

**THE ROLE OF LITERACY IN THE DAILY LIVES OF ADULT LEARNERS
WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS IN THE KHOMAS, OHANGWENA,
OMUSATI AND OSHANA REGIONS IN NAMIBIA**

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Abstract

The National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) was launched in 1992 to promote basic literacy and numeracy for the improvement of the livelihood of adults. Studies seem to neglect the voice of the adult learners with hearing impairments participating in the literacy programmes as well as the deaf parents. This study reckons the need to fill the gap that exists in the knowledge base: How the adult learners with hearing impairments of the NLPN in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions view the role of the programme in their daily lives.

The study used the critical interpretive orientation theory and the qualitative approach grounded on phenomenological design. The researcher and sign language interpreter used one-on-one and semi-structured interviews as the main instruments to collect data from the participants. Data was collected from a total of eighteen (18) adult learners with hearing impairments in the studied regions. A qualitative data analysis paired with typological analysis procedures was used. The researcher analysed, identified, recorded related main ideas, transcribed each interview to find the meaning and wrote a report. The findings of the study revealed evidence that participants in the NLPN are conscious about literacy and are willing to be functionally literate. The findings provided new insights on how literacy programmes and the Directorate of Adult Education could assist participants to acquire knowledge and significant skills necessary in their lives. This study suggests a future research on female and male participation in the NLPN.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ix
Dedication	xi
Declarations.....	xii
List of Figures	xiii
List of Abbreviations / Acronyms.....	xiv
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 The background of the study.....	2
1.2 Statement of the Problem	13
1.3 Research questions	14
1.4 Significance of the study.....	15
1.5 Limitations of the study.....	17
1.6 Definitions of terms and concepts.....	17
1.7 Conclusion.....	21
CHAPTER 2	22
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	22
2.1 Introduction	22
2.1.1 Perceptions on adult literacy programmes	23

2.1.2	Educational initiatives for the adult learners with hearing impairments.....	26
2.1.2.1	The International perspective	26
2.1.2.2	The African Perspective	29
2.1.2.3	The Namibian Perspective.....	33
2.1.3	The importance of literacy and participation in adult literacy for hearing impaired adult learners	34
2.1.3.1	Usage of literacy	34
2.1.3.2	The relationship between literacy and development	38
2.1.4	Gender participation in adult literacy programmes.....	42
2.1.5	The meaning of Empowerment	44
2.1.6	Empowerment in adult education and literacy programmes	47
2.1.7	Empowerment and employment for adult learners with hearing impairments	49
2.1.8	Motivation and expectation for adults with hearing impairments to attend adult literacy programme	51
2.1.8.1	Motivation	51
2.1.8.2	Expectation.....	52
2.1.9	How hearing impairment affect the adult learners with hearing impairments’ progress in the adult literacy programmes	54
2.1.10	The transition of skills and knowledge learnt in the literacy programme	58
2.1.11	The role of literacy and importance of functional literacy in the daily lives of the adult learners with hearing impairments	60
2.1.12.	The treatment of adult learners with hearing impairments in the literacy programme	62
2.1.13	The improvement on learning environment and learning content in the adult literacy programmes	63
2.2	Theoretical framework	63

2.2.1	Critical social theory	64
2.2.2	Humanist theory	71
2.2.3	A model for problem-based adult learning (PBL)	73
2.2.3.1	Problem-based learning (PBL) and adult education	75
2.2.3.2	An outline of the active role that adult learners with hearing impairments play in PBL	75
2.2.3.3	Role of adult educator in PBL.....	76
2.2.3.4	Benefits of PBL in adult education	77
2.3	Conclusion.....	78
	CHAPTER 3	81
	METHODOLOGY.....	81
3.1	Introduction	81
3.2	Research design.....	81
3.3	Population of the study.....	82
3.4	Sample and sampling techniques	83
3.5	Research instruments.....	84
3.6	Pilot Study	86
3.6.1	Results of the Pilot Study	87
3.6.3	Refinement of the research instruments	89
3.7	Data collection procedures	90
3.8	Ethical consideration	91
3.9	Data analysis	92
3.10	Conclusion.....	94

CHAPTER 4	95
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	95
4.1 Introduction	95
4.2 Biographical information of participants	97
4.2.1 Participants by gender	97
4.2.2 Age of the participants	98
4.2.3 Participants' self-identification of their degree of hearing impairments.....	98
4.2.4 Participants' living conditions.....	99
4.2.5 Participants' employment status.....	100
4.2.6 Descriptions of the communities where the adults with hearing impairments were situated.....	102
4.3 Adult learners with hearing impairments' motivation and expectations of the national literacy programme.....	104
4.3.1 Functional literacy- related classroom activities	108
4.3.2 Entrepreneurship and income generating skills.....	110
4.3.3 Employment opportunities	112
4.3.4 Communication and social skills.....	112
4.3.5 Respect and acceptance	114
4.3.6 Credentials of literacy certificates.....	115
4.4 Utilisation of skills and knowledge gained from lliteracy programme	116
4.5 Challenges experienced by the adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme	118
4.5.1 Personal challenges (Absenteeism).....	118
4.5.2 The adult learners with hearing impairments' perceptions of the value of their qualifications	122

4.5.2	Drug abuse and gender violence	124
4.5.3	Lack of teaching and learning facilities	125
4.5.3.1	Venues for learning and teaching.....	125
4.5.4	Incompetent promoters.....	127
4.6.	Adult learners with hearing impairments’ opinions on how NLPN should be improved.....	129
4.7	Conclusion.....	132
CHAPTER 5		133
INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS		133
5.1	Introduction	133
5.2	Background information of participants	133
5.3	Community’s level of understanding of the literacy programme	138
5.4	Adult learners’ motivation to attend literacy programme	140
5.5	The hearing impaired adult learners’ expectations of NLPN.....	145
5.6	Skills and knowledge attained from attending literacy classes and how they were utilised by the adults with hearing impairments.....	151
5.7	Challenges experienced by adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme	153
5.8	The hearing impaired adult learners’ views on the improvement of literacy programmes.....	161
5.9	Conclusion.....	163

CHAPTER 6	164
CONCLUSION, CRITICAL REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ...	164
6.1 Introduction	164
6.2 Opinions about the meaning of literacy programme	166
6.2.1 Perceptions about literacy programme	166
6.2.2 The uses of literacy in a society	168
6.2.3 Critical social theory and the role of literacy among adult learners with hearing impairments	169
6.2.4 Adult learner with hearing impairments' motivational factors to attend literacy programme	171
6.2.5 Problems experienced by the adult learners with hearing impairments in the literacy programmes	172
6.3 Summary of the study's findings	172
6.3.1 Expectations of adult learners with hearing impairments from NLPN?	173
6.3.2 How the adult learners with hearing impairments utilise the skills and knowledge they gain from the NLPN	175
6.3.3 Challenges experienced by the adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme	175
6.3.4. How the adult learners with hearing impairments want the literacy programme to be improved.....	176
6.4 Attainment of research questions	176
6.5 Critical reflections	181
6.6 Recommendations and implications.....	185
6.6.1 Recommendation to the Ministry of Education	185
6.6.2 Recommendations to the Directorate of Adult Education.....	186

6.6.3	Recommendations for the adult educators for the adults with hearing impairments	188
6.6.4	Recommendations for the adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme	189
6.6.5	Recommendations for community members.....	190
6.6.6	Recommendation for other stakeholders in education (Universities, government agencies, civil society, non-governmental organisations, youth groups).....	190
6.7	Limitations and strengths of the study	191
6.8	Further research.....	194
6.9	Conclusion.....	196
	REFERENCES.....	200
	 APPENDICES	 225
	Appendix one: Interview questions.....	225
	Appendix Two: Permission letter to the Ministry of Education	234
	Appendix Three : University of Namibia Recommendation Letter.....	235
	Appendix four: Ministry of Education Approval Letter	236

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my spouse Evaristus Iita, my daughters Natenya and Nangula and my son Angula.

Declarations

I, Mestilde Nangula Pashukeni Jonas, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part of thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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Mestilde Nangula Pashukeni Jonas

Date.....

