# FACILITATORS' PERCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT'S INVOLVEMENT IN ADULT BASIC LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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**Abstract**

Adult education has been globally recognized as the education for development but some issues such as inadequate government involvement constrains the effective running of adult literacy programmes thereby limiting its potentials. This study assessed the perception of facilitators on government's involvement in adult literacy programmes in Awka South Local Government Area. Descriptive survey design was used. The population of the study consisted of all the 34 facilitators in adult basic literacy centres in Awka South Local Government Area. There was no need for sampling because the population was small and manageable. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. A questionnaire designed by the researchers, based on a four-point scale, was the instrument for data collection from the facilitators. Data collected from responses to their questionnaire were quantified and analyzed using mean statistics. The study found that in the perception of facilitators, government adequately provided funds, teaching aids and other infrastructures and as well periodically organized workshops for facilitators in adult literacy centres in Awka South LGA. The study recommended among other things that successive governments should continue to adequately finance literacy programmes and that host communities and local government areas hosting adult literacy centres should hold government responsible by ensuring that each centre gets its dues and that whatever is provided is properly maintained.

**Key words:** Adult education, Literacy programmes, Government involvement, facilitators, Awka South LGA

## Introduction

There is a general consensus that literacy, the ability to read, write and do basic arithmetic operation (Srivastava, 2017), is of foremost importance in helping people to face their problems intelligently and to generally enrich their lives and their societies. While a lot of attention has been given to education of the child, adult education was relegated until recently when nations began to appreciate the importance of adult education in nation building through the effort of UNESCO and other concerned bodies. According to Global Education Report Monitoring Team (2020), literacy drives sustainable development and can be used to predict the quality of the future labor force as well as ensure policies for life skills for men and women. Literate individuals can easily access information to improve education, health, safety and aspire to acquire skills for survival in this ever-changing age. Adults are the drivers of development and enabling adult literacy is very important. Kombo and Tromp (2009) emphasized that adult literacy is the fertilizer needed for development and democracy to take root and grow. It is the invisible ingredient in any successful strategy for eradicating poverty and achieving gender equality. In order to realize this, adult literacy should be seen as a continuous process that requires regular and sustained learning properly provided for the government and other stakeholders.

Government's basic functions are providing leadership, maintaining order, providing public services, providing national security, providing economic security, and providing economic assistance. Education of the citizenry is part of the public services that government is supposed to provide for. According to the National Policy of Education (NPE), 2017, the functions of state agencies for mass education include

to provide access by setting up literacy centres (classes) and provide infrastructural facilities including furnishing, equipment and supply of training materials for mass literacy and non-formal education programmes; enroll adult learners and facilitate learning; recruit and pay NFE vocational and literacy facilitators in collaboration with the local government councils; provide support services for adult and non-formal education including curriculum adaptation, mobile and rural libraries, television viewing and audio-listening centres and studios, visual teaching and learning aids; develop and produce neo-literates' newspapers and other supplementary readers in local languages; and train grassroot personnel such as facilitators, area coordinators, scheme organizers, library attendants and administrative officers.

The move by the federal government to revive the adult literacy programme in order to boost quality of education in country is worthwhile but the local authorities should be encouraged to play their roles adequately and consistently. According to THISDAYLIVE (2019), the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC), not long ago, disclosed that 35 percent of the nation's adult population was illiterate. It was sad and worrisome that more than a third of our national population wallowed in illiteracy and its consequences. Interestingly, in the 2022 world literacy day celebration, 31% of adult population were reported to be illiterates, a significant reduction of the earlier statistics (Suleiman, 2022). This may be a result of the huge funds and efforts that the country has devoted to mass literacy programmes over the years including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme launched more than 33 years ago. Nevertheless, several millions of adult Nigerians

are still illiterates and lack basic skills for survival in this era. They suffer unemployment or manage low-paying, dead-end jobs that are associated with poverty.

The high rate of illiteracy level partly accounts for the low level of development in Nigeria because the growth and development of any nation depends largely on the quantity and quality of all segments of its population. One of the main objectives of funding adult and non-formal education is to ensure adequate investment in education that would facilitate acceleration of national development (NMEC, 2010, as cited in Hussain, 2020). Over the years, there have been some efforts by the Federal Government to boost literacy level, with the setting up of strategic institutions, commission, agencies and centres for learning across the nation. The major challenge appears to be at the level of the states and the local governments. It has become pertinent to assess the extent states and LGAs are involved in the implementation of the stipulations of NPE as it concerns adult literacy programmes. The states and LGAs should play their roles especially in the areas of provision of adequate funds, infrastructures and organization of seminars and workshops for facilitators of adult learning in order to equip them to be familiar with evolving methodologies of teaching and learning in the 21st Century.

