

# Low Participation in Adult Literacy Programmes in Kalingalinga Lusaka District Zambia

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to investigate low participation in adult literacy programmes among adults in Kalingalinga Lusaka district in Zambia. The main objectives of the study were to find out whether adults are aware of the literacy programmes, to find out the reasons why adults participated in literacy programmes and to find out why there is low participation in the literacy programmes.

The participants were adult residents of Kalingalinga. The study used a survey research design. In order to collect data from the respondents a questionnaire was used.

The finding of the research showed some of the reasons that were given for low participation in literacy programmes included the following; some people were simply not aware of the literacy programmes and others stated that it was time consuming.

One of the recommendations of the study was that there was need for continuous promotions of programmes to encourage a lot of adults to participate.

**Key words:** Participation, Adult, Literacy, Programmes.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Adults not being able to read and write has been a global problem for a long time. In September of 2015, the UNESCO institute of statistics (UIS) reported that 85% of the world's adults aged 15 and older lacked basic reading and writing skills. That's 757 million adults and two-thirds of them are women (Peterson, 2017).

### *Literacy*

According to UNESCO (1995) literacy refers to the ability of an individual to read and write with understanding a simple short statement related to his/her everyday life. The concept has since evolved to embrace multiple skill domains, each conceived on a scale of mastery levels and serving different purposes. May today view literacy as the ability to identify, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials in various contexts.

National Assessment of Adult Literacy defined literacy as task-based and skill-based, the task based definition focusing on the everyday literacy tasks an adult can and cannot perform without, where the skill –based definition entailed the knowledge and skills adults must possess in order to perform their tasks, ranging from basic, word level skills to higher level skills (White and Mc Closkey, 2003)

### *Adult Literacy in Least Developed Countries*

The highest illiteracy rates are found in the Least Developed Countries, mainly in Africa and 60 percent of all illiterate adults are women (Lind and Johnson, 1990). Most of these people are people living in extreme poverty and nearly one in five is a young person aged between 15 and 24 (UNESCO 2006) One in five in the world is illiterate, the majority being women. Most of the illiterate people are found in south and west Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab states. Illiteracy naturally affects the political and economic development of nations across the world

Zambia has been one of the countries that has taken several steps to curb the levels of illiteracy. There has been a lot of initiatives such as starting national literacy campaigns, opening community schools, and re-introducing evening classes that were started by the government and cooperating partners to reduce the levels of illiteracy in the country. However some of these initiatives have failed. Robinson-Pant, (2003) observed that, although adult literacy programmes have been implemented in most countries of the developing world, they have often been characterised by high drop-out rates and low attainment and retention of literacy skills. The government plays an important role in the provision, organization and teaching of adult literacy. Since independence, the organization of adult literacy in Zambia has been managed by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services that was the leading provider of non-formal and literacy education. Although governments are expected to be major players in the provision of adult literacy as agreed at Jomtien and Dakar Conferences for Education for All in 1990 and 2000 respectively, the past two decades have witnessed reduced investment and participation in adult literacy by the government (MCDSS, 2003).

### *Objectives of the Study*

1. To find out whether adults are aware of the literacy programmes.
2. To find out the reasons why adults participated in adult literacy programmes.
3. To find out why there is low participation in Adult literacy programmes.

### *Research Questions*

1. Are adults aware of the literacy programmes?

2. What are the reasons why adults participate in adult literacy programmes?
3. Why is there low participation in adult literacy programmes?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The declaration on human rights signed in Paris in 1948 included rights of each individual to education. One of the issues of major concern in education today is the eradication of illiteracy. This is due to realization and acceptance of the fact that education, in general and literacy in particular has implications for both personal and national development (Fordham, 1985).

Scholars agree that literacy is essential to human development as it offers a foundation for good health and nutrition, as well as for achieving socio-economic development and institution of democracy. In today's knowledge-based world, this is ever more true. Thus, the absence of literacy skills makes it difficult to attain fundamental needs, to uphold basic human rights and advance a better quality of life (Hasaba, 2013).

According to Michelo (2013) who cited PAF (2008) Literacy indeed strengthens the capacity and the capabilities of individual and communities, enhancing their participation in economic, social, political and cultural activities when as it states that; Literacy serves as a mechanism through which social justice, gender equality; liberation from discrimination and the ongoing struggle against deprivation exclusion and vulnerability can be pursued and realised. Literacy should be viewed as the core engine and agents of social change, as means to creation of peace and stability and the promotion of poverty reduction and democratic governance.

According to Blunch (2017) adult literacy participants have been more likely to move from economic inactivity and working as an unpaid family worker to becoming self-employed, especially in rural areas. This indicates that usefulness of adult literacy programmes in helping to transform developing economies from self-subsistence farming into modern economies, a transformation that developed economies have already achieved. Adult literacy programmes have also been found to directly improve the earnings capacity of participants in some cases. In Ghana for example, it was found that in households where nobody had completed any formal education, incomes in adult literacy programmes participating households were between 8.5% and 14% higher than in non-participating households. Similarly, in Indonesia it was found that rate of return for adult literacy programmes were similar to those of primary education, with both calculated at about 22%. Even more directly, there is evidence that adult literacy programme participation has led to immediate increases in income from being cheated less, for example at the bank or the market.

Oxenham (1975) states that virtually in every country, every literacy project starts out with an overenthusiastic and over-subscriptions of enrolment. However, the strength of their

desire and its ability to carry them through to completion are still uncertain. In this context, it is more or less futile to try to promote literacy until keen interest in literacy and learning has been cultivated. Once individual motivation for literacy has been done in an appropriate way, a fair number of participants will be attracted.

An in-depth study on motivation done in Bangladesh concluded that all adult participants as well as teachers had a positive attitude towards the adult literacy programme, at least in the initial phase because their interest in literacy was captured during the mobilization phase (Adult Literacy Motivation, 1979).

