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## Implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies for Sustainable Mass Literacy in South East Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The study assessed the extent of implementation of adult literacy programmes by State Agencies for sustainable mass literacy in South East Nigeria. Two specific purposes, two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprised one thousand two hundred and eighty (1280) adult literacy centres in South East, Nigeria. The sample of the study comprised 50 adult literacy centers drawn through simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was adopted Checklist, titled "Level of Implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies for Sustainable Mass Literacy Checklist" (LIALPSASMLC). The Checklist was validated by three (3) lecturers from Ebonyi State University Abakaliki, and scorer reliability method was applied using Kendal's W Test of Concordance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), which yielded the overall reliability index of 0.63. Frequency and the percentage were used to analyse the data collected through the checklist. Chi-Square test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that Basic English Language Skills, Civil Education, HIV and AIDs prevention, basic hygiene and nutrition were implemented as the contents of Adult literacy in South East, Nigeria. On the contrary, entrepreneurship education content, and basic technology were not implemented in Adult Literacy programmes amongst others. Based on these findings, the study recommended among other things that the agencies for adult literacy in each of the states in South East should recruit qualified teachers to teach adult literacy centres for quality learning outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Implementation, adult Literacy, State Agencies, Sustainable, Mass Literacy.

## Introduction

There has been an increasing awareness and emphasis on eradication of illiteracy since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1945 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. According to Matasci (2016), the Article 26 of that document explicitly states that everyone irrespective of age or gender has the right to education. This statement is all inclusive –male and female, old and young. It implies that education is an inviolable right (and not a privilege) to be acquired and enjoyed by every citizen, irrespective of age, social status or sex. Realizing the importance of mass literacy in Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria domesticated Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which provides the right of everyone to education (Mass Literacy) and that education shall be free and compulsory up to elementary stages.

However, literacy is viewed as the ability to read, write, explore and understand the world around us. Onwuadi, Ugwueze and Okeke (2017) affirmed that literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. The researcher also states that the word “literacy” enables adults to take active part in the development of their communities and nation in general. Similarly, Onwuadi et al (2017) added that literacy is the ability of a person to function in all the activities in which is required for effective functioning of his/her group, the community and also for enabling him/her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his/her own and the community’s development. The word of Onwuadi et al (2017) was the confirmation of Okongwu in Owede (2022) who stated that adult literacy is the ability of someone regarded as an adult by the members of his society to read, write and do simple calculations. The author expositions implies that it is the possession of the basic skills of reading, writing and calculation of numbers for everyday activity of an adult.

Adult literacy comprises all forms of education and learning aimed ensuring that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work. Wami and Deekor (2020) viewed adult literacy as a practice in which adults engage in systematic and sustained self-educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. Onwuadi et al (2017) posited that adult literacy is virtually any educational activity designed to bring about learning which according to them include the work of aerobics instructor, nurse, private consultant, literacy worker and community activist and many others. It denotes the entire body of learning processes: formal, non-formal, and informal, whereby those regarded as adults by the society in which they live, develop and enrich their capabilities for living and working, both in their interests and those of their communities, organizations, and societies (UNESCO, 2017).

One value attached to adult literacy programmes is that they are voluntary (Adero, 2018). Therefore, the participants are generally self-motivated; the practice of adult education is regarded as andragogy. Adult education in Nigeria is therefore a core mandate to enhance the literacy rate in the country.

Implementation is the transformation of education policies into realities. Implementation of adult literacy programmes involves working out the plans and suggestions that have been made by adult education curriculum specialists and subject experts in a classroom or school setting

(Offorma, 2019). It is the process of translating educational theories or programmes into practice particularly at the classroom level.

The curriculum contents of adult literacy encompass the comprehensive plan of what the teachers want to teach the adult learners including the objectives and learning outcomes. According to Nwobi, Mbagwu, Onwuadi, Asogu, Nwachukwu, Okafor, Ifeanacho, Otegbulu, Idakpo and Yakubu (2017), the content of adult literacy are the specific information, topics and materials used to meet up to the curriculum of objectives of adult literacy programmes in Nigeria. The contents of adult literacy programme must be adequate, objective and comprehensive to meet up to the needs of the adult learners (Offorma, 2019).

The question is whether the content of adult education is novel or obsolete? There are emerging issues which require proper evaluation of the contents of any educational problem to align it with the global best practice in order for all round development of the learner. For instance, the world of communication, education, association and businesses has been dominated with the use of improved technologies. The contents of adult literacy must be all embracing to accommodate innovations that would help learners and the society. Nevertheless, no matter the adequacy of contents of adult literacy, if teachers are not qualified, the contents and experiences will not be translated to the adult learners.

