

ACCESS OF NON-LITERATE ADULTS IN KABBA/BUNU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KOGI STATE TO EDUCATION FOR ALL IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study attempts to examine the extent to which non literate adults in Kabba/Bunu LGA have access to basic education and the literacy skills acquired by them as a result of their exposure. The study was carried out using the survey design. A sample of 9 adult learning centers spreading across the Kabba/Bunu Local Government Area and 10 adult learners were randomly selected from each. An interview schedule was developed and validated for use in data collection. A pro-forma was also designed to obtain data on enrolment into literacy programmes in the local government. The collected data were analyzed with the use of percentages which were compared with population projections. Findings revealed that with an average of 1.9% of non-literate adults compared to the population in Kabba/Bunu LGA between 2008 and 2011 enrolled in literacy programmes, their access LGA to literacy programmes is limited. It was also found that an average of 4.8% females and 0.4% males compared to the population enrolled in the literacy programmes. Although adult learners attend the basic literacy programme, it was found that they were not exposed to any form of vocational skills acquisition or other relevant life skills to help them cope with expected societal requirements. It is therefore recommended that the adult literacy programme be made more intensive and skills based so that the participants will acquire basic education skills alongside training in particular vocations. More training is required for those involved in managing and implementing the curriculum used for the adult literacy programme to integrate skills acquisition into the adult literacy programmes.

Key words: Adult Literacy, Literacy Skills, Adult Learning Centres, Literacy in Kabba/Bunu

Introduction

Education has remained a tool for human capital development in every society. There is no society that can survive and do well without giving its members a good quality of education. It is a weapon for transmitting skills, knowledge and attitudes for the survival and sustenance and progress of people in the changing world (Adepoju & Fabiyi, 2005). Obayan (2003) acknowledged that the purpose of education is to transmit the skills of understanding life situations, adapting to and influencing them by contributing to their development. This is also in concert with the fourth National Education Goal of helping learners to acquire appropriate skills and develop mental, physical and social abilities and competencies for equipping the individual to live in and contribute to the development his society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

Conventional notions that literacy is just the act of reading, writing and being able to do simple arithmetic have been discarded because such restricted skills are of limited utility. The emphasis of literacy campaigns has thus shifted from these conventional expectations to functional literacy as an evidence of acquiring basic education. To be functionally literate, those who complete basic education are expected to demonstrate a level of reading, writing and numeracy adequate for effective participation in the life of their community (UNESCO, 1978). Children are expected to acquire functional literacy from exposure to basic education. Same is made available to the older ones in Nigerian through the Adult Basic Education Programme (Ayodele & Adedokun, 2008).

Nigeria has adopted the global agreements and objectives of the Millennium Development Goals and is making effort to eradicate illiteracy by integrating literacy and non-formal education for out of school children, youths and adults into the UBE programme (UBE, 2004). Basic education for those outside school age is managed by the National Commission for Adult Education (NCAE) at the federal level in conjunction with the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education (AANFE) at the state level. The non-formal system administered by these agencies provides education for youths and adults allowing for exit and re-entry at desired points or times in life with provision for movement from non-formal to the formal system.

Despite the provisions for basic education in Nigeria, the level of access as shown by the number exposed to opportunities for literacy is not yet satisfactory. UNESCO (2012) reported that about 11 million school-aged children are not enrolled in any formal institution in Nigeria; 55% of whom are girls. This confirms earlier reports of the Local Government Areas Baseline Survey (1992) that only 29% of the women in the sample were found to be literate. Earlier survey by UNESCO revealed a drop-out rate of 86% at women's education centres. The literacy rate for the age group 15-24 years was estimated at 71.2% with 90.6% for men and 62.5% for women. The rural-urban distribution also showed 62.1% in rural areas and 84.9% in urban areas (UNESCO-IBE, 2006).

In order to address this issue, a wide variety of non-formal education programmes designed for illiterate adults and out-of-school children and youths have been put in place. The National Commission for Adult Literacy and Adult and Non-formal Education is responsible for developing strategies, coordinating programmes, monitoring and promoting literacy and post-literacy programmes nationwide. This agency provides functional literacy through twelve major programmes including basic literacy, post-literacy, women education, nomadic education, continuing education, Arabic integrated education, literacy for the blind, workers education, functional literacy, vocational education, literacy for the disabled and prison education. To be able to deliver, the agency reported that a total of 15,505 instructors were trained, of whom 8,140 were males and 7,365 were females. In addition, a total of 1,495 supervisors and organizers were trained nationwide, of whom 815 were females and 680 were males. The National Centre for Adult Education established in Kano in 1985, serves as the non-formal education library, documentation and resources development and production centre for the country. It provides in-service training to staff of state agencies for Adult literacy and NGO literacy programmes and carries out research on adult education. Institutional and follow-up materials are also developed for distribution (UNESCO-IBE, 2006).

