

ASSESSMENT OF THE UTILISATION OF BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AMONG ADULT LEARNERS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF OYO AND ONDO STATES, NIGERIA

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Abstract: The need to expand adult learning programmes for economic growth and sustainable development has made the issue of utilisation of basic literacy education germane in developing countries. Evidently, there have been rekindle interests and efforts in the provision of basic literacy in Nigeria, particularly towards mobilising both public and private funds for such programmes. However, there seems to be a dearth of studies that empirically show the extent to which the people actually utilise the skills acquired in adult literacy. This study, therefore, investigated adult learners' utilisation of the basic literacy education for sustainable development in Oyo and Ondo state, Nigeria.

Survey research design of ex-post facto type was adopted. A total of 1,310 adult learners (Oyo: 579, Ondo: 731) were selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Literacy Access Questionnaire ($r = 0.81$) was used to obtain data for the study. This was complemented with six sessions of Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) with adult learners. One research question and two hypotheses were raised, answered and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and multi regression.

The study revealed that a significant relationship exist between utilisation of basic literacy education and sustainable development in the two states ($F_{(3,$

$1306 = .550, p < 0.05$). Some of the beneficiaries use skills acquired in issuing receipts to customers, saving and withdrawing money in banks, farmers became better users of fertilizers and sales of farm produce; assist and supervise their children school work. The FGD also shows that the beneficiaries used skills acquired for their life-improvement activities and they want further improvement opportunities.

There is the need for improved funding of adult literacy and organisers of adult literacy programmes need to work collaboratively with learners in developing curriculum that meets their basic life-improvement as well as increase post literacy activities that will help in sustaining the skills acquired.

Keywords: Adult Learners, Basic Literacy, Rural Communities, Utilisation

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The importance of people's ability to read and write has made literacy one of the fundamental requirements of modern civilization. Various research reports such as Basic Education Coalition [5], Amartya [1], UNESCO [34], FAO [15], and Denga [13], have all agreed that the

greater the percentage of a functional literate people in a country, the much better are the chances for rapid political, social, economic, technology and cultural development. Though, while literacy alone is not sufficient to generate development, it is a major factor in the ultimate effectiveness of a country's investments. Literacy is an indispensable foundation that enables young people and adults to engage in learning opportunities at all stages of the learning continuum. The right to literacy is an inherent part of the right to education. It is a prerequisite for the development of personal, social, economic and political empowerment. Literacy is an essential means of building people's capabilities to cope with the evolving challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy and society UNESCO [37].

An educated populace is more likely to enjoy higher agricultural productivity, longer life expectancies, lower infant mortality rates and greater political stability (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education [23], Mylek [21], and Lind [17]). Therefore, where the right to education is guaranteed, people's access to and enjoyment of other rights are enhanced (Colclough, Al-Samarria, Rose and Tembon [11]). Also, the people are better equipped to protect themselves from various diseases particularly HIV/AIDS (BEC [5]).

Nigeria with an estimated population of about 140 million people is a relatively wealthy nation, if compared with other countries in Africa within the realm of natural, material and human resources (National Population Commission, NPC [26]; Oyinlola [29]; UNESCO [35]). Also, Nigeria like any other developing nations is facing problems like rapidly increasing population, slow growing economy, and many unschooled adults. Basic literacy (both formal and non-formal) in Nigeria has been hampered by many social, political, economic and cultural factors such as insufficient number and quality of physical infrastructures such as school buildings, school furniture and equipment, lack of books, writing materials and teaching supplies, an insufficient number of qualified teachers, considerable number of drop outs and repetition of grades at the primary and middle levels.

As a result of aforementioned problems associated with inadequate provision of literacy programmes, many youth and adults could not participate effectively in the development of their communities and at the same time might not know what their rights are or how to defend these rights. Against the backdrop of several educational opportunities like formal and non-formal education available in Nigeria, unequal participation and access continue unabated among the citizens (Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report [39]; Federal

Ministry of Education (FME [14]). In Oyo and Ondo States more than 20% of the adult population cannot read at all (NPC, [25]). The bulk of these adult illiterates reside in the rural areas and this negates the challenge of education to serve rural development is one of the main themes of the EFA. It should be noted that 60% of the people in developing countries (70% of the population in Nigeria) still live in rural areas (NPC, [25]). While rural-urban statistics on education are scarce, many countries report that non-school attendance, early drop-out of students; adult illiteracy and gender inequality in education are disproportionately higher in rural areas (Nigeria DHS, [27]). Urban-rural disparities in educational investment and in the quality of teaching and learning are widespread and need to be redressed (Nigeria DHS, [27]).

