

# Environmental Adult Education and Sustainable Development: Gender Equity Perspective

Okorie Christiana Uzoaru, (Ph.D)<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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\*Corresponding author: Okorie Christiana Uzoaru

Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

## Abstract

Without addressing environmental degradation and the social and economic inequities of the future, poverty reduction today cannot be accomplished or sustained. This is especially true when it comes to gender-based discrepancies in how the environment is used. Inherent societal gender inequality is a violation of human rights and a major concern for sustainable development. A thorough understanding of how men and women relate to the natural environment and environmental resources, as well as their rights and roles in resource planning and management, is required for social equity in society, gender-sensitive economic strategies, and environmental protection, according to discussions on equity and sustainable development in this paper. This understanding can be attained through environmental education programmes.

**Keywords:** Gender Inequity, Gender Equity, Environment, Sustainable Development, Environmental Education.

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## INTRODUCTION

In Africa and some parts of the world, gender stereotypes inherent in the culture of the people defines women and men in opposite ways, create limitations to both women and men, and legitimise unequal power relation. Gender stereotyping refers to the way in which a society expects women and men to behave and the specific roles women and men are expected to play the society. This cultural phenomenon has resulted from gender inequity in most African society and has been contributing to the non-attainment of sustainable development. Gender inequity inherent in society is a denial of human right and is of great concern to sustainable development. Gender Equity is the process of allocating resources, programs and decision-making fairly to both males and females. This requires ensuring that everyone, girls and women, boys and men are be provided with a full range of activity and programme choices that meet their needs, interests and experiences. Achieving gender equity is critical to sustainable development. The adoption by 189 governments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action marked a turning point in the history of women's rights. This progressive blueprint remains a powerful source of inspiration in the effort to realize equal opportunities for women and girls. It was in line with this that the

international community in 2000 identified promotion of gender equity and women empowerment in goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and 2015 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 also specify achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girl. These goals were in recognition that to achieve sustainable development, gender equity need to properly address in all society. However, gender equity is an essential building block in sustainable development, the three pillars of sustainable development, which are economic well-being, social equity and environment protection. To further champion the cause of gender equity in sustainable development, the post 2015 sustainable development agenda proposed a renewed focus on women, households and communities in the context of environmental management; that must respect and uphold women's rights to essential environmental goods and services such as water, energy and food; and putting place an environment that is conducive to gender equality more broadly through:

1. Promoting gender-sensitive legislation;
2. Enforcing existing legislation;
3. Making judicial systems more accessible and responsive to women; and
4. Providing legal aid to women seeking to claim their rights.

In most African societies women's and men's roles are socially constructed, but all too frequently gender-based disparities exist that disadvantage women; this impedes their development and hence that of humankind. Reducing poverty today, without taking care of environmental degradation and social and economic inequalities tomorrow cannot be achieved or sustained without paying careful attention to gender-based differences. More often, women and girls bear the burden of gender disparities. Because of their socially-constructed roles, men and boys usually have an advantage over women and girls in access to resources, decision-making, and capacity to take advantage of social, political, and economic opportunities. To enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of development interventions, and achieve sustainable development, these differences need to be understood and factored into policies and programs.

In Nigeria traditional society, women are basically traditional home makers; they engage in subsistence farming and fishing, and many unpaid domestic tasks, which in one way or the other not recognized as developmental activities. This traditional life has changed overtime due to education, civilization and modernization in the society. Women have in addition to their traditional roles, are now playing recognised developmental roles. Many are self-employed while some are in paid employment. This is in support of Sibani (2017) observation that "the Nigerian societies have come of age where women are intellectually capable as men. In Nigeria today, professions doctor, lawyers, accountant, teachers, research scientist and others about half are women". But Sebany, Olaolorun & John (2020) observed that the household continues to be a key site of women's disempowerment. Rigid social structures dictate that men take on the role of the breadwinner and decision maker, while women take on domestic work and childcare responsibilities. Norms regarding gender are closely linked to the life course established by society. In Nigeria traditional society, there exist restrictive norms that ensure women and girls have limited access to opportunities and resources that can foster their empowerment. These norms created inequitable relationships within the home and the society and left women and girls vulnerable with limited decision-making power, access to resources and disempowered creating inequitable relationships within the home. Thus Aries (2015) states that the emergence of childhood revealed the ideals about the appropriate forms of play and educations for boys indeed the very concept of boyhood developed at least a century before the concept of girlhood emerged. In the eighteenth century. Nicholson (1990) avers that the position of women in Nigerian culture was dependence oriented hence a common address to women as *Oriaku*, the consumer of wealth. This is to say that women do not play a significant role in the production of wealth in the family, they depend on their husbands for their

economic welfare that is why a majority of the women still value the wealth given to them by men as against the backdrop of feeding themselves despite civilization that education brought to Nigeria.

