

## Financing Adult Mass Literacy Programm: The Experience of Ekiti State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The study was set out to examine the ways and manner through which adult mass literacy programme is being financed in Ekiti State. It also considers the blue print on the adult mass literacy education in Ekiti State, with emphasis on Adult literacy and functional Literacy/Vocational Women Education Programmes. The purpose of the study is to find out how adult mass literacy education is being financed and the problem militating against it. Oral interview and secondary approach of research was used. It was discovered that Ekiti state government have not been paying too much attention to the funding of adult Mass literacy programme and that the action of some Administrators in charge of partnership in funding with the international donors have discouraged to release cash for the programme. The Ekiti State government should make adequate resources available for the programme.

**Key words:** Adult mass literacy, financing, Ekiti State government, international donors, Each-one-teach-one, budget allocation, financial resources

### INTRODUCTION

Mass literacy education (Borode, 2002) is an attempt to engage in massive literacy training of a nation. The development of a nation is largely determined by the level of literacy of citizenry. There is therefore no doubt, that to reduce ignorance, poverty and diseases, illiterates must be educated.

The developed countries of the world record huge success, in economic, political and social development because of their high level of literacy. The developed countries according to UNESCO in Borode (2004) are in demographic terms "mature." Their fertility and death rates is low while the population of elderly people is high. The reverse is the case in the developing countries (in which Nigeria is one) where there is poor infrastructure in the towns, the low per capital income level remains highly visible and educational progress is highly affected by the level of poverty.

The above situation led to the formation of educational policy on adult mass literacy Programmes in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) which is expected to be implemented by the three arms of government functionaries, via federal, state and local government. The national policy on education (4th Edn.). The policy on state Agencies for mass education are as follow:

- Implement the National Policy on mass literacy, plan and research, organize, develop and manage state mass literacy education programmes.
- Monitor and ensure quality control of state programmes.
- Set up and supervise the activities of the mass education programmes.
- Liaise with non-governmental organizations in the state for the implementation of mass education programmes.
- Train grass root personnel.
- Provide support services for adult and non-formal education, including curriculum development, mobile and rural libraries, television viewing and audio listening centers, audio-visual teaching and learning aids.

All the above activities will definitely require huge financial outlay before achieving grass root implementation in the state.

**Adult literacy programmes in Ekiti state:** The Ekiti State Agency for Adult and Non-formal Education was established in 1990 by edict 7 of the old Ondo state. She was saddled with the responsibility of mass literacy delivery. Some of the functions include the following among others:

- Organizing and carrying out of literacy programmes through the establishment of basic literacy centers.

- Establishment of functional/women vocational centers.
- Establishment and supervision of Government Continuing Education centers.
- Coordinating the activities of non Governmental Association for Literacy Support Service (NOGALSS) in the state and other Non-governmental Organizations and individual donors in respect of literacy programmes.
- Implementation of UNICEF and other Donor Agencies for Adult Education programmes in Ekiti State.

Fabusuyi (2006) reiterated that there are 85 basic literacy centers with 9 months duration and about 1722 learners. For grassroot effective implementation and supervision of mass literacy programme apart from the state headquarters staff, each of the 6 local governments has an officer (AMLO) Area Mass Literacy Officer.

Functional Literacy/women vocational education: This programme combines literacy and training in some vocational skills. The purpose is to equip the participants with skills that could provide them employment opportunities on the completion of their training. Functional literacy centers were established and equipped with some infrastructures and equipments like sewing, knitting, embroidery, sealing, interlocking, popcorn making, soap making, cloth weaving and cookery machines. There were 12 of such centers in the state at the time of writing this study. All these entail financial outlays so as to achieve the set down goals.

**Problem of the study:** The slow pace at which adult mass literacy education programmes is moving in the state, (especially basic literacy education) is of great concern to the masses. Also on the assumption of office in October 2006, the state sole Administrator noted that poverty has eaten deep into the bones and marrows of the people. The reason he attributed to this was the high level of illiteracy in the state. He then approved a sum of N2.1million for the implementation of adult mass literacy programme. This prompts the researcher to investigate on how adult mass literacy programme is being financed in Ekiti state of Nigeria.

**Research questions:** In what ways is Adult mass literacy education being financed in Ekiti state of Nigeria?

What are the problems militating against the finance of Adult mass literacy education in Ekiti state of Nigeria?

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The descriptive research designed was deemed appropriate for this study. And it was focused on the

agency for adult and non-formal education in Ekiti state. Oral interview was conducted on the appropriate officers in the Agency. Also secondary information was obtained from all relevant documents.

