**COMMUNITY EDUCATION CORRELATES AND ILLITERACY REDUCTION AMONG WOMEN ORGANIZATIONS IN CENTRAL SENATORIAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Illiteracy, a condition of ignorance and deprivation where individuals cannot read, write and calculate skills for their development, is a significant problem in our communities and the world. Illiteracy has adverse effects not only on personal development but also in economic and social terms. This study examined Community Education Correlates and Illiteracy reduction among women Organizations in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State. Two null hypotheses were developed to direct the study. Literature related to the variables was reviewed*. *A survey research design was adopted for this study. A total of 561 respondents were purposively selected from a population of 11,210 using the purposive sampling technique. An instrument titled "Community Education Correlates and Illiteracy among Women Organisations Questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by experts from Measurement and Evaluation, University of Calabar; the reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate, and the coefficient of each sub-scales was adjudged to be high, implying the instrument is reliable. The researchers collected the data with the help of three research assistants. They were analyzed using simple regression statistical techniques to test the hypotheses at a .05 level of significance. The result of the analyses revealed that community agricultural education programmes and community liberal education programmes were collectively and individually related to illiteracy reduction. Based on the findings, it was recommended that community education programmes be organized regularly to enable more women to acquire knowledge, skills and values that can make them functional and productive.*

**Keywords:** Community Education, Illiteracy Reduction, Women, Organizations, Empowerment.

**1 Introduction**

Community education is the training in formal and non-formal settings given to community members, with the sole intention of mobilizing them for improved participation in the development of society. Community education is not a new concept; in our traditional communities, people have practised it even before the advent of the colonial masters. Illiteracy is, at the same time, a cause and a consequence of poverty, ignorance and underdevelopment. It is commonly accepted that development gains cannot reach the general population until primary education is provided to all, particularly women.

Today, most communities have committed to developing women's literacy in Nigeria. Literacy for women has a tremendous impact on their development, families, and community. Ugbe, Erim & Beshel (2019) asserted that most women are not fully involved in the development of their communities; this could be attributed to the gap between women and men in the aspect of leadership, employment and education, to mention a few. In this study, the researchers have selected factors such as community agricultural education and community liberal education to determine whether they relate to illiteracy reduction among women in the study area.

Community agricultural education programme refers to any action plan of activities that are meant to address either all or any of; (i) agricultural rehabilitation; (ii) communication of agro-based information; (iii) awareness creation on contemporary agro-based practices; (iv) optimization of agro-based production, and; (iii) enhancement of dietary diversity (Iwuchukwu & Igbokwe, 2012). Community agricultural education programmes are usually implemented mainly for food security and economic empowerment of rural community dwellers and their societies. The importance of rural community dwellers in the agricultural sector is borne out of reports which continuously reveal that at least 80% of them engage in one form of agriculture or the other (Fabiyi & Akande, 2015). In Nigeria, based on the largely agrarian society, agriculture was the economy's mainstay in the 1970s when the oil boom period brought about a change in the significant revenue-generating trend for the country.

In present times, there has been a reverse in the trend of events in the agricultural sector. The initiatives include; the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP); National Food Acceleration Production Programme (NAFPP); Agenda (ATA) with its accompanying sub-programmes of Special Program for Food Security, FADAMA II Program, Fertilizer Revolving Fund, Presidential Initiative on Cassava, Rice, Vegetable Oil, Tree Crops and Livestock; National Agricultural and Land Development Authority (NALDA); Anchor Borrowers Program (ABP); National, Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS), Youth Collaborative Community Agriculture Programme (YOCCAP), and, Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP), to mention a few. (Akinbamowo 2013). There are numerous types of research undertaken to ascertain the impact of these programmes and others on rural community dwellers.

Constraints to rural Nigerian women farmers' involvement in local food production were investigated in survey research designed study by Imonikebe (2010). The population consisted of all agro-inclined women in the country's southern region. A sample of 3,500 respondents was purposely selected, and inquiries in the study's data collection instrument included ascertaining challenges to rural women's involvement in food production and solutions to the problems. Mean scores were used to analyze the data. It was observed that illiteracy and lack of technological knowledge served as the prime challenges, while giving women agro-based adult education was the most profound solution indicated by the respondents. Therefore, rural women's challenges to food production bordered around issues of agro-based illiteracy, while the most perceived solution was exposing them to agro-based adult education. Could it thus be conjectured that agro-based adult education may not have any meaningful impact on women's illiteracy levels? This study is considered reasonable for review regarding its investigation of constraints on rural women's participation in food production.