With basic literacy skills - writing, reading, and numeracy - rural people are better equipped to make more informed decisions for their lives and for their communities and to be active participants in the identified indicators of sustainable development: economic, social, health, political, environmental and institutional development (Lind, [19]). It should be noted that sustainable development aims at the highest possible quality of life like living comfortably for all people -individually and collectively. It is based on the natural limits of our environment and the comprehensive needs of the people food, shelter, water, good environment (World Bank, [45]).

Rural people and rural areas are not homogenous, and so for education to be relevant to people living in rural areas, in terms of genuine economic and social development it needs to respond to the diversity of rural situations. For education to be sustainable especially in the rural areas, the beneficiaries have to put into use the skills they have acquired in their daily activities in issues like health, the environment, economic, social and human settlements. They should have been using the skills in practical way especially in their interaction with members of the community where they are resident. Adult learners should also be able to promote a good living environment along with healthy lifestyles, preventing health threats, promote social and civil activity, sustainable crop production patterns as well as consumption habits.

In response to the demand for equal opportunity of education to all, the governments of Oyo and Ondo (through their agencies for Adult and Non-Formal Education) established literacy centres spreading across the local government areas of their states. Access to literacy opportunity was provided through the establishment of literacy centres where learners are encouraged to register for literacy programmes established within their communities. In the two states, apart from the establishment of the agencies,

both agencies are staffed with professional adult education officers who organize, establish, mobilize illiterate adults for registration for literacy programmes. Facilitators who are well known and resident among the learners are recruited to teach and guide the learners. Various learning materials like primers, free pencil and notebooks are also provided freely to the learners. Basic literacy programme is been taught in Yoruba language being the most spoken language in the two states. Lessons are taken twice or thrice a week within a duration of nine months before end of the lesson examination is conducted.

However, despite phenomenal growth of the formal educational systems and the interest shown to non-formal education in the past decades, some members of the population are still found to be non-literate in the two states. The total population of 5,591,589 (male = 2,809,840 female = 2,781,749) was recorded in Oyo state according to 2006 population figure. Of the total population, 62.6 per cent are literate in English language while 71.3 per cent are literate in the native language (Yoruba). In Ondo state, the total population was 3,441,024 (male = 1,761,263 female = 1,679,761). 66.6 per cent of the population in Ondo State is literate in English while 74.3 per cent are literate in Yoruba. This data indicate that an average of 30 per cent of the population in the two states is not literate (N.P.C, [26] and National Bureau of Statistics (N.B.S, [22]).

Questions like the following therefore come to one's mind: Why do we still have illiterate people in the two states? Who are these non literates? Where are they? In general, illiteracy is characteristically found among poor people in rural areas and marginal groups in urban areas. Particularly, the rural poor, women and ethnic minorities, who have somehow missed the benefits of modernisation and democratisation of the state and society, have remained non-literate. Illiteracy is also widespread among people who speak unofficial and unstandardised languages, which are often not targeted for literacy programmes.

The above scenario, therefore, shows the present limitations of non-formal education, this questions the extent to which the non-formal education system prepares Nigerians especially, in the two states covered, particularly rural people for competencies required within the world of work and life in general. It is against this backdrop that the study is out to study how accessible are the literacy centres, how relevant the skills acquisition and how the skill acquired is been utilized among the rural dwellers in Oyo and Ondo States of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of various developments in terms of social, political and economical development, more than 30% of the population of residents in Oyo and Ondo states could still not read and write and again. This facts therefore ask how relevant the skills been taught are to the needs of the learners, and in what ways could these be ascertained and how those who passed through the literacy centres are using the skills acquired need to be determined with a view of strengthening the literacy programme of the two states.

Objectives of the Study

(a) Investigate how the skills acquired by the adult learners at the literacy centres are utilized for their personal socio economic development (b) Identify if there is a significant difference in utilization of adult basic literacy skills for sustainable development between learners in Oyo and Ondo States (c) Identify the difference in the utilization of basic literacy skills between male and female adult learners.

Research Question

How has the beneficiaries been utilising skills acquired for sustainable development?

Research Hypotheses

H₀¹

There is no significant difference in the utilisation of basic literacy skill among the beneficiaries of the literacy programmes in Oyo and Ondo states.