Abadzi (2003) says that, Adult literacy programs tend to be heavily subscribed when they open, but often experience relatively low and irregular attendance rates and sometimes disappointing completion rates. This phenomenon suggests that demand exists, but the content does not meet the needs of some students or other factors intervene to limit attendance.

All adult participants as well as teachers had a positive attitude towards the adult literacy programme, at the initial phase. They realize the importance of such programmes, but in spite of both enrolment and attendance are far from satisfactory. The strongest barrier to motivation is poverty, since the potential learners need to use all their time earning a living, they cannot spare sufficient time to attend school. The programme moreover does not provide any immediate benefit nor any clear prospects for future, and this is another major barrier (Adult Literacy Motivation, 1979).

Adult literacy programs have faced low participation from members of the communities lately and this has been due to various reasons. In a study on low participation in Adult literacy classes; reason be it, conducted by Oluoch (2005) the literacy programme was found to have suffered low opinion from the public, the teachers and the learners and this often discouraged learners from participating, hence increasing their social and economic vulnerability. The literacy programme has often been associated with failures who could not successfully make it in the more prestigious formal education. Oluoch further explains that there is a problem of the stigma attached to being seen as illiterate. Some illiterate adults, especially those respected in society, feel shy and ashamed to be seen attending literacy classes for fear of being identified as illiterate. Men also opt to forgo attending classes if they are to share classes with women, whom normally perform better and shame them. Adult's learners also stay away if they feel that the teachers are not treating them as adults as they hate being underrated and become disgusted with the use of desks meant for children.

Adults like other peers, also experience peer pressure and it can determine whether an adult continues or drops from learning programmes. An example of these peer pressures can be, men in the villages telling their fellow men that what they are learning in the centre is fit for women and not for men and somehow, this thinking could be a reason why most of the

adult learners in evening programmes in Uganda were women (Nigwagaba, 2007).

Garland (1993) observed that, lack of self-confidence by adults and their fear to fail are deterrents to adults' participation in learning programmes. This is because adult education institutions administer tests to learners in a way that shows their grades. This is done in order to give them certificates. Most adult learners like getting certificates although they fear doing the examinations.

Natukho, Amutabi and Otunga (2005) state that, community based factors which limit participation in adult education programmes in Africa include Community appreciation for adult education, cultural factors, cultural institutions, and wars and conflicts. The adult community's appreciation for education motivates adult learners to seek education. However, if the reserve is true, then the adult's motivation to study falls very low and no matter how many adult education programmes exist in that country the attendance levels will be very low.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey research design. According to Isaac and Michael (2017) Survey is used to answer questions that have been raised, to solve problems that have been posed or observed, to assess needs and set goals, to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met, to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyse trends across time and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context.

The target population includes all the residents of Kalingalinga in Lusaka district of Zambia. However a sample size of 45 was used. The sample included both males and female residents. A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985). Questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents.

### IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

#### Age Group of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-29	25	56
30-60	20	44
Total	45	100

The table shows 56% (25) of the respondents were between the age range of 18 to 29 and 44% (20) were between the ages of 30 to 60.

#### Have You Heard Of Adult Literacy Programmes

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	71
No	13	29
Total	45	100

The table shows that 71% (32) have heard about literacy programs, while 29% (13) have not heard about literacy programmes.

#### Participated In Adult Literacy Programmes

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	33
No	30	67
Total	45	100

The table indicates that 33% (15) of the respondents have participated in literacy programs, while 67% (45) have not participated in literacy programmes.

#### Low Participation in Adult Literacy Programmes

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not Aware Of The Programmes	9	20
Consumes Time	5	11
Engaged In Other Activities	7	16
Other	24	53
Total	45	100

The table indicates that 20% (9) of the respondents said that there was low participation in literacy programs because people were not aware of the programs, 11% (5) said that there is low participation because the programmes are time consuming, 16% (7) said that low participation because people are engaged in other activities and 24% (53) said that there are other reasons for low participation.

#### Reason Why Adults Participate In Adult Literacy Programmes

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Improved Standard Of Living	10	22
Imparts Knowledge And Skills	35	78
Total	45	100

The table indicates that 22% (10) of the respondents said that the value of literacy programmes is improved standard of living, while 77% (35) said that the value of adult literacy is to impart knowledge and skills to the community.

### V. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The first objective was to find out if adults in Kalingalinga were aware of adult literacy programmes. About 71 percent of the respondents said that they had heard of the adult literacy programmes while only a few were not aware of the adult literacy programme. The majority indicated that they know what the literacy programmes were all about.

The second object was to find out the reason why adults participated in adult literacy programmes. Most of the respondents 35 percent indicated that adults participated in adult literacy programmes to acquire knowledge and skills

while 10 percent said that adults participated to improve their standard of living.

The third objective was to find out why there is low participation in Adult literacy programs. Some of the reasons that were given for low participation in adult literacy programmes include the following some people are simply not aware of the adult literacy programmes that are being offered, while other stated that these programmes are time costing and others stated that they were engage in other important activities.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The findings showed that there are various factors that cause low participation in adult literacy programmes in Kalingalinga. It is important for all stakeholders involved in the provision of adult literacy programmes to find ways to attract more adults to participate in the programmes.

## VII. RECCOMENDATIONS

1. There is need for continuous promotion of literacy programmes to encourage a lot of adult participations.
2. The local authorises and stakeholders must show more commitment to providing adult literacy programmes.
3. Facilitators or instructors need to undergo professional training on how to manage adult learners who participate in the literacy programmes.
4. It is important that adult literacy programmes that are offered be evaluated so as to grudge there straights and weakness. Continuous evaluations should be encouraged.

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