adult education. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-67136-5_8
- Effiom, B. E., Ekwok, M. L., Ebuara, M. O., Odo-Simon, K., Elizabeth, G., & Inaja, A. E. (2022). Counselling adult learner for community participation in development of literacy centers in akampa local government area of cross river state, Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Policy*, 8 (2), 17-24. <https://doi.org/10.56201/jhsp.v8.no2.2022.pg17>
- Eleberi, G., Woko, M., & Owede, K. E. E. (2014). Adult education and community development programmes as vital tool for transformation of rural communities in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5 (24), 7-12.
- Elfert, M. (2019). Lifelong learning in sustainable development goal 4: What does it mean for unesco's rights-based approach to adult learning and education? *International Review of Education*, 65 (4), 537-556. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S11159-019-09788-Z>
- Ewelum, J. N., & Ugochukwu, M. K. (2016). Community involvement/participation in Nigerian educational system: The role of adult and non-formal education. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, 3(6), 2284-2291. <https://doi.org/10.18535/ijsshi/v3i6.8>
- Festus, M. O., & Adekola, O. M. (2015). Adult education for meaningful socio-economic development in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2 (2), 199-213. <https://doi.org/10.5296/JSSS.V2I2.7799>
- Gombe, S. Y., Suandi, T., Ismail, I. A., & Omar, Z. (2016). Extension education's role towards community empowerment in Nigeria: Issues, challenges and prospects. *Journal of Education and Social Policy*,

- 3(2), 135–142. https://jespnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_2_June_2016/17.pdf
- Halliru, S., & Aganah, A. S. (2023). Enhancing adult education through institution building: The Nigerian experience. In M. Slowey, H. Hinzen, M. Omolewa, & M. Osborne (Eds.), *Adult education and social justice: International perspectives* (pp. 107–119). Firenze University Press. <https://doi.org/10.36253/979-12-215-0253-4.14>
- Hussain, M. S. (2013). Challenges and emerging perspectives in adult education delivery in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(13), 138–145.
- Kazeem, K., & Oduaran, A. (2006). Universal basic education in Nigeria: Adult literacy practice and policy reform needs. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 12(1), 34–44. <https://doi.org/10.7227/JACE.12.1.4>
- Ogbonnaya, K. A., & E., O. A. (2023). Enhancing women’s participation in community development through community education for sustainable development in south-east Nigeria. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 18(7), 734–744. <https://doi.org/10.18280/ijstdp.180734>
- Ojobanikan, E. I., Mandah, N. C. A., & Foyewa, A. O. (2024). Assessment of funding approach to adult learning and education in rural communities. *Journal of Digital Learning and Education*, 4(1), 61–72. <https://doi.org/10.52562/jdle.v4i1.989>
- Okafor, I. M., & Arikawei, A. R. (2020). Repositioning conceptual understanding of adult education for social transformation in Nigeria. *African Research Review*, 14 (1), 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.4314/AFRREV.V14I1.4>
- Okello, I. H. T. (2023). Nigeria in focus: Improving the process of adult education monitoring for sustainability. *IAA Journal of Education*, 9(3), 14–18. <https://doi.org/10.59298/IAAJE/2023/3.10.1000>
- Olajide, M. F., Oladitan, I. O., & Kolo, I. A. (2013). Influence of adult non-formal education and informal learning on democratization processes in Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(9), 32–35. <https://doi.org/10.7176/RHSS/3-9-04>
- Olaniyi, F. O. (2017). Entrenching democratic values for good governance in Nigeria: The role of adult education. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(19), 128–133. <https://doi.org/10.7176/JEP/8-19-14>
- Olateju, A. O. (2024). Corruption in formal adult education in Nigeria: Implications for sustainable national development. *International Journal of Economic, Finance and Business Statistics*, 2(2), 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.59890/ijefbs.v2i2.1735>
- Olomola, O. O., & Olumide-Ajibola, C. A. (2021). Adopting adult education for fulfilment of the right of women to education in Nigeria. *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, 21(1–2), 174–189. <https://doi.org/10.28934/jwec21.12.pp174-189>
- Olufunke, A. M., & Ademola, O. J. (2012). Adult education: The hope of the marginalized. *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 4(1), 91–97. <https://doi.org/10.18767/EJES.35999>
- Olufunke, A. M., & Adeyemo, C. W. (2013). Finding solutions to challenges facing adult education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 3 (4), 23–29. <https://doi.org/10.5296/IJLD.V3I4.4241>
- Olufunke, A. M., & Oluremi, O. F. (2014). Inclusive education and the development of Nigerian communities. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 3 (1), 28–40. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/V3-I1/501>
- Olumese, O. (2019). *Inhibitions to the enforcement of economic and social rights in the UK and Nigeria: A study of two worlds* (Doctoral thesis, Nottingham Trent University). Nottingham Trent University Institutional Repository. <https://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/36381/>
- Salawu, M. L. A., & Aina, S. A. (2017). Education for peace and justice in Nigeria: A critical analysis 1999 – 2015. <https://doi.org/10.5430/WJSS.V4N1P40>
- Sule, J. O. (2024). Accessing the impact of policy reforms on the rights to education: A comparative study of emerging and developed economies (Nigeria and the u.s.). *GSC Advanced Research and Reviews*, 21 (1), 053–064. <https://doi.org/10.30574/gscarr.2024.21.1.0359>
- Uzoagu, I. F., & Oriji, A. (2022). Education & developmental initiatives: Examining the role of adult education in rural community development in Nigeria. *European journal of training and development studies*,

9 (2), 11-26. <https://doi.org/10.37745/ejtds.2014/vol9n21126>

Uzoagu, I. F. (2023). Adult education and human capacity building for community sustainability in Nigeria. *International journal of vocational and technical education research*, 9 (2), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijvter.15/vol9n2112>