However, it seems that most teachers that handle adult literacy programmes are not qualified. For instance, UNESCO Report of (2020), adult teachers used various qualifications in facilitating adult learning and education in Nigeria. According to the report, about 33.3% of them possessed only Post Literacy Certificates; 54.5% of them possessed WAEC/NECO while 84.8% were Teachers Grade II certificate holders. The result further shows that 32.73% were NCE and Degree holders of certificates in adult education; 64.9% were diploma holders while 57.6% were graduates from the Universities. This situation could invariably affect the effective implementation of adult education programmes in Nigeria. However, no matter how qualified adult literacy teachers might be, they require instructional materials to be functional in the field.

A method is a particular way of organizing different techniques to achieve some teaching objectives. Many more strategies are being employed to provide education and literacy through the non-formal approaches. These approaches include the conventional literacy model, the functional literacy model, and the conscientization model, the use of radio to provide instruction, among others (Fasokun, 2012). The curriculum of adult literacy recommended for the use of functional literacy models which consider and promotes the interest, needs and aspiration of the adult learners in the instructional process (National Commission for Mass It is important to note that the staff strength and learning facilities in rural and urban adult literacy centres might not be the same in the five States of South East Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo) in terms of availability and functionality of teaching and learning resources. It is observed that adult learning centres are usually attached to schools with quality and well-equipped classrooms, libraries, laboratories and adequate teachers are sited in the urban and some strategic areas, where there is a high concentration and interest of stakeholders (Arop, Ekpang and Owan, 2018). Therefore, the thrust of this study is to assess the extent of implementation of adult literacy programmes by State Agencies for sustainable mass literacy in South East Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The current situation of Adult Literacy programmes in Nigeria in general and in South East region in particular is a concern to all including government, society and researchers at large. A good number of male and female citizens who had not gotten opportunity to attend formal education opted for adult education programmes. Despite the efforts to eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria, the country is still witnessing lots of illiterates. For instance, the report of UNESCO and UIS in 2020 indicates that Nigeria has an adult illiteracy rate bordering above 41% as at 2018-2019 representing 62.02% literacy rate. The report showed that 38 percent of the estimated 200 million population, representing over 76 million adults are non-literates from 2021-2022 respectively. A survey conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2019 cited in Wami (2022) indicates that the population of out-of-school in Nigeria has risen from 10.5 million to 13.2 million, the highest in the world. This situation could be directly attributed to the inadequate number of literacy instructors/facilitators, poor methods of teaching, inadequate instructional materials/facilities, poor remuneration of facilitators, withdrawals from service by facilitators due to lack of mobility for effective monitoring, and poor evaluation due to unsustainable political among others. In addition, the way that the majority of literacy centers are run across South East Nigeria serves as another telling sign of the marginal status of adult education in the area. The researcher is however, optimistic that adult literacy programmes can be improved in the area if the problems affecting its implementation can be reduced by Adult Education Agencies. Nevertheless, there was gap of literature on the assessment of management of adult literacy programmes by State Agencies for Sustainable Mass Literacy especially in South East Nigeria. This is the problem was addressed by the present study.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of implementation of contents stipulated in the Adult Literacy Programmes in South East Nigeria?
2. What is the level of use of methods in the implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies in South East Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study

- 1: the level of implementation of contents stipulated in the Adult Literacy Programmes in South East Nigeria is dependent on location.

- 2: the level of methods used in the implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies in South East Nigeria is dependent on location.

### **Methodology**

The design of this study was the descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey is a type of design concerned with describing events as they are, without manipulation of any variable. According to Shona (2019), descriptive survey design aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situations or phenomenon. It can answer what, were, when and how questions, but not why questions. Unlike in experimental research design, the researcher does not control or manipulate any variable, but only observes and measures them. The area of this study is South East geo-political zone of Nigeria. The zone covered Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. The population of this study comprised one thousand two hundred and eighty (1280) adult literacy centres in South East, Nigeria. As at the time of this study, there were 262 adult literacy centers and 339 Adult literacy teachers in Enugu State; 171 adult

literacy centres and 259 adult literacy teachers in Ebonyi State; 209 adult literacy centers and 312 adult teachers in Imo State; 283 adult literacy centres and 279 adult teachers in Anambra State; 355 Study Centers and 533 teachers in Abia State.

The sample of the study was 250 Adult literacy teachers from 50 adult literacy centers.