The National Commission for Adult Education, in conjunction with state agencies, have organized a network of literacy committees linking literacy classes and programmes, through both governmental and non-governmental bodies. Courses are also organized for the training of Adult literacy personnel in three institutes established in Uyo (1952), Maiduguri (1976) and Bauchi (1978). Toboho (2000) noted that participatory committees have been set up at class/centre, village/ward, local and state government levels to co-ordinate activities and aid material distribution; disseminate information; and provide feedback to the agencies.

UNESCO-IBE (2006) reported a study of street children in Lagos, Nigeria and observed the danger posed by lack of basic education within the populace. As a result it recommended an increase in the funds allocated to education by government and an expansion of non-formal remedial vocational continuing education programmes which should be flexible and varied to meet the street children's needs. It suggested the setting up of drop-in educational and vocational centres by education authorities and concerned NGOs. It should also permit a wide choice of options for those with aptitude; and the training of education and welfare workers in the right methods of approach to street children.

The Quranic school has been a strong feature of informal education in Nigeria. As a result of the fact the many children, especially in the northern part of the country, attend these religious

institutions only. It has been suggested that the integration of elements of basic education into the Quranic School curricula has the tendency of making room for products to have access to functional literacy. At least three states: Kano, Katsina and Niger, have provided basic education access to over two million pupils through this means (UNESCO-IBE, 2006).

Voluntary agencies have been part and parcel of basic education provision in Nigeria. Akawo (2012) reported that community-based education programmes were provided by women's co-operative societies and some mosques and churches in Nigeria. He stated further that a home- and community-based informal low-cost participation initiative is also being employed in the provision of non-formal education at the pre-primary and primary schools levels.

The Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education in Kogi State has been providing literacy programmes through literacy, continuing education, and women education. The literacy programme is designed for the training of non-literate adults at the basic and post basic literacy levels, continuing education programme is designed to cater for the out of school youths through extra moral programmes where subjects that are relevant to make them acquire knowledge for further studies are undertaken in these classes while women education programme is designed to cater for the non-literate women population and also oversees vocational training. All successful candidates in any the programmes are awarded certificates accordingly (Kogi State AANFE, 2012). In either of these categories, basic literacy spans a period of 9 months while the post basic literacy spans 2 years. The literacy by radio programme was also put in place in the state whereby instruction is received over the radio. This is however not functioning in Kabba/Bunu LGA. Rather, adult learners are enrolled through campaigns to the religious bodies and socio cultural groups within the community.

The international community has determined that every citizen of all countries of the present world needs basic education to live effectively (EFA, 2000). Nigerian federal government adopted this position and translated it into objectives for ensuring that all illiterate citizens have access to basic education. Agencies at both the federal, state and local government levels have been charged with the responsibility of extending access to basic education to children and illiterate youths and adult in Nigeria. Since 1999 when the UBE scheme was launched by the federal government and 2004 when the enabling law was enacted, global data and summaries on access are provided especially by international agencies like UNESCO and UNICEF or national agencies like the Federal Ministry of Education, Universal Basic Education Commission and Federal Office of Statistics. The performance of the entire country thus provided has not reflected the picture of access at the local level. Research on access at the local level has been limited. There is thus the need to focus on access to education at the local government level in order to discover areas in which success is recorded and to what extent. In view of all the arrangements to extend literacy to all in Nigeria, Kogi State inclusive, this research has the purpose of finding out the access that non-literate adults have to basic education in Kabba/Bunu LGA.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine:

- (i) the extent to which non-literate adults have access to Adult Literacy Programme in Kabba/Bunu Local Government area of Kogi state.
- (ii) whether gender disparities exist in the access of non-literate adults to Adult Literacy Programme in Kabba/Bunu Local Government area of Kogi state.
- (iii) whether location disparities exist in the access to basic education among non-literate adult Literacy in Kabba/Bunu LGA of Kogi state.
- (iv) whether non-literate adults have access to the acquisition of vocational skills from Adult Literacy Programme in Kabba/Bunu Local Government area of Kogi state.

