

Assessment of the Implementation of Adult Basic Literacy Programmes in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the assessment of the implementation of adult basic literacy programmes in Cross River State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Survey design was adopted for the study; and proportionate, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to choose a sample of 1,920 adult learners and 76 facilitators from 30 literacy centres. A questionnaire titled “Assessment of the Implementation of Adult Basic Literacy Programmes Questionnaire (AIABLPO)” was used for data collection. It was a 12 item modified four point rating scale. The instrument was duly validated by experts and its reliability estimate was established as .78 using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Mean was used in answering research questions while t-test statistics was used in testing the hypotheses. The results revealed, among others, that provision of educational materials for adult basic literacy programmes is inadequate. It was recommended, among others, that government should increase capital allocation with the intension of providing adequate funds for successful implementation of adult basic literacy programmes in the study area.

Keywords: assessment, adult, basic, literacy, programmes

Introduction

Literacy is designed for children, youths and adults. Literacy is seen in the light of the prevailing circumstance as an individual’s ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying texts (UNESCO, 2004). Hence, the importance of people’s ability to read and write has made literacy one of the fundamental requirements of modern civilization (Chediell, Sekwao & Kirumba, 2000). This implies that literacy acquisition makes the society a better place of abode. It appears that it is in recognition of the importance of literacy education that Nigerian governments at all levels (federal, state and local) have made some attempts to reduce illiteracy in the country through the ability to read, write and numerate.

Nigerian governments, both past and present, have established various policies and agencies to address the problem of illiteracy in the country and improve the lives of her citizenry. Prominent among these agencies include, National Mass Literacy Campaign (NMLC) which emerged in September 8, 1982 by Federal Government of Nigeria under President Shehu Shagari to launch basic literacy campaign. This campaign was done considering the high rate of illiteracy in Nigeria then which was put at about 70% of the total population. Unfortunately, this effort was hampered by lack of funds, poor recruitment of instructors, inadequate literacy training centres, and lack of knowledge about the essence of literacy, among others (Sarumi, 2005).

The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1990 under the Ibrahim Babangida led administration with offices across the thirty-six (36) States of the federation, including Federal Capital Territory, Abuja among others. NMEC was formed to be responsible for the organisation, mobilization, monitoring and assessment of adult literacy practices in the country (Aderinoye, 2007). The commission's activities are decentralised, with offices and literacy centres in the six geo-political zones of the country, the 36 states and all the 774 local government areas. Coordination and supervision of literacy classes are the sole responsibilities of the Commission. The duties are carried out through local government adult education officers, supervisors and literacy instructors. The minimum number of literacy classes expected in any local government is ten, with additional classes managed and funded by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Aderinoye, 2007).

National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education introduced varieties of non-formal and continuing education programmes as a complementary option to take care of disadvantaged, marginalized and hard to reach children, youths and adults. Non-formal education programmes are offering flexible opportunities to the above-mentioned sets of people who could not participate in formal school system either due to poverty, cultural or other social barriers. These programmes include mass literacy programme, functional literacy, extramural programmes, correspondence courses, open university, distance education, lifelong education, remedial education, women education, pre-retirement education, internship programmes, among others (Aderinoye, 2007).

The non-formal education approach permits mainstreaming of learners into the formal system at different levels. Through non-formal education approach, various adults and youths who have once missed the opportunity of formal school system have gained literacy skills. Today, the people are doing well in their endeavours by alleviating illiteracy. Examinations are conducted on the basic competencies of reading, writing, numeracy and life skills, which are central to all the literacy programmes (Fasokun & Pwol, 2008). Adult education programmes and activities cover almost all the areas of human endeavour but it appears that there are indecisive policies, structures and management of adult education for effective implementation of these programmes, as a result, most of these programmes failed (Fasokun & Pwol, 2008).

Adult basic literacy programme could be regarded as a programme which is meant to provide adult learners with the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. These skills of reading, writing and numeracy are first provided using the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment of the adult learners as the case may be; and also, taught in English as the official language of Nigeria (Biao, 2006). Adult basic literacy programme is defined as the skills of reading, writing and computing using symbols in at least one language of immediate environment (National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), 2008). The programme contents for adult basic literacy programme include English, Mathematics, Life Skills, language of any immediate environment and Citizenship Education. Its duration depends on contact hours per week (National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), 2008).

The objectives of adult basic literacy programme as enumerated by the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) (2005) include:

- ❖ To eradicate illiteracy (especially among adults) in Nigeria by the year 2015
- ❖ To sensitize and mobilize the people for action towards community development
- ❖ To provide access to basic (adult) literacy and non-formal education to the unreached and marginalised in the community
- ❖ To provide the basic essential education for community development through health, nutritional education, and vocational skills acquisition
- ❖ To empower the people to be able to take necessary actions based on their acquired knowledge
- ❖ Also to address their full needs.