## **RESULTS**

In what ways is adult Mass literacy education being financed in Ekiti state of Nigeria?

**Financing adult mass literacy in Ekiti State:** The result shows adult mass literacy financial situation in Ekiti State up to year 2006. The 3 arms of government functionaries were involved in the funding of Adult Mass Literacy programme in Ekiti State viz the federal, state and local government, others are international donors and philanthropist.

**The federal government:** The federal government, through the National Commission for Mass literacy Adult and Non-Formal Education (NCMAFE) do contribute to the funding of various adult literacy and women functional vocational centers through the provision of primers in the 3 major areas, reading, writing, mathematics and vocational center equipments, which runs to millions of naira were also provided. Federal government did not make physical cash available but supply part of the material which could be used for the programme.

**The state:** since its creation in October 1996, did not make reasonable fund available for the adult mass literacy programme. Records have it that before the emergency rule in Ekiti state (October 16, 2006) between [450,000-480,000] was made available for the programme which was insufficient.

During the emergency rule, the sole Administrator, having noticed the poverty level of the people and convinced that Each-one-teach-one and ten methods could be used to reach the villagers. He approved and made available the sum of two point one million naira (2.1 million) for the programme. This was the highest money released for the funding of the programme since the creation of the state. The state budgetary provisions only cater for the payment of staff in the Adult and non-formal Agency, with little overhead cost. The state government is yet to take adult mass literacy education serious in areas of funding, in that less than 1% of budgetary allocation to Adult Education was given to Adult Mass Literacy Education. This is similar to the situation of adult mass literacy education in Zimbabwe as postulated by Midzi (2001).

**Local government:** The 16 local governments in the state do set apart some amount for the funding of Adult literacy and community development programmes. The state agency for adult and non formal education as the big brother of the local government, often seek for Local government Financial Assistance (LFA) to execute the adult mass literacy programme and also give moral suasion i.e., persuades the local government to sponsor mass literacy programme in their areas. This function is always performed in cooperation with the Area Mass Literacy Office (AMLO) and the local government chairman.

**International organizations:** Some international organizations like United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNESCO do make contribution in form of cash and kind. The state government benefits from the international donors through a system called Government, Cash Counter-part Contribution (GCCC). In this system the state is expected to contribute a designed percentage (%) of the fund, while the rest will be contributed by such international donors.

This was experienced last in the old Ondo state. (Before the creation of the state). Since the creation even though, Ekiti State paid her own counterpart of Adult Mass Literacy funding but the international donors have not responded to fulfill their own side of the agreement. Both UNDP and UNESCO, now makes their fund available in form of materials and equipments to women Functional Literacy Vocational Centers and Adult Basic Literacy Centers. The fund available were disbursed on the payment of honorarium for the facilitators/instructors, for the monitoring team and some material/equipments to complement the one provided by National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education.

**Individuals and philanthropists:** Do assist in funding adult mass literacy programme. Some of them might volunteer to sponsor 10 adults in Adult Basic Literacy Education and also procure some materials for functional literacy vocational centers. Other Non-governmental organizations like churches and mosques do eradicate illiterate levels by their own effort. This was effected through the appropriate link with the state agency for Adult and Non-formal Education. Examples of such are Baptist church, Igede Ekiti and Deeper life Bible Church Ikere Ekiti.

**Research question 2:** What are the problem militating against the finance of Adult Mass Literacy Education in Ekiti state of Nigeria.

Hindrances to the funding of Adult Literacy education in Ekiti state.

- The number one problem is that majority of the people and organizations did not know the scope and depth of Adult Education Programme. Some of the officers, including some departmental heads in the state Agency for adult and non-formal education are civil servants without prior knowledge of Adult Education programme. Most of the executive directors of the programmes at state levels were posted to the agency as a result of promotion or transfer of workers from other government parastatals. The ignorance of these high level officers often prevented them from sourcing fund for the programmes.
- The various adult educators often find it difficult to convince the government and other non-governmental organizations that investment in Adult mass literacy programme is not a waste of money and other resources. Government often considers it (Adult Literacy Education) as a second rate programme, which should not take too much of the annual budgetary allocations. Many people argue that when resources for education are limited, it is best to spend most of them on children's education (schooling) rather than on adults who are ready to die. This was because people felt that adults are people who are no more in the active labour force. This was in agreement with ASPABE (2006) postulation about the resource quality in Adult Education.
- The international donors often find it difficult to respond to clarion call for financing adult mass literacy programmes, because the feedback received from their previous donations were not in congruent with the actual situation on ground. This fact is supported by Lind (2007) who postulated that the actions of the recipient of international donors tend to discourage them from pumping money directly to Adult Basic Literacy Education.
- Some pointed it out that the rate of illiterate is still high in the villages that those who use literacy in their daily lives are still relatively low, which does not justify the huge amount spent on the programme at local levels.
- Some of the international donors were not constituent in both material and cash donations.
- Awareness: That many illiterate were not aware of the programmes (Adult Basic Literacy and women functional vocational centers) judging on the number of participants of both programmes, it shows that majority of the adult illiterates in the state were not aware of the programme.
- Another problem facing the funding of Adult Literacy programme in the state is financial maladministration on the part of the officers at the state levels.