Research Questions

The following research questions are generated for this study:

- (i) What is the level of access of non literate adults to basic non formal education in Kabba/Bunu LGA?
- (ii) Are there gender disparities in the access to basic education and Adult Literacy in Kabba/Bunu LGA?
- (iii) Are there location disparities in the access to basic education among non-literate adult Literacy in Kabba/Bunu LGA?
- (iv) Are learners exposed to the acquisition of vocational skills from the Adult literacy programme in Kabba/Bunu LGA?

Methodology

This study adopted the survey design. A survey research depends on data gathered from a representative sample of a given population for making judgments about the population. This method will make it possible to obtain valid and reliable data on access that non literate adults in Kabba/Bunu local government area of Kogi state have to basic education. This is an accountability issue at the local government level on the extent to which basic education is being universalized. Kabba/Bunu local government was created in 1991 as one of the areas in the Western Senatorial District of Kogi State. The local government area is bounded by Ijumu LGA and Mopa-Amuro LGA to the West, Lokoja LGA in the North and Okehi LGA in the East. The local government is made up of Kabba and Bunu districts which consist of 12 villages and 38 villages respectively.

The entire Local Government Area has 3 Adult Education Centers controlled by the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education (AANFE) running basic literacy and post-literacy programmes respectively. There are 9 Adult Learning Centers controlled by the LGA running the basic literacy programme. All the 3 adult learning centers controlled by AANFE were purposively selected for the study. In addition, the stratified random sampling technique was used to select 6 out of the 9 adult learning centers controlled by the Local Government for the study. The total population of adult learners in the local government was 180. From each of the 9 adult learning centers 10 adult learners were selected for the study. This gave a total of 90 participants.

An interview schedule was developed to find out about vocational skills acquired by adult learners registered in the literacy and post-literacy programmes. The expert opinion of university lecturers with specialization in educational measurement was used to validate the contents of the interview schedule. Three experts were used and there was a consensus among them that the items on the instrument were good for achieving the objectives of the study. The Adult Literacy Pro-forma was designed to be filled by the managers of the programme in Kabba/Bunu Local Government and the Agency for Adult and Non Formal Education to obtain information on enrolment figures on the programmes running in the centers. Data collected using the validated instruments were analyzed with the use of percentage. Comparisons were also made with projected population statistics on literate and non literate adults' population figures from 2007 to 2012.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of access non literate adults to non formal education in Kabba/Bunu LGA?

The census figures and projections for Kabba/Bunu LGA were obtained from Kogi State Office of the National Population Commission. Facts from National Census indicated that Kabba/Bunu LGA has a population that is 4% of Kogi State population. With this percentage, data on non literate adults in Kabba/Bunu LGA was derived as displayed in Table 1. The table also shows the enrolment of non literate adults in Kabba/Bunu LGA adult the various literacy programmes in Kabba/Bunu LGA. Data collected by use of proforma are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Data on Kabba/Bunu LGA non literate adults (2008-2012)

Year	Population of Non-Literate Adults	Enrolment into Adult Literacy Programmes											Percentage Enrolment of Non Literate Adults in Literacy Programmes to the Population
		Basic		Post Basic		C.E. Centers		Vocational Centers		Radio Literacy		Total Enrolment	
		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
2008	11152	17	2	5	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	258	2.3%
2009	9333	19	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	202	1.1%
2010	7834	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	122	1.6%
2011	6778	16	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	180	2.7%

Source: National Population Commission 2009.

Projected Non Literate Population Figures were sourced from 2006 National Population and Housing Census of the Federal republic of Nigeria: Kogi State Priority Tables Vol. 1. (Page 217) Abuja: National Population Commission 2009.

Table 1 shows that the highest enrolment figure of non literate adults into adult literacy programmes was recorded in 2008. Total enrolment figures went down from 258 in 2008 to 202 in 2009 and again went down to 122 in 2010. The year 2010 had the lowest enrolment figure. In 2011, the enrolment figure went up 180. As a proportion of the population of non-literate adults, the year 2011 recorded the highest with 2.7% registered in adult literacy programmes. Averagely 2% of non-literate adults in Kabba/Bunu LGA registered in basic and post basic adult literacy programmes.

Research Question 2: Are there gender disparities in the access to Adult Literacy in Kabba/Bunu LGA?