Similarly, Ndifon, Patrick and Idiku (2012) employed a descriptive survey approach to assess the extension educational needs of Nigerian women farmers. All women farmers in the country's south-south region formed the population. A sample of 300 respondents was drawn randomly. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire, and one enquiry therein verified the women's preferred format of agro-based learning experiences for enhanced agro-allied literacy. Using percentages, the most preferred educational training formats in descending order were seminars/workshops, on-the-farm demonstration activities, non-formal learning experiences at home, and presentations during meetings. The result, therefore, denoted the educational training formats which the respondents perceived as their most preferred. From the finding, could it be presupposed that the respondents prefer educational training formats that tend more towards non-formal and informal education strategies? Could it be postulated that formal educational training formats may not achieve desired expectations based on their behavioural changes in line with agro-allied literacy? The study above was given credence for review because of its inquiry into female farmers' preferred educational training formats.

A descriptive survey method was applied to a study which examined the impact of adult education schemes on agricultural productivity in Nigeria by Apata and Shitu (2013). All farmers (participants and non-participants of adult education schemes) from the country's South Western region exclusively formed the population. A sample of 120 respondents was randomly selected, and data were elicited using a questionnaire. The poser inquired included – (i) the extent of association between levels of education (formal and non-formal) and participation in adult education and; (ii) the extent to which participation in adult education schemes relates to agricultural productivity. Data analysis was achieved using chi-square and PPMC. Results revealed formal education level as having a significant but negative association with participation in adult education schemes, while the non-formal level was significant and positively associated. For the PPMC analysis, participation in adult education schemes significantly correlated with agricultural productivity.

It meant that while the non-formal educational level was positively associated with participation in adult education schemes, the formal educational level was negatively associated. In addition, the finding indicated that a significant connection existed between being part of adult education learning experiences and agricultural productivity. Thus, could it possibly be premised that the finding concerning formal education and participation in adult education is due to the perceived lack of needing adult education by those who must have undergone an appreciable duration of formal learning experiences? On the other hand, could it be that this finding appears to stern the educational strategy favoured by rural farmers? The finding of this empirical study was deemed applicable for review, borne out of its consideration of adult education schemes and agricultural productivity.

Women farmers' participation in agricultural extension activities was ascertained in correlational survey research designed by Onuekwusi and Chukwu (2014). Women farmers in Abia State made up the population, while random sampling principles were utilized to select 150 respondents who responded to quantitatively designed data. Posers therein involved verifying the relationship between educational level and participation in extension activities. The PPMC technique was used for the analysis, which revealed educational level as an insignificant correlation of the women's participation in extension activities. It signified that participation in extension activities had no significant connection with their educational level. Worthy of note is that participation in many extension activities was mostly very high. Thus, could it be deduced that most were regular participants to make up for the extent of formal schooling they attended? Or better still, could it be theorized that the high level of participation might be due to the satisfaction derived from their literacy needs being addressed? This study was earmarked as being suitable for review about its research on the relationship between educational level and women farmers' participation in extension activities. In the same vein, Osita-Njoku and Princewill (2015) utilized a descriptive survey approach to examine strategies for building capacity in rural women for poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Rural women farmers in Imo State composed the population, while 180 respondents were purposively and randomly drawn. Quantitatively designed posers involved ascertaining challenges faced by rural women farmers towards attaining sustainable development and capacity building need areas perceived by the women. Analysis using descriptive statistics indicated that the respondents reported a lack of education as the most pronounced challenge, while literacy skills/educational development was revealed as the most critical capacity-building need. Therefore, the finding symbolized that the women were hindered mainly by their lack of education, thus their unanimous perception of literacy skills/educational development as a desired capacity-building need for the attainment of sustainable development. Could it be assumed that this finding somehow appears conclusive based on the context of the study's focus? Perhaps, despite that, could it be surmised that inadequacies of material/human resources can challenge the women's efforts towards literacy skills/educational development during the implementation of the programme? The study's finding was considered reasonable for review due to its inquiry into rural women farmers' challenges and capacity building needs.