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 A conceptual model 73

Figure 4.1: Numbers of participants by gender 97

Figure 4.2: Numbers of the participants by age 98

Figure 4.3: Numbers of the participants by regions 99

Figure 4.4: Employment statuses of the participants..... 102

List of Abbreviations / Acronyms

ASDSE	Adult Skills for Self Employment
AUPE	Adult Upper Primary Education
CLDC	Community Learning and Development Centre
CAU	Commission of the African Union
CNN	Council of Churches in Namibia
CONFINTEA	International Conference on Adult Education
DAE	Directorate of Adult Education
EFA	Education For All
EWLP	Experimental World Literacy Programme
FLP	Family Literacy Programme
IALS	International Adult literacy Survey
ICEIDA	Icelandic International Development Agency The
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Ministry of Education and culture
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NLPN	.National Literacy Programme in Namibia
NLP	Namibia Literacy Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisations
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund

UNLD	United Nations Literacy Decade
UNMCAU	United Nations Millennium Commission of the African Union
UN	United Nation
SWA	South West Africa
PBL	Problem Based adult Learning
QEASD	Quality Education For Africa's Sustainable Development
WEF	World Education Forum
WFD	World federation of the Deaf
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study investigated the role of literacy in the daily lives of the adult learners with hearing impairments in the National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions. Two instruments were used to collect data from adult learners with hearing impairments in the identified regions. The researcher and an experienced sign language interpreter interviewed those adult learners who were sampled for this study. The information from the participants was used to answer research questions about the role of literacy among adult learners with hearing impairments and the present educational theories as well as methods appropriate in adult literacy learning. In the context of this study, adult learners with hearing impairments refers to those adults who have hearing problems including deaf adults and are participating in the literacy programmes. Therefore, in this study terms such as adult learners with hearing impairments, deaf adult learners as well as hearing impaired adult learners will be used interchangeably.

This chapter contains the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, and significance of the study, limitations, and definition of the concepts that were used in the study.

1.2 The background of the study

In Namibia, before independence, the South African colonial regime did not offer opportunities for all illiterate adults to be taught literacy skills. After, Namibia's independence in 1990, the National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) was launched in 1992 to fill this gap. The NLPN aimed to offer literacy skills to all adults. The literacy skills which are offered are reading, writing and numeracy (Directorate of Directorate, 2008). However, from its onset the literacy programme did not offer literacy skills to adults with hearing impairments until 2009. This situation then, affected adults with hearing impairments. This situation necessitated the researcher to do this study to investigate the role of literacy in the daily lives of the adult learners with hearing impairments in Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions.

1.2.1 The meaning and history of adult education as the custodian of the NLPN

The term adult education and adult learning denote any learning or educational activity which takes place outside the formal education system by (among) adults in that society (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). The meaning of adult education has changed from literacy and remedial education in the 1930s and 1940s to life-wide and lifelong education in the

1950s and 1960s respectively (Mpofu and Amin, 2004). The literacy and remedial view of adult education was abandoned a long time ago, however, this view was changed and adopted by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisations (UNESCO) (cited in Timus et al., 1979, p. 23) as follows:

Adult learning denotes the entire body of organised educational processes, whatever the content, the level and method whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong, develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge and improve their technical skills in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviours.

In Western countries, where adult education has been a discipline for many years (Mpofu, 1998), adult education was regarded as all activities in which capacities and capabilities of people who are considered to be adults are developed for specific purposes, irrespective of the particular settings of the activity. Similarly, in most parts of Asia, adult education is viewed much larger than literacy education and remedial education (Hinzen, cited in Mpofu and Amin, 2004).

For example, in Malaysia and Thailand, adult education is considered to play a very important role in the development of human resources for all sectors of the economy. In China, adult education was expected to facilitate national modernisation and development programmes in general (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). Despite the fact that adult education in the world has come a long way, there

seems to be no proper evidence focused on literacy education for adults with hearing impairments. It also appears as if education systems in the world took a long time to realise the role which literacy can play in the daily lives of the adult learners with hearing impairments.

Of recent, there have been numerous commitments to adult education and adult learning worldwide. The commitments to adult education among others include Education for All (EFA) goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) (2003-2012) and the World Education Forum in 2000 which proclaimed the Dakar Framework for Action. This offshoot of the Dakar Framework for Action was the Education For All goals from the starting year to 2015. These commitments illustrate how eager the world is to help people become literate. Despite these commitments, the world is still faced with a high number of illiterate adults.

Currently, Africa and Asia have a large number of illiterate women and girls (UNESCO, 2012). This was confirmed at the launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003), on 13 February 2003 when the Director General of UNESCO remarked that, “Efforts to promote literacy are not new, but the persistent scandal around 860 million people without access to literacy in today’s world is both a disturbing indictment and an urgent call for increased commitment because, this situation is unacceptable” (UNESCO, 2004b, p.15).

Mpofu and Amin (2004) asserted that the colonial educational systems did not make provision for adult education in most African countries. The colonial governments were not keen on promoting a literate and numerate indigenous population due to the general perception that an enlightened black population would become a threat to the white's establishment. For this reason, wide disparities in educational provision existed between the white settler communities and the indigenous black populations up to the attainment of independence in some countries.

Mpofu and Amin (2004) further noted that the isolated efforts particularly by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) through non formal education could not close the educational gap in many countries in Africa. However, at independence, most new African governments were obliged to come up with more concrete efforts to close the educational gap. This led to the establishment of national literacy programmes of various sorts in Africa (Mpofu and Amin, 2004).

These literacy programmes in Africa, nevertheless, are confronted with problems such as the lack of teaching and learning materials, funding, commitment to change and the timing of learning (Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005). As a result, Africa has high numbers of illiterate adults. It is worth mentioning that, the percentage of persons with disabilities who are illiterate is very high (Olouch, 2005). Additionally, in Africa, adult learning was not offered separately for those adult learners with hearing impairments and in most cases they were excluded.

In Namibia, the colonial era created unequal education because colonial education was not for all and was segregated according to races. The former South African government did not recognise education for black people, hence black people were not allowed to attend the same schools as whites and their educational facilities were not the same as well (Swarts, 1998). Furthermore, the apartheid regime in Namibia made sure that black people were 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' (Swarts, 1998, p.66) as well as garden layers and house builders for European settlers (United Nation Institute for Namibia, 1986).

The education sector in Namibia has greatly been affected by the oppressive nature of the apartheid regime of the past (Indabawa, 2000). A consequence of the autocratic character of the apartheid systems in the then South West Africa is that adults with hearing impairments were not offered the opportunity to attend adult classes, but were instead sidelined because of their impairments, colour and race (Swarts, 1998).

Some African organisations which tried to improve the situation were the likes of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), the Namibia Literacy Programme (NLP), as well as the Regional Bureau of Literature and Literacy, which was founded in 1970 in Johannesburg.

On the other hand, the South African government provided literacy and small scale community projects training for a handful of adults in black administered areas in Namibia. The small scale community projects established was governed by

organisations. These organisations provided alternative education in particular contexts (Hopfer, 1997, cited in Likando, 2008) for example; education relating to health and small scale community projects that were intended to improve livelihoods. Other organisations and centres which had played a role in providing adult education opportunities in Namibia were the Rossing Foundation Adult Education Centre, Ehafo Vocational Skills Training Centre and the Penduka Development Organisation (Nafukho, Amutabi, and Otunga, 2005).

However, these organisations did not provide education for adult learners with hearing impairments and did not equip participants with enough literacy skills as those who completed the programmes and were declared literate found themselves back in the same classes few years later, due to relapsing into illiteracy once again (Likando, 2008). The other factor is that some pastors who acted as administrators did not have the necessary skills in the administration of the adult education programmes (Macharia, Mbumba and Buberua, 1990). Thus, the average Namibian at independence was “socially, politically, economically, psychologically and educationally brutalised and disempowered” (Avoseh, 1999, p.126).

At Namibia’s independence in 1990, the new government committed itself to widening access to education for all. The government transformed the education system and affirmed its commitment to educate all Namibians irrespective of their colour, races or tribes. This is stipulated in the Namibian Constitution (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1991), through article 20, which provides that: “*All persons shall have the*

rights to education” (p. 12). The Ministry of Education (cited in Hamunyela, 2008) interpreted its constitutional intentions into a policy for educational reform and development by publishing a policy document named “*Toward Education for All*” (MEC, 1993). Education For All is defined as accessibility of all people to education and adjusting education for higher quality. This policy document also elaborates the rationale of lifelong learning by which its definition includes adult learning.

