
WOMEN'S NON-PARTICIPATION IN ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN BORNO STATE: AN ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED FACTORS

Fatimah, Abdul-Mumin Sa'ad

Department of Educational Foundation and Administration
Federal College of Education, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria.
E-mail: amsaad@yahoo.com

***Abstract:** This study is on perceived factors responsible for women non-participation in adult literacy programmes in Borno State. These factors include husbands, economic, and women social engagements. Others include socio-cultural, religious and women adult literacy programme-related problems. In this study each of these factors has been analysed in Borno State. The design for the study was a survey method. The study covered three Local Government Areas (LGA) in Borno State, which were Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC), Biu Local Government Area and Monguno Local Government Area. Each of the three Local Government Areas selected represents the Central, Northern and Southern Borno Senatorial Districts respectively. They also represented the urban, semi-urban and rural Local Government Areas of Borno State. The researcher interviewed a total of 58 participants and 310 non-participants of the Adult Basic Literacy Programmes, making a total of 368 respondents. The data collected were analyzed using simple frequencies and percentages. The findings of the study showed that husbands and economic factors were clearly the two major factors perceived as barriers responsible for women non-participation in adult literacy classes in Borno State. Other perceived barriers were culture, religion, women's social engagements, and women adult literacy-related problems such as the learning environment, learning and instructional materials, inadequate facilities in the centres, etc. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made among which include the followings; that traditional rulers, religious leaders and other influential persons should begin to re-socialize men, especially husbands, to accept the equality of women with men particularly as regards access to and participation in educational activities; that women's adult literacy classes should be reorganized so that women are not mixed with men during lessons; that Government should provide shuttle buses to take women learners to and from literacy classes; that learning materials and working tools should be provided free to women learners.*

Keywords: Adult Education, Illiteracy, Gender Inequality,

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INTRODUCTION

Everywhere in the world, there are existing problems of illiteracy and the problems are much more in developing countries like Nigeria. It was reported by United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that 41 out of every 100 people in the developing countries are illiterate (UNESCO, 1982). The persistent growth

of illiteracy in such countries is, according to the report, due to problems of poverty, social degradation and high population growth rate. In Nigeria, the situation is not different. For example, when the country attempted to eradicate illiteracy in 1981/82 still 60.0% of the country's population remain illiterates. This figure rose to 62.5% in 1983/84 (Fajoyomi, 1991). According to Fajoyomi, this increase in illiteracy rate is due to rapid growth in population.

The problem of illiteracy became even more magnified when gender factor is introduced in literacy studies. For instance, in the late 1980's 70% Nigerian female population were illiterate as against 54% male population. Similarly, the global situation of women in the adult and non-formal education sector was not encouraging at all. Umar (2002: 169) reported that UNESCO statistics in 2000 "...have shown that the proportion of women illiterates is steadily growing". Umar further observed that Mangwat and Abama (1997) reported that in 1960, 58% of the illiterates were women and by 1970 the percentage has risen to 60%. By 1985 the number of illiterates has gone up to 33 million, and by 1990 it has increased to 54 millions. Of the total increase of 54 million illiterates, 86% were women (Umar, 2002: 169). The most recent United Nation International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) report has shown a reduction in adult illiteracy rate in Nigeria by recording 72% literacy rate (UNICEF, 2010).

Even though poverty and population growth could be said to be responsible for high level of illiteracy in developing countries, they could not also on their own account for the higher rate of women illiteracy compared to men. Gender inequality in terms of rights appears crucial. It is common knowledge that women all over the world are considered and treated unequally with men (Sa'ad, 2001). It appears too that they are more seriously and regularly oppressed in traditional societies such as the African societies, including Nigeria.

In Nigeria, even the government recognizes the oppression of women and attempts have been made by the government to improve women's situation, leading to the emergence of organizations like Better Life for Rural Women, The Women Commission and The Family Support Programmes and The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Services headed by women themselves.

All these efforts notwithstanding the condition of women in Nigeria particularly that of Borno State leaves much to be desired. Their disadvantaged condition has in turn produced many perceived factors responsible for non-participation in adult basic literacy programme established to remedy the lost opportunity for education during childhood. Thus, the focus of this study is on the perceived factors responsible for women non-participation in adult basic literacy programme in Borno State. These factors include husbands, economy, and women social engagements. Others include socio-cultural, religious and women adult literacy programme-related problems. In this study each of these factors has been analyzed in Borno State.

THE CONCEPT OF ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education is a complete type of education being rendered for the development of the whole nation, more especially to those who really need it. Adult education is also an education that takes care of some categories of individual socially, economically, politically, morally and emotionally. Adult education could be rendered anywhere, anyhow and also could be for anybody at any moment. In short according to Arthur Creesh Jones quoted in Omolewa, "any instruction given to the adult would constitute adult education" (Omolewa, 1981:2). Omolewa also refers to adult education as "the term we use for adult discussion groups, particularly discussions on the facts, problems and culture of the group to which a student belongs" (Omolewa, 1981: 2-3). Arthur Creesh Jones has also defined adult education on the basis of programmes. As rightly commented by Omolewa, Arthur Creesh Jones' definition also,

...describes adult education as the education which embraces all forms of education provided for working men and women, housewives, and others who, for one reason or the other, are willing to improve the quality of their education (Omolewa, 1981: 3).