 Similarly, Otu and Anam (2016) investigated women's role in food production and poverty in Nigeria in a study in which they applied a research design. Rural community dwellers (agricultural extension officers and farmers) in Cross River State made up the population, while 360 respondents were systematically drawn. The study's aims involved ascertaining the extent to which women's access to capacity-building programmes correlated with their food production/poverty level. Applying PPMC for data analysis, a significant relationship existed between women's access to capacity-building programmes and food production/poverty level. This, therefore, implied that women who accessed capacity-building programmes had a significant relationship with their food production/poverty level. Thus, from the finding, could it be assumed that women's enhanced food production/poverty literacy level depends on their accessibility to capacity-building programmes? The finding of this empirical study was adjudged well-suited for review in accordance with its assessment of accessibility to capacity-building programmes and food production/poverty levels.

Haile (2016) investigated factors hindering rural women farmers' participation in agricultural extension services in Ethiopia by applying a survey research framework. Rural women in the country's Dendi West Shoa Zone made up the study's population. Purposive, stratified, and systematic random sampling principles were employed to select 697 respondents. Data collection was done quantitatively, and one of the inquiries was concerned with investigating the predictability of the level of education on women's participation in agricultural extension programmes. Multiple regressions were used to analyze the data, and the level of education was found to have significant but negative predictability on their participation in agricultural extension programmes. This meant that the higher a woman's level of education, the lower the participation rate in extension programmes and vice versa. Apparently, could it be that this finding appears similar to that of Apata & Shitu (2013) in the sense that the more formal education an individual has received, the lesser the motivation to participate in extension-based programmes or non-formal education activities? This study was considered okay for review by considering factors hindering women's participation in extension services. Adams (2017) used a descriptive survey method to identify challenges faced by Nigerian women farmers. Women farmers in Ondo State constituted the population, while 120 purposely and randomly sampled respondents were drawn for the study. Posers in a questionnaire included ascertaining the constraints of the women farmers and perceived solutions. Frequency counts and percentage scores were utilized to analyse data. For constraints, the most pronounced one was a combination of poor technical know-how capacity and a high rate of illiteracy. In contrast, a combination of educational empowerment/capacity building of rural women was observed as the most perceived solution to the constraints. In a similar observation made to the finding of Osita-Njoku and Princewill (2015), could there be probable challenges the women might face in implementing programmes designed for them? Could it be assumed that the programmes would have inadequacies that might demotivate the women's expectations towards acquiring appreciable levels of agricultural-based literacy skills? The empirical study of Adams (2017) was accepted as being well-suited for review due to its identification of challenges faced by rural women farmers.

Olatinwo, Fawole and Akinyemi (2017) determined the constraints of rural female youths participating in agricultural development in Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was used, and female youths in Katsina State composed the population. One hundred twenty respondents were drawn randomly while the questionnaire collected data. One of the posters inquired about challenges hindering female youths' participation in agricultural development. Mean scores were used for analysis which revealed that inclusive among the top five reasons were; (low level of agro-based literacy, inaccessibility to agro-based inputs such as credits and subsidies, poverty and little or no access to extension officers). Thus, the youths did not participate in agricultural development activities due to low agro-based literacy levels. What could possible ways be used to impact their agro-based literacy levels? Could this finding possibly serve as a clarion call for more attention to be emphasized on youths' involvement in agricultural development in the country? This empirical finding was regarded apt for review based on its inquiry into constraints on youths' participation in agricultural development. Conceptually, liberal education refers to a course or system of education suitable for cultivating a free human being. In support, Zeng (2001) opined that it is an education whose philosophy borders on the empowerment of individuals with; (i) broad knowledge, (ii) transferable skills, and; (iii) a much stronger sense of ethics, values, and civic engagement. It is an education meant to transform an individual towards the possession of a sound mind in a sound body, thus becoming a free man who has imbibed capabilities in line with being able to think for him/herself and be a responsible societal member. For Shoenberg (2009), it is an education that helps learners de-emphasize learning based on passing examinations. Instead it emphasizes a programmatic approach towards solving real-life problems or situations that are usually beyond classroom borders. According to the Shoenberg (2009) community, liberal lifelong education serves as the new civic frontier for beneficial societal living in this century of globalization and environmental sustainability. In defence of their point, Geary (2009) highlighted the benefits of liberal lifelong education to include the following:- (i) it offers learners the opportunity of learning a wide range of knowledge not only consisting of various topics but also a detailed study in the learner's specific area of interest; (ii) it assists learners to inculcate community-based social responsibilities (e.g., the sustenance of unity in any given society); (iii) it enhances learners' abilities to develop and acquire strong skill-set of the following – practical, intellectual, problem-solving, communication, and analytical skills, and; (iv) it enables learners' understanding of the world through detailed knowledge of various philosophies, events, possibilities, opportunities, and procedures that make the wonders of life more understandable and coherent. Below are available empirical works concerning related variants of community liberal lifelong education and areas bordering on illiteracy. A survey approach was employed by Njong (2010) in research which identified the impact of educational attainment on rural women's poverty in Cameroon. The study's population was sourced from a household survey conducted around the country around 2000, while purposive sampling procedures were used to draw 9,026 respondents. The study's aims included determining the predictability of educational level on poverty status, and data analysis was achieved using multiple regressions. Result revealed educational level as a significant but negative predictor of poverty status, thus denoting that as educational level increases, poverty status reduces. Ostensibly, could this finding be premised to imply that as educational level increases, literacy level also increases? It is due to the assumption that as literacy levels increase, poverty levels reduce. In the same vein,

