

# Factors Influencing Low Level of Women Participation in Literacy Programme in Maiha Local Government Area of Adamawa State

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## Abstract

This study was designed to determine the extent to which poverty, gender stereotyped, socio-cultural belief and lack of awareness influence low level of women participation in literacy programme in Maiha Local Government Area of Adamawa State. Survey designed was adopted for the study and a sample consistent of three hundred (300) women which were randomly selected from the entire population of women that were participating and those that are dropped out from literacy programme. Four objectives were formulated and four corresponding research questions were raised to guide the study. Twenty itemed questionnaire were used to collect the relevant data. Data collected were analysed using frequency and percentage distribution. The results of the study revealed that poverty, socio-cultural belief, gender stereotyped and lack of awareness were the major factors that contributed to the low level of women participation in literacy programme. Discussed base on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made: Women should be self-employed, by enhancing them to acquire skills of knitting and sewing. ii. Enlightenment campaign on the importance of women education should be carried out by the government and iii. Gender discrimination should be discharge so that women can contribute in the development of the community and the nation at large.

## Introduction

Education is a cornerstone for sustainable development. It is a fulcrum around which the quick development of economic, political, sociological and human resources of any country revolves. It is the catalyst that increases the impact of other investments in health, nutrition, family planning, agriculture, industry and infrastructure that the nation can make quick of its economic and political development (World Bank, 1997).

Education is an instrument per excellence for effective national development (NPE 2004) as well as a dynamic instrument of change, it is also the basis for the full promotion and improvement of the status of women by improving their living standard. It is the starting point for women advancement in different human endeavour. It is also the basic tool that should be given to women in order to fulfill their role as full members of the society.

Statistically, women constitute a significant proportion of the general population of the world with the highest percentage and are expected to contribute their quota, and as such any development programme that affect women affect the entire population, because they constitute more than half of the population. Unfortunately majority of them cannot read and write. Therefore, basic literacy should be acquired by women. (UNESCO, 1986) attributes at the low level of enrolment of women in education in Nigeria, due to discrimination based on sex, Nigerian women face a lot of constraints and inhabitation which militates against their personal development and their role in national development.

The World population (1995) states that in many societies, women are still considered less valuable than men. The Nigerian Government in (2005) established the MDG's programme to address the needs of women and their exclusion from the benefit of development and also to provide gender equality, and despite all these efforts by Nigerian Government, women are still limited in accesses to schooling.

The relatives low participation of women folk in development efforts have become a global concern. It is not surprising that institutes have been established by the government and nongovernmental organization (NGOS) across the world to address the backwardness of women and related issues. Nigerian women have been left behind in many field of human endeavour including education and educationally based occupations. Traditional, socially and cultural attitudes are all loaded against Nigerian women.

Out (2008) opined that Nigerian women contribute to development in many ways, but this contribution is not the maximum as their work has tendered to be confined to the traditional tasks utilizing primitive technology in the face of rapid technological innovation and development.

The need to change the perception of women status has become imperative, where about half of the population of the world are faced with several challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, HIV and AIDS,

environmental degradation, violent and conflict. Therefore Nigerian women as a group of social actors have tremendous capacity of human resources and if Nigerian government is to benefit from women's contribution, particular needs of women must be met to overcome the factors influencing their low level of participation in education and limiting their progress.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There are lots of socio-cultural factors hindering women participating in development efforts in the society, some of these factors stem from the patriarchal ideology of the society about women's roles and cultural beliefs which have created lots of backwardness of women by way of gender inequality, low level of education, poverty, family, domestic commitment, location and time of literacy programme being unsuitable. According to Kabeer in Agbalajobi (2008), gender inequality is one of the pervasive forms of inequality, because it is present in most society. Similarly, Odufawa and Dosumu (2008) emphasized that lack of education among women is a problem that hinders women contribution to societal development, as low educational and professional attainment render them poorly equipped mentally into the male dominated world of decision making and competition.

Poverty is one of the major factor hindering women from participating in any educational programme. Women in Maiha Local Government area are restricted to many educational activities, this is because of the socio-cultural belief, low level of education and lack of awareness on the importance of women education. To them, educating a woman is a waste of resources, and so they prefer the women to stay at home because the role of a woman is always in the kitchen, even to fetch water is the duty of the male children and the male child is regarded as the superior in the house.

