

## **Comparative analysis of Male and Female participation in Adult Basic Literacy Programme in Borno State.**

**By Dr. Amina Sanda\*<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Continuing Education and Extension Services University of Maiduguri,*

### **ABSTRACT**

Despite the effort made by Nigerian Government in balancing the rate of illiteracy among its citizen, there is still a major challenge face by the Ministry of Education in combating or reducing this menace. The issue of gender inequality has pose a treat leading to a wide variation between adult male and female in literacy rate across location, most especially in rural area. This study was designed to compare and analyze the Participation of Both male and female into Adult Basic Literacy Programme in Borno State. The study found that the male participation was by far 59% more than that of the female counterparts. The study also found out that Adult Basic Literacy Programme had positive influence on the minds of the participants. This research has concluded that there is much difference between the participation of male/female in basic literacy programme in Bonro state.

**Keywords:** Male and Female participation in Adult Basic Literacy Programme in Borno State.

### **Introduction**

The majority of people in the world today who cannot read and write are assumed to be women. Though the gender gap will have narrowed considerably by the year 2015 as suggested by UNESCO, although still more than half the female population in several of the poorest countries are still illiterate Abadzi, (1994). Women in these areas of the world are also concentrated in the poorest paid, most vulnerable areas of work, usually in the informal sector. They often lack the opportunity to develop new skills to improve their standard of living, through vocational training programmes or basic education. This paper aims to provide an analysis of male and female participation into Adult Basic Literacy programmes. The gap between adult women and men literacy rates worldwide is gradually narrowing (11.1% in 2000) but is still projected to reduce only to 8.1% by the year 2015. The picture on youth literacy is however more optimistic due to increasing access to schooling, with a projected 4.2% gap in literacy rates by 2015 (92.5% male, 88.3% female). Interestingly, in Latin America and the Caribbean, there were more literate women than men in the 15-24 year age range in the figures collected for the year 2000 (gender gap of – 0.6%), reflecting the high participation of girls in school education.

Within the regions discussed above, there are however great differences in the gender gap between the countries included in the aggregate rates: for example, within North Africa and the Arab states, Qatar (-5.7% by 2015) and United Arab Emirates (-7.7%) show a very favourable picture for women, as compared with Iraq (30.6% gap, only 29.1% female literacy rate) and Yemen (30% gap). Given similar religious and cultural values of these four countries, it would seem to be

the contrasting economic conditions and political stability that have influenced the access of women to education in Qatar and UAE, as well as demographic factors (large numbers of illiterate men from poorer areas of the world, who migrate to Qatar in search of work). As Maamouri (1999) pointed out in relation to the Arab region, breaking down illiteracy rates further into age-specific rates reveals that the highest proportion of illiterate women in this region are in the over-fifty age bracket – suggesting even higher numbers of young women are literate. Similar disparities between countries can be found in the Central and Eastern Europe region: Turkey (10.5% gap) and Albania (8.4% gap) stand out as unlikely to have attained gender equality in adult literacy rates by the year 2015, in contrast to all the other countries in this region. Within sub-Saharan Africa, it is also evident that there are great variations – from the lowest female literacy rates worldwide (Niger, 16.2%, Mali, 27.4%) to several countries with over 90% female literacy rates (Botswana, Congo, Lesotho, Zimbabwe), and Namibia where more women than men will be literate in 2015 (91.5% female, 89.9% male).

In the 1980s and early '90s, several key studies evaluated the “barriers” facing women who wanted to participate in literacy programmes. Similar to the factors influencing girls’ attendance at school, the obstacles identified included women’s lack of time and heavy domestic workload, distance to classes/centers, male teachers, opposition from other family members (particularly husbands) and poor linkages with other development inputs, such as income generating programmes (Ballara 1991, Lind 1989 and 1990, Bown 1990). Over the past decade, a broader understanding of what ‘literacy’ means to individual women in differing social, political and cultural contexts (see last year’s EFA Global Monitoring Report, p 60, Box 2.9) has led to a realisation that terms such as “barriers” and “motivation” can conceal a deeper analysis of why women drop out from programmes. In particular, illiteracy does not necessarily carry the stigma associated in many developed countries: Kell’s (1996) research in South Africa revealed how older women maintained positions of authority and were respected for their knowledge within their communities, without learning literacy. By contrast, Rockhill found in Los Angeles Hispanic communities, that men felt threatened by their wives learning to read and write, as they could no longer see them as “illiterate whores” to be dominated in the home (Rockhill, 1994: 245). Understanding around what being literate or illiterate means to women and men in specific cultural contexts is thus a crucial first step when setting up literacy programmes aiming to empower women.