H₀²

There is no significant difference between utilisation of skills between male and female learners in adult literacy class.

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study would help adult educators and other stakeholders to find ways of improving strategies of adult education in such a way that will enhance improved living standard of adult learners and assist policy makers in national development. The report from this study will also serve as a data base and a source of encouraging stakeholders of the need to see education generally and adult basic literacy in particular as investment that is most desirable for the sustainability of our societies.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to rural literacy centres established by AANFE in Oyo and Ondo states. The two states were selected because records showed that the literacy centres established by the

agencies are more viable when compared with other states in the region. Furthermore, the study was delineated to cover 127 literacy centres established and run by AANFE of the two states in 12 communities in the two states.

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Concept of Literacy

The term 'literacy' does not lend itself to easy definition. This is because of the interdisciplinary, complexity and diverse nature it possesses. There are therefore, different forms of literacy. A person could be literate in his dialect but be illiterate in the regional, national or another man's language. Literacy is seen as comprising diverse practices embedded in socioeconomic, political, cultural and linguistic contexts, acquired in school and outside of school. It also involves family and community contexts; the media in various forms of technology; skills for further learning; and the world of work and life in general. Thus, this concept of literacy emphasises the literacy challenge as making societies literate and not simply as making individuals literate (UNESCO [39]). These evolving ideas pay attention to some key elements that have to be taken into account in any discussion about literacy and literacy measurement: (a) the centrality of using texts (b) the need to use texts with understanding, that is, competently (c) not to be restricted to texts, but also including numeracy issues (d) the need to explore these issues anchored to everyday life experiences where the diverse and manifold aspects of social life are instantiated (e) understanding that everyday life in any social setting is never an isolated, individually-bound reality.

The Global Campaign for Education has conducted a major consultative effort that led to the establishment of a set of International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy, which includes a definition that has some common elements with those previously quoted:

Literacy is about the acquisition and use of reading, writing and numeracy skills, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. The goals of literacy programmes should reflect this understanding.

(UNESCO [39]).

Characteristics and attitude of the rural masses

(a) The people from rural areas feel that they are powerless (b) The majority are ignorant on legal and welfare measures provided by the government (c) The rural poor do not have a forum to assist them in securing redress of their grievances (d) About 60% are illiterates and 63% are living below the poverty line (e) Except for a few small and marginal farmers,

the village people comprise child labour, agricultural labourers and people with traditional occupations (f) Many rural people have developed a kind of fatalistic attitude. This is because of their series of failures, in spite of their efforts for better living. There are frequent seasonal migrations to earn a living (Vasudeva Rao, [44]).

Utilisation of Basic Education

How literacy skills can be used depends very much on language situations. Even when the dominant language is known and spoken by people somewhat literate, formal and official bureaucratic language differs from spoken language. This implies the exclusion of large population groups not belonging to the 'elite'. Unnecessary gaps exist between the literacy used in personal and family relationships and the functional literacy required for relating to public institutions or other power structures. The challenge of literacy for all must also take into account the increasing numbers of children, youth and adults who have learned to read and write but who do not make active or meaningful use of their literacy skills. In brief, the problem of functional illiteracy is much bigger than the literacy statistics indicate.

The ability to read, write and use numerical information is crucial for labour market success and social well-being. Research has shown clearly that inadequate literacy skills reduce an individual's employment prospects and limit her or his opportunities to participate fully in society (OECD/Statistics Canada [28]; Centre for Educational Research and Innovation [CERI] [9]; Power [30]). Also, it is widely accepted that societies with highly literate populations will be more competitive. The argument goes that success in today's global economy requires skilled workers capable of continually learning and adapting to change (Statistics Canada [31]; OECD/Statistics Canada [28]; CERI [9]; Bruner [7]; Chisman [10]; Maynard [19]). For a man to succeed in the present day life, he needs literacy not only for himself but for other people that will have direct contact with him. This was confirmed as thus: *We have come to recognize that literacy is linked with virtually all aspects of our national life, public and private. It is a passport to employment and a key ingredient to a fulfilling life. And without requisite literacy ... we can neither survive as a democratic nation nor prosper as an economic power* (Bruner [7]).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design of ex post facto type was adopted for this study.