The researcher however finds UNESCO definition below as quoted in Omolewa as more comprehensive and relevant to this study, viz.:

The term adult education Covers all organized educational activities provided for people who are not in the regular school and university system and who are generally fifteen or older (In Omolewa, 1981: 3)

THE BORNO STATE EFFORTS IN PROMOTING ADULT BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION

Illiteracy has been the greatest enemy of mankind all over the world, which has for a long time been keeping people in darkness, ignorance and great confusion. High level of illiteracy has made a lot of countries underdeveloped more especially the African countries, to which Nigeria belongs.

Though illiteracy had been the greatest enemy of humanity for a long time, some form of literacy education had for a long time been in existence in northern Nigeria, particularly in Borno which was brought by Muslim traders in the fifteenth century. Omolewa (1981) for example cited a historian Ahmad Ibn Fartua, who had compiled the history of the reign of Mai Idris Alooma (1571-1603) as well as that of Imam Ali Ghaji (1472-1504), the founder of the Second Kanuri Empire, as saying that they were renowned for their interest in the reading of the Holy Qur'an, while Ngazargamu remained throughout the seventeenth century a center of learning and culture. Mai Akbar-Ibn Air (1793-1810) for example was described as an educated prince and a friend of science and religion. Omolewa (1981) further explained that the Islamic Jihad of the early nineteenth century also had an educational component as Islamic learning was

further advanced in Northern Nigeria. Similarly, He also observed that the Christian religion was also not left out in the development of literacy education in Nigeria. The author further observed that the beginning of adult literacy education could be traced to the establishment of literacy classes for adults who after work retired to these learning centers.

Religious bodies are active in the promotion of adult basic literacy education in Borno state, because there is a huge turnout of women into *islamiyya* in Maiduguri metropolitan; some attend every day, while some attend twice a week. Also there are a number of *sangaya islamiyya* schools in Borno, which is the informal *almajiri* system of Islamic education. Currently, Borno state government is making efforts to reorganize this informal system and provide necessary and essential materials for effective learning under the same traditional *mallam*, but with close supervision of the government. At the Women Development Center Maiduguri and other mass literacy centers, a lot of adult education activities are being rendered. Such activities include literacy classes, tailoring, sewing, knitting, etc. These activities are receiving attention because of the existence of a Mass Literacy Agency which was established some 18 years back to aggressively address illiteracy problem in the state. Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy, as it is called, was established by the Government on 2nd September, 1987 by edict No 10 of 1987. The Agency took off in January, 1988. Some of the functions of the Agency, as specified by section 5(1) of the edit establishing it, are seven (7) as follows:

- a) To lay down policy for mass literacy and non-formal education geared towards the overall social and economic development of the state;
- b) To organize and carry out literacy programmes in both Roman and Arabic scripts for adults in the state;
- c) To develop in adults the ability to use skills acquired to enhance their knowledge and understanding of their physical and social environment in order to improve their modes of living;
- d) To prepare and issue an annual report on mass literacy activities in the state;
- e) To devise ways and means of co-operating and integrating programmes and of mass literacy in the state;
- f) To devise ways and means of co-coordinating and integrating the formal and mass literacy system where desirable, to accredit courses, lay down equivalencies to institutions for acceptability or transference within the state;
- g) To undertake research programmes in mass literacy and pilot projects.

Over the years, the Mass Literacy Agency has added five (5) more functions to the above statutory functions (Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy Action Plan, 2006: 1), viz.:

1. To provide post literacy and Continuing Education Programmes.
2. To provide public enlightenment and awareness through the viewing centers of the agency.

3. To provide functional education for socio-economic development and equip them with generative skills.
4. To provide political education
5. To provide training programmes in the field of adult education (for adult educators and administrators) as well as vocation education (Type writing and Secretarial studies), SSCE and GCE programmes.

In order to ensure that the Agency is able to carry out the above functions successfully all over Borno, the state was subdivided into six zonal offices as provided by the Schedule I of the edit, namely: 1) Maiduguri Metropolitan Council Zone, which comprises of Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Jere, Kaga Mafa and Magumeri Local Government Areas with headquarters in Maiduguri; 2) Bama Zone, which comprises of Bama Konduga and Gwoza Local Government Areas with headquarters in Bama; 3) Askira Zone, with Askira Uba, Damboa and Chibok Local Government Areas with headquarters in Askira; 4) Biu Zone with Biu, Hawul, Kwayar-Kusar and Bayo local Government Areas with headquarters at Biu; 5) Kukawa Zone with kukawa, Mobbar, Gubio, Nganzai, Guzamala and Abadam Local Government Areas with headquarters in Kukawa, and; 6) Monguno Zone with Monguno, Marte, Dikwa, Ngala and Kala-Balge Local Government Areas with headquarters at Monguno.

All the Zonal offices are headed by senior officers on grade Level 13 and above. The six zones are further divided into Area Offices. Each of the twenty seven (27) Local Government Areas has area offices with the headquarters located at the Local Government secretariat. Each area office is headed by a senior officer on grade Level 8 and above. And in order to implement the programmes of the Agency at the grass root level, the twenty-seven (27) Area offices are further sub-divided into ninety-seven (97) supervisory areas and are headed by officers on grade level O6 and above.