As observed by the researcher, most of the women in Maiha local government especially in the rural areas are ignorant of the importance of women education because they believe their role is only at home, that's why as early as 12 years of age they will give out their female children's hand in marriage. And because of these, women are still the poorest in the world. Adeniran (2008), opined that women poverty is a violation of their human right to life and well being such as food, adequate housing and a safe healthy environment. Similarly Obbo (2005), as cited in Adeniran (2008), noted that HIV and AIDS epidemic has under scored that gender insensitive policies undermined development. Rufai (2005), claims that gender stereotyping based on the cultural belief are not in favour of women. Against this background, that the study is designed to assess the extent to which poverty, gender, socio-cultural and lack of awareness influence low level of women participation in basic literacy programme in Maiha local government area.

### **Purpose of the Study**

1. The extent to which poverty influences low level of women participation in literacy programme.
2. The extent to which gender stereotype influences low level of women participation in basics literacy programme.
3. The extent to which socio-cultural belief influences low level of women participation in literacy programme.
4. The extent to which lack of awareness influence low level of women participation in literacy programme.

### **Methodology**

A survey designed was adopted for the study. A survey is usually used to describe available or phenomena, established existence of its occurrence.

The target population comprised all the women that were enrolled in basic literacy programme in the local government. Including those on the programme. The total sample size and those that dropped out of the literacy programme are consist of about three hundred (300) respondents were randomly selected. The study covered ten (10) literacy centres, in Mayo-Nguli, Bwade, Pakka, Kwabona, Matisimi, Pegin, Humbutudi, Vokuna, Kwalavaya and Bellel literacy centres. Thirty (30) respondents were picked from each centre 15 women, the programme and 15 dropped out to represent the women.

Twenty (20) items questionnaire were designed by the researchers to solicit the information from the respondents tagged factors influencing low level of women participation in basic literacy programme. The questionnaire is divided into five (5) section A-E. Section A are items related to demographic characteristics of the respondents, section B are items related to poverty as a factor influencing low level of women participation. Section C: are items related to gender stereotype as a factor that influences low level of women participation. Section D: are items related to socio-cultural factor that influence low level of women participation in basic literacy programme. Section E contains lack of awareness influence low level of women participation in basic literacy programme. An introductory letter was collected from the department by the researchers, addressed to

zonal Adult education office of Maiha local government area of Adamawa State. Seeking permission to carry out a study on the factors influencing low level of women participation in basic literacy programme. The permission granted to the researcher, three hundred (300) copies of the questionnaires were distributed by the researcher and two research assistants. It took the researcher two (2) weeks to administer and to retrieve the adequately filled questionnaire. The researcher was able to retrieve all copies of the questionnaires. Because each of the 15 women were given 1 questionnaire to be filed by those women that were dropped from the programme and every woman returned the questionnaire given to her.

Four point type likert scales with responses ranging from strongly agreed, agreed disagreed and strongly disagreed.

The questionnaire were given to the researcher's supervisor's and other experts in the field of measurement and evaluation for validation. Suggestion were made to drop some items and some were recasted. While in terms of reliability, the split half reliability technique was used in measuring the reliability instrument. The test scores of one half was correlated with those on the other half. The reliability coefficient was 0.72 and hence the instrument was found to be reliable.

### Research Question :1

To what extent does poverty influence low level of women participation in literacy programme?

Table: 1.1 Frequency distribution of responses on poverty.

S/N	Items	No. of Respondents	SA	A	DA	SD	%
1.	Low income level is a factor that influences low level of women participation in literacy programme	300	153 (51%)	87 (29%)	54 (18%)	06 (2%)	100
2.	Lack of money to buy materials for knitting and sewing and sometimes to buy primers influences low level of women participation in literacy programme	300	190 (63.3%)	66 (22%)	39 (13%)	05 (1.7%)	100
3.	Lack of money to pay fees as at when it is due discourages women from participating in literacy programme	300	116 (38.5%)	70 (23.3%)	67 (22.3%)	47 (15.7%)	100
4.	Lack of transport to and from adult literacy centres influences low level of women participation in literacy programme.	300	135 (45%)	97 (32.3%)	40 (13.3%)	28 (9.4%)	100
5.	Preoccupation with income earning activities discourages women from participating in literacy education	300	140 (46.7%)	89 (29.7%)	50 (16.7%)	21 (7%)	100