Many development programmes have used women’s literacy classes as an ‘entry point’ to other interventions, such as family planning, savings and credit groups or maternal/child health programmes. Empirical research evidence, demonstrating a link between women’s literacy rates and health improvement (notably child mortality rates, Caldwell, 1993 or fertility rates, Levine et al, 1991, 1999, Cochrane, 1979) has lent weight to the idea that literacy can enable women to be more efficient in their roles within the family. Burchfield’s study in Nepal (2002a), for example, concluded that women’s literacy programmes had a positive impact on indicators including children’s education, family and reproductive health, and participation in income-earning activities. The policy objective for promoting women’s literacy influences both the kind of literacy curriculum provided and sometimes the reasons why women attend such classes. In many NGO programmes in Nepal, obtaining a loan or access to skills training courses can be dependent on attendance at a literacy course for six months beforehand (Robinson-Pant, 2001). In such circumstances, women may (understandably) not be motivated to learn to read and write for any particular purpose, other than to gain access to other development inputs. These strong instrumental policy objectives for promoting women’s literacy have also led to a majority of literacy programmes being based around women’s reproductive role in the home. The popular “family literacy” approaches in both developed and developing country contexts, for example, often introduce new literacy practices

(such as “baby record books”) that will support women as mothers (Manandhar and Leslie, 1994 describe such a family literacy programme run by Save the Children USA in Nepal). Many literacy class textbooks are more didactic in their approach – aiming to instruct women on better health and hygiene practices through stories with a message. Based on the assumption that women can learn new ideas more effectively once they can access printed material, such primers often equate illiteracy with ignorance. Dighe’s (1995) survey of women’s literacy primers in India revealed that they presented a stereotypical image of the illiterate woman who was unable to adopt hygienic practices in her home until she became literate.

### **Male Participation in Adult Literacy Programmes**

In most parts of the world today, men are under-represented in the adult literacy programmes and other community education activities. Women substantially outnumber men in the full range of adult learning programmes. In Ireland, for instance, a report from the Department of Education and Science (2008) emphasises the fact that the overall participation of men in Adult and Continuing Education remains low “...and this phenomenon continues to pose a big challenge for the nation and the world at large” (O’Connor, 2007: 50). In Ireland’s Back to Education Initiative (BTEI), a total of 25,860 participated in BTEI funded programmes in 2007 out of which 77% were women and 23% were men. In as much as this shows an increase on the 2006 figure of 24,728 participants, the male-female ratio for 2007 shows an on-going decline in the participation rate of males. In summary, the figures of male participation were 25% in 2005, 24% in 2006 and 23% in 2007. This decline does raise concern for male participation and highlights the need for specific strategies to attract men into the programmes (O’Connor, 2008).

Zambia’s situation is no different in this regard. The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) in the GRZ (2009:17) Annual Report shows the following figures of the participants in adult literacy classes nationwide:

- i). Total number of adult participants: 37,648
- ii). Female participants : 25,511
- iii). Male participants : 12,137

For Southern Province in particular, being the province of interest in this study, the figures in the year 2009 were as follows:

- i). Total number of participants : 3,958
- ii). Female participants : 2,756
- iii). Male participants : 1,283

### **Barriers to Male Participation in Adult Literacy Programmes**

Owen (2000) identifies a three strand conceptual framework in the research literature within which the complex mix of inter-related barriers to adults’ accessing and participating in education and training can be analysed.