Olufunke (2011) applied a descriptive survey research design to investigate literacy as a potent tool for Nigerian women's empowerment. All rural-based women from Oyo State served as the population, while 211 respondents were randomly drawn. Two of the study's objectives were concerned with the relationship between literacy and women's empowerment and improved standard of living among women. PPMC was used for data analysis, revealing literacy as a significant correlate of women's empowerment and an improved standard of living. Consequently, this meant that literacy was found to have a significant relationship with women's empowerment and their improved standard of living. Could this finding be inferred from the hypothesis that liberal educational empowerment programmes can significantly impact illiteracy among women? Or could it possibly denote that community liberal educational empowerment programmes would have no meaningful impact on a given society where women's illiteracy rates are meager? The above-reviewed study was earmarked as being justifiable for a review of its inquiry into literacy as a potential tool for women's empowerment.

Similarly, a survey research framework was put to use by Ololube and Egbezor (2012) in an assessment of the necessity of non-formal education for women's development in Nigeria. The population was sourced from all rural women in the country's south-south region. A sample of 745 respondents was randomly drawn, and investigated the influence of non-formal education on each mass adult/youth literacy and out-of-school children's literacy. Mean scores were used for analysis. It was observed that each of the "out-of-school children's" and "mass adult/youth" literacies was significantly influenced by non-formal educational programmes. This implied that non-formal educational programmes significantly influenced the literacy levels of the two investigated categories of educationally disadvantaged persons. The uniqueness of this finding is in its discovery of the significant influence of non-formal education on the two most illiteracy-prone categories of people. Therefore, could it be surmised that implementing a community liberal education programme for women using this educational strategy would have little or no impact on their literacy levels? The study of Ololube and Egbezor (2012) was considered appropriate for review because of its systematic study of non-formal education on literacy of vulnerable women groups. Ukwuaba (2015) utilized a survey to evaluate how women's literacy could be promoted through community education in Nigeria. The study's population was formed from all the 68 community development officers in Enugu State, and a census was conducted. The respondents were enquired about the extent to which community education programmes had impacted illiteracy among women, and analysis of the responses was achieved using mean scores. It was reported that community education had tremendously impacted various aspects of the women's daily livelihoods, such as decision-making, political empowerment, enhanced socio-economic engagement and literacy skills acquisition. This implied that illiteracy among the women had impacted their daily livelihoods in all the areas mentioned above. Even though this finding seemingly sounds conclusive, it somehow creates the following two posers: (i) What possible strategies could have been employed during the implementation of the community education programmes that tremendously impacted the women's daily livelihoods? (ii) Could it be speculated that a similar finding would be yielded when the programmes' beneficiaries are inquired about how their daily livelihoods have been affected by having engaged in the programmes? This study's finding was valued as having been applicable for review about its evaluation of community education and women's literacy.

**2 Theoretical framework**

Conscientisation theory (Paulo Freire, 1970)

 Paulo Freire propounded the conscientization theory in 1970. This theory states that oppressed people must challenge the perception of their oppressors and not think about themselves as less than or lacking something that their oppressors have, thus becoming aware of their rights. The theory is based on consciousness-raising and dialogue. It involves teaching people how to read and write in relation to awakening their consciousness about their social reality. Education can function as a means of integrating generations into the logic of the current system and can work to bring these generations to conform to that logic. According to Freire, education could function as a liberating and transformative tool that leads generations to think critically about reality and contribute to transforming their world. This theory represents the oppressor and oppressed positions in an unjust society. Paulo Freire argues that education should provide the oppressed with the tools to improve their condition and regain their humanity. This can only occur if the oppressed individual plays a role in the liberation and the oppressors understand that they must rethink their way of life and examine their role in the oppression.