Undoubtedly, adequate funding is very important for the successful implementation of any academic endeavor. Funds are needed to meet various needs that will make for the success of the outfit. Similarly, conducive environment is required for learning to take place. When infrastructures such as buildings, furniture, teaching aids, information communication technology (ICT) equipment are made

available, they make for conducive physical environment. If adult educators are well taken care of, it helps to make the learning space psychologically and socially conducive. Proper remuneration of facilitators alone will not make them render effective service if they are not properly trained or periodically upgraded through training by organizing workshops and seminars in order to further educate and sharpen their skills. It behooves the government to do this.

Recently, a lot of claims have been made in the media by various governments including successive governments in Anambra State of their contributions to adult education. It is hoped that they are not merely politically motivated castles built in the air in order to foster political ambitions of those in authority, as is wont to happen in this clime. It is needful to investigate if they actually walked their talks among other reasons. Following the above background, this study was carried out to examine government's involvement in adult literacy programmes in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, Nigeria from the perception of facilitators.

**Statement of the Problem**

There is a great concern over the illiteracy rate in the world population. Illiteracy is a great hindrance to the promotion of national development. Governments across the globe have made various efforts to comply with UNESCO's directives that they get involved in promoting adult education in order to eradicate illiteracy. Illiteracy is not only an obstacle to the social-economic and political transformation of the country, but its eradication will also quicken tempo of development. Due to illiteracy, many adult Nigerians, especially the populace at the grass root level and

especially in Awka South Local Government are unable to participate meaningfully in the development process of the country. The situation is very worrisome in the face of the change in the definition of literacy which further highlights their disadvantaged state. The recent summit of ministers of education in the African sub-region on the Marrakeh Framework, where adult education was recognized as a core driver of all the SDGs, also reaffirmed the importance of the new form of literacy, digital literacy, as an essential tool for lifelong learning (Suleiman, 2022). The fate of illiterates based on initial definition of literacy, to wit, ability to read, write and carry out basic arithmetic functions, which they don't even have, becomes further jeopardized. Whereas, adult education is a means of adapting to changing circumstances, meeting the challenges of the day and ensuring that the society survives and thrives, adult basic literacy programmes is the bedrock upon which other literacy programmes are built. It becomes necessary to ensure that adult literacy programmes are not neglected and that every tier of government plays its roles. This study therefore assessed the perspectives of facilitators on government's involvement in Adult Literacy in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State. The study particularly sought to find out from facilitators and their unit head, if and how adequately government actually provides funds, infrastructures and organizes seminars and workshops for the improvement of adult literacy programmes in Awka South Local Government Area.

The study would be of importance to many stake holders. These include government at all levels and her agencies, the people of Awka South Local Government Area, adult learners, facilitators, adult literacy centres' host community and the general public.

**Research Questions**

1. To what extent does government provide funds for adult literacy programmes in Awka South Local Government Area?

2. To what extent does government provide infrastructures for adult literacy programmes in Awka South Local Government Area?

3. To what extent does government organize seminars and workshops for facilitators of adult literacy programmes in Awka South Local Government Area?

## METHODS

This study employed descriptive survey design because it enables the description of events as they occurred in their natural setting among other things. The design enabled the researchers to elicit the opinions of facilitators using a questionnaire to collect all the necessary information on the extent of governments' involvement in adult literacy programmes in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. The area was chosen because of the presence of the adult literacy programme centres in the area. The population of the study was made up of all the facilitators in all the adult literacy centers in Awka South LGA in Anambra State and this consist of 34 facilitators from the 12 centres (Source: Agency for Non-Formal Education, 2023).

**Table 1: Population Distribution Table of Facilitators in Adult Literacy Centres in Awka South LGA**

| S/N | ITEMS | SAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Central Adult Edu. Centre Awka | 6 |
| 2. | Eziato Adult Edu. Centre Awka | 4 |
| 3. | Community Adult Edu. Centre Umuawulu | 1 |
| 4. | Adult Edu Centre Prison Awka | 2 |
| 5. | Campus III Adult Edu. Centre Amawbia | 1 |
| 6. | Community Adult Edu. Centre Nise | 2 |
| 7. | Udoka Adult Edu. Centre Awka | 3 |
| 8. | Igwesimma Adult Edu. Centre Amawbia | 2 |
| 9. | Igwebueze Adult Edu. Centre Ifite Awka | 2 |
| 10. | Ezeike Adult Edu. Centre Nibo | 3 |
| 11. | Central Adult Edu. Centre Nibo | 2 |
| 12. | Central Adult Edu. Centre | 6 |
| | **Total number of respondents** | **34** |

Instrument for data collection from the facilitators was a researcher-designed questionnaire tagged Facilitators' Perception of Government Involvemmentet Questionnaire [FPGIQ] 2023. It is made up of two parts -Sections A and B. Section A is on personal data of the respondents while section B is made up of three clusters, each containing items related to each of the research questions that guided the study. The items were assigned a four-point response scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE). These had a corresponding value of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