Population of the Study

The population for this study consisted of 6 Local Adult Education Officers (LAEO) in Oyo State, 6 Area Mass Literacy Officer (AMLO) in Ondo State; facilitators and adult learners who have participated in the basic literacy programmes organised by the Oyo and Ondo Agencies for Adult and Non-Formal Education (AANFE) between 2000 and 2008. The two states were selected due to the similarity in their socio-economic and ecological characteristics. The literacy programme from the two states was also believed to be more viable when compared with other states from South Western States.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A multi-stage sampling technique was used in the selection of the respondents from each of the two states. The first stage involved purposive and clustered used in selecting two rural based local governments from each of the senatorial districts from the two states thus making 6 rural based local governments from each of the two states. The second stage involves the use of the stratified random sampling technique on delimiting the population of the study along all the existing adult literacy centres in each of the 12 rural based local government selected. The third stage of the sample selection involved the use of proportionate and simple random sampling technique in selecting 40% of those that have participated in the literacy programmes from the literacy centres identified.

Data Collection Instruments

A descriptive research questionnaire and focus group discussion were used to obtain information from the adult basic literacy beneficiaries.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The Adult Basic Literacy Skills Assessment Scale (ABLAS) and the FGD instruments were subjected to content validation processes especially face validation in order to ensure their validity. For this purpose, the instruments were scrutinized by scholars and States Adult Education Officers who vetted the structuring, adequacy and the content validity of the items in the questionnaire. The reliability co-efficient of the ABLAS as the main instrument was found to be $r = 0.81$. This confirms the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

Administration of the Instruments

The instrument was personally administered on the respondents by the researcher with the assistance of five Agencies Staff, twelve facilitators and four research assistants groomed for the purpose of this research. The Focus Group Discussions (F.G.Ds) was conducted in all the selected communities among

the respondents in group of 5-10 in an interval of two weeks for each group respectively.

Method of Data Analysis

Data obtained through the instruments were analysed through the following statistics: The descriptive statistics of simple frequency counts and percentages was used to describe the demographic data and answer the research questions. Multiple regression analysis was used to find the joint effect of accessibility, acquisition and utilization on sustainable development in hypothesis three. The chi-square was used to determine if a significant difference exists in hypotheses one and two carried out at 0.05 level of significance.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Interpretation and Discussion

The result from the study shows that 1251 (95.5 per cent) of the respondents agreed that literacy they have acquired have improved their involvement in income generating activities because they have acquired new skills (such as ability to take account of their stock and keep the same for future use; read and write out the requisitions and proper record keeping of their business) that enabled them to function effectively in reading, writing and calculating as individuals in their community which in turn affect the communities as there is there is improved social, political and environment interaction where they reside. Another 1201 (91.7 per cent) agreed that they now appreciate and defend their right according to the law of the land thus promoting social relation in their communities. These findings confirmed the relevance of literacy as key to relationship on adult has with the people around him and whatever he makes use of the learning acquired about himself as shown by Krahn and Lowe (1998). If a person can read and write, he will most certainly be able to avoid certain things that can harm him (EFA, [40]). He will be able to get information from newspapers and other sources on what to do to be healthy as established in (EFA Global Monitoring Report [40]). He will know how to take care of himself to stay healthy. The country benefits from this because it is only those who are healthy that can contribute to the development of a nation.

There was a mean difference of 0.9389 between the utilization of acquired skills among the respondents in Ondo and Oyo states. Ondo state's mean with the highest number of respondents is 52.2722 while Oyo state has 51.3333. However, 90.9% of the respondents agreed that the literacy training has enabled them understood what HIV/AIDS is all about and how to safeguard their families.

Table 1: Distribution showing difference in the Utilisation of the basic literacy skills among the respondents from Oyo and Ondo states

Utilization	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Crit-t	Cal-t	DF	P
OYO	579	51.3333	5.5273	1.96	2.820	1308	0.005
ONDO	731	52.2722	6.3244				