#### **i. Dispositional Barriers**

These have to do with an individual’s feelings, thoughts and attitudes to him or herself and to any learning activities. For many reasons, some men are very difficult to attract into a structured learning environment. This could be due to the past experiences and poor literacy skills which they may be exposed to, and the male culture which portrays any adult learning as a female pursuit and

not fitting with a masculine image (Owen, 2000). Corridan (2002), in his study of adult literacy provision, identified barriers which included negative school experiences such as physical punishment and internalizing feelings of inadequacy brought on by teachers. Another barrier he identified was a strong sense of embarrassment and shame at returning to any learning as an adult.

To this, Owen (2000) submits that lack of confidence and low esteem are key dispositional barriers to male participation in adult literacy. The traditional view of men in society as patriarch and breadwinners endures. Many men may not identify benefits of adult learning due to the culture that men should be the ones to go out to work in order to provide for their families, in line with the traditionally assigned gender roles. Consequently, they may struggle to see its relevance in their own lives.

## **ii. Institutional Barriers**

Institutional barriers may arise from realities and perceptions in relation to local image, access policies, costs, physical environment, learning options, pedagogical practices, learning outcomes and progression opportunities of learning activities which will help better their lives. The image, ethos and physical environment, administrative and pedagogical practices of education and strategies used by training providers also discourage men from attending these programmes. In this regard, men respond positively to an approach which involves service providers who work together with them to provide integrated learning opportunities (Corridan, 2002).

## **iii. Situational Barriers**

Situational barriers refer to an individual's life situation as well as the extent to which resources such as time or money influence participation. Associated to resources, information barriers also relate to the availability, range, quality and reliability of information on adult literacy programmes (Owen, 2000). For example, in the Education Policies Progress Report (2010) report on male participation in literacy programmes, the inaccessible nature of information about adult literacy and the cost of participation were cited as barriers. Failure to portray progression routes was also suggested as a deterrent to prospective male participants wishing to work towards specific goals. The need for clear and accurate information and clear guidance to facilitate appropriate choice of causes was also highlighted.

## **Research Design**

This study adopted a Correlational design which explored the comparative analysis of male/female participation in Adult Basic Literacy Programme in Borno State. Correlation design is relevant to this study because the study sampled the opinion of respondents who have been chosen as representative of all the female adult learners in the literacy centers. It is also relevant because the variables in this study (social, and economic) are type of variables that can be studied using correlational design to determine the correlation among the factors.

## **Population and Sample**

The target population for this study consists of all 27,113 female adult learners who were enrolled in the 310 literacy centers in Borno State. One tenth of the population which according to O'cornnor (2010) is an appropriate sample size for a survey study when the population is large and the sampling distribution is fair. The study involved a sample of 2,711 subjects out of the total

target population of 27,113 male and female adult learners, husbands, and parents. Random sampling technique was used in nine local government areas out of the twenty seven local government areas of the state. The local government areas are; Maiduguri Metropolitan, konduga, Bama, Magumeri, and Mafa.

### **Research Instrument**

The main instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire, which was developed by the researcher along the 3 points Likert Scale. Documentary records on female enrolment and completion was also done to supplement the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of thirty nine items covering personal data as well as educational status, economic, and social factors. Validation of the instrument was conducted in two stages: first the researcher gave copies of the questionnaire to the supervisors and an expert in test and measurement who reviewed it and made necessary corrections, as regards the clarity and appropriateness of the questions. . The second stage was pilot testing; a pilot test was conducted using 15 (women adult learners) respondents different from the sample. A total of 15 subjects that participated in the pilot study did not participate in the main study. The pilot test conducted was computed using Pearson Product Movement Correlation and test - retest. The correlation coefficient was 0.89 which is very high. Hence the instrument was adjudged reliable.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