In order to fully cover adult learning activities and provide opportunities for adult learning, in 2003 the government of the Republic of Namibia, through the Ministry of Education, introduced a *National Policy on Adult Learning*. A *National Policy on Adult Learning* defined adult learning as:

“The entire range of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities undertaken by adults and out of school youth, which result in the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to enhance the quality of life” (MBESC, 2003, p.2).

The National Policy on Adult Learning intended to promote a broad concept of adult learning as an area of activity that is much wider than literacy and numeracy education for adults. It also aimed to give expression to the constitutional rights of all adults to have learning opportunities. Additionally, it reaffirmed the government’ obligation to make this right effective and to promote recognition of

the value of adult learning for individuals, the economy and society (MBESC, 2003).

Okedara (1983) observes that “adult learning is assisting those who were not privileged with a chance to learn and to be trained in basic skills of learning so they enroll for work in reading, writing and arithmetic” (p.73). Affirming this assertion is Namibia’s signatory to a number of recent international initiatives which promote adult learning such as *The World Education Forum* in 2000 that proclaimed the Dakar Framework for Action which set *Education for All* goals for the current period to 2015. Education For All III was /is aimed at fulfilling the learning needs for all young people and adults through equitable to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. Education For All IV was /is aimed at improving the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and promoting equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, 2003).

Following these obligations, the Ministry of Education through the Directorate of Adult Education (DAE), launched the National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) on 5 September 1992 (DAE, 2008).

The aims of NLPN as broadly defined in the Ministry of Education policy document “Toward Education for All...” are to provide not only equitable access to education for all Namibians, but also quality education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993a).

This notion changed from the idea of mere access to quality education (Sperling, 2001)

which was aimed at equipping participants with fundamental skills and knowledge that would enable them to survive in the world that was changing faster than ever (United Nation, 2002). The NLPN offers stages 1, 2 and 3 of basic literacy and numeracy to improve the livelihood of adults who were previously discriminated and marginalised under the colonial dispensation (DAE, 2008). Stage one provides learners with literacy and numeracy skills in their mother tongues. Stage two is a follow-up stage conducted in their mother tongue which forms an intermediate level of the literacy programme. Stage three is equivalent to Grade four of formal education and introduces learners to Basic English for actual communication in everyday life (MBEC/ UNICEF, 1997).

For progress purposes, several evaluation studies of the programme have been done by DAE, in 1994/5, 1999/2000 and 2008 respectively (DAE, 2008, p.6). The participants in the evaluation studies done in 1994/5, 1999/2000 and 2008 were adult learners without hearing impairments, the District Education Officers and hearing impaired promoters. The evaluation findings were instrumental in the revision of the policy guidelines of NLPN 1996 – 2000 which recommended the expansion of the literacy programme to include the Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE), Community Learning and Development Centre (CLDC), Family Literacy Programme (FLP) and Adult Skills for Self Employment (ASDSE). The Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) is a continuation of the programme for the adult learners who completed Stage 3 of NLPN (Ministry of Education, 2006).

The evaluation of Family Literacy Programme in 2010 indicated the need for educating many adults to join the Family Literacy Programme in order to help their children who are in grade one and two with homework. While NLPN is a well-developed programme, other participants, particularly the adults with hearing impairments, are yet to be included in these programmes. Since its inception in 1992, the National Literacy Programme in Namibia has been admitting adult learners without hearing impairments only. This is because the Directorate of Adult Education did not initiate any plans to include those adult learners with hearing impairments during the commencement of its literacy programmes.

A conference on deaf education was held in Okahandja on 23 and 24 August in 2008. The conference was part of a joint project between the Ministry of Education and the Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA). The conference discussed the employment opportunities of people with hearing impairments and made recommendations on how to improve and broaden these opportunities (ICEIDA, 2008). It should however be noted that, this conference focused on the deaf people who were in formal education.

Due to further commitment between the Icelandic International Development Agency and the Ministry of Education; in January 2009, ICEIDA supported the Directorate of Adult Education, through sponsoring three weeks of training for the hearing impaired promoters to teach literacy for adults with hearing impairments as well as payment of

their honoraria up to December 2010 (ICEIDA Annual Report, 2009; Matengu, Nuujoma and !Haosemab, 2009).

The literacy classes of adult learners with hearing impairments are in seven of thirteen regions of Namibia namely: Caprivi, Kavango, Khomas, Ohangwena, Omaheke, Omusati and Oshana (Matengu, Nuujoma and !Haosemab, 2009, p.4). Stage three adult learners with hearing impairments are able to read and write and at this point are further developing literacy and numeracy skills to enable them to continue learning (DAE, 2008).

The information on the adult learners with hearing impairments which NLPN has so far was obtained through classroom observation done by Directorate of Adult Education officers towards the end of 2009 in Ohangwena and Oshana regions, which focused more on the hearing impaired promoter's training needs. The findings from the same study identified the lack of teaching and learning materials and a need for improving lesson preparations by the promoters with hearing impairments (Matengu, Nuujoma and !Haosemab, 2009). Other studies related to literacy learning among hearing impaired learners done outside Namibia focused on non-hearing impaired community members and on how literacy equips them to prepare their hearing impaired children for life ahead (Marsden, 2003; ICEIDA, 2010).

While there is some knowledge on the training needs of the hearing impaired promoters as well as on perceptions of community members on how literacy enables them to

prepare their hearing impaired children for life ahead, the literature reviewed is silent on the voice of the adult learners with hearing impairments themselves. Moreover, very little (if ever) is documented on how the adult learners with hearing impairments view the role that literacy plays in their daily lives. Adult learners with hearing impairments' perceptions on the role of the literacy programme are very important for the programme planners and implementers (in this case DAE).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The literature review (DAE, 1994/5;1999/2000; Matengu, Nuujoma and !Haosemab, 2009) identified the lack of teaching and learning materials and poor lesson preparations. The other study by (Marsden, 2003) revealed that the hearing impaired children were not prepared to face life ahead. These studies were done among children with hearing impairments as well as the promoters with the same impairments.

The evaluation study done on the Family Literacy Programme in 2010, showed the need for parents to participate in the education of their children especially those who are in grade one and two. However, these studies seem to neglect the voice of the adult learners with hearing impairments participating in the literacy programmes as well as the deaf parents. The views and opinions of adult learners with hearing impairments in the literacy programme should be regarded as very significant as it gives the literacy implementers (DAE) information about the effect of their programmes on all recipients and indicate avenues requiring improvement. Therefore, the researcher reckons that

there is a need to fill the gap that exists in the knowledge base: How the adult learners with hearing impairments of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia view the role of the programme in their daily lives.

1.3 Research questions

The following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the expectations of adult learners with hearing impairments from NLPN?
2. How do adult learners with hearing impairments utilise the knowledge and skills they gain from the NLPN?
3. What challenges if any, do adult learners with hearing impairments who are participating in the literacy programme experience during the process of utilising the knowledge and skills gained from the programme?
4. How do adult learners with hearing impairments want the literacy programme to be improved?

1.4 Significance of the study

Babbie and Mouton (2001) explain that the significance of the study is the reason that motivated the researcher to embark on a study of a specific topic and its importance. Situations that encouraged the researcher to undertake this study relate to the researcher's experience in education as a former special education teacher and an education officer in the Directorate of Adult Education. These experiences reveal that adult learners with hearing impairments were ignored educationally and that their learning needs were neglected in many ways. The information acquired from reviewing the wide-ranging literature motivated the researcher to do this study. The significance of the study is briefly described in the paragraphs underneath.

The experience which the researcher gained as a teacher of hearing impaired children has shown that people with hearing impairments are neglected in society. Currently, as an education officer at the Directorate of Adult Education, the researcher has also witnessed how the views of adult learners with hearing impairments in the NLPN are constantly neglected. Against this background, the researcher developed an interest to find out how these adult learners with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Oshana, Oshana and Oshana regions attending NLPN, perceive the role of literacy in their daily lives. It is expected that this study will be of significance to adult literacy for hearing impaired adult learners.

First, it will create an understanding for the adult learners with hearing impairments' perceptions of NLPN. This will provide insights which may be brought to the attention of everyone involved in the planning and implementation of the literacy programme.