Although, Nigeria is a strong patriarchal (gender ideology) society surrounded with gender discrimination in both economic and social life, it is slowly making progress towards narrowing gender gaps in education, labor force participation and health outcomes. International Monetary Fund African Department. (2018) reported that more women in Nigeria are entering the workforce, achieving economic freedom and gaining increased control over their lives. In view of this, DE Silva (2016) asserted that women's employment has been steadily increasing from 57 percent in 2011 to 65 percent in 2018. Gender ideology according to refers to Davis and Greenstein (2009), is the attitudes regarding the appropriate roles, rights and responsibilities of women and men in society. Sebany, Olaolorun & John (2020) pointed out that Nigeria remains a largely patriarchal society, where structural and gender inequalities ensure that men dominate the private and public spheres and hold positions of power. Women are relegated to the background with diminished agency and decision-making power in all arenas be it economic, reproductive and social, in support of this, Shvedova (2002) pointed out that societies all over the world are dominated by an ideology about "a woman's place."; a perception that women should only play the role of working mother, which is generally low-paid and apolitical. According to Malhotra and Mather (1997), norms can intervene in women's ability to transform resources into outcomes that change or challenge intra-household gender inequities, and are therefore critical to address for any transformation to take place. The implications of not providing girls with equal voices, choices, and opportunities (equity) affect not just their lives, but the future of the planet. The issue of gender inequity that is inherent in our traditional society has many negative consequences on environmental sustainability and sustainable development at large. Unequitable distribution of resources (social, political, economic and cultural) and decision-making power among male and female due to heavy presence of gender inequity poses threat to sustainable development.

### **Women and the Environment**

Women are more dependent on natural resources than men are. Women must travel further to acquire water and burning wood in degraded surroundings. They may therefore have less access to education and other worthwhile pursuits, which increases their vulnerability to gender-based violence in remote places. Food, fuel, building materials, medications, and a variety of materials for income-generating activities are all dependent on woods for women. These woods are destroyed by industrial logging, migration and resettlement, agricultural

expansion, and cutting for firewood and charcoal. Women's needs are not taken into account in reforestation plans. Women in most rural communities in Nigeria, have less control of and access to land; and natural resources than men. In many cases women are excluded from formal ownership of land. Due to their socially constructed roles and existing inequalities, women are more vulnerable to the impacts of environmental and natural disasters such as drought, floods and cyclones than men. Women are disproportionately vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of violence in times of vulnerability and need. This risk increases at times of disaster (Irish Aid Policy, 2004:3).

### **Gender Equity**

Fairness in the treatment of men and women to their respective needs is gender equity. Gender equity is the process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls, and importantly the equality of outcomes and results. It is also referred to differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms or differences between the sexes. In UNESDOC (2019), it was noted that gender equity means fairness of treatment for men and women according to their respective needs, which may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities. Thus, gender equity ensures that women and men and girls and boys have an equal chance, not only at the starting point, but also when reaching the finishing line. It is about the fair and just treatment of both sexes that takes into account the different needs of the men and women, cultural barriers and (past) discrimination of the specific group.

The issue of equity is linked to the attainment of the three pillars of sustainable development because the central ethical principle behind sustainable development is equity and particularly intergenerational equity. The Brundtland Commission, which played such a prominent part in popularising the notion of sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, incorporated the rhetoric of equity sustainable development strategies and policies. Also, the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 reaffirmed the centrality of equity in its Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration. Equity according to Falk, Hampton, Hodgkinson, Parker, and Rorris (1993) is about fairness, it is derived from a concept of social justice. It represents a belief that there are some things which people should have, that there are basic needs that should be fulfilled, that burdens and rewards should not be spread too divergently across the community, and that policy should be directed with impartiality, fairness and justice towards these ends.