**Table1: Adult basic literacy center in Ekiti state of Nigeria**

| Local government  | No of basic centre (As at 2006 december) |             |
|-------------------|--|-------------|
|                   | Centre                                   | Enrolment   |
| Ado               | 6  | 101         |
| Ikere             | 8  | 158         |
| Ido/Osi           | 11                                       | 235         |
| Gboryin           | 6  | 172         |
| Ekiti East        | 7  | 137         |
| Irepodun/Ifelodun | 4  | 8           |
| Efon              | 7  | 121         |
| Ijero             | 11                                       | 205         |
| Oye               | 2  | 15          |
| Ise/Orun          | 2  | 29          |
| Emure             | 1  | 20          |
| Ikole             | 4  | 126         |
| Ekiti South/West  | 4  | 60          |
| Moba              | 5  | 100         |
| Ilejemeje         | 2  | 47          |
| Ekiti West        | 5  | 128         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>85</b>                                | <b>1722</b> |

Source: Ekiti State, agency for adult and non-formal education

**Table 2: Functional literacy vocational centre as at December 2006**

| Local government  | Vocational |            |
|-------------------|------------|------------|
|                   | Centres    | Enrolment  |
| Ado               | 2          | 22         |
| Ikere             | 1          | 12         |
| Ido/Osi           | 2          | 29         |
| Gboryin           | 1          | 14         |
| Ekiti East        | 1          | 15         |
| Irepodun/Ifelodun | 1          | 12         |
| Efon              | 1          | 7          |
| Ijero             | 1          | 16         |
| Oye               | 1          | -          |
| Ise/Orun          | 1          | -          |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>12</b>  | <b>127</b> |

Source: Ekiti state, agency for adult and non-formal education

- The state also fails to release the budget allocation for the programme, so as to enhance effective implementation of the programme. The little that was budgeted for was not released up to expectation.
- Majority of the facilitators and instructors honorarium were not paid for more than a year. Even though the stipends was very small and discouraging most of the facilitators still offer their services, because of their personal interest in the programme.

Table 1 indicates that a total number of 1722 enrolled for adult mass literacy classes for the year 2006. There are 16 local government areas in the state. The least enrollment is from Irepodun/Ifelodun Local government area while the highest is from Ido/Osi local government area. It is one of the local government with the highest number of centers. Enough publicity was not given to Adult basic literacy education at the local government levels.

Table 2 reveals that 10 out of the 16 local government in the State have centers for vocational skills

centers, where adults, both semi-illiterates and illiterates are trained on one skill or the other. The participants were few in most of the centers because enough publicity was not given to it and most of the facilitators were not well treated by both the local and state government.

### CONCLUSION

The state government should make adequate financial resources available for the programme and also the person to be in charge of adult and non-formal Education must have received enough training in Adult Mass Literacy Education.

Some constraints like:

- Lack of a coherent policy framework is both a cause and an effect of little political will and commitment toward Adult Mass Literacy Education practice and service delivery.
- Lack of information on how much has been created and how much is needed to spend on providing education for the masses in Ekiti state of Nigeria need urgent attention by the political and civil servants who dominate the decision-making level. These constraints are similar to Adult Education in Uganda. Jjuuko (2007).

The politicians should not just post anybody to the sector, so as to fulfill their electoral campaign. Also the officers in charge of the counterpart funding should be made accountable for every amount released by the international donors for Adult Mass Literacy Programme. If Ekiti State would actually remain fountain of knowledge, the grassroot adult illiterate must be made literate through the proper funding of awareness campaign and eradication of adult illiterate. The politician should not just implement the programme to have 100% success on paper while actually the real number of illiterate is still very high. Education Tax Fund, resources should be made available for Adult Mass Literacy Education.

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