Second, the results of the study will provide evidence on how the programme is received from the perspectives of adult learners with hearing impairments as well as what role it plays among all recipients in the country. This will shape educational experiences in ways that will support the expansion of adult education in general and the adult learners with hearing impairments, in particular.

Third, the results of the study will contribute to the ongoing evaluation of the NLPN by the Directorate of Adult Education to include adult learners with hearing impairments. In addition, it will also be relevant to the needs of adult learners with hearing impairments with regards to adult literacy in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions. Finally, the results of the study will contribute to the existing local and global literature related to the views and attitudes regarding adult literacy in general and add to a new and better understanding of how these views and attitudes may influence the provision of adult literacy in disadvantaged community spheres such as adults with hearing impairments in Namibia.

1.5 Limitations of the study

This research did not escape limitations, thus, there were inevitable and unavoidable. First, time was limited. This research was only conducted in four regions which ultimately left out other regions which offered literacy classes for adult learners with hearing impairments. Therefore, to generalise the results to the other regions, the study should have involved more participants from all regions offering adult literacy for the hearing impaired adult learners. Second, the study lacks the consideration of adult learners with hearing impairments who previously participated at certain points in the literacy programme and no longer participate. Access to the former participants was not possible despite the fact that their names appeared on the attendance registers at the literacy centres. The possibility that some of these participants have passed away or migrated to other regions could not be ruled out. These limitations might have had a general effect on the results of the study.

1.6 Definitions of terms and concepts

There are various definitions and explanations of **literacy**, some of which are provided below:

- The **traditional meaning of literacy**: is linked to reading and writing and therefore, literacy becomes situated in the individual learner rather than society or the socio-

cultural setting. Literacy learning through a socio-cultural perspective or a social model looks at literacy as a set of practices.

- **Another definition of literacy:** is that literacy denotes the ability to identify, understand, interpret, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts (Barton, 2007, p. 33). It involves listening, speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and using every day technology to communicate and handle information (Gee, 2008).

 - **The description of literacy** that best fits the context of this study comes from the perspective of social literacy. The social definition of literacy emphasises the importance of what learners do with literacy and how they identify with it rather than taking a skills-based approach that is of a reductionist nature and how they perceive literacy or how they utilise it within different social and cultural contexts (Barton and Hamilton, 2000a; Roach, 2002).
2. **Deafness:** refers to the inability to hear things, either totally or partially. Symptoms may be mild, moderate, severe or profound. People who are profoundly deaf can hear nothing at all. In order to communicate spontaneously and rapidly with people, they are totally reliant on lip-reading and/or sign language. People who are born deaf find lip-reading much harder to learn compared to those who became hearing impaired after their had learnt to communicate orally (with sounds).

3. **Hearing loss:** exists when there is diminished sensitivity to the sounds normally heard. The term hearing impairment is usually reserved for people who have relative insensitivity to sound in the speech frequencies. The severity of a hearing loss is categorised according to the increase in volume above the usual level necessary before the listener can detect it.
4. **Sign language:** is the primary means of communication; it is part of the Deaf-World.
5. **D/deaf:** Individuals, who are *Deaf*, as noted with a capital *D*, are culturally Deaf and belong to a cultural, linguistic minority group. Many of these Deaf individuals belong to a Deaf community or a Deaf-World.
6. **Hearing impaired people:** designated with a lowercase, are part of a much larger and more heterogeneous group than individuals identifying specific (Lane, 2005). Some of the Hearing impaired or deaf people typically consider themselves to be part of a 'hearing world' and do not primarily use sign language as a means of communication, but rather spoken English or other languages.
7. **Hard of hearing people:** are people who have "residual hearing sufficient to enable successful processing of linguistic information through hearing" (Rodda and Eleweke, 2000, p. 102) and may use hearing aids. Individuals who are hard of

hearing may identify them to be 'hearing impaired' and for the most part, do not typically associate themselves with the Deaf community.

8. Deafened individuals are individuals who originally had normal levels of hearing at birth but lost their hearing due to a medical condition, age or at a later stage in their lives.

9. Hearing impaired adult learners: These are the adult learners with hearing impairments who are participating in the literacy programme. They are either D/deaf or hard of hearing or Deafened and may or may not use Sign language as the primary means of communication.

10. Functional literacy: As adopted in this study, functional literacy refers to life-orientation skills that literacy programmes have to offer to adult learners in order for them to use these skills for the sustainability of their living conditions.

11. Functional literacy skills: in this study are perceived as the skills that allow the adult learners with hearing impairments to engage in social, political and economic activities effectively and activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his/ her culture or group (Openjuru, 2004).

12. Development: In this study development refers to a process of helping people change, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to conceive, plan, design and implement their own self development (Indabawa and

Mpofu, 2006). In the context of this study, development can be seen as an agent for general improvement in all spheres of society in terms of reduction of poverty, discrimination, inequality, unfairness, and dominations in adult learning (UNDP, 2001).

13. Skills and Knowledge: These are skills that can be learnt and applied in real life situations and can be used for improvement of individual's living conditions.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the background information of the study. The researcher believes that the perspectives on adult learning internationally, in Africa and in Namibia help us to understand the history and the meaning of Adult Education which form the basis of this study. This chapter also stated the problem and reasons as well as the importance of undertaking this study. The research questions that guided the study were identified in this chapter, while the limitations and the definition and clarification of concepts and terms were defined.

Chapter 2 presented the literature review on the role of literacy among adult learners with hearing impairments.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The provision of adult literacy for adult learners with hearing impairments has been a great concern worldwide. They like any other human being, have the right to be literate and to contribute to the nation building of their communities (United Nation Educational Scientific Cultural Organisations (UNESCO, 2006). There was a need to find out how literacy plays a role in the daily lives of the hearing impaired adult learners. This study was intended to contribute to the understanding of how adult learners with hearing impairments can benefit from adult literacy. The study aimed also to define the role which adult literacy plays in ensuring that participants are able to participate actively in their communities and in the economic development of their country. This study would also like to affirm the commitment of inclusive education which advocated for the inclusion of everyone in education and maintains that all learners and adults be included in education. This however, support the National Policy on Disability (1997) which maintains that "irrespective of their disabilities, people living with disabilities need to be educated and their needs should be attended to"(p.56).

In the eyes of modern society, adult learners with hearing impairments have lagged behind their hearing counterparts with regard to literacy, and employment and

employment levels; and educational attainments (Elwan, 1999; Livingstone and Bovill, 2000). Literacy skills have been shown to be related to education, employment earnings and employment status (UNESCO, 2004 b). From a theoretical perspective, literacy education, including adult literacy learning, has evolved significantly over the years and the field has become much broader in definition (Marsden, 2003; Power. and Leigh, 2000).

2.1.1 Perceptions on adult literacy programmes

There has been a comprehensive variety of research conducted dealing with adult literacy in general (DAE, 2008, Marsden, 2003; ICEIDA, 2010; Kweka and Namene, 1999, Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006; Openjuru, 2004; Olouch, 2005); Matengu, Nuujoma and !Haosemab, 2009; Likando, 2008; Abadzi, 2004); and on literacy, training and empowerment of adult educators (Youngman, 2000a, 2000b; Indabawa, 2000); literacy and productive skills training (Rogers, 2005; Erickson, Koppenhaver and Yoder, 1994; Lewis & Del Valle, 2009; Heelan, 2001; Denny, 2002; Omolewa, 2000).

Some of the international and African initiatives on adult literacy are: The world federation of the Deaf (WFD), 2009; UNESCO, 2000, 2009, 2012; World Economic Forum, 2007, ICEIDA, 2009; UN, 2002; Commission of the African Union, 2005; Quality Education For Africa's Sustainable Development, 2005; the Salamanca statement on Special Needs Education; UNESCO, 1994 and the Gallaudet University Declaration on Adults with special learning needs, 1997.

Despite much consideration being given to adult literacy in general, for example, the Directorate of Adult Education' provision of literacy and numeracy skills to adults in the NLPN. The researcher did not come across any study so far that focused on the role of literacy in the daily lives of the adult learners with hearing impairments in the National Literacy Programme in Namibia.

Several evaluation studies of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia have been done by DAE in 1994/5, 1999/2000 and 2008 (DAE, 2008, p.6). The participants in the evaluation studies done in 1994/5, 1999/2000 and 2008 were adult learners without hearing impairments, the District Education Officers and non-hearing impaired promoters. The findings of those evaluation studies were instrumental in the revision of the policy guidelines of NLPN 1996 – 2000 which recommended the expansion of the literacy programme to include the Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) and other programmes.