Furthermore, Falk, Hampton, Hodgkinson, Parker, and Rorris (1993) contended that equity means

that there should be a minimum level of income and environmental quality below which nobody falls and that within a community it usually also means that everyone should have equal access to community resources and opportunities, and that no individuals or groups of people should be asked to carry a greater environmental burden than the rest of the community as a result of government actions. It is generally agreed that equity implies a need for fairness (not necessarily equality) in the distribution of gains and losses, and the entitlement of everyone to an acceptable quality and standard of living. Gender equity in the context of sustainable development has to do with fairness between men and women, boy and girls of a community. It doesn't mean the neglect of a particular gender, but to achieve a reasonable balance between satisfying men and girl needs now and setting aside enough to provide for their needs of the future.

### **Sustainable Development**

The concept of sustainable development as construed in Brundtland report (1987) holds that human civilizations must exist and satisfy their own needs without endangering the capacity of future generations to do the same. Sustainable development is a strategy for structuring society to ensure its long-term viability. This entails taking into account both the immediate and long-term imperatives, such as social and economic equality and the preservation of the environment and natural resources. Ever (2018) defined sustainable development as the organizing principle for achieving human development goals while maintaining the capacity of natural systems to produce the natural resources and ecosystem services on which the economy and society rely on. Sustainable development according to Dernbach in Mensah (2019) is intergenerational equity which recognizes both short-term and long-term implications, which according to Kolk (2016) is possible by including economic, environmental, and social issues in the decision-making process. Duran *et al.*, (2015) pointed out that sustainable development is a development that protects the environment, because a sustainable environment enables sustainable development. Thus, the goal of sustainable development is stability of the economy and environment through the integration of economic, environment and social aspect of any society. For stability to be attained, equity in the distribution of society resources need to be considered.

### **Gender Equity and Sustainable Development**

The relationship between development, the issues facing women and the environment, and international policy is relatively recent. As an example, women are not even mentioned in the Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972), and the word "man" is frequently used to refer to a "human creature," roughly speaking. Similar to this was the original World Conservation Strategy. (IUCN/UNEP/WWF, 1980)

only occasionally discussed socioeconomic issues with women, and only in relation to conventional issues associated with them, such as population growth and illiteracy. In terms of international policy, the connection between development and the concerns of women and the environment is relatively new. For instance, women are not even named in the Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972), and the term "man" is frequently used in the meaning of "human being" in general. Women were only addressed on a few occasions and then in regard to concerns that were historically connected with them, such as illiteracy and population increase, in the first World Conservation Strategy (IUCN/UNEP/WWF, 1980). Only in 1984 did the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) establish a women's advisory group (Senior Women's Advisory Group on Sustainable Development), which started to study and provide advice on the Programme regarding the connection between the issues of exclusion as they affect women, the roles they play, and the harm done to the environment during development, as well as the ways to deal with both situations.

A workshop was organized to examine how the environmental crisis affects women in 1985 at the Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum, which ran concurrently with the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development, and Peace in Nairobi. A plan of action was created as a result of this workshop with the intention of empowering women in environmental management and administration and educating and training them on environmental issues. However, it wasn't until the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, adopted by this Conference, that the environment was formally brought up in the context of the conversation about women in light of their interrelationship, and that these issues were then connected to development concerns. Important contributions made by women in terms of population and food safety, but no findings or recommendations were made about the relationship between gender and the environment. Nevertheless, this document provided a definition and outline of sustainable development and served as a starting point for a discussion of the topic from this angle. It also resulted in the replacement of the initial perception of women as the victims of environmental degradation with one in which they are seen as possessing the knowledge and abilities necessary to serve as efficient environmental managers.

