

DISTANCE EDUCATION AS A WOMAN EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Studies over time have revealed that education is the most potent instrument for the emancipation of any group of people (Azikiwe 1992; Ocholi 1999; UNIC, 2000). Sambo (2000) also opined that mental freedom, which usually precedes all other forms of freedom, can only be guaranteed by an effective education system.

This view was further crystallised by Okeke (1995) when she observed that education is a sure pathway to the liberation of the mind and the improvement of socio-economic status of people.

History, the world over, is replete with the achievements of men folk and their contributions to the development processes and from time immemorial the position of women in the structure of society has never been considered on the same plain as that of men, they have been regarded as a second-fiddle. It is on this believe that Ker (1999) argued that women all over the world have been categorized under the disadvantaged groups of people and society itself has systematically and consistently pursued the socialization of women into accepting the notion of disadvantaged group.

Given the preponderance of this categorization of women as a disadvantaged group of people, a social reengineering process is required to introduce equality through emancipation of the mind. This is where education has been found to be useful as a liberating force and agent of social change especially in developing countries like Nigeria.

It is on this premise that the Open and Distance Learning scheme is hereby considered as an effective strategy for women empowerment, within the functional framework of the general lifelong education process.

Keywords: Women, education, distance education, empowerment, Nigeria.