PERCEIVED FACTORS IMPEDING WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

A number of factors militate against women participation in adult educational activities in Nigeria especially in Borno State. Five of them are central to this study and therefore constitute the subthemes of our literature review. These are:

1. Traditional marital life and women participation in educational activities
2. Culture and women education
3. Domestic chores and other social engagements and women participation in educational programmes
4. Women low economic capacity and participation in educational activities
5. Literacy centres and women participation in adult education programme

Traditional Marital Life and Women Participation in Educational Activities

Many different perceived factors influence women participation in adult education programmes. First, a woman's education, all over Africa including Nigeria, is seen as

unimportant because of misconceptions about women's education. Traditionally for example it is considered that is difficult for husband to control an educated woman because she will be arrogant. Similarly, the parents of a woman believes that whatever income she makes out of her education, it will only add up to her husband's income and not to her family of birth. To reinforce this believe amongst the Hausa's for example, there is a Hausa saying that equate a woman with a tall tree with its roots, stems and leaves in its house of origin, but with its shades (i.e., benefits) in another person's house – 'biciyar gidan mu, inuwar gidan woni'. The same notion exists among the Kilba. Angili (2005) for example reported that among the Kilba, a girl is only economically valuable to her family while she is unmarried, but as soon as she got married, her earnings will be added to the total earnings of her husband's. Because of all the above, educating women is traditionally considered as a waste of time and money.

Traditionally too women are considered as properties and only good at home keeping and child bearing. Thus, daughters are given out to marriage at a very early age thereby missing their early childhood formal education. Once married, her ownership has been transferred to her husband whose consent must be registered for her to participate in any adult literacy programme, which is usually not forthcoming since her role is considered to be at home.

The subordination of women to family institution and men is not peculiar to Nigeria or Africa. It is common among a number of Asian societies as well. Among the Timorese society in East Timor for example, forced/arranged marriages of the girl child are common according to a research carried out by Lester (2004: 16), viz:

After her marriage had been arranged to a cousin, the aunt was to give a buffalo or two as initial *barlake* to the baby's family. The family then had to care for her until she's old enough to marry. She had to stay at home and learn the household duties. She cannot go to school nor play outside and the parents had to control her. She had been betrothed for marriage.

The daughter could not possibly renege on this arranged marriage. If she were not to marry her cousin, her family had to pay back the *barlake* and worse, she had brought shame to her family. As vividly put by Tio Augusto:

During the Portuguese time, even if she does not want to get married to the man, I am the father, I have to beat her *so* for instance, like when the uncle and aunt are by the door, even if she doesn't want to get married with the man, and she can run away to the Jakarta, but her mother and father cannot let her leave because her parents have the obligation to her uncle and aunt. So when her aunt and uncle come, as

parents we have an obligation to give our daughter (in Lester, 2004: 16).

What is significant about this arranged marriage in the past and the story about *barlake* is how self-sacrifice and sense of duty have repeatedly been expected from the Timorese woman since birth. Obedience to the family, the guilt of bringing shame to the family and doing household chores are learned early in life. These values and norms are further reinforced in married life. Once married, it is a woman's duty to continue the "flow of life" between families. This is captured in a myth from Vemasse that emphasized the centrality of a woman's fertility in establishing and maintaining the lineage

In short, the traditional institutions and ideologies that have contributed towards the discrimination and subordination of women are, as rightly pointed out by Tiwaah (2005), the foremost factors that have been perceived to influence women participation in adult education in most African countries.

Culture and Women Education

Apart from family life tradition, religious practices have been found to be important perceived factors influencing women participation in adult education. For example, Purdah or 'kulle' which is practiced wrongly by not allowing women to go out in the day time is one good example. Corollary to this, women are not allowed to interact with men that are not their blood relations. Thus, traditional Muslim sisters were not moving freely with their male counterparts even if it was necessary for them to move in search of knowledge. Similarly, parents kept their daughters away from schooling for fear that their daughters may mix with men and get pregnant, which will bring shame and social disgrace to the family especially if the father was a traditional ruler or a title holder. Consequently, study has found that in most Muslim communities/states in Kenya and Nigeria, female enrolment and completion rates were very low. Muslim women are grossly under-represented at the secondary and tertiary levels of education (*Okojie, 2001: 12*).

With regard to culture, majority of studies found that cultural factors largely determine girls' access to education. As is well known, most African countries are patriarchal in structure, patriarchal attitudes lead to discrimination against women. Patriarchal attitudes lead to preference by parents for boys' education for the following reasons as correctly identified by *Okojie, (2001: 12)*:

- Sons become future heads of households; they inherit property and ensure continuity of the family. Education prepares them to perform these functions.
- Daughters are temporary, they get married and move to their husbands' homes while boys remain in the family. Investment in girls' education is seen as benefiting the husbands' families.
- Boys are expected to care for their parents in their old age and to assist in caring for their siblings.