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the governments of Nigeria have made some strides by providing funds, training and mobilization against illiteracy (Nigeria National Development Plans, 2008). It is believed that when people are functionally literate, they will think of being self-reliant and self-dependent. Being self-reliant and self-dependent will enable the adult citizens make a living that will lift them above poverty level since one of the major objectives of the Nigeria National Development Plans (2008) is to build a united, strong and self-reliant nation. To build this type of a united, strong and self-reliant nation, there is need for the people to be literate because no nation can be strong with a vast majority of her citizens being illiterate and living in ignorance. When adult basic literacy programme is entrenched in people, they can participate meaningfully at the socio-economic and political level and thus coming to self-fulfillment (Ayodele & Adedokun, 2004).

Funding is an important factor in determining the success of any programme. Any programme that is not well funded is bound to fail. Funding is a crucial factor that determines the extent of human and material resources that can be provided. As an integral part of adult education, the adult basic literacy programme cannot be effectively implemented if there is insufficient funding for such a programme. According to Nwaji

(2012), adult basic literacy programme is suffering financial set-backs because it was inadequately budgeted for. Supporting this, Ukeje (2000) also observed that even money to provide for the barest necessity in education is in short supply. Iyaji and Yanusa (2010) clearly stated that funds for adult basic literacy programme are insufficient and that all the structures upon which the adult basic literacy programme can function effectively are weighed down by lack of funds, and when funds are eventually released, it is either inadequate to meet the ever increasing demands of the programme or are released late thereby not solving the intended needs.

Adequate funding is a very viable weapon for the implementation of any educational programmes. Salami (2004) lamented that a plan without a large budget surplus will get nowhere. In the words of Dike (2005), it is observed that the laudable objectives of the adult basic literacy programme are threatened by lack of funds, as most adult basic literacy centres lack basic financial strength to sustain them. Therefore, if Nigeria is to move rapidly away from the crushing level of illiteracy, a massive injection of uninterrupted funds will have to be ensured (Ibukun, Olori, Oyedeji & Tahir, 2005). Besides, even when motivation for education is strong among the masses, if there are insufficient funds, the aims of education will be frustrated and all efforts to achieve it will be wasted (Igbo, 2000).

Furthermore, it is also established that money to a greater extent answers all things. Iyaji and Yanusa (2010) noted that in some cases, facilitators with sound educational qualification are seen abandoning the adult basic literacy programme employment offer for other better paying jobs. According to them, poor remuneration of facilitators also accounts for the non-availability of highly qualified facilitators and this invariably affects the achievement of the objectives of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State. That is to say funding is very crucial for effective implementation of any programme. In the same vein, a reasonable amount of money is required to enable the establishment of more literacy centres, payment for literacy personnel, procurement of reading and writing materials, training of personnel and provision of other basic infrastructures in the state (Ejike, 2007).

Accordingly, sufficient financing of adult basic literacy programme is the guarantee for sustainable development of the implementation of adult basic literacy programme. Unfortunately, it appears that the programme is not well funded in Cross River State. Ojogwu and Oyitso (2014) stated that there may never be a time in a developing education system when there will be sufficient funds for education. The authors submitted that whatever funds provided should be equitably distributed and utilized to operate the various sectors and programmes in the national education system. They advised that no segment should be sacrificed at the altar of other presumed more important sectors and that they are all important for national development.

It is a world view that illiteracy is at the root of African underdevelopment. According to Ojogwu (2010), this is because the children of poor illiterate parents start life and

schooling handicapped, and many dropped out of school. It was based on this fact that the UBE law made provisions for financing adult literacy and non-formal education. According to the author, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) was also established by law to ensure proper financing and monitoring of UBE programmes and projects including adult and non-formal education. Also, federal, state and local governments were to contribute according to an agreed formula. Regrettably, it seems the governments at all levels are treating adult education programmes with levity. This means that if these programmes are not properly funded, there will be problem even in the procurement of literacy materials.

Literacy materials have been defined differently by different scholars. According to Nzeneri (2012), literacy materials are often associated with such terms as educational devices, media, technique, tool and technology. Some define it as audio-visual materials, some as innovation in teaching and learning and others as curriculum materials. Some others define it as using any of the above terms like educational media or educational technology.

Literacy (instructional) material is an important instrument through which curriculum can be actualized. This is any device with instructional content or function that can be used for teaching and learning process. Ejike (2007) further stated that literacy materials are often referred to as instructional aids or devices that are used to supplement or complement the teacher's task. Examples are: chalkboards, pens, pencils, books, power points presentation, graph, chart, diorama, posters, models, among others. Therefore, Ejike averred that literacy materials are used to aid in the transfer of information from one adult learner to another. This is to ensure practical and quick understanding of the said topic.