Sources: Field work, 2012

Table 4.1.1 The result of the respondent on poverty as a factor that influence low level of women participation in literacy programme, item 1 shows that 51% of the respondent strongly agreed that low income influence low of women participation; 18% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. Item 2, 63.3% strongly agreed, 22% agreed, 13% disagreed and 1.7% strongly disagreed that of lack of money to buy materials and other items influence low level of women participation in literacy programme. Item 3, 38.7% of the respondents strongly agreed, 23.3% agreed, 22.3% disagreed and 15.7% strongly disagreed that lack of money to pay fees when it is due discourages women from participating in literacy programme. Item 4, 45% strongly agreed, 32.3% agreed, 13.3% disagreed and 9.4% strongly disagreed that lack of transport to and from adult literacy centres discourages low level of women participation with 63.3%

Item 5, 46.7% strongly agreed, 29.7% agreed, 16.7% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed that preoccupation with income activities influences low level of women participation in literacy programme. Majority of the respondents with 63.3% revealed that poverty is a factor that influences low level of women

participation in literacy programme.

**Research Question: 2**

To what extent does gender stereotyped influence low level of women participation in literacy programme.

Table 2.2 Frequency and percentage distribution of responses on gender stereotype

S/N	Items	No. of Respondents	SA	A	DA	SD	%
1.	The duty of a women to produce children	300	133 (44.3%)	87 (29%)	45 (14%)	35 (11.7%)	100
2.	Women place is in the kitchen	300	170 (56.7%)	49 (16.3%)	43 (14.3%)	38 (12.7%)	100
3.	The work of a woman should be within the home	300	144 (48%)	95 (31.7%)	52 (17.3%)	09 (10.3%)	100
4.	Women should remain indoors always	300	76 (25.3%)	121 (40.3%)	53 (17.7%)	50 (16.7%)	100
5.	The most important thing for a woman is to take care of her children	300	132 (44%)	86 (28.7%)	43 (14.3%)	39 (13%)	100

Source: Field work, 2012

Table 4.1.2 shows that respondents gender stereotyped influences low level of women participation. Item 1, shows 44.3% strongly agreed, 29% agreed, 15% disagreed and 11.7% strongly disagreed that duty of a woman is to produce children. Item 2, 56.7% strongly agreed, 16.3% agreed, 14.3% disagreed and 12.7% strongly disagreed that women place is in the kitchen. Item 3, 48% strongly agreed, 31.7% agreed, 17.3% disagreed and 10.3% strongly disagreed that the work of a woman should be within the home. Item 4, 25.3% strongly agreed, 40.3% agreed; 17.7% disagreed and 16.7% strongly disagreed that women should remain indoors always. Item 5, 44% strongly agreed, 28.7% agreed, 14.3% disagreed and 13% strongly disagreed that the most important thing for women is to take care of her children.

Generally, gender stereotyped on item 3, shows that higher frequency on the place of women is in the kitchen with (56.7%) while item 4, has the lowest frequency of (23.3%). The result therefore, revealed that gender stereotyped is a factor that influences low level of women participation in literacy programme with 56.7%.

**Research Question: 3**

To what extent does socio-cultural belief influence low level of women participation in literacy programme?

S/N	Items	No. of Respondents	SA	A	DA	SD	%
1.	Mixing women and men in the same class is against our culture	300	153 (51%)	86 (28.7%)	55 (18.3%)	06 (2%)	100
2.	Literacy education will make women to be arrogant	300	166 (55.3%)	69 (23%)	45 (15%)	20 (6.7%)	100
3.	Literacy education makes women to dislike having many children	300	140 (46.7%)	89 (29.7%)	55 (18.3%)	16 (5.3%)	100
4.	Literacy education makes women to neglect their house duties	300	168 (56%)	67 (22.3%)	53 (17.7%)	12 (4%)	100
5.	Literacy education makes women to go out of the house frequency	300	158 (52.7%)	69 (23%)	45 (15.9%)	28 (9.8%)	100