Domestic Chores and Other Social Engagements and Women Participation in Educational Programmes

Domestic chores and other social engagements of women appeared to be too much for them to have enough time and energy to pursue adult education. An average woman is all the time engaged in such activities as cleaning, cooking, looking after children, attending or conducting marriage and naming ceremonies, providing care and support to sick individuals, paying condolence visits, and so on. This is a role assigned to women since childhood when they were girls as African culture prescribes domestic roles for women. In one of the Nigerian studies for example, "women stated in the focus group sessions that if a woman has only male children, her domestic work will suffer. Domestic chores such as cooking and cleaning the house which take up a lot of time are assigned to girls; girls therefore have little time for study or homework" (Okojie, 2001: 13).

Women Low Economic Capacity and participation in Educational Activities

Lack of economic power appeared to be another perceived factor responsible for women low or non participation in adult education programmes. The bread winners of most households in Africa, Nigeria inclusive, are men because women, since childhood, were not trained to be bread winners. The prerequisites knowledge and skills required to earn a living on their own were denied them. They were only trained to be mothers, housekeepers, etc, in the home under the tutelage of their husbands. In other words, they do not have the financial capacity to sponsor their adult education. Unfortunately, the financial dimension of educational policies, especially in regard to the disadvantaged adult women, is being treated, as rightly pointed out by Drake (1984:55), with lip service for quite a long time.

Literacy Centres and Women Participation in Adult Education Programme

Finally, all the perceived factors discussed above can be said to be factors external to the adult education school/environment. In-school factors may include the kind of teachers/instructors used. For example, it was found that many adult education instructors are Secondary school leavers who do not have adequate knowledge and skills required to handle adult learners. Similarly, most adult education instructors and officers are men while majority of the learners are women thereby creating some cultural and sociological problem in the programme. Other questions that need to be explored in this study to unearth the perceived factors responsible for non participation of women in adult programme in Borno State would include the following: What is the proximity of the adult programmes? Are the school and classrooms environment conducive? Are the instructors adequately and appropriately knowledgeable? Are they approachable/friendly? Are the teaching and learning materials good, appropriate and adequate?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study has adopted the feminist theory as the theoretical framework of this study mainly because it places more emphasis on gender equity which is at the heart of this study on perceived factors responsible for non participation of women in adult basic

literacy programme. In other words, it is more focused on women who are the research targets of this study. Feminism believes that different sorts of inequalities do exist between individuals and classes, but the most important inequality is gender inequality and therefore calls for the ending of gender inequalities in all its manifestations through legal and other means such as education, economic empowerment, freedom from cultural and male domination, etcetera, (Wikipedia, 2010).

It is the feminist activism that has led to many positive developments in favor of women the world over such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN, 1995) and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW), 1979. Part III, Article 10 of the Convention states that States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education. For instance, while sub-section (d) of the article stated that women should be given 'the same opportunities to benefit from scholarship and other study grants', sub-section (e) accord them 'the same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women.'

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Survey design was used for the study. Leedy (1989) defined survey design as a research design that is used to collect data from a large population or group of people. The population for this study was all the adult women in Borno State for whom the women Adult Basic Literacy Programmes was designed, irrespective of whether they are participants or non participant in adult basic literacy programmes of the state. At the time of the study the population stood at 3,680. Since the study cannot reach all of them, the study sampled 368 respondents out of the 3,680 which was 10% of the population.

To ensure spread based on the state character, the samples were first drawn from three Local Government Areas (LGAs) out of 25 LGAs of Borno State, which are Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC), Biu LGA and Monguno LGA to represent urban, semi-urban and rural LGAs respectively. These three LGAs also represent Central, Northern and Southern Borno Senatorial Districts respectively. The three LGAs also represent 50% of the Mass Literacy Zonal Offices in the state.

Secondly, from all the three LGAs, the Researcher interviewed 58 women who were participating in adult basic literacy programs of the three LGAs, whom the researcher refers to as participants – 30 came from MMC, 15 from Biu LGA and 13 from Monguno LGA.

Finally, from each of the three LGAs, a purposive sampling technique was used to sample a total of 310 women who do not participate in any adult basic literacy programme but live within the communities hosting the Adult Basic Literacy Centers. In this study the

researcher refer to these women/respondents as nonparticipant – 150 came from MMC, 100 from Biu LGA and 60 from Monguno LGA

Overall, the study ended up with a total of 368 respondents with the largest number coming from MMC (180), followed by Biu (115) and Monguno (73).

A closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from both women participants and non participants in adult basic literacy programme. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections, A and B. Section A covered the bio-data of the respondents while section B covered items on the five main areas of the study, namely: husbands, economic factors, women social engagements, socio-cultural and religious factors, and women adult literacy programme-related problems. It took three months to conclude the data collection.

FINDINGS

The data collected were analyzed using frequencies and simple percentages. The variables analysed were five perceived factors responsible for non participation of women in adult basic literacy programmes, namely: husbands, economic, social engagements, culture and religion, and adult basic literacy programme-related problems. A research question was formulated on each of the variables to guide analysis. Simple frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data. The results of the analysis were presented in tables 4.1 to 4.5 in the next section of the paper.

Research Question 1: What is the perception of women on husbands as barriers responsible for women non participation in adult basic literacy programme in Borno State?

