



7th – 9th June 2022

Lifelong Learning for Social Justice in the Era of Knowledge Based Economy in Nigeria: Learning from the Narratives of Women in Purdah's Empowerment Needs

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Women in purdah's need for empowerment is critical for the development of women as an aspect of social justice. Educating women to be out of poverty, illiteracy and disempowerment as an aspect of social justice is rooted from the Islamic traditions and some modern conventions. It was reported that prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during his life gives opportunity for women every week to participate in education (Alnoor, 2010). More recently, especially after the establishment of Sokoto caliphate Sheikh Usman Bn Fodio empower Nana Asmau to educate large number of women who were not opportune to be educated. This is paper argued that the entrenchment of adult education for social justice for women in purdah has rooted from Islam and other national and international conventions. This study determined the empowerment needs of women in Purdah in Bichi Local Government. The study used Nussbaum's (2011) women capability theory. It also used quantitative and qualitative instruments with aim of the generating the empowerment needs of women in purdah through their narratives in Nigeria. The study used chain referral as a means of reaching out to the research participants. A total of ninety-seven (97) women in purdah were identified with the whole 97 responding to questionnaire and eight (8) out of which were recruited for semi-structured interviews. Both instruments were validated to establish their reliability. The data collected using questionnaire was analysed using frequency counts, percentages and mean, and the data collected using semi-structured interviews were thematically analysed. The quantitative findings revealed that women in purdah needs empowerment for the development of skills and knowledge for economic independence; improving health and hygiene; building self-esteem; building access to information; overcoming cultural practices limiting participation in education, and skills to amplifying their (women) voice and personal development. Whereas the qualitative findings revealed women's dilemma on ways to acquire skills for empowerment and it also shows concern of the women on possibility of in-house training for their development. They findings shows women call for the need for the enlightenment of their husbands on the right of women to acquire education for empowerment, health and wellbeing. The study recommends among others mass enlightenment of the public by governmental agencies and practitioners.