In the case of this study, the information on the adults with hearing impairments so far, was obtained through classroom observation done by DAE officers towards the end of 2009 in the Oshana and Oshana regions, and it focused more on the hearing impaired promoters' training needs. The findings from the same study identified the lack of teaching and learning materials, and the need of improving on lesson preparations by the hearing impaired promoters (Matengu, Nuujoma and !Haosemab, 2009).

A remarkable study was done by Mpofu and Amin (2004) on the perceptions of adult learning involving institutional providers in Namibia. This study revealed that the perceptions of adult education remain narrow. This simply meant that their ideas on the concept of adult education and specifically on its importance to illiterate adults were not fully understood. Other studies related to literacy learning among hearing impaired learners were done outside Namibia. These studies focused on non-hearing impaired community members and how literacy equips them to prepare their hearing impaired children for life ahead (Marsden, 2003).

A recent study (Likando, 2008) on the views and attitudes of adult literacy learners, adult educators and policy makers regarding the adult literacy programmes in the Caprivi region revealed that, the Directorate of Adult Education need to revisit the curricula and learning content of the NLPN. Although the findings of these studies are useful in informing us about the Namibian situation in this area, they merely form the foundational background for this study. This is because of the limited information gained in these studies and the fact that the views of the adults with hearing impairments with regard to the role of literacy in their daily lives were not included in these studies.

2.1.2 Educational initiatives for the adult learners with hearing impairments

2.1.2.1 The International perspective

Some international literature focused on fighting illiteracy within a general adult population and less on the hearing impaired adult learners. It is estimated that about 650 million people worldwide have physical disabilities as well as sensory blindness and deafness (UNESCO, 2000). Seventy million people worldwide are living with hearing impairments. According to the worldwide survey conducted by the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), the international and representation organisations for deaf people conducted several years ago found that 80% of deaf people did not receive any basic education, especially in developing countries. This is because they were sidelined in accordance to their disabilities and impairments.

The World Federation of the Deaf strongly advocates access to education for deaf people of all ages as well as for their family members and the involvement of deaf adults in all aspects of education planning and programming (WFD, 2009). Worldwide, the rights of people with hearing impairments are often overlooked, especially in developing countries. It is unfortunate that societal prejudices and barriers regarding education prevent deaf people from enjoying full human rights (UNESCO, 2000). For the deaf people, one major barrier is the lack of recognition, acceptance and usage of sign language in all areas of life as well as lack of respect for deaf people's cultural and linguistic identity (WFD, 2009).

Other international initiatives on adult learning have been made by UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation) through the CONFINTEA series of international meetings, which take place every 12 to 13 years, since the late 1940s (Denmark in 1949, Canada 1960, Japan 1972, France 1985 and Germany 1997) (UNESCO, 2009).

The Hamburg Conference and CONFINTEA V marked a turning point in the global recognition of and commitment to adult learning and non-formal education. It called attention to adult learning and non-formal education as indispensable elements of lifelong learning. The delegates emphasised that adult and lifelong learning were key tools in addressing the global challenges of the 21st century in relation to democracy, peace and human rights, respect for diversity and conflict resolution, economic and ecological sustainability, and workforce development (UNESCO, 1997).

The same CONFINTEA V affirmed that adult education should not only expand knowledge, but it should also promote human rights, active citizenship and effective democracy, education and employment that are essential to a good quality life in each country. In addition, CONFINTEA V emphasised that adult education is more than a right and maintained the right to have access to resources, to develop and practice individual and collective skills and competencies (UNESCO, 1997).

This holistic understanding of adult learning and non-formal education established by CONFINTEA V is the ground upon which CONFINTEA VI will be built. The

CONFINTEA VI aims to strengthen the recognition of adult learning and non-formal education within the perspective of life-wide and lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2009).

Another international initiative on adult learning is the United Nations and the Salamanca statement on Special Needs Education. The Salamanca statement focused on making education accessible for people with all kinds of disabilities, regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social and linguistic condition (UNESCO, 2009; UNESCO 1994).

Additionally, the World Economic Forum (2007) states that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and skills. The World Economic Forum aims to achieve a 50 % improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults. The World Economic Forum adds that aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that, recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all. These measurable learning outcomes especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills are prominent in the lives of people with hearing impairments (World Economic Forum, 2007).

Another breakthrough in promoting adult learning is the Gallaudet University Declaration on adults with special learning needs in 1997 which recommended that the lifelong learning for adults with special learning needs be developed with their full participation to assure that it responds to their educational needs and goals (Gallaudet

University Declaration, 1997). This declaration further emphasised the need for adult learners with hearing impairments to be provided with opportunities beyond basic education and vocational skills for personal and social development. This same declaration again stated that lifelong learning for adults with special needs be sensitive to issues of cultural, linguistic, gender and economic diversity.

2.1.2.2 The African Perspective

African societies have remained behind in adopting and encompassing the view of adult learning (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). Although there was adult education and adult learning going on in industrial and traditional circles of Africa, there has been very little acknowledgement of the role of adult education and adult learning (Mpofu, 1998). With specific reference to Southern Africa, Mpofu and Amin (2004) contended that adult education has generally been marginalised in most countries. The most critical resistance to the broader view of adult education seemed to have occurred in Africa (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). The example given was that adult education was essentially education for the development of local communities.

Traditionally, in Africa, programmes were tailored to the immediate and pressing needs of local residents especially the kind of education surrounding the issues of birth and childhood and initiation and puberty (Gboku and Lekoko, 2007). This contributed to many African countries' initiatives on adult education and adult learning being supported by the international community. The CONFINTEA VI Regional Conference

for the African Region is a good example in initiating adult education and adult learning in Africa.

The CONFINTEA VI Regional Conference for the African Region was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Kenya, from 5 to 7 November 2008, in Nairobi. In the outcome document, participants agreed that the potential of Africa resides in its human, cultural and linguistic; as well as its ecological diversity and natural resources. The same conference identified a variety of serious challenges, such as poverty and the lack of capacity-building, unequal socio-political and economic systems. The conference maintained that in order to fulfill the right to education for adults and youth, legislation, policies, funding and implementation there is a requisite to address challenges facing countries in the region (UNESCO, 2009).

According to UNESCO (2009), sixty-one percent of the people who live in Sub-Saharan Africa are illiterate against an average of seventy-six percent for developing countries. The findings of a recent study commissioned by the African Union corroborate this assertion, as follows:

Firstly, a smaller proportion of the participants enrolled in the literacy programmes ever achieve functional literacy. Secondly, a smaller proportion of Africa's female population is literate. This includes adults with hearing impairments. Thirdly, fewer women are engaged in the acquisition of life-skills, among out-of-school youth (Commission of the

African Union, Quality Education For Africa's Sustainable Development April 2005, pp. 7-8).

The African Union's Education Department took the necessary measures for obtaining:

Full commitment by African governments to the execution of internationally agreed education covenants: Education for All, secondary education, technical and vocational education, higher education, and adult and continuing education, the United Nations Literacy Decade, the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in the overall context (United Nations Millennium Commission of the African Union, April 2005, p. 5).

The colonial education systems did not make provision for the development of institutionalised adult education in most African countries. Isolated efforts by non-governmental organisation through non-formal education could not close the educational gap (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). However, at independence, the new African governments were obliged to come up with more intensive efforts to close the educational gap between those who were illiterate and those who were literate. This led to the establishment of national literacy programmes for various types. Some of these literacy programmes were: The Tanzania National Literacy Campaign which commenced, in 1971; The launching of Botswana National Literacy Programme, in 1981; The National Mass Literacy Campaign of Nigeria launched in 1982; The Zimbabwe National Literacy Campaign which was started in 1983 and The Namibian

National Literacy Programme, launched in 1992 (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). In fact, with all these African governments the equivalence between government literacy agencies has remained frozen in the mind of many (Mpofu and Amin, 2004). This meant that there was not a clear role that government literacy agencies played which justified their commitments to adult literacy. This contributed to the misunderstanding of the role of literacy agencies among people.