Table 4.1: Husband's Bias as Perceived Barriers Responsible for Women Non Participation in Adult Basic Literacy Programme

Husband's Bias		Respondents and Responses			
		Participants		Non-Participants	
		Freq.	%		%
Basic literacy induces arrogance	SA/A	54	93.1	249	80.3
	D/SD	3	5.2	58	18.7
	UND	1	1.7	3	0.9
		58	100.00	310	100.00
Basic literacy is time-wasting	SA/A	44	75.8	275	88.7
	D/SD	10	17.2	34	10.9
	UND	4	6.9	1	0.3
		58	100.00	310	100.00
Husband discouragement	SA/A	46	79.3	260	83.8
	D/SD	11	18.9	45	14.5
	UND	1	6.8	5	1.6
		58	100.00	310	100.00

The table 4.1 presents responses to three major biases by husbands against wives as barrier to women participation. The first kind of bias considered is that husbands believe adult

basic literacy will make their spouse arrogant to which 93.1% and 80.3% of participants and non-participants in adult basic literacy programme respectively answered in the affirmative. In other words, an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that husbands believe adult basic literacy will make their spouses arrogant. The strength of these responses showed the mindset of Nigerian and African males. No thanks to a patriarchy that sees the female as not more than a piece of property.

The second item considered under this factor was the thinking of husbands that women adult basic literacy is a waste of time – 75.8% participants and 88.8% non participants agreed that there exists this kind of mind set among husbands. The researcher has earlier on discussed the influence of gender considerations in determining rights that are available to girls and women. And it is this view that the male is superior, better, stronger, wiser, etc, than the female that is predominant in the society. A man's world they say. One would have thought that the various organs of government charged with overseeing the affairs of the educational sector would have embarked on a serious re-orientation of men and husbands in the country. Marriage is not slavery/servitude; women have as much rights as men in the marriage contract. And come to think of it, men are actually cheating themselves by not educating their wives.

The third item considered under this factor was whether men do verbally or otherwise discourage women from participating in adult basic literacy programmes, and 79.3% participants and 83.8% non participants confirmed the tendency of husband to openly or sublimely discourage their spouses from participating in adult basic literacy programmes. This is another confirmation of the negative role men have played so far in the education of their wives. Of course men use money tactics to prevent their wives from acquiring western education.

In conclusion, the data analysed in this sub-section clearly indicated that husbands are to a large extent barriers to women participation into adult basic literacy programmes as confirmed by participants and non participants alike.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of women on economic factors as barriers responsible for women non participation in adult basic literacy programme in Borno State?

Table 4.2: Economic Factors as Perceived Barriers Responsible for Women Non Participation in Adult Basic Literacy Programme

Economic Factor		Respondents and Responses			
		Participants		Non-Participants	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Transportation problem	SA/A	38	65.5	240	77.4
	D/SD	18	31.0	67	21.6
	UND	2	3.4	3	0.9
		58	100.00	310	100.00
Money for materials	SA/A	35	60.3	280	90.3
	D/SD	22	37.9	27	8.7
	UND	1	1.7	3	0.9
		58	100.00	310	100.00
Income earning activities	SA/A	45	77.5	256	82.6
	D/SD	12	20.6	50	16.1
	UND	1	1.7	4	1.3
		58	100.00	310	100.00

The first item considered under economic factors as barriers to women participation in adult basic literacy was lack of transport money. Consequently, majority of participants (65.5%) as well as non participants (77.4%) agreed that it is a serious barrier. These figures show that transport fare to and from adult basic literacy venues is indeed one of the economic factors that negatively influence women's participation in adult literacy programmes. In recent times the cost of Petrol and Diesel in the country has further increased the cost of transport. In spite of various public transportation programmes it is still costly to move around major cities and towns in Nigeria, Borno inclusive. Undoubtedly such things like steady transport fee or highly subsidized or even free transportation are vital to female participation in adult basic literacy programmes. More so, when many men do not just give lift to a woman without making passes at her.

The second item is lack of money to purchase materials for such activities as knitting, sewing, tie and dye, catering, etcetera. Again, majority of participants (60.3%), and most of the non participants (90.3%) believe that this was a serious hindrance. At this juncture, one needs to ask what about the billions of naira that has been voted and appropriated for these Adult Basic Literacy Programmes? Where are the National Directorate of Employment, the Industrial Training Fund, National Board for Technical Education, and the Ministries of Labour and Productivity? How could one be productive without working tools? How could one learn a trade but at the end of training have no equipments to practice his skills? The questions seem infinite / unending.

The third item considered under economic factors was women's preoccupation with income earning activities to supplement family income. On this issue most of participants (77.5%), and non participants (82.6%) agreed that it was indeed a serious economic hindrance. Thus, one could say this factor (pre-occupation with supplementing family income) is an important factor responsible for women non-participation in adult basic literacy. This is not surprising for recently the World Food Agency, a department of Food and Agricultural Organization parastatal of the United Nations, predicted that over a

billion people will need food aid in 2010. The percentage of world population living in hunger is increasing largely due to more people losing their jobs one way or another.

It is very clear that economic factors are indeed barriers to women's participation in Adult basic Literacy programme in Borno State, Nigeria, as confirmed by the responses of both participants and the non participants of the programmes.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of women on social engagement as barriers responsible for women non participation in basic literacy programme in Borno State?