When government implements adult basic literacy programme in the right way, by providing the required logistics that will help in its successful implementation, it will serve as a motivating factor for both the facilitators and adult learners. Nwaji (2012) posited that teaching and learning demand a lot of materials for arousing or motivating the interest of the learners for concretizing learning experience and for onward transfer of knowledge. Nwaji added that there is need for adequate textbooks, workbooks, drawing books, pencils and erasers, posters and pictorials, computer, printer, scanner, amongst others. When all these are adequate, it will enhance learning effectiveness.

There are procedures for any teaching-learning process to take place for the best interest of the adult learner. Nzeneri (2012) acknowledged that there is a procedure for choosing or selecting literacy materials. This procedure is guided by certain principles suggested by some curriculum experts or educators. The principles demand that the literacy materials selected must fulfil the following conditions: it must be relevant to the problem or topic of discussion; it must be thoroughly and properly integrated with the instructor's chosen methods, techniques, programmes, tasks or objectives; it has to be implemented

by actively involving the learners. That is, active participation of learners in the programme must be ensured for maximum learning to take place.

The use of literacy materials is a useful method of teaching in adult basic literacy programme. According to Nzeneri (2012), the use of pictures and symbols are effective means of supplementing oral teaching. For effective implementation of literacy materials to take place, there is need for the following functions: It can reduce the time required for verbal expression. The aids can facilitate the understanding of facts and ideas which adult learners would find it difficult to assimilate through verbal explanation alone. For instance, in the teaching of biology, nature study or art, the use of teaching aids remains an indispensable strategy for success. According to Nzeneri, the simplest teaching aid is the chalkboard and chalk. This is very important because at times adults meet or hold their classes in unusual places like open spaces, private houses and places of worship. It is clear that all these materials need competent facilitators with adequate training skills to handle them to enhance learning.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Ascertain the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State.
2. Determine the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State.

Research questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State?
2. What is the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and are tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and adult learners on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and adult learners on the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 19,959 comprising 19,812 adult learners and 147 facilitators in all 234 literary centres in Cross

River state (Cross River State Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, 2017). A sample of 1,996 was used for the study comprising 1,920 adult learners and 76 facilitators, drawn from 30 literacy centres. This sample size represented 10% of the entire population, gotten through proportionate, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The instrument used for data collection was researchers’ developed questionnaire titled: “Assessment of the Implementation of Adult Basic Literacy Programmes Questionnaire” (AIABLPQ). The instrument had two Sections, A and B. Section A had respondents’ demographic information while section B was a 12-item questionnaire in the form of modified four point rating scale of Very High Adequate (VHA) – 4, High Adequate (HA) – 3, Adequate (A) -2 and Not Adequate (NA) – 1. The scoring for negatively worded items in section B was reversed. The instrument was validated by experts and its reliability estimate was established at .78 using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. This reliability coefficient was considered high enough to justify the use of the instrument for the study. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to direct the study. The copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents by the researchers with nine research assistants trained for the purpose. Data collected were analysed using mean and t-test. For research questions 1 and 2, if the mean scores were below 2.50, the items were regarded rejected, otherwise they were considered accepted.

Presentation of results

Research question one: What is the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State?

Table 1: Mean rating and standard deviation of the respondents on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State

S/N	Item Statement	N = 1996		
		\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
1	Federal government’s budgets for the effective implementation of adult basic literacy programme.	2.40	0.03	NA
2	State government’s funding of adult basic literacy programme.	2.03	0.99	NA
3	Local government’s finances for adult basic literacy programme.	2.36	0.99	NA
4	Non-Governmental Organisations’ (NGOs) financial contribution for adult basic literacy programme.	2.19	0.91	NA
5	Philanthropists’ funds for adult basic literacy programme.	2.27	1.03	NA

6	Community Based-Organisations' (CBOs) (such as youth organizations, age grades, town councils among others) provision of funds for the running of adult basic literacy programme.	2.31	1.05	NA
Grand Mean		2.17	0.47	NA

Key: \bar{x} - Mean, SD – Standard deviation, DEC – Decision, NA-Not adequate.

The result of the study as presented in table 1 shows the mean and standard deviations of respondents on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State. The result shows that items 1-6 have mean ratings of 2.40, 2.03, 2.36, 2.19, 2.27 and 2.31 with standard deviations of 0.03, 0.99, 0.99, 0.91, 1.03 and 1.05 respectively. Since the mean ratings are below the criterion level of 2.50 for accepting an item, this means that the respondents disagreed with the above item statements. That is to say that fund by non-governmental organizations, philanthropist, community based-organizations, federal, state and local governments are inadequately provided for the proper implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State. The grand mean of 2.17 with a standard deviation of 0.47 shows that funds for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme are inadequately provided in Cross River State.