Source: field work; 2012

Table 3: Illustrates the frequency and percentages of the respondents on socio-cultural belief. Item 1, show 51% strongly agreed, 28.7% agreed, 18.3% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed that mixing men and women in the same class is against our culture. Item 2, 55.3% strongly agreed, 23% agreed, 15% disagreed and 6.7% strongly disagreed that the socio-cultural belief is a factor that influence low level of women participation. Item 3,

46.7% strongly agreed, 29.7% agreed, 18.3% disagreed and 5.3% strongly disagreed that literacy education makes women to dislike having many children. Item 4, 56% strongly agreed, 22.3% agreed, 17.7% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed that literacy education makes women to neglect their household duties. Item 5, 52.7% strongly agreed, 23% agreed, 15.9% disagreed and 9.8% strongly disagreed that socio-cultural belief influences low level of women participation in literacy programme. Therefore the socio-cultural factor is a factor that influences low level of women participation in literacy programme.

#### Research Question: 4

To what extent does lack of awareness influence low level of women participation in literacy programme.

Table 4.4 frequency and percentage distribution of responses on lack of awareness

S/N	Items	No. of Respondents	SA	A	DA	SD	%
1.	There is no literacy centres in my district	300	170 (56.7%)	43 (14.3%)	49 (16.3%)	38 (12.7%)	100
2.	There is no literacy programme suitable for women in my area	300	140 (46.7%)	87 (29%)	55 (18.3%)	18 (6%)	100
3.	I do not know any literacy programme useful to women in my area	300	133 (44.3%)	88 (29%)	41 (13.7%)	38 (12.7%)	100
4.	I was told that literacy education is for men only	300	130 (43.3%)	97 (32.3%)	35 (11.7%)	38 (12.7%)	100
5.	I do not know how literacy education can improve my condition	300	160 (53.3%)	61 (20.3%)	47 (15.7%)	32 (10.7%)	100

Source: field work 2012

Table 4.4 illustrates the frequency and percentage of responses on lack of awareness influence low level of women participation in literacy programme. The responses shows that item 1, 56.7% strongly agreed, 14.3% agreed, 16.3% disagreed, and 12.7% strongly disagreed that there is no literacy centre in my district. Item 2, shows that 46.7% strongly agreed, 29% agreed, 18.3% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed that there is no literacy programme suitable for women in my area. Item 3, 44.3% strongly agreed, 29.3% agreed, 13.7% disagreed and 12.7% strongly disagreed that I do not know any literacy programme useful to women in my area. Item 4, shows 43.3% strongly agreed, 32.3% agreed, 11.7% disagreed, and 12.7% strongly disagreed that, I was told that literacy education is for men only. Item 5, shows that 53.3% strongly agreed, 20.3% agreed, 15.7% disagreed and 10.7% strongly disagreed that, I do not know how literacy education can improve my condition.

#### Discussion

The purpose of the study was to find out to which extent does poverty, gender stereotyped, socio-cultural belief and lack of awareness influence low level of women participation in literacy programme. Data analysis carried out on table 1 shows that poverty contributes to low level of women participation in literacy programme. The findings agreed with Adeniran (2008) which remarked that poverty is a violation of women human right life and wellbeing such as food, adequate housing and a safe healthy environment.

The finding that also dealt with gender stereotyped shows that, it contribute to low level of women participation in literacy programme which also agreed with Umar (1996) who found that in most parts of the north, it is believed that the place of a women is in the kitchen and at home as bearing children and maintaining the welfare of the family are their major roles

Another finding also shows that socio-cultural belief influences low level of women education influences low level of women participation in any educational programme, which is confirmed with the study of Odufuwa and Dosumu (2008), that lack of education of women is a problem that hinders women contribution to societal development awareness, as low educational level and professional attainment render them poorly equipped mentally into male dominated world of decision making and competition.

#### Summary of the Major Findings

The following are the major findings of the study;

1. Poverty influences low level of women participation in literacy with 63.3% of the factors.
2. Gender stereotyped affects women participation in literacy programme with 56.7%

3. Cultural beliefs affects women participation in literacy programme with 56%
4. Lack of awareness affects the participation of women in literacy programme with 56.7%

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Poverty reduction and eradication programmes should be provided and materials for learning should be given free to the women adult learners.
2. Parents and elders in the society should be encouraged to accept the equality of men and women because of gender stereotyped.
3. Government should provide basic literacy programmes for women only.
4. Enlightenment campaign on the importance of women education should be encouraged.

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