Table 4.3: Social Engagements as Perceived Barriers Responsible for Women Non - Participation in Adult Basic Literacy Programme

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS		RESPONDENTS AND RESPONSES			
		PARTICIPANTS		NON-PARTICIPANTS	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Domestic activities & Attendance	SA/A	43	74.1	282	90.9
	D/SD	13	22.4	27	8.7
	UND	2	4.4	1	0.3
		58	100.00	310	100.00
Domestic activities & Performance	SA/A	44	75.8	270	87.0
	D/SD	13	22.4	36	11.6
	UND	1	1.7	4	1.3
		58	100.00	310	100.00
Entertainment media accessibility	SA/A	39	67.2	244	78.7
	D/SD	17	29.3	64	20.6
	UND	2	3.4	2	0.6
		58	100.00	310	100.00

As can be seen in Table 4.3, three items relating to the variable social engagement as a factor responsible for women non participation in adult basic literacy programme were examined. Regarding the first item, i.e., whether domestic activities hinder women's participation in adult basic literacy programmes, majority of the participants (74.1%) and non participants of the programmes (90.9%) agreed that domestic activities is a preoccupation of women that seriously hinders them from participation in adult basic literacy programmes. These figures suggest that domestic activities take large portion of the females time on a daily basis, for Imam *et al* (1985) has argued that in Nigeria, important labour activities like gathering firewood, cooking, washing, training her kids, cleaning, fetching water, grinding grains, tending domestic animals, etcetera, are all done by the female folks. It is no wonder that the woman has little time for education. In spite of these men are still assumed to be stronger and breadwinners than the females. This is clearly an assumption bereft of the truth and is not supported by facts.

The second item considered under this variable has to do with the extent to which domestic chores prevent adult women learners embarking on maximum production of vocational materials such as weaved, knitted, sewed materials etcetera. Again, majority participants (75.8%) and non participants (87.0%) of the programmes agreed to a large extent that domestic chores were indeed a hindrance to women's maximum productivity

in adult basic literacy programmes. This clearly shows that domestic activities constitute a stumbling block to women effective participation in the production of income earning products at the centre.

The third item considered under social engagements is accessibility to entertainment media, both visual and audio. Majority of participants (67.2%) and non participants (78.7%) of the programmes agreed that this item constitute much hindrance to women adult basic literacy enrolment and effective participation. This is not surprising knowing the importance women attach to watching films, and other soap operas, and listening to variety of music from their radios. With radio and television in almost every home, one would tend to agree with the opinion of the respondents on this very issue.

Research Question 4: What is the perception of women on socio-cultural and religious factors as barriers responsible for women non participation in basic literacy programme in Borno State?

Table 4.4: Cultural and Religious Factors as Perceived Barriers Responsible for Women Non-Participation in Adult Basic Literacy Programme

Cultural And Religious Factors		Respondents and Responses			
		Participants		Non-Participants	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Woman place in the Kitchen	SA/A	46	79.3	268	86.4
	D/SD	9	15.5	39	12.5
	UND	3	5.1	3	0.9
		58	100.00	310	100.00
Kulle/Purdah	SA/A	37	63.8	280	81.6
	D/SD	20	34.5	36	11.6
	UND	1	1.7	2	0.6
		58	100.00	310	100.00
Mixing men and women	SA/A	38	65.5	280	90.0
	D/SD	10	17.2	28	1.0
	UND	2	3.4	2	9.0
		58	100.00	310	100.00

The first item considered under this variable is the traditional idea that the woman's place is in the kitchen, being one of the perceived factor in the problems faced by women in adult basic literacy. As table 4.4 shows, majority of participants (79.3%) and non participants (86.4%) of the programmes agreed that this traditional believe is still predominant and constitutes a big hindrance to women participation in adult basic literacy. In other words, men, in-laws and the society in general believe that the place of a woman is in the kitchen. This belief is based on the false superiority complex of the male over the female gender, and it is the influence of this wrong perception that has trickled down into female education. But we all know that women are not necessarily kitchen objects. The second item examined under this variable is kulle/purdah. Majority of participants (63.8%) and non participants (81.6%) of the programmes agreed that kulle/purdah constituted one of the impediments to women participation in adult basic literacy programmes. This is logical because Islam remains the dominant religion in all the

three Local Government Areas sampled. Such Islamic practices as the *purdah*, it is the belief that women must be seen and heard only when it is absolutely necessary. This practice, can, without proper guidance, make it difficult for women to increase their participation in adult basic literacy programmes. The third item considered under this variable is the issue of mixing men and women in the same environment as learning go on. Again, majority of the participants (65.5%) and most of the non participants (90.0%) agreed that this practice negatively affects women’s participation in adult literacy programme. This shows that proximity of women to men during lessons as an important factor that impedes increased participation of women in adult basic literacy programmes. Thus, mixing male and female learners in adult basic literacy programmes robs the learning environment of the freedom, innocence, adventure and naivety which have become the hall marks of a positive learning environment. ‘

Research question 5: What is the perception of women on adult basic literacy programme-related problems as barriers responsible for women non participation in basic literacy programme in Borno State? This question had been answered in table 4.5 as indicated below.