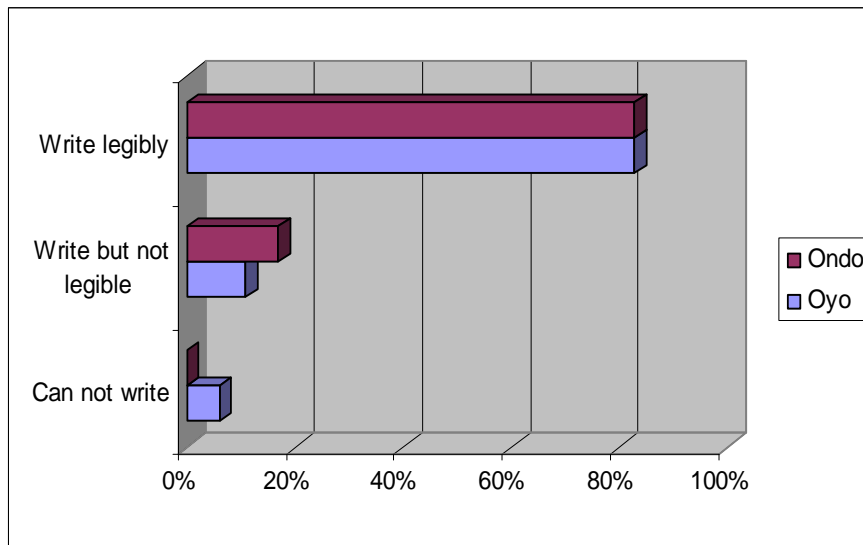


Figure 1: Bar Chart Showing Percentage of Learners ability to write in the FGD

Olka mi mo ti to sieko
 Agba mo ti mo ko mo ka
 Alani ti mo ri ninu eko mi
 Eyi ti se mo ko mo ka nife
 mo le ka iwe mo le ko
 Sila mo tu tirai lati Saoyinbi
 mo mo Alani ti e wa lati
 Pe ki eya mo iwe
 mo se tan lati ka omo ni
 to omo mi ni ile iwe
 mo dupe iwe ipile idoba
 ondo ibi ti omo even o ti de
 oloju oba a mi won debe
 oruke mi ni
 Grace Babatemi
 Babatunde

Figure 2: A participant's letter in Yoruba language

This study generally show the relationship between adult literacy and sustainable development as a prerequisite for a healthy living as indicated in Annan [2]. The literacy skills acquired enable the beneficiaries to contribute to a sustained health development as reflected in Stiglitz [32]. Participation in literacy activities assists the learners to recognise that as members of the society, as individuals and societies, all need to take actions that, for instance, reduce mortality, increase life spans, and increase productivity in sustainable manner (www.bctf.ca).

Responses from the FGD were not different from the views expressed in the questionnaire as the participants said:

On reading Skills

671 (75%) of 895 respondents who are Christians were able to be good Bible reader. 78% of the 1310 respondents were able to read their private letters. All the participants claimed they now read and assist their children in their school work and are equally able to read their children school report. 87% of the participants also claimed to have known how to read instructions on medicine.

A particular member of the FGD said she was able to read the campaign posters of the different political parties in Ondo state while 10 (28%) out of the 36 participants from Oyo state claimed to have been able to read local newspapers such as "Alaroye" and "Ajoro" to the amazement of the members of the unregistered free readers association at a newspaper stand in Omi-Adio, a village in Iddo local government area of Oyo state.

On writing Skills

Majority of the FGD members in Ondo state 14 (78%) were happy not only to say they could write letters but that they agreed to write letters of appreciation to the Executive Secretary of Ondo AANFE and another letter to the Governor. Two members of the FGD also revealed that they had course to help members of their cooperative movement to fill withdrawal form in banks as those members they helped were yet to attend literacy classes. (Scaffolding situation) the traders among them now write out receipts to their customers and complete withdraw and savings form in banks.

All the participants for FGD demonstrated their ability to read and write. A portion of the primers were given to them to read. 27 (77%) of the participant from Oyo State can read a portion of the Yoruba primer given to them very well, 30 (83%) write fairly well and read what they have written. In

Ondo, 17 of the 18 participants (92%) could also read well a portion of primer that was given to them to read, 15 (83%) write letters and read them very well (Figure 1, 2 and 3). 41 (75%) of the entire 54 participants read various road signs and instructions on drugs and 42 (78%) were also able to interpret road signs: *We read and write our letters. We have even personally posted our letters in the post office near the market place. We can speak little English without any aid from anybody. And we relate with our customers who call us on phone, or send message which we read and reply. All these things are easy if one knows how to read and write.*

The FGDs participants exhibited various ways they are using the literacy skills. One of the participants wrote the above letter in Yoruba language to show her skill in writing.

The translation of the participant's letter in Yoruba language is hereby reproduced in English language:

My dear husband,

I have gone to literacy class. I can read and write now. The gains of literacy to me now is that I can write without been aided and I can try to speak English. I have understood the importance attached to literacy and I am ready to sponsor all my children education. I therefore thank the government of Ondo state for providing this opportunity. I pray that God will lead them to whatever position they aspire to.