Stratified random sampling technique was used to select ten (10) literacy centres from each of the 5 States in South East Nigeria; making it a total of fifty (50) adult literacy centers for the study. The instrument for data collection was adapted Checklist, titled “Level of Implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies for Sustainable Mass Literacy Checklist” (LIALPSASMLC). The items of the checklist were derived from the literature review.

The response opinions were under 2-points scale of Highly Implemented (HI) = 50% and above and Lowly Implemented (LI) = 49% and below for research question 1; Highly Used (HU) for 50% and above and Lowly Used (LU) for 49% and below for research question 2. The researcher then applies scorer reliability method using Kendal’s W Test of concordance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) which yielded the reliability coefficients index of 0.63. The researcher, with two (2) research assistants in each state administered the instrument directly to the respondents in the two hundred fifty adult literacy centers in the Five States of South East Nigeria. Frequency tables and Percentages were used to analyse the data collected on research questions while Chi-Square statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. For the checklist, items with 50% rating and above were accepted as high implementation while 49% and below were not be accepted. The null hypotheses were upheld when the probability value is greater than 0.05 level of significance ( $P > .05$ ), and were not upheld when the probability value is less than 0.05 level of significance ( $P < .05$ ).

## **RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of implementation of contents stipulated in the Adult Literacy Programmes in South East Nigeria?

**Table 1: Percentage Response on the Level of Implementation of Contents Stipulated in the Adult Literacy Programmes in South East Nigeria**

S/N	Item Statements	Total	YES				NO				Dec
			Rural	%	Urban	%	Rural	%	Urban	%	
1	Basic English Language skills e.g. reading, writing, speaking	250	77	30.8	98	39.2	35	14.0	40	16.0	HI
2	Civic Education Contents e.g. peace-building, democracy and good governance	250	68	27.2	91	36.4	38	15.2	53	21.2	HI
3	HIV and AIDS prevention	250	54	21.6	81	32.4	50	20.0	65	26.0	HI
4	Basic hygiene and nutrition	250	66	26.4	89	35.6	41	16.4	44	17.6	HI
5	Entrepreneurship contents e.g. family economics, vocational skills, etc.	250	45	18.0	50	20.0	56	22.4	99	39.6	LI
6	Basic technology e.g. wood work, electrical work, automobile mechanics etc.	250	38	15.2	70	28.0	72	28.8	70	28.0	LI

Field Work, 2024; **Keys=** HI= High Implementation; LI= Low implementation

The data in **Table1** shows that out of 250 respondents, 30.8% of teachers from rural and 39.2% from urban area agreed that they teach Basic English Language skills e.g. reading, writing, speaking while 39.2% from rural and 16.0% from urban area disagreed; 27.2% from rural schools and 36.4% from urban school agreed while 15.2% from rural and 21.2% from urban school agreed that they Civic Education Contents e.g. peace-building, democracy and good governance; 21.6% from rural and 32.4% from urban schools agreed that they teach HIV and AIDS prevention while 20.0% from rural and 26.0% from urban disagreed; 26.4% from rural schools and 35.6% from urban schools agreed that they teach Basic hygiene and nutrition while 16.4% from rural schools and 17.6% from urban schools disagreed. It also shows that 18.0% from rural schools and 20.0% from urban schools agreed that they implement Entrepreneurship contents e.g. family economics, vocational skills, etc. while 22.4% of teachers from rural and 39.6% from urban schools disagreed; 15.2% of teachers from rural schools and 28.0% from urban schools agreed while 28.8% and 28.0% disagreed. This shows that Basic English Language skills, Civic Education Contents and HIV and AIDS prevention and Basic hygiene and nutrition where the contents of adult literacy implemented while entrepreneurship education contents and Basic technology were not implemented in adult literacy programmes.

**4.2 Research Question 2:** What are the level of use of methods in the implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies in South East Nigeria?