In order to ascertain the validity of the instrument, the instrument was given to two lecturers, one from Department of Vocational Education and the other from

Department of Adult and Continuing Education, all from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Some corrections were made based on their recommendations. The instrument was approved for use before it was administered to the respondents. Copies of the questionnaire were personally administered by one of the researchers by hand to the respondents on the meeting day of facilitators of adult education (ADE) centres in Awka South LGA. All copies of the questionnaire distributed were correctly filled and retrieved same day. Responses to the questionnaire were collated and analyzed using mean statistic on four (4) rating scales of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4, High Extent (HE) = 3, Low Extent (LE) = 2, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1..The decision rule was based on the mean score which was benchmarked on 2.50. Only items with mean scores which rated 2.50 and above were regarded as indication of high extent while mean scores that rated below 2.50 were regarded as indication of low extent.

**Result**

**Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent Government fund Adult Literacy programmes in Awka South LGA**

| S/N | Government funding of Adult Literacy programmes | VHE (4) | HE (3) | LE (2) | VLE (1) | Grand total | Mean (X) | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Basic adult literacy programme is financed by government | 25 | 9 | - | - | 34 | | **HE** |
| | | (100) | (27) | - | - | (127) | 3.7 | |
| 2 | Government is financing vocational craft programme for adult literacy education centres | 18 | 16 | - | - | 34 | 3.5 | **HE** |
| | | (72) | (48) | - | - | (120) | | |
| 3 | Government is providing funds for policies towards the implementation of functional adult literacy programmes in Awka South LGA | 30 | 4 | - | - | 34 | 3.5 | **HE** |
| | | (120) | (12) | - | - | (132) | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Government supports and finances the implementation of continuing education | 32 (132) | 2 (6) | - - | - - | 34 (134) | 4.0 | **HE** |
| 5 | Government supports and finances the implementation of post literacy education | 32 (128) | 2 (6) | - - | - - | 34 (134) | 4.0 | **HE** |
| | **Cluster Mean =** | | | | | | **3.74** | **HE** |

The cluster mean of 3.74 in Table 2 indicates that government provided funds for literacy centres in Awka South LGA to a high extent. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 with mean ratings from 3.5 to 4.0 are all above the criterion mean of 2.5. This indicates that respondents perceive that government adequately provided funds for adult literacy programmes in Awka South LGA.

**Table 3: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent Government provides infrastructures for Adult Literacy programmes centres in Awka South LGA**

| S/N | Government's provision of teaching aids items | VHE (4) | HE (3) | LE (2) | VLE (1) | Grand total | Mean (X) | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Government makes provision for teaching aids in the adult literacy centres | 17 (68) | 6 (18) | 11 (22) | - - | 34 (108) | 3.1 | HE |
| 7 | Government provides furnishings and equipment for adult literacy programmes | 15 (60) | 17 (51) | 3 (6) | - - | 34 (117) | 3.5 | HE |
| 8 | Government makes provision for support services like libraries for adult literacy centres | 21 (84) | 9 (27) | 4 (8) | - - | 34 (119) | 3.5 | HE |
| 9. | Government provides rural libraries, television viewing and audio listening centres and studios in adult literacy centres | 10 (40) | 3 (9) | 17 (34) | 4 (4) | 34 (87) | 2.5 | HE |
| | **Cluster Mean =** | | | | | | | |

**3.15**

The cluster mean of 3.15 in Table 3 indicates that government provided infrastructure for literacy centres in Awka South LGA to a high extent. Items 6, 7, 8 and 9 with mean ratings from 2.5 to 3.5.0 are not below the criterion mean of 2.5 and are therefore deemed high. This indicates that respondents perceive that government adequately provided infrastructures for adult literacy programmes in centres in Awka South LGA although item 9 on provision of rural libraries, television viewing and audio listening centres and studios is on the borderline of 2.5.

**Table 4: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent government organizes workshops for facilitators of Adult literacy programmes in Awka South LGA**

| S/N | Government Organization of Workshop Items | VHE (4) | HE (3) | LE (2) | VLE (1) | Grand total | Mean (X) | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. | government organizes workshops for adult literacy programmes facilitators in Awka South LGA | **16 (64)** | **14 (42)** | **4 (8)** | **-** - | **34 (114)** | **3.3** | |
| **11** | Government have been consistently organizing workshops for facilitators periodically in adult literacy centres in Awka South LGA | **20 (80)** | **9 (27)** | **5 (10)** | **-** - | **34 (117)** | **3.4** | |
| **12** | Workshops that government organized for facilitators in adult literacy centres have contributed in improving the skills of facilitators | **19 (76)** | **8 (24)** | **7 (14)** | **-** - | **34 (114)** | **3.3** | |

**Cluster Mean =**

**3.3**

Table 4 shows items 10, 11 and 12, with means of between 3.3 – 3.4, all above the benchmark mean of 2.5, in addition to the cluster mean of 3.3, indicates that from the

facilitators' perspectives government adequately organized workshops for facilitators of literacy centres in Awka South LGA to a high extent.