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State

Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)	DS
Facilitators	76	2.29	.37	1994	3.26	0.34	NS
Adult Learners	1920	2.30	.50				

The result of the study as presented in table 2, shows the t-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State. Result shows that a t-value of 3.26 with degree of freedom of 1994 and a probability value of 0.34 was obtained. Since the probability value of 0.34 is greater than 0.05 set as level of significance for testing the null hypothesis, this means that the result is not significant. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and learners of adult basic

literacy programme on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State is therefore not rejected. Inference drawn is that the responses of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme did not differ significantly on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State.

Research question 2: What is the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State?

Table 3: Mean rating and standard deviation showing the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State

S/N	Item Statement	N = 1996		
		\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
1	Provision of chalkboards for adult basic literacy programme	2.24	0.45	NA
2	Provision of free textbooks for adult basic literacy programme	2.40	0.02	NA
3	Provision of media facilities such as televisions, radios among others for adult basic literacy programme	2.35	0.05	NA
4	Provision of models for the smooth understanding of learners of adult basic literacy programme	2.30	0.07	NA
5	Provision of free pens for adult basic literacy programme	2.27	0.50	NA
6	Distribution of pencils to learners of adult basic literacy programme	2.19	0.51	NA
	Grand Mean	2.38	0.33	NA

Key: \bar{x} - Mean, SD – Standard deviation, DEC – Decision, NA-Not adequate.

The result of the study as presented in table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of respondents on the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State. The result of the study shows that items 1-6 have mean ratings of 2.24, 2.40, 2.35, 2.30, 2.27 and 2.19 with standard deviations of 0.45, 0.02, 0.05, 0.07, 0.50 and 0.51 respectively. The mean ratings are below the criterion level of 2.50 for accepting an item. This means that the respondents disagreed with the item statements. The grand mean of 2.38 with a standard deviation of 0.33 means that literacy materials such as chalkboards, free textbooks, media facilities such as television and radios, pen and pencils for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme are inadequately provided in Cross River State.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme on the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme on the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State

Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)	DS
Facilitators	76	2.29	1.37	1994	-4.36	.209	NS
Adult learners	1920	2.27	1.51				

The result of the study as presented in table 4, shows the t-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme on the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State. Result shows that a t-value of -4.26 with degree of freedom of 1994 and a probability value of 0.209 were obtained. Since the probability value of 0.209 is greater than 0.05 set as level of significance for testing the null hypothesis, this means that the result is not significant. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme on the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State is therefore not rejected. Inference drawn is that the responses of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme did not differ significantly on the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State.

Discussion of the findings

The finding of this study as presented in table 1 showed that funds by non-governmental organizations, philanthropist, community-based organizations, federal, state and local government are not adequate for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State. The findings of this study is in consonance with the finding of Nwaji (2012) who stated that adult basic literacy programme is suffering financial set-backs because it was not adequately budgeted for especially by the federal and state governments. Also, the findings of this study is in line with the view of Iyaji and Yanusa (2010) who clearly stated that funds for adult basic literacy programme are insufficient and that all the structures upon which the adult basic literacy programme can function effectively are weighed down by lack of funds, and when funds are eventually released, it is mostly not adequate thereby hampering the implementation of the programme. Similarly, Dike (2005) observed that the creditable objectives of the adult basic literacy programme are threatened by lack of funding, as most adult basic literacy centres lack

basic financial strength to sustain them which brings about poor implementation of the programme. The result also showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State.

Based on the research findings in table 2, it was found that literacy materials such as chalkboards, free textbooks, media facilities such as television and radios, pens and pencils for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme are inadequately provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State. The result of this study is in line with the finding of Ejike (2007) who in his study found out that literacy materials have not been adequately provided for proper implementation of adult basic literacy programme. Buttressing these findings, Ategwu (2010) and Nwakir (2011) opined that literacy materials such as textbooks, workbooks, drawing books, pencils and erasers, among others need to be adequately provided in the various centres so as to enhance teaching and learning in the adult literacy programme. The result also revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and learners of adult basic literacy programme on the adequacy of literacy materials provided for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Cross River State.

Conclusion

From the result of this study, it was concluded that funds for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme are inadequately provided in Cross River State. Literacy materials for the implementation of adult basic literacy programme are inadequately provided in Cross River State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made according to the findings of the study:

1. Government should increase capital allocation with the intension of providing adequate funds for successful implementation of adult basic literacy programme.
2. Government and other stakeholders should pool their resources together to ensure that literacy materials are adequately provided in the various centres to enhance teaching and learning activities in the literacy centres.

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