

**PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF WOMEN ACCESS TO BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION
PROGRAMME IN KWARA STATE**

BY

KAYODE, SADIQ TOYIN
DEPARTMENT OF ADULT & PRIMARY EDUCATION,
UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN
Mobile No: 08037059779
E-mail: kayoed.st@unilorin.edu.ng

&

Kuranga, Yunus Adebayo
DEPARTMENT OF ADULT & PRIMARY EDUCATION,
UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN
Mobile No: 08038080877
E-mail: kuranga.ya@unilorin.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This Study focuses on the problems faced by women in accessing basic literacy education in Kwara state. The study adopted descriptive survey type of research design. The sample for the study consists of 200 respondents randomly selected from different centres in the state. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Problems and prospects of women access to basic literacy education in Kwara State" (PPWABLEQ). Data collected was analysed using descriptive statistical technique and weighted mean score of 2.5 as a criterion mean score for decision. Conclusion was drawn recommendations made. Among others governments at all levels should encourage women to participate in basic literacy education; .and that Government at all levels should provide necessary tools needed for the effective and efficient implementation of the Programme to achieve the desired goals.

Keywords: Basic Literacy, Problems and Prospects of Adult education

Introduction

According to Schultz (2002), women in Nigeria have had various challenges in order to obtain equal education in non-formal and other forms of education (formal / non-formal) education in Nigeria. Besides education being regarded as basic human right (Universal Declaration on Human Rights 1948), education given to women affords them lifelong acquisition of knowledge, value, attitudes, competence and skills (Aliu 2007). Also to Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN2013) allow equal access to education with the believe that it enhances self and national development. Women in Kwara State need education (formal and

non-formal) for development. Formal School system is established to cater for children and youth, adult and non-formal education was designed for matured individuals in the society who may have had insufficient education and those who never participated in any formal education system. (FGN 2013). The issue of women and development came into the forefront during the UN Decade for women 1976-85. The observed marginalization and discrimination against women all over the world compelled the UN to hold conference, pronounce declarations and embark on programmes to address the imbalance in the system. The central themes of all the conferences have been the need to raise the status of women and bring them to the development process. Realizing the fact that empowerment of women can best be achieved and sustained through enlightenment, training, skill acquisition and basic literacy and numeracy, the Nigeria government embarked upon provision of functional education for women. Various centres like women development centre in various local governments in the state, women education units of the Ministry of Education both at the federal and the state levels, the better life programme, MAMSER, family support programmes, were established in the past. With all these the majority of Nigeria women were still non-literate. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the problems and prospects of women's access to non-formal education for development in Kwara State. According to Wagner, (2000), no society can achieve mass literacy without effective programme for her adult members; particularly, women to enable them, promote effective family life, Care and guide the youth, Secure for every child the highest advantage in physical, emotional,

spiritual and social education, Develop mature, responsible citizens in a free and democratic society, and transmit and interpret cultural ideas and value,

Women played vital role as traders, farmers and entrepreneurs in addition to their reproductive and community managing roles. Women argued that they worked to earn money to meet their social as well as economic needs and to accumulate their own independent stores of wealth. They further stated that they also had to support their children so that when they themselves are old, the children would in turn, take care of them (Akinboade 1995). It is however clear, that women make the greatest contribution to the economy mostly in the agricultural sector. In the rural area for example, women plays important role in food production and processing. They are also involved in bush-clearing in some part in the State (rural areas). They are engaged in planting, weeding, harvesting and transportation of the farm produce. It is only in predominantly Muslim areas where female seclusion is practiced that fewer women are engaged in farming; although, Muslim women are actively engaged in food processing.

Women have also made a unique impact in industry and trade. Although available data show that women are scarce in the formal industrial sector both as entrepreneurs, and as employees. Women's industrial activities are enormous. Women are involved in food processing, preservation and storage etc.

In the area of trading, Nigerian women find relief in trading to make up for their marginalized position educationally. Hence, the majority of them are involved in trading activities as lack of education is not a barrier. Trading also permits self-employment and can be carried out with or without shops,

furnishings or transport while lack of storage or preservation facilities is not a serious barrier. Most of these roles that women play are often described and apportioned to their sex coupled with their limited access to education generally and non-formal education in particular.

It is clear that low education limits the contribution of women to development the limitation is not far from the challenges faced by women in the society. For instance the various values which women hold traditionally are tied to their traditional roles. It is believed that women in traditional society placed very high premium on love and care for children, husbands and family members. They are also considered less able than men and other entrusted with unskilled backbreaking labour. They lack motivation to be educated and thus they are deprived of skills and jobs which may help to raise their status in the society.