Additionally, several recent initiatives on providing literacy outreach to specific disabled population were also identified in some African countries. For example, in 2008, the government of South Africa launched the Kha-ri-gude Campaign to foster literacy for 4.7 million illiterate South Africans, focusing on illiterate adults from groups that have traditionally not been reached well by conventional education (Kha-ri-gude, 2009).

Among the targeted groups, disabled citizens were specifically identified, with 60 sign language teachers included in the initial group of educators. As well as the development of Brailled materials and further plans for outreach efforts to accommodate adults with a range of disabilities (Kha-ri-gude, 2009). The larger scale initiatives were promising in them and showed that literacy initiatives for adults with impairments can be incorporated into large scale literacy campaigns.

In summary, in Africa, the main major challenge with regard to the provision of adult literacy to persons with hearing impairments was that most of African countries were colonised. This made the situations rather difficult for some of the African countries to provide adult literacy to persons with hearing impairments. Other major challenges were the lack of resources and the fact that adult education was marginalised in some African countries (Mpofu, 2006).

2.1.2.3 The Namibian Perspective

The education was not for all during the former South West Africa (SWA) regime because it was distributed according to races. This situation led to the education sector in Namibia to be greatly affected by the oppressive education system of South Africa. The same situation led adults with hearing impairments not to have opportunities to attend adult classes and was instead sidelined because of their colour and race (Swarts, 1998).

In Namibia, the National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) was launched in 1992 by the Ministry of Education through the Directorate of Adult Education (DAE) (DAE, 2008). The Programme offers stages 1, 2, and 3 of basic literacy and numeracy to improve the livelihood of adults who were previously discriminated and marginalised under colonial dispensation (DAE, 2008). Once stage 3 is completed it is equivalent to Grade 4 of formal education.

The aims of NLPN as broadly defined in the Ministry of Education policy document “Toward Education For All...” to provide not only equitable access to education for all Namibians, but also quality education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993a). The NLPN aimed at equipping participants with fundamental pertinent skills and knowledge that would enable them to survive in the world which was changing faster than ever (UN, 2002). These skills included family health, income generating and agricultural skills among others.

The participation of Stage 3 adult learners with hearing impairments in the study help the researcher to learn about their expectations of NLPN programme. Their views in this study again help the researcher hear about the knowledge and skills they gained from the NLPN. Their contribution in the research assisted the researcher to be acquainted with the challenges that they experienced in the programme and how they want the programme to be improved.

2.1.3 The importance of literacy and participation in adult literacy for hearing impaired adult learners

2. 1.3.1 Usage of literacy

Education is a fundamental human right enshrined in all major United Nations and other International Charters. The need to provide adult literacy education and eradicate illiteracy among adults, including hearing impaired adults need proper consideration.

The provision of occupation-oriented skills necessary for increased economic productivity to them has been of great concern worldwide (Oluoch, 2005). However, researchers identified that many adult learners with hearing impairments under - achieve in education due to inadequate literacy levels and illiteracy (Denny, 2002). They are disadvantaged in both further education and in vocational opportunities (Gerber and Reiff, 1999). Heelan (2001) and Commings (1995) acknowledge the importance of adult learners with hearing impairments to be technologically literate. This supports Corridan's (2002) affirmation that learning to read and write is purely associated with formal school but in developed countries, adults with impairments are supported so that they are well advanced in technology.

The literature revealed that rural people are responsive to literacy if it benefits and meets their needs and aspirations (Benshofs and Lewis, 1992). This was supported by Menkiti (2008) who states that Education For All agenda is incomplete without adult literacy. Children whose parents are functionally illiterate are twice as likely as their peers to be functionally illiterate too (Benshofs and Lewis, 1992). This is in agreement with Cresdee's (1997) assertion that the objectives of adult literacy programmes should not only be to teach adults how to read and write, but the focus should be beyond the individual learner to be functionally literate and combine two elements of vocational skills training and literacy (Rogers, 2005). This again supports Omolewa's (2000) suggestions that adult literacy should not be construed purely as a tool for the acquisition

of literacy skills, but it should be adopted and used as a skill for economic and social advancement.

In addition, being literate helps adults with hearing impairments to increase their levels of literacy and be competent among other adults who are illiterate (Erickson, Koppenhaver and Yoder, 1994). This supports Benschofs and Lewig (1998) 's observation that for provision of basic skills for reading and writing, the literacy programmes need to be responsive to the needs of the participants in order to assist the them to have a wider range of vocational options.

Indicating the need for adult learners with hearing impairments to be literate Dugdale (2004) as well as Benschofs and Lewig (1992) advocate that literacy helps adult learners with hearing impairments be accepted by their peers. This is because most people like to be associated with people who are literate. Adult literacy among the adult learners with hearing impairments can assist them advance their literacy skills in a knowledge-based and information- intensive society (Literacy for tomorrow, 1999; Gravett, 2005). Literacy improves the livelihoods of participants of a country (Oluoch, 2005).

It is important to note that adult literacy helps the participants partake in the socio-economic development of the country. According to Oluoch (2005), Indabawa (2000) and Menkiti (2008), there is a key element in engaging adult learners with hearing impairments realise the importance of adult literacy and to contribute to socio economic development of the country. This key element is when literacy programmes are

accompanied by post literacy, income-generating activities and other basic education and skills training programmes.

More recently, some literacy programmes attempted to help participants acquire skills necessary for self-employment or gain employment in their respective communities (Oluoch, 2005). However, this is negatively influenced by several factors in some literacy programmes. Some adult learners with hearing impairments could drop out and attend at their convenience (Padden and Hampries, 2005). In the Namibian context, the literacy programmes had only been admitting adults without impairments until in 2009 when ICEIDA financially assisted the Directorate of Adult Education to start accommodating adults with hearing impairments. The admission of adults with hearing impairments in the NLPN programme did not yet bear good fruits. This is due to the fact that skills offered in the NLPN were not functional and sufficient for them to be able to sustain themselves financially. This led to negative factors such as absenteeism and, dropouts among adults with hearing impairments in the NLPN.

In addition, parental levels of education have shown to be a significant factor relating to literacy levels. Those children with highly educated parents tend to have higher literacy scores (Barton, 2007). As a result, there is need for literacy programmes which have components that improve the literacy and numeracy skills and develop their participants with functional skills (Oluoch, 2005). There is consensus that adult literacy enhances social participation and contributes to the reduction of stigma, prejudice and discrimination (UNESCO, 2005). Therefore, it is very important for the adult learners

with hearing impairments to participate in the literacy programmes in order to attain what they lacked in their daily lives.

2.1.3.2 The relationship between literacy and development

Two major assumptions have guided UNESCO in its promotion of literacy ever since 1945. According to UNESCO (2005) illiteracy is a major obstacle to development; hence, literacy is an instrument for development. Although, it has been debated and looked upon overtime, how literacy and development are related, views expressed about literacy confirmed that the eradication of illiteracy does not banish deprivation overnight. However, by eliminating one obstacle to development, it will indirectly help to improve living and working conditions (Dugdale, 2004).

In addition, literacy has been identified as a good index of a country's socio-economic development and stability and there is some correlation between literacy and development (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). This suggests that there is a parallel relationship between literacy and the major indicators of development. Conversely, this suggests that there is a parallel relationship between literacy and some indicators of underdevelopment such as poverty. UNESCO (1990) points out the problem of not recognising that the map of world illiteracy coincides with that of poverty.

Although, Lind and Johnston (1990) also make reference to this coincidence when they make the observation that the causal link between literacy and development remains ambiguous and unproved. There are, however, other examples of coincidence between advances in literacy and advances in economic and social development. According to UNESCO (2008), literacy and development help adults particularly in their improvements in health, education and other aspects of human welfare. This is because, people having reasonable literacy and numeracy skills tend to produce more farm crops, have limited number of children and enjoy a relatively better quality of life as compared with uneducated families.

In addition, educated people earn more and are respected by the society (UNESCO, 2008). These support the researcher's assertion that there is indeed a relationship between literacy, employment and development. These were confirmed by the findings of the current study on the role of literacy among adult learners with hearing impairments. The findings of the study revealed that: the adult learners with hearing impairments joined and participated in the literacy programmes to free themselves from poverty, to be employable and to be advanced in certain areas. On the basis of the existing data, it seems that the best we can do is to claim that there is a positive correlation between literacy, employment and development. This implies that higher levels of literacy seem to exist in conjunction with higher levels of development, and vice versa (Olouch, 2005).