The researcher collected an introductory letter from the head of department and took it to the Agency for Mass Literacy where she was given a research assistant who is the Literacy organizer, together with the research assistant and the organizers from each Local government adult education centers administered the questionnaire on the spot in one week to the respondents in their various adult education centers in the nine local government areas mentioned above. The questionnaire was collected back after one week. The researcher also checked records from the institute to supplement relevant information on the questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated to the respondents who did not understand English in Hausa, Kanuri, Bura/Babur. The questionnaire distribution took one week and collection took another one week, making two weeks. The researcher along with the research assistants went to the various stations assigned to them and distribute the questionnaire, collected those filled. A total of 520 questionnaire were collected back.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The data from the questionnaire were then coded into scale and analyzed using mean, standard deviation frequency and percentages. Regression analysis was also used in other to determine the relationship among the factors as stated in the hypothesis. The coefficients obtained were tested 95% Confidence Interval to verify the level of significance at 0.05. Decision was taken at 0.05 level of significance.

Multiple regression analysis was adopted based on the fact that the study has two dependent and three independent variables that may tend to correlate with each other in multiple ways.

## Data Analysis and Results

**Table 1. Comparative analysis of Male/female participation in Basic Literacy Programme. Classes of Nigeria between 1997 - 2007**

Year	Number of classes	Male	Percentage (%)	Female	Percentage (%)	Total
2006*	283	8375	63%	4930	27%	13,305*
2007*	372	10110	73.0%	3545	25.9%	13,671*
2008	372	16855	72.7%	6305	27.2%	23,160
2009	210	16743	72.5%	6342	27.5%	23,085
2010	310	16205	72%	6091	27%	22,296
2011	310	18436	71%	7351	28%	25,787

**Tables 2: Comparative analysis of Male/female participation in post literacy Classes of Nigeria between 1997 and 2007.**

YEAR	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
1997	124819.00	171424.00	341,743.00
1998	178392.00	183912.00	391,987.00
1999	179693.00	180857.00	392,244.00
2000	189366.00	183433.00	401,958.00
2001	226152.00	222522.00	448,674.00
2002	201279.00	214591.00	415,870.00
2003	177421.00	196052.00	373,473.00
2004	175712.00	213629.00	391,987.00
2005	183485.00	226663.00	410,148.00
2006*	194350.00	222418.00	416,768.00
2007*	175724.00	210961.00	386,685.00
<b>1997 – 2007</b>	<b>2,006,393.00</b>	<b>2,226,462.00</b>	<b>4,371,537.00</b>

Source : NMEC, (2008)

The above table shows that the enrolment figure for the stated period fluctuates. The year 2001 had the highest enrolment figures (448,674.00) followed by 2006 (416,768.00) while 2002 was the next (415,870.00).

**Tables 3: Trend in the Participation of Males and Females in Post Literacy classes of Nigeria between 1997 and 2007.**

YEAR	MALE	FEMALES	TOTAL
1997	26,896.00	25,092.00	51,988.00
1998	21,492.00	28,212.00	49,704.00
1999	29,051.00	38,173.00	67,224.00
2000	32,022.00	40,710.00	72,732.00

2001	69,192.00	39,558.00	108,750.00
2002	48,629.00	50,335.00	98,964.00
2003	42,086.00	35,020.00	77,106.00
2004	44,407.00	53,646.00	98,053.00
2005	46,311.00	46,583.00	92,894.00
2006*	53,111.00	50,473.00	103,584.00
2007*	130,293.00	60,707.00	191,000.00
1997 – 2007	<b>543,490.00</b>	<b>468,509.00</b>	<b>1,011,999.00</b>

Source: NMEC, (2008)

From the above table, it can be deduced that the enrolment figures for the stipulated period fluctuates. The year 2007 had the highest enrolment figures (191,000.00) followed by 2001(108,750.00) with 2006 was the next (108,750.00).

**Tables 4: Enrolment progression of Males and Females in Vocational Education in Nigeria between 1997 and 2007.**

YEAR	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
1997	1,917	1,769	3,686
1998	1,414	2,010	3,424
1999	1,520	2,163	3,683
2000	1,650	2,246	3,896
2001	1,709	1,661	3,370
2002	992	1,784	2,776
2003	11,862	11,633	23,495
2004	23,724	23,266	46,990
2005	47,448	46,532	93,980
2006*	94,896	93,064	187,960
2007*	187,132	186,128	373,260
<b>1997 – 2007</b>	<b>374,264</b>	<b>372,256</b>	<b>746,520</b>

Source: NMEC, (2008)

Table 4.3 shows that the enrolment figure for vocational education grew at a galloping rate from 2005-2007. The year 2007 had the highest enrolment figures (373,260) followed by 2006 (187,960) while 2005 was the next (93,980).