My name is Grace Babatunde"

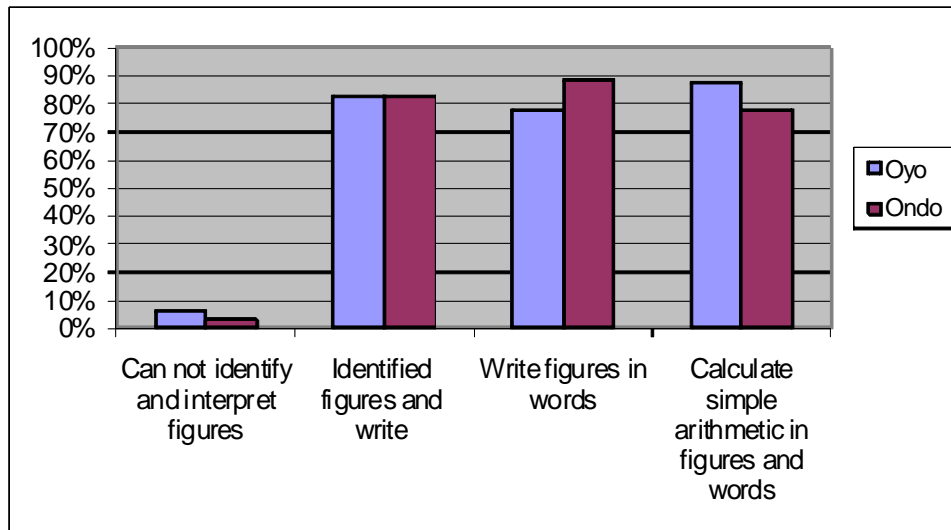
Female FGD Participant in Ondo State/ 45 years [September 23, 2007]

Responses from the FGD also showed that 47 (84%) of the participants now appreciate their level of achievement such as reading and writing their letters, ability to read, write and send messages on their phone.

48 participants (85%) were able to illustrate various ways at which they were utilizing the skills they have acquired. One of the participants in FGD said:

As strong members of cooperative society in this community, with these skills acquired, we assist each other especially those that are yet to be literate to fill their loan forms and encourage them to register in any literacy centres close to their homes. We can ask questions about how our money is been handled. We have confidence in ourselves unlike before when we do not have voice. Nobody can cheat us again.

From the above response, we can itemize the skills acquired by majority of the respondents as follows: (a) Reading (b) Writing (c) Inquisitiveness (d) Assertiveness (e) Confidence in Expression (f) Speaking

Figure 3: Bar Chart Showing Percentage of Learners ability in Numeracy**Table 3:** Distribution showing difference in the Utilisation of the basic literacy skills among the respondents from Oyo and Ondo states

Utilization	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Cal-t	Crit-t	DF	P
OYO	579	51.3333	5.5273	2.820	1.96	1308	0.005
ONDO	731	52.2722	6.3244				

Table 4: X² Contingency Table of Analysis on the Relationship between male and female utilization of adult basic literacy skills.

Utilization	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Crit-t	Cal-t	DF	P
Male	570	51.9649	5.8067	1.96	.570	1308	0.569
Female	740	52.7743	6.1494				

The study revealed the fact that whatever condition literacy is provided, the determination of the learners to succeed will influence the rate of acquisition and the subsequent use of those skills acquired. The indicators used in measuring sustainable development as far as this study is concerned are education, social, economic and political development in the lives of the beneficiaries of literacy skills in Oyo and Ondo states. The study showed that all the participants have acquired reading and writing skills through conscious efforts to participate in activities in and around them. This further prove what Laoye [16] claimed that for traditional literacy content to lead to sustainable development, the quality and reliability of instructions are crucial and that learners must attain a degree of literacy and numeracy sufficient to cope moderately in all areas in which literacy is required as well as to help in understanding of the natural and social environment. This finding is also in line with the traditional learning theory which acknowledges the knowledge, intelligence and wisdom people acquire from their environment for intra and inter personal relationship.