It is obvious that various cultural restrictions prevent women's access to functional literacy education. Resulting from social taboos, traditional and sometimes religious beliefs on the role and status of women, therefore women are regarded as subordinate to men both within and outside the home. Girls and women are prevented from attending school (formal/informal) with the belief that education of women will disturb the smooth relationship that exists among family members. The practice of purdah or female exclusion, whereby women are confined to the house is a good example coupled with early marriage and its attendant challenges.(Baka, 1992)

Kwara state is blessed with abundant natural resources yet her women are constantly in an economic problem with the majority of them living below the

poverty level. Poverty is known to be a function of non-literate and low quality of education; women's access to basic literacy education is drastically reduced in Kwara state. This is because the women's struggle for survival forces them to shift their time and energy to more direct income providing activities like buying and selling thereby relegating non-formal education activities to the background.

Research Question

1. What are the problems affecting the access of women towards basic literacy education in Kwara State?

Methodology

Descriptive survey research was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised of Women enrolled in basic literacy Programme in Kwara State. Two hundred (200) Respondents were randomly selected across Kwara State. A questionnaire designed by the researcher tagged Problems and Prospects of Women Access to basic literacy education programme in Kwara State (PPWABEPQ) was used as an instrument for data collection in the study. It consists of two (2) sections: section A deal with demographic data of the respondents. Section B contains (15) items on factors affecting women access to basic literacy education programme in Kwara State. Responses to these items were taken on four (4) point Likert rating or scale. A reliable co-efficient of instrument using test re-test method of 0.87 was obtained through the pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient method. Three research assistants were deployed to administer the questionnaire. The researcher

makes sure the selected research assistants were familiar with the interpretation of the content of the instrument in the language of the immediate environment of respondents. The data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentage and then mean rating and analysis of Variance (ANOVA) all decisions were taken at 0.05 alpha of significance.

Result

One research question was generating mean and standard deviation.

Research Question: *What are the problems affecting women access to basic literacy education?*

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD
1.	I have not heard of basic literacy education before	.68	.470
2.	There is enough teaching facilities for basic literacy education programme	.26	.437
3.	Funding towards basic literacy education is encouraging	.21	.409
4.	The facilities provided are most time outdated	.76	.431
5.	There is enlightenment programme on basic literacy education in my area	.32	.466
6.	I have received incentives which has motivated me to embark on basic literacy education	.31	.462
7.	Computer assisted equipment are available for learning and acquisition of skills	.32	.468
8.	I have heard about basic literacy education on the radio and television	.42	.495

9.	Free writing and equipment are available for learning and skill acquisition programme	.31	.464
10.	Instructors and facilitators used several methods to explain things to me for better understanding	.60	.492
11.	I approach my instructors when I don't understand a particular concept	.68	.468
12.	Instructors and facilitators are always available during the lesson time	.68	.368
13.	I am allowed to practice whatever I learnt in the class	.61	.490
14.	Teaching instructions and crafts tools are used to teach by the instructors and facilitator for proper understanding	.21	.408
15.	Facilitator are always ready to listen to my concern	.91	.287
Grand mean		0.49	

Table 1 reveals the problems affecting women access to functional literacy education, Women access towards functional literacy education has not been encouraging, this is evident by the mean value of the items two (2), three (3), five (5), 6 (six), seven (7), eight (8), nine (9), fourteen (14) in table (5) above, which all have the mean value of 0.21, 0.26, 0.32, 0.31, 0.32, 0.42, 0.31, 0.21 respectively which are all lesser than 0.5. The overall mean of 0.49 also indicates low level of women access to basic literacy education. It can therefore, be deduced that

women access to basic literacy education in Kwara state is not encouraging.

Discussion of Results

An empirical analysis has been carried out on the problems and prospects of woman access to basic literacy education in kwara State. Answering question 1, items 1 to 15 questionnaire were used. Findings reveal high positive response to the statements. This implies that basic literacy education has tremendous impact on woman in the state.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the government through its agencies should encourage women to participate in basic literacy programmes. Nigerian women are therefore, encouraged always be involved in programmes that will raise their status in the society.

It is equally recommended that husbands should encourage and support their wives to attend adult education programmes that can bring about political, social and economic development in the family as well as in the society at large.

It is however recommended that non-governmental agencies should assist women in the areas of empowerment such as vocational skills acquisition and other forms of financial aids that can make them participate in social and economic development.

Finally, government at all levels i.e Federal, State and Local Governments should encourage non-formal and adult education programmes by providing the necessary tools needed for the effective and efficient programmes so as to achieve the desired goals and objective of the programme for a nation

development

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