

Impact of Perceptions of Women’s Families and Peers on Women’s Participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme in Bahir Dar Zuria Woreda, North West Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of perceptions of women’s families and peers on women’s participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme in Bahir Dar Zuria Woreda, North West Ethiopia. To achieve the objective of this study, mixed research approach with explanatory research design was employed. In this study, registered women in Functional Adult Literacy Classes were the target population. Three rural kebeles of Functional Adult Literacy Centers out of thirty two rural kebeles of Functional Adult Literacy Centers were selected by a random sampling method. Out of 729 registered adult women, 184 adult women were selected from three rural kebeles of Functional Adult Literacy Centers through simple random sampling with lottery technique. Quantitative and qualitative data were employed. The former data were analysed by using a simple t-test, while the latter was analysed by using textual descriptive analysis. The findings of this study showed that majority (64.7%) of respondents were non-participate women in Functional Adult Literacy Programme. But they were registered at Functional Adult Literacy Classes. The findings of this study also indicated that women had negative perceptions of women’s families and peers towards themselves in relation to their participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme. To address the problems of this study, Adult Education Bureau of the Local Government should provide a positive advertising campaigns and testimonials for Functional Adult Literacy Programme in order to erase misperceptions held by perspectives of family and peers. In addition, Adult Education Bureau of the Local Government also should provide massive gender awareness creation about gender equality for the local communities in general and women/men in particular.

Keywords: Adult women, perceptions, family, peers, functional literacy, participation, programme & Bahir Dar Zuria Woreda

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education is playing a dominant role as an instrument for large-scale achievement and revolution in all spheres of human endeavour (Rani, 2010). Specifically, purposeful education enables an individual to understand and study real life situations and develop confidence as well as provide a strong base for rational value-oriented and nation-building progress (Ololube & Egbezor, 2012).

Being part of education, integrated functional adult education is one of the types of education system which is designed in a cost-effective way and used for remedial purposes where formal education has been ‘unable’ to educate adult citizens, and ‘illiteracy’ is a problem (Manda, 2009). It is the lifelong education programme which provides basic academic skills and job-oriented competencies. It has also positive impacts of other investments such as health, nutrition, family planning, gender equality, agriculture and industry that the country can make quick of its economic, social and political development (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2013).

Despite different international conferences encourage participation of women in the education sector, past reports indicated that women’s participation in education are low in number than men (Lasonen et al., 2005; Bhandari & Smith, 1997). According to the findings of recent study; however, about 774 million adults are part of the global illiterate population who lack basic literacy skills and two-thirds of the global illiterate population were women. In the same document, in many regions of our world, the illiteracy rate of women ranges from 55% to 78%. This showed that the women share of the illiterate population was greatest in Central and Eastern

Europe (78%), East Asia and the Pacific (71%), the Arab States (66%), and South and West Asia (64%), Central Asia (63%), Sub-Saharan Africa (61%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (55%) (UNESCO, 2013).

Women are the most illiterate group of people and are often denied the most basic economic and social rights to own property, to find decent work and to have an educated and good health in developing countries (Sossou & Tuwor, 2008). Wharton (2005) highly insisted that women's work is profoundly linked to their gender role and the cultural association of women with 'inside' the home, while men dominate the world 'outside' the home and performs their productive role as a breadwinner. This implies that patriarchal modes and practices were motivated by cultures and illiteracy that hinder women's freedom to opt for various choices to assert greater mobility in social interactions. Therefore, the problem starts from the family and continues in the school, peers and society at large according to Prakash (2003).

Similarly, a country wide study report, for instance, in developing country like Ethiopia (Gelana & Hindeya, 2013) indicated that the patriarchal families expect that females will take on the roles of wives and mothers as well as their work place in the kitchen rather than enroll in Functional Adult Literacy Centers. The findings of this country wide study also showed that perceptions of women's peers had its own negative impact on women's participation in functional adult literacy centers. However, this work of study concluded its result based on secondary data. In addition, this work of study was focused at national level, but not referred to the present specific study area. Thus, the objective of this study examined the impact of perceptions of women's families and peers on women's participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme in Bahir Dar Zuria Woreda, North West Ethiopia. This study is very important for the policy decision makers intervention aimed to address illiteracy problems of adult women, especially rural women become self-reliant through engaging a modern agriculture and income generating projects, health and family planning as well as other contextual oriented skills.