Also corroborating this finding, Omolewa (1998) asserted the opinion that meeting the literacy education goals identified means meeting the needs of the society as well as promoting a comprehensive education system that takes into consideration all the aspects of life. Laoye [16] findings was confirmed in this study as majority of the respondents 1246 (95.1%) of the respondents agreed that their level of communicating skills has increased for better as they now operate their cell phone to transact business with their customers, thus improving their economic activities. Sustaining economic development, the FGD responses show that majority of the participants have improved in their economic activities, thus, encouraging sustainable development in the rural areas. Many of the respondents claimed that: *We now write receipt for our customers. We can read and write all requisition before going to the market and this has been very helpful as we no longer experience shortage in the sale and things are improving for better. We also take stock of our shops independent of shop keepers. In fact the money we pay to shop attendants is now been used in support of the education of our children.*

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS ANALYSIS

Significant Difference in the Utilization of Basic Literacy Skill among the Beneficiaries of the Literacy Programmes in Oyo and Ondo states

The table 3 showed that there was significant difference in the Utilisation of the respondents from Oyo and Ondo (Cal-t = 2.820, Crit-t = 1.96, df = 1308, P < .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. As indicated in the

result of the findings, there was a significant difference in the provision, acquisition and utilisation of basic literacy skills in the two states. There was a mean difference of 0.9389 between the utilization of acquired skills among the respondents in Ondo and Oyo states. Ondo state's mean with the highest number of respondents is 52.2722 while Oyo state has 51.3333.

The popularity of the literacy in the two states is not the same. In Ondo, the establishment of Prospects High School offers opportunity for continuity for adult learners who are willing to continue their education and the establishment of women and vocational education centres in the state tremendously help the acceptance of the agency's programme by the people whereas Oyo state various programme which could be of re-orienting the adult illiterate is been checkmated by lack of fund, hence, access to literacy skills is not effective, therefore utilization of adult basic literacy is not the same because of the factor earlier mentioned.

Availability and varieties in the basic literacy programmes could be said to have influenced this differences, while Ondo state is well funded and enjoyed political support from the state government, learning facilities and opportunity cut across the need of the learners, Oyo state is not enjoying this privileges, hence, the Oyo state agency programme was scantily distributed among the local governments that only pay their statutory monthly mass literacy fund to the Agency.

This study discovered that there is enough sensitization and awareness of the people on the activities of Ondo State Agency for Adult and Non Formal Education than Oyo state, an example is the annual international literacy week that is held every year in Ondo state. This event which is well funded and supported by the Ondo state government and jointly anchored by the state Ministry of Health is attended by all and sundry, and in fact, award of prizes special, recognition award to individuals and organisations that have contributed to literacy promotion, certificates of participation to adult learners and provision of reading glasses given to the deserving learners are observed. As a result of government intervention in the programmes of Ondo Agency, many participants account for the benefits they have enjoyed from their participation.

In chorus all the respondents used for this study and those picked for the FGD maintained that literacy opens their minds, they claimed that they were able to see a glare of hope in their future. Through literacy they were able to rise from the poverty-stricken homes in which many were born and now lead at least, decent and respectable lives since they are now economic buoyant, participate more in political arena,

have improved social relationship and assume more cultural development. The respondents said: *With new found confidence in ourselves, we stand amidst squalor and see in others, what we might have been if we are determined. We become sensitive to being used. We are no longer content to obey the decisions of those into whose hands we have entrusted our welfare like sheep. Instead, we can question them now; we weigh on scales those things which are presumed to be done for our own good. We realize their mistakes and offer suggestions for improvement. Which other asset in life is more valuable than the ability to see things in their true light?*

The participants said further: *Literacy prepares our minds for changes. What changes are being made to the ultimate improvement of our lives, we do not run to impotent gods and goddesses in search of their approval. When experts from faraway lands come to help us, we do not say these are strangers. Instead, we listen to them, we try to make them feel at home in our communities and most important, we learn from them. The hand of literacy brings people together. It has a unifying force second only to suffering. Literacy brings the world within our vision and hearing. We can read about how things are done in other parts of the world. The standard of human intelligence varies and we could follow the trend of events happening in the world by listening to World News, reading Newspapers as well as learning from others who are distant from us and in all those various ways learn to improve our minds.*

Difference between Utilisation of Skills between Male and Female Learners in Adult Literacy Class.

There was highest number of female (740) participants in the study more than male (570). However, establishing the use of literacy skills by both male and female table 4 showed that there was no significant difference in the utilization of both the male and the female respondents as far as this study was concerned (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal-t = .570, df = 1308, $P > .05$ level of significance. The mean table for male was 51.9649 while that of female was 52.7743 showing a difference of 0.8094. Therefore, the null hypothesis saying there was no significant between utilization of literacy skill by male and female is therefore accepted. The finding of the study implies that the use of literacy has no gender influence as far as this study is concerned. An individual need of the participant is the major factor that determines the involvement and eventual usage of the skills acquired.