**Discussion of the Findings**

Findings of the study were discussed in the following paragraphs based on the research questions as follows.

The main purpose of this study was to assess unit head and facilitators' perceptions of government involvement in adult literacy programme in Awka South LGA. Based on the summary of findings, it was discovered that facilitators perceived that government is adequately funding adult literacy programmes, financing vocational crafts centres and also providing funds for promoting policies towards the implementation of adult literacy programmes in Awka South L.G.A. This finding differs from the findings of Madu, Ewelum and Okunna (2020) which revealed that some of the challenges confronting Adult and Non-Formal Education (ANFE) in Anambra State include difficulties in identifying budget meant for ANFE, lack of information on funding by individuals, inadequate funding by the government among other things. The difference in the findings might be because the present study was conducted in a local government area in the state capital territory where it is likely that government focused attention on and provided their needs.

In an earlier, Hassan (2009) found among other things that governments were not funding ANFE adequately in Nigeria; that funds for ANFE was obtained from other sources; that adult literacy, distance education, labour and prison education received

funds from the government; that there was a political will on the part of government to fund adult and non-formal education but that some problems were confronting financing ANFE. Similarly, Maina and Orodho (2016) found that sources of facilitating access and participation in centres in Murange's Kenya were inadequate. Of course, sources referred to included funds. In agreement with Hassan (2009), Maina and Orodho (2016) and Ebirim, and Chuke (2009) also found that government were not funding ANFE adequately in Anambra State. The difference in present studies finding could be as a result of awareness creation over the years and massive interventions by both national and international bodies over the years. Additionally, the perceived adequate funding by government in the present study may not be unconnected to the reported serious and massive support given to adult education by the government of Chief Willie Obiano (Anambra Broadcasting Service [ABS], 2021). It behooves successive governments to continue in that stride.

It was also found that government is providing infrastructures, teaching aids and support services like libraries for adult literacy programmes in Awka South LGA. In contradiction to the present study's findings, Okoye (2020) in a study conducted in 2017 found that most learning materials required in Anambra State learning centres were not available except for printed materials. The present study's finding really confounds earlier trends in the state as can be seen from other earlier studies. Hamshek (1995) posited that availability of adequate infrastructure correlates with good performance. Okoye (2015) also found that adult literacy programme was fully implemented in the area of funding payment of teachers' monthly stipend and availability of print and non-printed materials in Delta State. Okoye's study appears

to herald the beginning of the realization of the gains of interventions made to boost adult education. Conducive environment for learning is a sine qua non for improved performance. It has been found to also motivate participation. Respondents to the present study feel that government has done well. Sustainability by successive government is very important. Providing facilities without commensurate training of personnel may not yield desired result. In appreciation of the importance of tooling and retooling, the study also examined government's involvement in training through workshop.

This study also found that government has been adequately organizing seminars and workshops for facilitators of adult literacy programmes in Awka South LGA. This finding is in line with the finding of Okoye (2015). Okoye disclosed that there was poor implementation of periodic organization of workshops and symposia for teachers and supervisors. According to Mbah (2014), the quality of adult education instructors must first be improved through workshops, seminars, conferences, in-service training, incentives and proper supervision in order to improve adult education. In fact, no area should be neglected. Adequate funding, infrastructures, facilities, instructional materials and properly trained facilitators are needed to realize the potentials of adult literacy programmes.

## Conclusions

This study concluded that in the perception of facilitators, government adequately provided funds, teaching aids and other infrastructures and also organized workshops for facilitators in adult literacy centres in Awka South LGA.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

1. Proper orientation programmes on the funding, equipping, training of staff and running of adult literacy centres should be organized for stakeholders so that they know who to hold responsible for what they need, among other things.
2. Successive government should continue to adequately finance Adult Education Programmes.
3. Host communities and LGAs hosting adult literacy centres should ensure that each centre gets its dues and that whatever is provided is properly maintained.
4. Other sources of fund should be explored in case successive governments fail to live up to expectation so that there will be sustainability of adequate supply of funds for the needs of adult education centres towards the realization of full potentials of adult and non-formal education.

## Suggestions for Further Studies

1. A follow up study can be carried out to find out the perception of other stake holders such as staff of agency in charge of adult literacy, representatives of non-governmental organizations involved in adult literacy and host communities on how best to partner in running literacy centres in Anambra State.
2. A study can be carried out to determine strategies for sustaining adequate funding of adult literacy centres.

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