The importance of women in protecting the environment and the various ways they participate in development processes were not mentioned in the official schedule when the first meeting to plan for the Earth Summit was held in 1990. The meetings held under the auspices of the UNEP in the four developing world regions of Africa (Harare, Zimbabwe, 1989), the

Arab countries (Tunis, 1990), Asia (Bangkok, 1991), and Latin America and the Caribbean (Quito, 1991), where participants submitted the information then available on the main environmental problems of each region and their effects on the female population, were largely responsible for the subsequent incorporation of women into the programme. The two conferences conducted in Miami in 1991, the World Congress of Women for a Healthy Planet and the Global Assembly on Women and the Environment: Partners in Life served as the culmination of the work done before Rio. At these gatherings, the situation was thoroughly examined, and decisions on recommendations for the UN Conference were made. Questions concerning the existing development paradigm and a request for adjustments to be made in order to ensure sustainability and a development approach that places people's needs and rights first were presented alongside the proposals. The agreement reached was outlined in the document Agenda 21 for Women's Action, an ideological framework that serves as a springboard for action and makes the case for participatory democracy, universal access to information, moral principles, and full participation by women on an equal footing with men as the cornerstones of change.

It is important to recognize the excellent work done by the Women's Organization for the Environment and Development in translating the Women's Agenda into terms appropriate for the politicians involved in the Rio Conference because there is typically a significant gap between international and government policy and women's activism, which frequently seem to come from different worlds. This same organization collaborated with the Coalition of Brazilian Women during the NGO Forum to organize workshops addressing Women's Agenda 21 issues under the auspices of "Planeta Femea," where two agreements on population, development, and the environment as well as women in general were also reached. The Rio Declaration's principle 20, which states that "Women play a leading role in environmental management and in development," was the consequence of lobbying by various women's organisations and networks and rising international awareness of the issues of gender and the environment. Because of this, their full participation is essential if sustainable development is to be realized (United Nations, 1992). Although women are mentioned in all 40 sections of Programme 21, which outlines the priorities for action to ensure sustainable development into the twenty-first century and deals with specific sectors and intersectoral relations, section 24 is the only one that deals with them directly. It is stressed in this section that women must actively participate in political and economic decision-making if the Summit's decisions are to be successfully implemented that they play a critical role in bringing about changes to the current model of consumption and production. However, there are also plans of attack to

address the prejudice that already exists against them, the plan as listed in Rico (1998) include:

1. Implementation of measures to strengthen institutions, non-governmental organizations and women's groups so that women can be trained in the use and management of resources.
2. Initiatives to reduce the enormous workload borne by women through the establishment of nurseries, equal division of household tasks between men and women and use of environmentally sound technologies.
3. Implementation of programmes to set up and strengthen preventive and curative health services run for and by women, including safe, inexpensive and voluntary family planning services.

These points of view were given importance and were further explored in a number of conferences and international meetings that were conducted in the following. In announcements, plans, and programs, both sustainable development and the issues of women and gender continued to gain credibility and take up special positions.

Sustainable development as defined the United Nation's World Commission on Environment and Development (UNCED, 1987), also known as the Brundtland Commission in her tagged *Our Common Future* (1987), defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The report also identified three components to sustainable development: economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity, and suggested that all three can be achieved by gradually changing the ways in which we develop and use technologies. (United Nations General Assembly, 1987:43). This concept of sustainable development as contained in United Nations General Assembly (1987), aims to maintain economic advancement and progress while protecting the long-term value of the environment; it "provides a framework for the integration of environment policies and development strategies". Intragenerational equity is a core principle of sustainable development since inequality worsens the environment. The ability to choose whether or not to practice environmentally beneficial conduct is not available to those living in poverty. The Brundtland Commission claims that people who are hungry and destitute frequently damage their immediate environment in order to survive; they remove forests, overgraze meadows with their animals, abuse marginal land, and crowd into crowded cities in growing numbers.

The combined effects of these developments are so great that poverty has elevated to a serious global disease. In order to achieve sustainable development,

men and women must engage equally and fully at all levels (Hemmati and Gardiner, 2002). Gender equity must be the cornerstone of sustainable development. Without tackling the ongoing problem of gender inequality through an essential, revolutionary educational programme, the three "pillars" of sustainable development cannot be accomplished. The discussions of equity and sustainable development lead to the conclusion that social equity in society, gender-sensitive economic strategies, and environmental protection all require a thorough understanding of how men and women relate to natural and environmental resources, as well as their rights and roles in resource planning and management. For instance, when gender-related social, economic, and environmental obstacles are seen individually as independent elements of that culture, the issues that plague that civilisation can likewise be considered as discrete difficulties.