On the contrary, despite numerous efforts involving the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) to ‘evaluate the social and economic effect of literacy,’ there is no basis on which to believe that literacy has anything to do with the economic, social and political development of a people (Lind and Johnston, 1990, p.45). Wagner (2000) explores the link between literacy and development and has concluded that there is little research as yet to suggest that literacy programmes are enabling the unemployed to obtain new jobs or to make major career changes. Although these views could not be denied some participants in this study believed that literacy is the only way that they would be assisted to be employed and to succeed in their lives.

Furthermore, there is virtually no evidence from developing countries that adult literacy programmes lead to actual economic improvements in the lives of the programme participants (Wagner, 2000). For as long as there is no conclusive evidence on how literacy effects development, it leaves open the possibility that it is actually the other way around. It could be that social and economic advancement lead to the attainment of higher levels of literacy rates. Similarly, underdevelopment could incapacitate the ability of a society to attain a higher-level literacy rate (Wagner, 2000). These ideas partly support some findings of this study. The participants in the study felt that what they learnt in the NLPN programme would not help them to contribute to the development of their communities and the country at large. Additionally, the participants sensed that for them to link literacy and development it would be when the knowledge and skills that

they would gain or gained from the programme helped them to achieve their goals of being self-sustainable.

Although, there is no evidence to directly link literacy to development, educationists have settled for what Lind and Johnston (1990) call the ‘dialectic view’ of the relationship between literacy and development. This suggests the existence of a symbiotic relationship between the two, in which each affects and is affected by the other. However, the findings of the current study on literacy, employment and development showed that adult learners with hearing impairments are indeed in need to be literate in order to think about economic development; they need to have functional skills for them to search for employment and participate in the economic development of their society. The researcher feels the need to state that, because of a dialectic relationship between literacy and development, adult education is an indispensable condition for sustainable development in any society.

The position of the researcher stated above supports what (Cappelli, Daniels, Durieux-Smith; McGrath and Neuss (1995) appropriately say: “the development process is in fact an educational process; or rather it should unfailingly be viewed as such” p.97. This implies that we cannot separate adult education from development and vice versa. We cannot therefore conceive of development in the absence of education any more than education in the absence of development (Lind and Johnston, 1990). These notions gave more information to one of the research questions of the study which aimed to find out

whether the skills and knowledge gained in the NLPN would contribute to the development and economic empowerment of the participants.

2.1.4 Gender participation in adult literacy programmes

Some studies (McGivney, 2004; Groce, 2006; Oluoch, 2005; Lind and Johnson, 1990, Indabawa and Mpofu, 2000) highlight the low attendance of male participants and high attendance of female participants in the literacy programmes. The reasons given for the low turnout of male participants in the literacy programmes indicated that males were basically shy about exposing their illiteracy (Groce, 2006). Cultural barriers such as sex taboos, family relationships, and perceptions of literacy being a female activity and leadership conflicts also constrained participation (Oluoch, 2005). The male culture portrays literacy programmes as education for females and did not fit with the “macho” image of males (The international Adult Literacy Survey, 2009, Groce, 2006).

Other contributing factors to gender imbalances in the participation of male adults in the literacy programmes included a strong sense of embarrassment and shame of returning to school as an adult, particularly to tackle literacy difficulties which, men view as a taboo (Fasokun, Katahoire, and Oduaran, 2005). McGivney (2004) advises that the lack of education amongst males of all ages in specific social groups poses a significant danger, not only in relation to the labour market, but also to the broader community.

At the same time, Mpofu (2000) and UNESCO (2012) state that despite the higher numbers of female participants in the literacy programmes, women and girls make up nearly two thirds of illiterate adults and youth population in the world. The overall participation of males in adult and continuing education remains low. This phenomenon continues to pose a challenge for vocational education continuity (Ireland report on adult learning, 2008).

In Namibia (Kweka and Namene, 1999; Kiria, 2010) stated that there is a gender imbalance in the NLPN due to factors such as lack of understanding, laziness and family responsibilities. Males failed to understand the need to be literate like their female counterparts; they instead developed attitudes and did not want to attend literacy classes with women. Another factors identified was laziness. Laziness (especially in men) was caused by their alcohol consumption and the constant urge to be at the local cucashops (she-been) instead of attending literacy classes. Family responsibilities contributed also to gender imbalances in the NLPN. This is because male adults had to perform different chores such as looking after cattle, cultivation of the land and searching food for their families.

In addition, in the Namibian context, the lack of education among men contributed to high numbers of unemployed men and domestic violence because some of the women who were literate started small business which men perceived as being a threat. Furthermore, some men believed that even if they attend literacy classes they would not be able to attain anything in order to succeed in their lives (Kiria, 2010).

While confirming that gender differences are insignificant in relation to literacy levels in all participating countries (The International Adult Literacy Survey, 2009), Ireland report (2004), highlights that literacy difficulties constitute one of the most significant dispositional barriers to participation, in which they predispose individuals into believing that they will not succeed in adult learning.

In essence, there is consensus that men's unwillingness for engaging in literacy education includes personal, family and work-related factors. For men to be motivated to participate in the literacy classes there should be an educator and learner relationship on a foundation of mutual respect and trust. There should be a non-threatening, non-competitive, flexible and confidential environment (Owen, 2000, Dublin Adult learning Report, 2002). The non-competitive, flexible and confidential environments are important factors that need consideration in the NLPN. The literacy programmes need to create a positive relationship, respect and trust between the adult educator and the male adult learners as this would motivate and raise the numbers of male adult participants with hearing impairments in the programme.

2.1.5 The meaning of Empowerment

Generally, empowerment is considered to be a person's ability to 'take effective control of one's life in terms of being well informed and equipped with education, finance and relevant skills to make decisions without any external influence' (Folkman, and Lazarus ,1988, p.45). Empowerment has four basic elements namely: control of one's life, access

to information and education, access to finance, and access to skills for decision-making related to one's situation (Basil, and Reyes, 2003). Collectively, these elements can enable a person to become empowered. In other words, empowerment enables people to make the choices they want, follow the careers they desire and achieve the goals they set for themselves (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). In the case of this study, empowerment is needed by the disadvantaged adults with hearing impairments because if they are empowered by the literacy programmes, they will be able to make relevant decisions. However, the question remains whether the literacy programmes really offer or provide empowering activities for participants.

The need for empowerment is supported by many researchers:

Empowerment connotes people's demands to be recognised and valued. In a narrow sense, empowerment describes a wide range of efforts aimed at enhancing the power of individuals, groups and organisations in society. Fundamentally, empowerment is the process of changing the balance of power in favour of those who were kept out of the mainstream of economic, social and cultural activities as a consequence of deliberate policies such as colonialism and apartheid (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006, p.82).

Empowerment is the process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy in communities through which identification and removal of conditions that reinforce powerlessness (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006, p.90). In this regard, empowerment involves the four ever-changing processes of seeking access to economic or public resources; awareness-raising with regard to rights, especially across gender lines, equity and fairness in terms of access to public resources and their management. Empowerment involves action in order to effect changes or to modify the situations, circumstances and social relations in which people find themselves (Phillips, 1996).

Traditionally, women and disadvantaged people are among the most disempowered groups (Phillips, 1996). Therefore, efforts aimed at empowering people normally involve or target women and other disadvantaged people like street children, the elderly, the orphaned, people with impairments and disabilities, the rural and urban poor, minority ethnic groups and refugees; victims of epidemic diseases such as malaria and HIV and AIDS, and the non-literate adults (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). This is necessary in order to create a more just world in which the needs of diverse groups are attended to and of particular importance, is the empowerment of women because they are considered to be at the centre of sustainable development (Phillips, 1996). According to Allen (2005, p.19-20), women's empowerment means among other things "the recognition of their contributions and knowledge, helping (their) self-respect and dignity, enabling them to become more economically independent and self-reliant,

reducing their burden of work, especially at home and promoting their qualities of nurturing, caring and gentleness.”

2.1.6 Empowerment in adult education and literacy programmes

In generic terms, adult education refers to all education that takes place outside the formal constraints of formal schooling. It is for people who are biologically (at least fifteen years of age) and socially (can take responsibilities in the family or the community) recognised as adults (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). Such people may have missed the opportunity for initial education while they were young and, for this reason, need some form of compensation (Oluoch, 2005). They may need to extend their knowledge or learn to trade a recreational or a leisure-time activity, or just acquire more knowledge for its own sake (Omolewa, 1981; Okedara, 1983; and Lindeman, 1980).