Research method and sampling techniques

To achieve the objective of this study, mixed research approach with explanatory research design was employed. In this study, registered women in Functional Adult Literacy Classes in Bahir Dar Zuria Woreda were the study population. Out of thirty two rural kebeles of Functional Adult Literacy Centers, three rural kebeles of Functional Adult Literacy Centers were selected by a random sampling method. However, proportional sampling method was utilized when the total study population selected from three rural kebeles of Functional Adult Literacy Centers. After proportional study population determined from three rural kebeles of Functional Adult Literacy Centers, about 184 adult women were selected out of 729 registered adult women from the selected Functional Adult Literacy Centers through simple random sampling with lottery technique.

Data collection procedures and analysis

To keep the quality of the data, the validity and reliability of the drafted questionnaires were examined. To succeed its validity, the structured questionnaires (closed-ended questionnaires) and unstructured questionnaires (open-ended questionnaires) were emerged from prior review of literatures. The questionnaires were documented in English version and translated into Amharic (a native language of the study area) and then, back into English to maintain its consistency by independent language experts. Experts were read the questionnaires carefully and then, some redundancy and ambiguity words were omitted from the questionnaires. In addition, adult education curriculum reviewer and development expert were participating in the drafted questionnaire developed time because experts cross checking the inclusiveness of the contents and nature of the questionnaires. Then after, the study also used pre-test questionnaire for the purpose of avoiding contamination and cross checking the internal reliability of the questionnaires. To come up with final version of the structured questionnaires, about eight identical items for impact of perceptions of women's families and peers on women's participation in Functional Adult Literacy programme were developed in to five point scales.

After this, thirty registered adult women were selected by a randomly sampling method for the purpose of a pilot survey study. Two pilot survey study areas of Functional Adult Literacy Centers were also selected out of thirty two rural kebeles of Adult Literacy Centers through a random sampling technique. And then, 30 pilot questionnaires were distributed and collected from two adult literacy centers. After collections of the data, pre-test data enter in to SPSS of version 20 and codified, edited and computed by scales. Crobach alpha of the total reliability of the items for impact of perceptions of women's families and peers on women's participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme were 0.977 and 0.948 respectively. To sum up, the reliability of internal consistency of all pre-tested structured questionnaires were large and well fitted.

After pre-tested questionnaires, actual questionnaires were distributed and collected from the concerned target population in this study area. After collected the actual questionnaire data, data were entered in SPSS of version 20, codified and edited. Finally, data were analyzed by a simple t-test at 95% confidence interval. In addition, qualitative data were analyzed by using a textual descriptive analysis.

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

A total of 184 respondents in the study, 35.3% of respondents were participant women in Functional Adult Literacy Classes where as 64.7% of respondents were non- participant women in Functional Adult Literacy Classes, but they were registered at Functional Adult Literacy Centers. The study showed that 84.2 % were ever married, 8.7 % were widowed, 4.3 % were divorced, and 2.7 % were unmarried. The survey study also showed that 31 % were aged group between 15 and 29, and 69 % of respondents were aged group between 30 and 60 years old.

Results of perceptions of women's families and peers on women's participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme

As indicated in Table 1, the result of one sample t-test of respondents on the extent to which the perceptions of women's families towards themselves in relation to their participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme is displayed the observed sample mean (19.0326) and the expected mean (24) and significant at $t(183)=-8.163$, $p<0.05$. Therefore, as the sample mean significantly less than the expected mean, it can be reported that adult women had negative perceptions of women's families towards themselves in relation to their participation in functional adult literacy.