### **Gender Equity and Economic Growth**

Nigerian society was thus dominated by a strong patriarchal ideology. Women were legally and culturally attributed as a second-class status in society. Women mostly at rural communities' experience poverty differently from men because they are denied equal rights and opportunities, lack access to resources and services and are excluded from important decisions that affect their lives and development. Thus, a full understanding of the gender dimensions of poverty and of the inequalities which determine women's disadvantaged position in society is necessary if the rights and needs of women and men are to be met equally and sustainable development is to be achieved. Women are highly reliant on their local environment for their livelihood; they frequently lack ownership and decision-making power over the natural resources on which they depend. These factors limit women's potential to climb out of poverty, makes them very vulnerable to environmental change or degradation, and increases and perpetuates inequality.

The issue of gender equity needs to be addressed in order for Nigerian women to have access to most of the depravities that have contributed to their state in society because gender inequity not just affect the lives of women, but the future of the planet. The future of the planet is dependent on equitable distribution and usage of the resources. Gender fairness is not to create a society that is the same and genderless. It is about everyone being given the same opportunities, rights and obligations despite their differences. Achieving gender equity is having the understanding that advantage exists alongside disadvantage. We need to address both if we are to achieve economic growth.

### **Gender and Social Equity**

Women's place in most Africa nations social structure to that of the man is basically inequity, and this can also affect sustainable development process of such nation.. In view of this, Henderson and Jayden

(2010) argued that women's status in society shapes their political role and levels of participation in politics. Continued perceptions of traditional social roles for men and women can serve to discourage women from involvement in politics; and even when women pursue politics, they are more likely to get involved at the local or community level rather than at the national level (McCann & Wilson, 2012).

To ensure fairness (equity), we need to implement measures, programs and strategies to compensate for the social and historical disadvantages women face in the workforce and in life to create an even playing field.

For equity to be attained socially, Nigerian government need to mainstream gender equity in all levels of her social sector. Gender mainstreaming aims to ensure that both practical and strategic gender needs are addressed. Practical gender needs are related to daily needs and activities. They are linked to roles that women and men are given by society. Strategic gender needs are related to changing the relationships, roles and responsibilities of women and men in society. Thus, gender equity puts the focus on fairness and justice regarding benefits and needs for women and men, girls and boys.

### **Gender and Environmental Protection**

Gender is a culturally-based expectation of male and female duties and behaviors. Leach (1991) asserts that gender is a crucial factor in determining resource availability and control and that it interacts with class, caste, race, culture, and ethnicity to influence the processes of ecological change. According to Leach, gender played a part in the struggle between men and women to retain prospects and livelihoods that were ecologically sustainable. Women spend a lot of time gathering and storing water, as well as obtaining fuel, food, and fodder, and managing property, whether it be forest, marsh, or agricultural land, according to Korolera (2012). Gender equity and environmental goals, go hand in hand. The most detrimental effects of environmental degradation typically affect women the most due to socioeconomic and discriminatory difficulties. Environmental issues have a variety of effects on women as well. Additionally, women make more ecologically friendly decisions in their personal life, which may greatly facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Women are a source of support for entire communities since women provide the majority of care for children, the elderly, and the sick. For instance, communities' traditional and generational knowledge of biodiversity enables them to obtain pharmaceuticals, nutritional balance, and agricultural rotation systems. Drought, unpredictable rainfall, or strong storms can seriously harm women's lives and the lives of their children when access to these vital resources is

hindered. Natural catastrophes diminish female life expectancy rates and kill more women than men, according to studies, but they also affect women more than men.

Women in rural communities in Nigeria spend a significant portion of their time performing subsistence tasks linked to natural resources, such as gathering fuel wood or growing crops and vegetables to feed their families. In spite of this, women remain insufficiently recognised and involved in environmental policy-making and environmental management for sustainable development due to gender inequality prevalent in most African societies. Gender equity is crucial for every country and every society in Africa and the world at large for sustainable development to be attained. Gender equity is crucial to sustainable development because women are more dependent on natural resources than men due to unequal access to alternatives like wage jobs and the security and benefits, they provide. In deteriorated environments, women must go further to obtain water and firewood. Because of this, they might not have as much access to education and other useful endeavours, which makes them more susceptible to gender-based violence in rural areas. Compared to men, women in Nigeria have less access to and control over land and natural resources, they are frequently denied formal land ownership rights; and are more susceptible than men are to the effects of environmental and natural disasters including drought, floods, and infertility of soil and so on.