However, one of the most salient factors affecting literacy rates worldwide is that of the gender disparity. Of the almost one billion illiterates currently in the world, the large majority are women.

If educational access trends do not improve dramatically in the coming decades in order to accommodate male/female parity in literacy, expanding opportunity to bridge the gender will be not be reached for over a century. This is important as women's education will be a great asset to the nation and not a waste if provided with the same opportunity as their men counterpart. Thus, given credence to the findings of Casey, Psych, Purcell and Whitlock, [8] along with the findings of UNESCO [34] and International Literacy Institute in 2000 that in 36 countries, all of them in Africa or Asia, the difference between male and female literacy rates is over 20%; and that in 26 countries, also nearly all of them in Africa and Asia, the male-female difference is between 10% and 20%.

Problems faced by adult learners in the area of access to, acquisition of literacy skills and utilization of literacy skills for sustainable development.

Using the Focus Group Discussion and interview schedule, representatives of stakeholders were able to speak their minds on the problems facing adult literacy generally and skills acquisition and utilization particularly. A group of 54 respondents was selected for the focus group discussion (FGD) (36 from Oyo state and 18 from Ondo) and their responses were astonishing. As normal for anybody learning a new thing so was with the literacy skills beneficiaries' responses on problems confronting them because of their peculiar characteristics and the needs for literacy are faced with different types of learning problems, the response of the beneficiaries to the problems they faced.

74% of the respondents agreed that their new learning is not further reinforced with continuity of literacy programmes (post literacy programmes) by the organizer thereby making some of them to forget what they had learnt because of their inability to further utilize the acquired skills. 60% of the respondents claimed that the primers they were taught was only in Yoruba language whereas some of them who are not Yoruba speaking people had no choice.

Interview schedule conducted with the facilitators and officials from the Agencies for Adult and Non-Formal Education in Oyo and Ondo states identified lack of and insufficient funding as a major problem facing literacy programmes in the two states. Official reports from Ondo state indicate that Ondo Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education is presently enjoying government support (even though there is always the need for more funding) and this is reflected in the numerous activities of the agency. However, reports and observation from Oyo State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education shows

that the state government has not been responsive positively (in terms of funding) to the plight of adult literacy programmes in the state. Another important problem identified was the insufficient number of facilitators handling literacy programmes and 1113 (85%) of the respondents agreed that non provision of adequate learning materials especially, as Primers, mostly used in the states are not really relevant to the pressing need of most of the learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The government and provider of adult education programmes should link with the larger struggles and democratic movements be the women's movement, peace movement, ecological movement, human rights movement and the like so that the literacy programme can become part of a larger struggle for social, economic, and political change.

There is the need to develop post literacy programme that will sustain what learners have achieved at the basic literacy programme where such is not available, provide and promote environment that will encourage learners to make use of their knowledge in a sustainable manner.

Government at all level in Nigeria should develop and implement fully-costed policies, well-targeted plans and legislation for addressing adult literacy, education for young people and adults, and lifelong learning.

Literacy programme should be made relevant and adapt to learners' needs. It should also lead to functional and sustainable knowledge, skills and competence of participants in order to continue as lifelong learners whose achievement is recognised through appropriate assessment methods and instruments.

Stakeholders in adult learning should facilitate curriculum transaction by creating an environment that promotes and sustains learning. Learning strategies that evoke curiosity, questioning, analysis, synthesis, perspective building among the learners would help sustain learner interest.

CONCLUSION

Adult basic literacy programmes that enable out of school youths and adults opportunity to access literacy skills for personal growth and community development must be made available throughout the year and must be serviced with establishment of classes very close to the learners, appointment and payment of qualified and competent facilitators, free distribution of learning materials like pencil, primers, chalkboard, dusters, and so on. The study revealed that regular funding which is the major determinant of any success of literacy activities is affecting the development of literacy in the two states, and this

constitute the danger of not meeting up with the EFA and MDGs goals, International Benchmark on literacy in Nigeria.

There is the need therefore to revise the primers being used to teach so as to meet the need of the learners and encourage them to learn the more. Award of certificate and yearly participation in International Literacy week is an important avenue to be used to achieve this. Efforts of Ondo Agency is appreciated here, as efforts is been geared on the recognition of International Literacy Day in the State, and learners with sight problems are also given reading glass, there is hope that Oyo State and other states of the federation will learn from Ondo State laudable achievements.

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