**Table 2: Percentage Response on the Level of Use of Methods in the Implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies in South East Nigeria**

S/N	Item Statements	Total	YES				N0				Dec
			Rural	%	Urban	%	Rural	%	Urban	%	
9	Use of conventional methods e.g. discussion, lecture method, drama, etc.,	250	69	27.6	88	35.2	43	17.2	50	20.0	HU
10	Use of Each–One–Teach –One (EOTO) methods	250	28	11.2	49	19.6	83	33.2	90	36.0	LU
11	Use of literacy Club	250	33	13.2	66	26.4	79	31.6	72	28.8	LU
12	Use of literacy by Radio	250	38	15.2	51	20.4	100	40.0	61	24.4	LU
13	Use of Literacy Campaigns	250	44	17.6	58	23.2	80	32.0	68	27.2	LU
14	Stakeholders Meeting	250	51	20.4	77	30.8	63	25.2	59	23.6	HU

**Field Work, 2024; Keys:** HU=High Used; LU= low Used

Data in **Table 2** shows that out of the 250 respondents, 26.6% of teachers from rural and 35.2% from urban area agreed that the use conventional methods e.g. discussion, lecture method, drama, etc., while 17.2% from rural and 20.0% from urban school disagreed; 12.2% from rural schools and 19.6% from urban schools agreed that they use Each–One–Teach –One (EOTO) methods e.g. picture, Syllabic analysis of the words, use of primers with pictures and integrating of reading and writing exercise while 32.2% from rural and 36.0% from urban schools disagreed; 13.2% from rural and 26.4% from urban school agreed that they literacy Club in teaching adult literacy programmes while 31.6% from rural and 28.8% from urban schools disagreed. It also shows that 15.2% of teachers from rural and 24.0% from urban schools agreed that they use literacy by Radio in the implementation of adult literacy programmes while 40.0% from rural and 24.4% from urban disagreed; 17.6% from rural schools and 23.2% from urban schools agreed that they use Literacy Campaigns in teaching adult education programmes while 32.0% from rural and 27.2% from urban schools disagreed. The data equally showed that 20.4% teachers from rural and 30.8% from urban secondary schools agreed that they use stakeholders’ meetings in the implementation of adult literacy programmes while 25.2% teachers from rural and 23.6% from urban secondary schools disagreed. This indicates that conventional lecture methods and stakeholder meetings were the only methods used in teaching adult literacy programmes while Each–One–Teach –One (EOTO) methods, literacy clubs, literacy by radio, and literacy campaigns are lowly used.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** The level of implementation of contents stipulated in the Adult Literacy Programmes in South East Nigeria is dependent on location.

**Table 3: Chi-Square statistic on the level of implementation of contents stipulated in the Adult Literacy Programmes in South East Nigeria is dependent on location**

	df	$\chi^2\alpha$	Sig.	Alpha Level	Remarks
Chi-Square	25	30000 <sup>a</sup>	.224	0.05	NS
Number of valid Cases	6				

Df = degree of freedom,  $\chi^2\alpha$  = chi-square calculated, Sig. = P-value; P < .05, NS= Not Significant

The data in Table 3 shows a P-value of 0.224 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance and with 25 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of rural and urban teachers on the level of implementation of contents stipulated in the Adult Literacy Programmes in South East Nigeria was accepted. This indicates that the implementation of contents of adult literacy programmes was the same in rural and urban public secondary schools in South East Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** The level of methods used in the implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies in South East Nigeria is dependent on location.

**Table 4: Chi-Square statistic on the level of methods used in the implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies in South East Nigeria is dependent on location**

	df	$\chi^2\alpha$	Sig.	Alpha Level	Remarks
Chi-Square	25	31000 <sup>a</sup>	.225	0.05	NS
Number of valid Cases	6				

Df = degree of freedom,  $\chi^2\alpha$  = chi-square calculated, Sig. = P-value; P < .05, NS= Not Significant

The data in Table 4 shows P-value of 0.225 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance and with 25 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of rural and urban teachers on the methods used in the implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies in South East Nigeria was upheld. This indicates that the teaching methods used in the implementation of adult literacy programmes was almost the same in rural and urban public secondary schools in South East Nigeria.

**DISCUSSION**

The finding of the study revealed that Basic English Language skills, Civic Education Contents and HIV and AIDS prevention and Basic hygiene and nutrition were the contents of adult literacy programme that were highly implemented while entrepreneurship education contents and Basic technology were lowly implemented in adult literacy programmes in South East Nigeria. This finding is in line with Nwobi, Mbagwu, Onwuadi,

Asogu, Nwachukwu, Okafor, Ifeanacho, Otegbulu, Idakpo and Yakubu (2017) that Agency for Mass Literacy Adult and Non-Formal Education (SAME) implemented national adult literacy benchmark on the provision of conducive adult literacy learning environment and content coverage to a low extent. This implies that the adult learners will not benefit from the objectives zero illiteracy in the area if the contents of the adult literacy are not implemented at the centres. Nevertheless, for contents of adult literacy programmes to be effectively implemented, they must be adequate, objective and comprehensive to cater the needs, interest and aspirations of the adult learners (Offorma, 2019). This would invariably help adult learners to exhibit knowledge and skills to solve their day to day activities because of its relevancy. It is worthy to note that the effective implementation of contents of adult literacy programmes require availability of instructional materials, qualified teachers, conducive centres and the use of innovative strategies by the teachers or facilitators.