Table 4.5: Adult Literacy Programme-Related Problems as Perceived Barriers Responsible for Women Non-Participation in Adult Basic Literacy Programme

Adult Literacy Programme-Related Problems		Respondents and Responses			
		Learners		Public	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Poor learning environment	SA/A	46	79.3	285	91.9
	D/SD	11	18.9	24	7.7
	UND	1	7.7	1	0.4
		58	100.00	310	100.00
Lack of instructional materials	SA/A	49	84.5	282	91.0
	D/SD	8	13.7	26	8.4
	UND	1	1.7	2	0.6
		58	100.00	310	100.00
Inadequate facilities	SA/A	48	82.7	284	91.6
	D/SD	8	13.7	25	8.1
	UND	2	3.4	1	0.3
		58	100.00	310	100.00

As can be seen from the table (Table 4.5), the first item considered is the issue of conducive learning environment. Majority of participants (79.3%) and most of the non participants (91.9%) agreed that lack of conducive learning environment in Adult Basic Literacy centres is a stumbling block to women participation.

The second item is on the issue of the dearth/scarcity of instructional materials like sewing and knitting machines, dryers for hair dressing, baking and cooking equipments as a hindrance to women participation, and most of participants (84.5%) and non participants (91.0%) agreed that this issue constituted a serious hindrance to women participation in adult basic literacy programmes. These figures show that facilities in adult basic literacy centres are adjudged as being grossly inadequate. Women literacy should go

beyond reading and writing. Since the final goal of female literacy is emancipation through economic, political and social empowerment, it becomes very important to ensure the provision of adequate and functional instructional materials to various centres of adult basic literacy programmes in the state.

The third item considered is on facilities available at adult basic literacy centres, and most participants (82.7%) and non participants (91.6%) agreed that this is a serious barrier to women participation. This is not surprising knowing that the state of corrupt practices in the country does impact on the kind of facilities provided to the citizens. Some facilities are out dated, inferior or non functional. The vogue is to award bogus contracts to fake contractors who will supply low standard equipments and less in number so that very high profits could be made. Even regular schools cannot boast of adequate facilities let alone ad hoc school system like adult education. We know that the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has been on strike severally on the issue of the poor state of infrastructure within the country's educational sector.

DISCUSSIONS OF MAJOR FINDINGS

It needs to be restated at this juncture that this research project is an attempt at an understanding of the perceived factors responsible for women non participation in adult basic literacy programmes in Borno state with samples drawn from three Local Government Councils of Borno state and data collected at two levels, i.e., women participants (i.e., learners) and non participants in the adult basic literacy programmes. Five dimensional factors emerged as having been responsible for non participation of women in adult basic literacy programmes in the state. They included:

1. Husbands as barriers responsible for women non-participation;
2. Economic factors as barriers responsible for women non-participation;
3. Social engagement as barriers responsible for women non-participation;
4. Culture and religion as barriers responsible for women non-participation, and;
5. Women adult basic literacy programme-related problems as barriers responsible for women non participation.

Consequently, the summary and discussions of the findings in this chapter were organized along the five dimensions listed above. Husbands as barriers responsible for women non participation is a major factor that emerged from the data collected from participants and non-participants. Responses from these groups show that husbands are indeed a serious hindrance to their wives education; or participation in adult basic literacy classes. However this hindrance is not overt but covert and secrete for most men will not openly come out to denounce women education let alone that of their wives for fear of being termed male chauvinists and egoists. But such comments or statement as "educating a girl child is a waste of time, money and energy"; or "boys are more likely to finish their education than girls"; or "let her go and finish her studies in her husband's house", are some of the tricks employed by men to deny girl child and women the right to education.

Furthermore, most of the country's technocrats in the educational sector are men before and after independence in 1960 you will understand why the girl-children and women education remained at the foundational level. One of Nigeria prolific females' novelists Buchi Emecheta has, in her novels, *The Bride Price* (1976); *The Slave Girl* (1977) and *The Joy of Motherhood* (1979) aptly captured the dynamics of gender relations in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. In fact, it is on record that the manuscript of *The Bride Price* (1976) was once burned by the author's husband. Again, one of the country's foremost female mathematicians and the first female vice chancellor, Grace Alele Williams, was beaten to pulps when she was awarded a Ph.D from the University of Lagos in 1974. The poor woman had to run for cover. Her husband then accused her of sleeping around for academic accolades. It seems to me that men are scared of being seen to play second fiddle to women. This fear is so real that some men use all sorts of tactics to belittle the abilities or potentialities of women. Thus they use even religion to frustrate women's claim to gender equality with men. In the socialization of men they are brainwashed into thinking that they are superior to women and so they (men) do all they could to keep women in bondage.

An economic factor as barriers responsible for women non-participation is the second group of perceived factors that hinder women's participation in adult basic literacy programmes. Component variables of this factor included mainly women's inability to transport themselves to and from literacy centres, and their inability to procure learning materials and working tools. Responding, participants and non-participants are of the opinion that women could scarcely afford to raise these little sums to see their education through. If as cheap as adult basic literacy programmes are, some women still cannot afford to pay their way through, then the level of poverty among women could be better imagined. It is clearly shown that, economic factors constitute huge hindrance to women's participation in adult basic literacy programmes.