Enrolment figures were obtained from the Agency for Adult and Non Formal Education Kabba Area Office and Kabba/Bunu LGA Adult Education Department. Gender disparity in access of non-literate adults to basic education was measured by the percentage enrolment of female to male on in literacy centres in Kabba/Bunu Local Government Area of Kogi State. Also, gender ratio and gaps were calculated and displayed on Table 2.

Table 2: Adult literacy gross enrolment by gender in Kabba/Bunu LGA

Year	Female Enrolment	Male Enrolment	Projected Adult Non Literate Population		Female Enrolment as percentage of population	Male Enrolment as percentage of population	Ratio of Female to Male Enrolment	Gender Gaps
			Female	Male				
2008/09	224	34	4611	654	4.9%	0.5%	7:5	4.4%
2009/10	190	12	3859	547	4.9%	0.2%	16:1	4.7%
2010/11	110	21	3239	459	3.4%	0.5%	5:1	2.9%
2011/12	167	13	2802	397	5.9%	0.3%	13:1	5.6%

Source: National Population commission

National Population Commission Projected Population figures sourced from 2006 National Population and Housing Census of the Federal republic of Nigeria: Kogi State Priority Tables

As shown in Table 2, for every 6 females enrolled to Adult Literacy programme in Kabba/Bunu LGA, 5 males were enrolled (2008/2009), 16 females were enrolled for each male in 2009/2010, 5 females for each male were enrolled for the years 2010 to 2011 and 13 females were enrolled for each male enrolled to adult literacy classes in the local government. This connotes that more females were enrolled into adult education classes than males. The average non literate adult female to male enrolment ratio for 2008 to 2012 was 10:2. Results show that the gender gaps in enrolment into adult literacy classes have been inconsistent and on the increase with the gender gaps for the years of study shown as 4.4%, 4.7%, 2.9% and 5.6% respectively.

Research Question 3: Are there location disparities in the access to Adult Literacy in Kabba/Bunu LGA?

Location disparity was determined by obtaining measures of how evenly the adult literacy learning centers are distributed between the rural and urban areas. Average enrolment in rural and urban learning centers in Kabba/Bunu LGA were calculated. Summary of results obtained is presented on Table 3.

Table 3: Location Disparity of Adult Literacy Centers in Kabba/Bunu LGA

Centers in Rural Areas	Enrolment	Rural Population as percentage of total population	Average enrolment per centre in Rural Areas	Centers in Urban Areas	Enrolment	Urban Population Enrolment as percentage of total	Average enrolment per centre in Urban Areas
4	368	38%	92	5	394	52%	78

Source: Agency for Adult and Non Formal Education, Kabba Area Office/Kabba/Bunu Local Government Adult Education Unit

As displayed in Table 3, 4 adult learning centers had an enrolment of 368 participants in the rural areas while 5 adult learning centers have a total enrolment of 394 participants in the urban areas. An average registered adult learners per centre in the rural areas was 92 while that for urban areas was 78.

Research Question 4: To what extent do learners acquire vocational skills from the Adult literacy in Kabba/Bunu LGA respectively?

A validated interview schedule was administered to 45 respondents randomly selected from 9 centers selected for the study. Their responses are shown in table 4.

Table 4: Adult learners' response to access to vocational skills acquisition

Skill	Percentage		Frequency	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Clothing & textile	90	100	0	0
Entrepreneurship	90	100	0	0
Computer Appreciation	90	100	0	0
Hand Craft	90	100	0	0
Gari Processing	90	100	0	0
Carpentry	90	100	0	0
Baking and Confectionary	90	100	0	0
Barbing and Hairdressing	90	100	0	0
Soap and Pomade Making	90	100	0	0

As shown on table 4, sampled participants in the adult literacy programmes were not exposed to any form of vocational training. Thus access of non literate adults in Kabba/Bunu LGA of Kogi state to vocational education was nil.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the extent to which non literate adults have access to adult literacy in Kabba/Bunu Local Government area of Kogi state. The indices considered on access were enrolment in basic education. Differentials in access were also examined through gender and location disparities in enrolment. Also, the extent to which adult learners acquire vocational skills from the programme were examined.