 The relevance of the theory to the study is on the premise that if the women in the area of the study see the need to challenge the perception of their oppressors, it could make them change their thinking to become better conscientized on how to address the issues of illiteracy among women organization by participating in community education programmes. This, in turn, could help them serve as significant contributors to the transformation of their society.

Social constructivist theory (Lev Vygotsky, 1978)

 Vygotsky propounded the theory by stating that cognitive development occurs on a social level (within a well-defined social environment) before occurring within an individual (Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, he stated that the roots of people's knowledge are based on their interactions with their surroundings and other individuals within their social environments before internalizing their knowledge. He said this is borne out of people's basic need to make sense of others within their social environment and construct knowledge on such a social level to enable them to relate to circumstances. The circumstances here, according to him, are culture and context inclined. From the previous, an individual's knowledge and understanding are collaboratively developed in coordination with others within their social environment.

Therefore, the relevance of this theory to the study is that irrespective of the fact that most women are illiterate, they should always seek to interact and collaborate with fellow community members who are more capable than themselves of learning. This continuous learning will help them continuously raise their independent knowledge, attitude and skills to higher levels.

**2.1 Statement of the problem**

 The fact that most women are illiterate in various women's organizations means they are locked out in acquiring knowledge, skills and expertise to expand their businesses and multiply their sources of income. Sometimes, even if some women are willing to seek new knowledge and skills, the gender-biased norms that place men as the sole decision-making authority make them shy away from taking up the opportunities. Moreover, girls are considered vulnerable during challenging economic times, as they are perceived to be commodity values in the form of bridewealth. The problem of illiteracy among the women's organizations in the central senatorial district of Cross River is still increasing. This could be attributed to a lack of awareness or inadequate awareness creation. This ugly situation has led to low productivity among female farmers, environmental health hazards, inability to access government loans to boost their business activities, lack of health information, high maternal mortality rate and high poverty level. Despite the frantic effort of the government, non-governmental organizations and donor agencies to assist women to become literate by introducing programmes such as adult basic literacy programmes, mass literacy programmes, vocational literacy programmes, functional literacy programmes, workshops and seminars. The situation remains relatively unchanged. Therefore, based on the above, this study sought to empirically investigate how community education correlates and could relate to illiteracy reduction among women organizations in the central senatorial district of Cross River State. The study sought to determine whether agricultural and liberal education relates to illiteracy reduction among women organizations in the study area.

**2.2 Purpose of the study**

 The study aimed to investigate the relationship between community education programmes and illiteracy among women organizations in the central senatorial district of Cross River State.

 Specifically, the study sought to examine the extent to which;

.1 Community agricultural education programmes significantly relate to illiteracy among women organizations.

2 Community liberal education programmes significantly relate to illiteracy among women organizations.

**2.3 Statement of hypotheses**

 The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

1 There is no significant relationship between community agricultural education programmes and illiteracy among women's organizations.

2 There is no significant relationship between community liberal education programmes and illiteracy among women organizations.

**3. Methodology**

 A survey research design was adopted for the study. The design was adopted based on the study's focus which is obtaining and analyzing data from a given population's representative with the intent of generalizing the finding on the entire population. The study was conducted in the central senatorial district of Cross River State. The area has six local government areas, namely; Yakurr, Obubra, Ikom, Etung, Boki and Abi. The area lies between longitudes 7045 and 9015E of the Greenwich Meridian and latitudes 5030 and 6030N of the equator. It has a landmass of 7632km2. It is bounded in the north by Ogoja, Obudu, Obanliku and Yala LGA of Cross River State, in the south by Akamkpa and Biase LGA, in the east by Ebonyi State and in the west by the Republic of Cameroon. The 2019 projected population for the area is 1,178,381, with a population density of 154inh/km2 (National Population Commission 2019).