However, the issue is that there are emerging issues which require to be implemented in adult literacy programmes to align it with the global best practice in order for all round development of the learner. For instance, the world of communication, education, association and businesses has been dominated with the use of improved technologies. There are also emerging entrepreneurial skills which the adult learners must embraced to improve their standard of living, but if these emerging skills are not effectively implemented in the agencies of adult literacy programmes, it would mar the attainment of the philosophy or objectives of the programmes particularly in South East Nigeria. Yusuf (2011) submitted that the focus of literacy programmes has been on reading, writing and numeracy with its limitations in tackling rural poverty. This has resulted in calls for the expansion of the range of issues that literacy education programmes target; literacy education programmes\_ for poor rural women should not be confined to mere reading, writing and numeracy, if literacy targets the reduction of rural poverty. To achieve sustainable livelihood for adult learners in South East and Nigeria in general, is to consciously impart in them the awareness of enterprising creativity, self-reliance, critical awareness and surviving skills through a holistic literacy programme for sustainable livelihood.

The result of the null hypothesis I revealed that there was no significant difference ( $p>0.05$ ) in the mean ratings of rural and urban teachers on the methods used in the implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies in South East Nigeria. This agreement suggest that there is same level of implementation of contents of adult literacy programmes in rural and urban public secondary schools in South East Nigeria. It implies that intervention programme is needed to ensure the implementation of the contents of adult literacy programmes especially the emerging the emerging contents.

The finding of the study revealed that conventional lecture methods and stakeholder meetings were the only methods used in teaching adult literacy programmes while Each–One–Teach –One (EOTO) methods, literacy clubs, literacy by radio, and literacy campaigns are lowly used. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Adero (2018) that stories, songs and dance, games and role play were the most used instructional methodologies by adult education instructors. These methodologies were found to influence implementation of the curriculum through stimulation of the adult learners and making learning more interesting. These methods does not support all adult learners

because they are limited in coverage and time. The methods to reach out all adult learners must involve literacy clubs, literacy by radio, and literacy campaigns among others. The finding also collaborates with Akintolu (2019) who submitted that the conventional methods of group work, project-based learning, use of activities, question and answers, storytelling, demonstration, role play and dramatics were found to be the major strategies through which the selected literacy centres use in motivating adult learners to learn. However, Akintolu (2019) advocated for Language Experience Approach, Each One Teach One (EOTO) and literacy club in the implementation of adult literacy programmes.

The result of null hypothesis 2 revealed there was no significant difference ( $p>0.05$ ) in the mean ratings of rural and urban teachers on the methods used in the implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes by State Agencies in South East Nigeria. The implication of this is that both teachers in rural and urban areas do not use innovative strategies that appeals to adult learners in the implementation of adult literacy programmes for mass literacy. This situation can mar the effective implementation of programmes and policy guidelines for adult literacy in South East Nigeria. The inability of teachers to use methods recommended by the curriculum of adult literacy programmes in rural and urban area could be attributed to teachers or instructors' lack of knowledge of competencies in the use of Each–One–Teach –One (EOTO) methods, literacy clubs, literacy by radio, and literacy campaigns among others. It shows that teachers of adult literacy programmes needs periodic training on the innovative methods to be able to handle the different learning styles and abilities of adult learners.

### **Conclusion**

The study has shown that the implementation of adult literacy programmes in South East Nigeria would reduce the level of illiteracy and poverty among adult population. For this to be achieved the programmes of adult literacy must be effectively implemented for sustainable mass literacy. This indicates that the State Agencies must as a matter of urgency recruit qualified teachers into the centres, provide adequate teaching-learning materials, train teachers on the innovative methods. In the line of the above, the researcher concluded that for the country to have contributive adult population, the adult literacy programmes must empower them to take active participation in the all-round development of the area.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were based on the findings of the study

1. The State Government through the Agencies on adult literacy should urgently train teachers through seminars, conferences or symposium on the skills of entrepreneurship education and Basic technology for teachers to impact the adult learners effectively.
2. Teachers should employ methods that appeal to all senses of adult learners in the teaching and learning in adult literacy centres as this could enhance the implementation of adult literacy programmes for sustainable mass literacy in Nigeria.

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