The average enrolment rate of non literate adults in literacy programmes between 2008 and 2012 was 2% of the non literate adult population in Kabba/Bunu LGA. To have such a low rate reveals the response of the populace in this area to adult literacy. The non-literate adults in Kabba/Bunu seem to be so engrossed with the pursuit of livelihood than to attend literacy classes. Also, the general feeling that once a person has missed the opportunity of formal education, hope of attaining literacy is lost may be responsible for the reluctance of non literate adults in enrolling in the adult learning centres. The general attitude of those who missed the opportunity of schooling and their acceptance of spending adulthood to acquire literacy as a goal that is belated to pursue may not be misplaced as their likelihood of using the certificates to be awarded for employment purposed is very remote. Their observation of the impact of adult literacy programmes on those who had completed in previous year may also be a source of discouragement to likely participants.

The average ratio of females to males enrolled in adult literacy programmes between 2008 and 2012 was 10:2. There is every indication that female adult non literates are more positive in embracing adult literacy programmes. Women tend to create more time to make up for what they have lost in terms of school while men to feel that pursuing that tend to be a needless waste of time. The high female to male ratio in favour of the females found in this study supports the findings in reports by UNESCO (2006) that more females are out of school and yet more of them also drop out of school. Enrolment figures reported by UNESCO (2012) still reveal that Nigerian schools have more registered male learners than their female counterparts. Closing the gender gaps of as high as an average of 61% in Kabba/Bunu LGA within the 2008 to 2010 suggests ineffectiveness of adult literacy campaigns in this area.

Exposure of non literate adult learners to vocational education was found to be nil. It may not be surprising to find that all resources in adult literacy programmes aim at basics of reading,

writing and use of numbers since most adults tend to busy themselves with one vocation or the other. For those who have no form of training to practice the vocations, they might have settled for the traditional trades of crop and vegetable farming, gardening, weaving, backyard livestock keeping, iron smithing or trading including the buying and selling of foodstuff, clothing and other household needs. These vocations by convention could be acquired either through the family or by interest of the persons concerned. In addition, most non literate adults that do not leave their livelihood and family sustenance to chance readily expose themselves to apprenticeship training in such vocations as tailoring, carpentry and cabinet making, carving, painting, motor mechanic, welding, mason, weaving, hair dressing etc. As adults who are already into vocations therefore, emphasis of participation in literacy programmes may therefore just be to be able to read and write just as complementary knowledge for life and the pursuit of their trades.

Conclusion

The study of access of non literate adults to basic education in Kabba/Bunu LGA of Kogi State has revealed very low participation. The attention of an average non literate adult seems not to be on becoming literate but to eke out a living with whatever other skills they may have in spite of their not being literate. Needing more attention for sensitization and mobilization are the men who seem not to be interested in adult literacy programmes. Eradication of illiteracy as goal of the Nigerian government will only be attainable if men respond as well as women to the provision of adult literacy.

Recommendations

In line with the educational objectives as outlined in NPE (2004), Adult and Non-formal education in Nigeria aims to equip the adult with everything needed for life in order to be relevant in his society by helping to solve some of its problems. In view of the findings in this study, a need for invigorating the drive for enrolment in adult literacy programmes in Kabba/Bunu LGA has been identified. In doing this, more attention should be given to enrolment of men since more male adults are out of the learning centres.

Whereas most responsible adults are already practicing one vocation or the other, there is need to integrate literacy with vocational training to ensure that adults are able to improve on whatever skills they already have. ANFE in Kabba/Bunu LGA and all over the country should consider the option of recruiting non literate adults through vocational skills improvement programmes. Their interest in survival and livelihood through skills acquisition will likely motivate them to avail themselves of the opportunity provided and through any of the vocations, literacy components embedded in them will make them to become literate. In this way, adult literacy will achieve the dual purpose of skills improvement and literacy. Programmes which can equip adult learners with vocational skills could be in such areas as clothing and textile, entrepreneurship, computer literacy, arts and hand craft, cassava processing, carpentry, baking and confectionary, barbing, hair dressing, soap and pomade making, crop farming, cash farming, livestock farming, fish farming etc.

Literacy by radio programmes should also be given a boost especially because of rural communities that are so remote for the reach of adult literacy classes. For non literate adults in such places, the radio could make up for their inability to attend classes since they do not have any in their immediate locality. At the same time, the radio lessons should be used to complement the regular classroom lessons organized for non literate adults. This will help them to take advantage of giving room for them to engage in their vocations and continue to learn hand in hand. The planning and synchronization of radio with classroom experiences should be well planned such that the integrated learning system will be beneficial to the adults.

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