The economic plights of women are worsened because a lot of the time men see women as object of sexual satisfaction and nothing more. For example, women looking for jobs are prone to various kinds of sexual harassment and intimidation. Hence many of them became frustrated and some even take to prostitution covertly and overtly - those that have some morality left in them go under cover while those that have passed the edge do it brazenly/openly. But prostitution comes with its own risks of sexually transmitted disease, violence, and various forms of abuses, which make the women worse than before.

Eventually successive government has come out with various poverty eradication programmes targeted at women such as *Better Life for Rural Women in the 1980s*, *Family Economic Advancement Programme*, *Family Support Programme in the 1990s*, etc. Yet, women's lots have not been improved economically. For no sooner are these programmes launched than men hijacked them. Consequently, voted funds were mismanaged and misappropriated and the aims and objectives of those programmes

defeated. It is therefore not surprising that the lots of women seem not to improve in spite of billions of Naira spent.

A social engagement as barriers responsible for women non participation is the third dimensional component that emerged from collected data at the participants' and non participants' levels. Responses from representative sample of both groups show that women are so much engrossed in one type of domestic chores or another that they have no time left for studies. As Imam *et al.* (1985) has noted, women in Nigeria are wont to cook, clean, collect fire wood, hawk, grind grains, farm, tend to domestic animals and at night are expected to provide outlets for men to let out their bottled up libido. Don't forget it is these same women that are saddled with the proper socialization of the children. This is not to forget other social engagements like attending neighbors' naming ceremonies, burials, marriages, etc. It is therefore not surprising that women have little or no time to study or attend adult basic literacy programmes. Thus, it is safe to say that the myriad of social activities engaged in by Nigerian and Borno women make it almost impossible for them to participate in adult basic literacy programmes.

Culture and religion as barriers responsible for women non participation is the fourth broad dimensional component of the data garnered from participants and the non participants. The general submission is that cultural and religious factors help to prevent women from participating in adult basic literacy programmes. No thanks to negative comments and nuances on the issue of women education – some mockery and allegation of prostitution against working / educated women and a skewed mentality that views educated women as arrogant that contribute a lot to women non-participation in adult basic literacy programme.

Culturally, women are blamed for all the ills of the family, community and even the world. Women are expected to be quiet and docile almost like a statue. Yet they are humans with feelings and emotions which needs expressions. It is therefore no wonder that when their frustration boils up they act almost irrationally without adequate planning or foresight. Thus, some have enrolled in adult basic literacy classes without taking adequate thoughts of the logistics. Hence, they either abandoned the programme midway or go through it haphazardly, and at the end, have nothing to show for it.

Women adult basic literacy programme-related problems as barriers responsible for women non participation is the fifth and final dimension/component of the collected information from participants and non-participants. Adult basic literacy programme in Borno State is faced with many problems, touching on these three major ones: absence of conducive learning materials, inadequate or even lack of instructional materials and inadequate facilities in the adult basic literacy centres. All these have combined to make the programme very unattractive to women – both participants and non participants of the programmes. Thus, the image the programme had built for itself over the years is one of education at the last resort. Hence most of the learners as well as their tutors are past

their prime so they seem to be learning out of necessity. Not really being enthusiastic about the programme and its ability to impact new ideas to them, ideas that may improve their lives via improved skills and improved job opportunities and income.

CONCLUSION

The study sought to examine the perceived factors as barriers responsible for women non participation in adult basic literacy programmes in Borno State. It is very clear that all the major variables and items measured in this study constituted serious barriers responsible for women non participation in adult basic literacy programmes in Borno State, both from the perspectives of adult learners (i.e., the participants) and the non participants. These perceived factors are husbands, economic, cultural, religious, women's social engagement and a number of adult basic literacy programme's related problems.

Under theoretical framework, the study adopted as its theoretical framework the Feminist theory, which believes that different sorts of inequalities do exist between individuals and classes, but the most important inequality is gender inequality and therefore calls for the ending of gender inequalities in all its manifestations. The study adopted the feminist theoretical framework because it places more emphasis on gender equality. In other words, it is more focused on women who are the research targets of this study. It should be stated at this juncture that it is the feminist activism that has led to many positive developments in favour of women the world over such as the Beijing Conference on women and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW), 2004. Part III, Article 10 of the Convention states that States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education. For instance, while sub-section (d) of the article stated that 'the same opportunities to benefit from scholarship and other study grants', sub-section (e) stated that:

the same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women.

In conclusion, it is safe to say that many factors have been perceived as factors responsible for women's non participation in adult basic literacy programmes in Borno state, and that these myriad of factors that have been established in this study will require serious institutional and attitudinal changes to correct. In the next/final section, the study offers some solutions which the researcher feels will reduce the negative impact of these factors on women's enrolment in adult basic literacy programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are germane/apt.

1. Traditional rulers, religious leaders and other influential persons should begin to re-socialize men, especially husbands, into accepting the equality of women with men especially as regards access and participation in educational activities.
2. Government should provide buses to take women learners to and from literacy centres and allowances be given to the women who participated in the adult basic literacy programme by the state and local governments.
3. All poverty reduction and eradication programmes should be headed by women of proven integrity so that women can benefit maximally from the programmes.
4. Learning materials and working tools should be provided free to women participants.
5. Women's adult basic literacy programmes and lessons should be reorganized so that women are not mixed with men while undergoing the programmes.

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