As for Nomadic Non Formal Education; The National Commission for Nomadic Education (2009) posited that the nomadic population in Nigeria accounts for 9.4 million of which 3.1 million are school-age children. The majority of them are pastoralists (7 million), while others are migrant fisher folk and farmers. The participation of the nomads in existing formal and non-formal education programmes used to be extremely low, with the population's literacy rate ranging from 0.2% to 2.0% in 1988.

**Table 6: Determining the Significant difference between Male/Female participation in Adult Basic Literacy Programme in Bonro State**

Variables	Enrolment	Completion	Dropouts	Differences	Sig. level
Male	12,341	10,013	2328	1354	0.0123
Female	10,987	7,982	3005		

**Decision:** Since the difference that exists between the enrolment of male is greater than that of female and the value range of  $P < 0.05$  that 0.0123 and the divisible value is 1.123 which is almost 6%, we therefore accept that male participate more than female in basic literacy programme.

## Conclusion

The findings of this research have shown that despite the effort made in balancing the issue of gender equality, there is a significant difference between the participation of male/female in basic literacy programme in Bonro state.

Although some level of achievements have been attained with regards to enrolment into adult and non-formal education programmes; and literacy rates, a great task still lies ahead to ensure all adults attain adult literacy by the year 2015. There is thus the need for greater involvement and participation of all stakeholders in the education sector to ensure that all adults attain adult literacy by the year 2015.

## REFERENCES

Adenipekun, O. Rising figure of children, adult illiterates worry stakeholders in Vanguard, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2009.

Fasokun, T. (2009). Illiteracy is dragging Nigeria backwards. In The Sun News On-line Monday, January 5, Retrieved from

<http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/news/abujareports/2009/jan/05/abujareports-05-...>

Fasokun, T. & Pwol, C. (2009). Nigeria: The Current Situation within the Framework of the International Benchmarks. In DVV's Adult Education and Development No. 71.

Lind, A. & Johnston, (1990) *Adult Literacy in the Third World - A Review of Objectives and Strategies* SIDA



Mputu A. H., Vollmann, W. Brun, K., & Mcnevin, W. (2001). Literacy and Non - Formal Education In The E - 9 Countries. France, UNESCO.

Makoju, G. A. E., Obanya, Pai, Fagbulu, A., Nwangwu, R., Aderogba, F., Olapeju, O. O., Ayodele, S., Adediran, S., Ramon-Yusuf, S. B. and Ahmad, F. (2006). Nigeria Education Sector Diagnosis: A Condensed Version: A Framework for Re-engineering the Education Sector. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Education (Education Sector Analysis Unit).

National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) (2008). National Report of Nigeria submitted for the 6th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) to be hosted by Brazil in April 2009.

National Commission for Nomadic Education (2009). Selection of Effective Adult Literacy and Numeracy Programmes: Use of Radio in a Nomadic Education Programme. Available at [http://www.unesco.org/uil/literacyprogrammes/11\\_en.html](http://www.unesco.org/uil/literacyprogrammes/11_en.html) Retrieved 4/11/2009.

Olagunju, D. (2009). Illiteracy is dragging Nigeria backwards. In The Sun News On-line Monday, January 5, Retrieved from <http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/news/abujareports/2009/jan/05/abujareports-5->

Oconnor, T. (2010). *A Basic Text for Research* London: Oxford University Press.

UNESCO (1990). World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand. Paris, Author.

UNESCO (2000). The World Education Forum Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments. (26-28 April, Dakar) Paris, UNESCO.

UNESCO (2005). Education For All Global Monitoring Report. France, UNESCO.