### **Environmental Adult Education and Sustainable Development**

The key to sustainable development, according to Yarmol-Franko in Haugen (2010:3), is a change in how we think and live, both individually and collectively; we must break habits and throw away norms as the environment becomes a recurring theme in our lives; and environmental adult education works to achieve this transformation. Transforming intergenerational gender inequity thinking is necessary to achieve gender equity for sustainable development. In this situation, transformation involves mental, emotional, and practical aspects of gender justice. The adult population of Nigeria can be informed about the importance of fully implementing the international accord targeting gender equity, which includes the Belgium Platform for the Habitat Agenda and its review in 1997 as well as the Agenda of the UN subcommittee on the prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities, through environmental adult education. According to the Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Development, environmental adult education affirms values and behaviors that support social and economic change, ecological preservation, and the growth of ecologically sound, equitable societies that coexist in diversity and interdependence at

both the individual and collective levels (Apel and Camozzi in Ifoni, 2008).

Thus, piecemeal approach to gender related societal issue will not lead to sustainable development. Rather than a piecemeal approach, a more comprehensive approach that will result to sustainable development is environmental adult education approach. Environmental adult education as defined by Okorie (2015) is an educational programme that will increase adult learners' knowledge about the environment, develop in the adult the necessary skills and also change their behaviour towards the environment. Environmental adult education is an engaging, inclusive, and active educational approach drawn from multiple disciplines that informs and empowers learners to take actions for addressing the root causes of environmental problems. Accordingly, Dokubo and Okorie (2017) assert that Environmental adult education is any educational process that is designed for adult, in which the content:

1. Provides environmental awareness
2. Knowledge of environment and its associated problems
3. Will lead to positive attitudinal change towards the environment among the learners
4. Will equip the adult learners with skills of handling environmental issues
5. Promotes the consciousness of participating in activities that help in sustaining the environment.

In the context of this paper, achieving gender equity for sustainable development through environmental adult education will cover, gender equity and economic, social, and environment; and the place of environmental adult education in achieving gender equity for sustainable development.

### **Environmental Adult Education Processes for Achieving Gender Equity for Sustainable Development**

The "missing link" in sustainable development is gender equity. Without addressing economics, a focus on the environmental and social aspects of sustainable development ignores the capital required to fund advancement. Neglecting the environment while advancing the economic and social pillars of sustainability causes the natural capital required for growth to deteriorate. Green growth can result for a select few if economics and the environment are prioritized without consideration for social considerations. These few are usually predominantly men due to gender discrepancies around the world. The following environmental adult education procedures must be used if gender equity for sustainable development is to be achieved: n Nigeria;

1. Building on indigenous knowledge;
2. recognition of cultural belief (involvement of stakeholders);

3. Awareness raising concerning the importance of gender equity;
4. Enhancing traditional roles and knowledge through environmental adult education activities.

According to Haugen (2010), environmental adult education is an engaging, inclusive, active educational approach that empowers students to become activists, transforms classroom instruction into real-world action by addressing the causes of environmental problems, and provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in social activism and address environmental issues. The difficulty of environmental adult education, however, is the premise of sustainable development (environmental protection, economic growth, and social equity), and the answer to this challenge will result in gender equity for sustainable development. Quality of life is only one aspect of sustainability. It involves recognizing the relationships between and achieving equilibrium between the social, economic, and environmental spheres. In support of this, Benavides (1992:43) suggests that environmental adult education must be a process that:

1. Enables human beings and societies to "reach their fullest potential in order that they might live in harmony among themselves and in nature."
2. Empowers all who participate in the learning process, learners and educators.
3. Creates interest and motivation by helping people to feel ownership and also a sense that collectively, they can make change (LEAP/Ecologic, 1994).

This viewpoint supports Guevara's (2000) claim that environmental adult education is transformative and empowering when it encourages people to think that they have the power to improve their lives and the lives of those around them.

### **CONCLUSION**

Gender equity must be implemented through appropriate environmental adult education that aims to provide awareness of all the provisions in the environment, how to utilize them fairly, and how to manage them for better life existence if we want to achieve development that will cater to the needs of today's generation without compromising the ability of future generations to use the same resources.

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