The study population comprised all registered members of the various women's organizations in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State. The population for the study was 11,210 women in five hundred and fifty 550 registered women's organizations. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select the sample. It is a technique that allows a researcher to use his/her judgment to select respondents adjudged to be typical of the population (Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim & Ekuri, 2004). The reason for the technique was that the respondents could not be randomly selected. Thus, the researchers used their judgment based on identifiable characteristics of the population to select the sample. First, to determine the number of organizations to be selected, four per cent (4%) was applied to the total number of organizations in the area. Hence, a total of 22 organizations were proportionally selected. The proportionality of organization selection helps to have fair representation for the study. Secondly, to determine the sample or respondents selected for the study, 5% was applied to each Local Government Area; thus, the number of the sample selected was based on the strength of membership in each stratum. A total of 561 respondents were selected from the study. The study sample comprised 561 women selected from 22 registered women's organizations in the six Local Government Areas used for the study. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. It has two sections (A and B). Section A involved respondents' demographic data, while section B was used to elicit responses based on the sub-variables. The data were statistically analyzed using simple regression analyses.

# 4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Hypothesis one

 Hypothesis one stated that there is no significant relationship between community agricultural education programmes and illiteracy among women organizations. The independent variable is the community agricultural education programme, while the dependent variable is illiteracy among women. To test this hypothesis, simple regression analysis was used, and the result, as presented in Table I, showed the correlation coefficient of the variable as .684, which implied a robust positive relationship between community agricultural education programmes and illiteracy among women. The more community agricultural education programmes are carried out, the more illiteracy is reduced among women. More so, the result showed that Adj R2 = .467 implies that the variation in the dependent variable (illiteracy) can be accounted for by 46.7% of the community agricultural education programme. The 46.7% contribution of the independent variable on the dependent variable showed that other variables can still contribute 53.3% in explaining the variances in the illiteracy rate. A cursory look at the table also showed an analysis of variance result of (F= 85.58 p<.000). Since p(.000) is less than p(.05), this implies community agricultural education programme has a significant relationship with illiteracy. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE I

Simple regression analysis on the relationship between community agricultural education programmes and illiteracy among women's organization

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Source of variation  | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|  | Regression | 3960.810 | 1 | 3960.810 | 85.58\* | .000b |
| Residual | 25873.793 | 559 | 46.28 |  |  |
| Total | 29834.602 | 560 |  |  |  |

R=.684; R2=.468; Adj R2=. 467, Std Error= 6.802

4.2 Hypothesis two

 Hypothesis two stated that there is no significant relationship between community liberal education programmes and illiteracy among women organizations. The independent variable is the community liberal education programme, while the dependent variable is illiteracy among women. To test this hypothesis, simple regression analysis was used, and the result presented in Table II showed the correlation coefficient of the variable as .744, which implied a robust positive relationship between community liberal education programmes and illiteracy among women. The more community liberal education programmes are conducted, the more illiteracy is reduced among women.

 More so, the result showed that Adj R2 = .552 implies that the variation in the dependent variable (illiteracy) can be accounted for by 55.2% of the community liberal education programme. The 55.2% contribution of the independent variable on the dependent variable showed that other variables can still contribute 44.8% in explaining the variances in the illiteracy rate. A cursory look at the table also showed an analysis of variance result of (F=51.08 p<.000). Since p(.000) is less than p(.05), this implies a community liberal education programme has a significant relationship with illiteracy. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

 TABLE II

Simple regression analysis on the influence of community liberal education programme on illiteracy among women's organization

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Source of variation  | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|  | Regression | 2498.193 | 1 | 2498.193 | 51.08\* | .000b |
| Residual | 27336.409 | 559 | 48.902 |  |  |
| Total | 29834.602 | 560 |  |  |  |

R=.684; R2=.468; Adj R2=. 467, Std Error= 6.802

 To test this hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was used. Table II showed the multiple correlation coefficient of the variables as .714, which implied a robust positive relationship between community education programmes and illiteracy among women. The more community education programmes are carried out, and the more illiteracy is reduced among women. More so, the result showed that Adj R2 = .592 implies that the variation in the dependent variable (illiteracy) can be accounted for by 59.2% of community education programmes.