Table 1, T-test for significant of mean differences for perceptions of women's families on women's participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme

N	μ	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig
184	24	19.0326	8.25409	-8.163	183	0.000

* μ –Expected mean * SD -standard deviation * df- degree of freedom

On the other hand, a qualitative data collected from adult women on their families' perceptions towards themselves in relation to their participation in functional adult literacy. The findings of this study indicated that there had been misperception of families towards women's education. In addition, the qualitative participants reported that husbands did not interest and allow to their wives to attend in functional adult literacy. They also revealed that husbands perceived as the value of education is negative and they wanted their wives to stay at home and continue to remain in domestic tasks.

For instance, one of a woman shares her experience about perceptions of her family in the following statement:

I learned Functional Adult Literacy in Adult Literacy Center at the beginning of the year. But, now, I have stopped participating in functional adult literacy due to my family who perceived as functional adult literacy was wastage of time, not added relevant skills. For instance, my husband is the first and most to propagate this idea. He always wants to me; I stay my home by doing a reproductive role. (Participant from Yebab local Kebele).

As Table 2, the result of one sample t-test of the respondents on the extent to which the perceptions of women's peers towards themselves in relation to their participation in functional adult literacy revealed that the observed sample mean (16.0707) and the expected mean (24) and significant at $t(183) = -13.279$, $p<0.05$. Thus, as the sample mean significantly less than the expected mean, it can be reported that adult women had negative perceptions of women's peers towards themselves in relation to their participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme.

Table 2, T-test for significant of mean differences for perceptions of women's peers on women's participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme

N	μ	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig
184	24	16.0707	-8.09981	-13.279	183	0.000

* μ –Expected mean * SD -standard deviation * df- degree of freedom

In addition, qualitative interviewed participants indicated that perception of women's peers was another socio-cultural constraint which contributes to affect participation of women in Functional Adult Literacy Programme. Women blamed their peers for their participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme because their peers frequently discouraging our motivation, ridicule and gossiping us with other peers and relatives when we went to adult literacy centers. One of a divorced participant shared her idea as follows:

Now, I am engaged in Functional Adult Literacy Programme, but I felt afraid of participating in the programme on flexible way because my peers mockery me when the time of coffee ceremony. Thus, I will decide to stay away from class (Participant from Amba Kebele).

II. DISCUSSION

This study revealed that adult women had negative perceptions of women's families towards themselves in relation to their participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme. This study is similar with the survey study done in rural Kenya revealed that misperception of family had its own negative impact on adult women's participation in Adult Literacy classes. A study reported from Kenya also indicated that adult women's learner confessed that sometimes men felt their ego was threatened when their wives attained higher educational standards and they obtain permission from their husbands at the beginning when they were attend or enrolled in Adult Literacy Centers (Mualuka et al., 2009). The findings of this study also supported with other research findings in Kabompo District in North Western Province, Zambia noted by Manda (2009) pointed out that perceptions of women's family (e.g., jealousy husbands) had negatively affect women's participation in Adult Literacy Programme. Further, a country wide level research in Ethiopia conducted by Gelana and Hindeya (2013) reported that misperceptions of family had its own impact on women's participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme. Regarding perceptions of peers, according to Gelana and Hindeya (2013) revealed that peers of women had negatively influenced women's participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme. Therefore, this study is consistence to the previous one. This implies that this study reported that perceptions of adult women had less likely positive perceptions of women's peers towards themselves in relation to their participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this study, majority (64.7%) of adult women were withdrawn from Functional Adult Literacy Programme. But they were registered adults at Functional Adult Literacy Classes. The reasons for the study showed that adult women had negative perceptions of women's families and peers towards themselves in relation to their participation in Functional Adult Literacy Programme. To address these problems in this study area, Adult Education Bureau of the Local Government should provide a positive advertising campaigns and testimonials for Functional Adult Literacy Programme in order to erase misperceptions held by perspectives of family and peers. In addition, Adult Education Bureau of the Local Government also should provide massive gender awareness creation about gender equality for the local communities in general and women/men in particular.

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