 The 59.2% contribution of the independent variable on the dependent variable showed that other variables can still contribute 40.8% in explaining the variances in the illiteracy rate. A cursory look at the table also showed an analysis of variance result of (F=80.046 p<.000). Relatively, the liberal education programme is the highest predictor with ($β$ = .545, P<.05), followed by the agricultural education programme ($β$ = .282, P<.05), followed by entrepreneurship education ($β$ = .213, P<.05) and then, health education programme ($β$ = .178, P<.05) Since p (.000) is less than p(.05), this implies community education programmes have a significant composite relationship with illiteracy. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

**5. Discussion of findings**

Community agricultural education programme and illiteracy among women organizations

 The result obtained from the analysis of this hypothesis indicates a strong relationship between community agricultural education programmes and illiteracy among women in the central senatorial district. This is because the more community agricultural education programmes are carried out, the more illiteracy is reduced among women. This, in turn boosts the agricultural productivity level of female farmers. The result of this hypothesis is in line with that of Apata and Shina (2013), who examined the impact of adult education schemes on agricultural productivity in Nigeria; All farmers (participants and non-participants of adult education schemes) from the country's South Western region exclusively formed the population. A sample of 120 respondents was randomly selected, and data were elicited using a questionnaire. The poser inquired included – (i) the extent of association between levels of education (formal and non-formal) and participation in adult education and; (ii) the extent to which participation in adult education schemes relates to agricultural productivity. Data analysis was achieved using chi-square and PPMC. Results revealed formal education level as having a significant but negative association with participation in adult education schemes, while the non-formal level was significant and positively associated. For the PPMC analysis, participation in adult education schemes significantly correlated with agricultural productivity.

It meant that while the non-formal educational level was positively associated with participation in adult education schemes, the formal educational level was negatively associated. In addition, the finding indicated that a significant connection existed between being part of adult education learning experiences and agricultural productivity. The finding of the study is similar to Onuekwusi and Chukwu (2014) in a study of Women farmers' participation in agricultural extension activities. Women farmers in Abia State made up the population, while random sampling principles were utilized to select 150 respondents who responded to quantitatively designed data. Posers therein involved verifying the relationship between educational level and participation in extension activities. The PPMC technique was used for the analysis, which revealed educational level as an insignificant correlation of the women's participation in extension activities. It signified that participation in extension activities had no significant connection with their educational level. Worthy of note is that participation in many extension activities was mostly very high. Thus, could it be deduced that most of them were regular participants to make up for the extent of formal schooling they attended? Or better still, could it be theorized that the high level of participation might be due to the satisfaction derived from their literacy needs being addressed? This study was earmarked as being suitable for review about its research on the relationship between educational level and women farmers' participation in extension activities.

Community liberal education programme and illiteracy among women organizations

 The result obtained from hypothesis two indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between community liberal education programmes and illiteracy reduction among women in the Central Senatorial District; this could be so because the programs expose female learners to a more pragmatic learning approach to solving real-life situations/problems usually develop into self-discovery based learners who live fulfilling lives as they undertake the societal responsibilities of citizenship in ever-changing pluralistic society.

The result of the findings is in line with Njong (2010) in research which identified the impact of educational attainment on rural women's poverty in Cameroon. The study's population was sourced from a household survey conducted around the country around 2000, while purposive sampling procedures were used to draw 9,026 respondents. The study's aims included determining the predictability of educational level on poverty status, and data analysis was achieved using multiple regressions. Result revealed educational level as a significant but negative predictor of poverty status, thus denoting that as educational level increases, poverty status reduces. The study is in line with Olufunke (2011), who applied a descriptive survey research design to investigate literacy as a potent tool for Nigerian women's empowerment. All rural-based women from Oyo State served as the population, while 211 respondents were randomly drawn. Two of the study's objectives were concerned with the relationship between literacy and women's empowerment and improved standard of living among women. PPMC was used for data analysis, revealing literacy as a significant correlate of women's empowerment and an improved standard of living.

Consequently, this meant that literacy was found to have a significant relationship with women's empowerment and their improved standard of living. Could this finding be inferred from the hypothesis that liberal educational empowerment programmes can significantly impact illiteracy among women? Or could it possibly denote that community liberal educational empowerment programmes would have no meaningful impact on a given society where women's illiteracy rates are meagre?

**6. Conclusion and Recommendations.**

 Based on the study results, it was concluded that the agricultural education programme and liberal education programme have a significant relationship with illiteracy among women organizations in the study area. Therefore we recommend that.

1. More agricultural training programmes are organized for female farmers to acquire the needed skill for increased food production and income generation.
2. More community education programmes should be organized to aid women in acquiring knowledge, skills and values that can make them functional and productive

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