In addition to the large scale of people who are excluded or pushed out of the mainstream or formal education, adult education is also for the young, the un-served or under-served adolescents as well as the unreached children who live on the streets of African cities and townships (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). This new perspective has become current since the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) taken at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990, and renewed at the Dakar World Education Forum in April 2000 (UNESCO, 2000). Adult education is meant to meet the basic learning needs of all in a lifelong form, promoting learning to know, learning to do, learning to live and learning to be, as well as living to learn (Delors, 1998; Youngman, 1998 and Oduaran,

2002). Therefore, in the process of empowering people, adult education is a practicable instrument that can be used at all times and in all places.

In fact, there is a growing worldwide consensus that ‘literacy and adult education are a means for people to overcome poverty and exclusion, establish and reinforce democracy, achieve justice and comprehensive peace, enhance economic and social well-being and improve health and ensure food security (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). Adult education helps to prevent and eliminate gender and racial disparity, and other social problems such as violence against women, drug addiction, environmental destruction and HIV and AIDS (ICAE, 2000).

Additional, literacy leads to education and results in empowerment with the acquisition of the essential knowledge and skills, which enable one to engage in activities, required for effective functioning of the individual in his group and community and use these skills towards his own and his community (UNESCO, 2008).

Empowerment involves a process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform these choices into desired actions and outcomes. Empowering the poor has been linked to improved project performance and governance and to growth that is more pro-poor (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006).

2.1.7 Empowerment and employment for adult learners with hearing impairments

Empowerment is one of the top priorities in the fight against poverty (Abadzi, 2004). The employment and empowerment of the adult learners with hearing impairments has been a great concern in most adult literacy programmes (Abadzi, 2004). Adults with learning disabilities are vulnerable to psychological problems such as poor self-concepts which further prevent them from seeking employment (Rogers, 2005; Khor, 2002, Masi et al., 1999).

The adult learners with hearing impairments find it difficult to get jobs and to cope at the work places (Marsden, 2003) because; literacy programmes do not offer job-related skills. This contributes to a higher number of unemployed adult learners with hearing impairments (Indabawa, 2000). The notion of UNESCO in its Education For All initiative defines functional literacy as activities that help adults to be effectively functioning in their group and in the community (UNESCO, 2006). Most of the deaf adults are not functionally literate (UNESCO, 2006). The deaf adults need to be functionally literate for them to break the circle of poverty and become empowered, expanding their choices and thus reducing their dependence and vulnerability (Oluoch, 2005).

The adult learners with hearing impairments are more likely to be unemployed and if working they are most likely to get relatively low paying/skill jobs and/or perhaps face wage discrimination (McGovern, 2002). Again, McGovern (2002) suggests that

unemployment and low paying/skill jobs are present to a higher degree in adults with hearing impairments. However, Mellard (1998) noted that participants in adult literacy programmes with and without hearing impairments tended to demonstrate similar employment rates and statuses. There is a concern to whether adult literacy for adults with hearing impairments would lead to actual economic improvement in the lives of the programme participants (Rogers, 2005).

This study's findings highlight that hearing impaired adults were unemployed due to the lack of being literate and to the unemployment situation in the country. This is a worrisome situation for the people who are supposed to be empowered with necessary skills that assist them to be employable. Rogers (2005) recommends the combination of vocational skills training and literacy learning rather than keeping them in parallel. Rogers further recommends embedding the learning of literacy within the skills training, by using the embedded literacies of the craft or trade. Literacy has to become one of the skills being learned rather than being something on its own (Rogers, 2005).

While, the findings of the study revealed that the adult learners with hearing impairments would be empowered by doing practical skills that would enhance them to start their own businesses. It is important if the NLPN could empower the adult learners with hearing impairments by properly giving them the functional skills that would enable them to get jobs and to start proper business.

2.1.8 Motivation and expectation for adults with hearing impairments to attend adult literacy programme

2.1.8.1 Motivation

The adult learners with hearing impairments were motivated to attend literacy programmes to compensate lost earlier educational opportunities (Oluoch, 2005). Vella, (1994) comments that motivation to learn depends on the success the adult learners anticipate. On the other hand, Knowles (1999) notes that motivation to learn for adult learners may stem from their life events. The African adults are motivated to learn by various reasons such as to establish social status as well as to meet external expectations (Fasokun, 2004). Furthermore, Oduaran (2000) comments that adults are more interested in and motivated to attend the literacy programme which helps them acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes that they can apply in their daily lives.

Additionally, Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran (2005) remark that only a literacy programme which considers adult learners' motivation factors to attend literacy programmes can attract learners to join. This supports what was stated by Knowles (1986) that "while adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries), the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem and quality of life) (p.60). In addition to Knowles' view, Tough (1979) found in his research that all adults were motivated to keep growing and developing, but this motivation is frequently blocked by such barriers

as negative self-concept as a learner, inaccessibility of opportunities or resources, time constraints and programmes that violate the principle of adult learning. Indabawa (2000) asserted that rural adults with hearing impairments were responsive to literacy if it has the potential to benefit and meet their felt needs and aspirations.

There is a greater acknowledgment that adult learners are motivated to attend literacy programmes by various reasons, but the question remains whether the literacy programmes consider these motivating factors. Dunlap and Funton-Pierce (1999) advise that the motivating literacy programmes consider the learning environment, human resources and provide materials and activities which are interesting and attract high enrollment figures (Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005). The NLPN need to provide appropriate learning environment, human resources, learning materials and learning activities that would boost the attendance and motivate those adults who are not yet in the programme to attend.

2.1.8.2 Expectation

Good and Brophy (2000) suggest that the expectation of the adult learners with hearing impairments about literacy programme is very important. It is essential to find out what the learners expect and for the adult learners to attain functional literacy, they need the support from promoters and the learning environment itself (Joseph and McLachlan, 2003). The adult learners expect occupation-oriented skills (Oluoch, 2005), income generating projects skills, communication and social skills (Oduaran, 2000). At the same

time, Dansereau (1988) found that practical skills, interaction and communication with peers, instructors and experts produced the quickest, longest lasting and most transferrable learning outcomes which are expected by adult learners.

In recent years, researchers in this area have identified a range of strategies which hearing impaired adult educators could use, and classroom environments they need to create to promote learning and accommodate adult learners' expectations (Joseph and McLachlan, 2003). However, the question remains whether these strategies are being used in the literacy programmes in Namibia.

In addition, there is a broad agreement that some adult learners with hearing impairments struggle with reading, writing and communication in the classroom (Antia, Reed, and Kreimeyer, 2005; Joseph, and McLachlan, 2003). This led other researchers to indicate the need for adult educators to teach practical and communication skills that would help adult learners with hearing impairments interact directly with their hearing peers (Basil and Reyes, 2003) This again would help them to have a sense of autonomy and responsibility for how and what they expect to learn through interrelatedness, interconnectedness and interdependence (Swanson, 1999; Johnson, 2004).

Commenting on the importance of adult learners' expectations about the literacy programmes, Vella (1994a) and Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) elaborate that for the adult learners to freely express their expectations about the literacy programme, their learning environment should embrace respect, acceptance and integrity.

2.1.9 How hearing impairment affect the adult learners with hearing impairments' progress in the adult literacy programmes

Misinformation and ignorance by hearing people in relation to hearing impairments cause the stereotypes (Nikolarazi and Makri, 2005). At the same time, individuals with hearing impairments are very capable human beings; they must be the change which they want to see in the world. If individuals with hearing impairments feel that their potential is being diminished by mainstreamed society, then they should take matters into their own hands (Frew, 2002). The individuals with hearing impairments who use sign language are ridiculed and are faced with difficulties in the hearing world. Those individuals with hearing impairments who use oralism speech are shunned by the members of the community (Groce, 2006). On the other hand, hearing loss affects many aspects of life, with many psychological complications and various effects on how well a person with such a loss functions in society or in the world at large (Caissie et al., 2001). Hearing people often attribute negative stereotypes to deaf individuals and underestimate their potential (Caissie et al., 2001).

In Namibia adult with hearing impairments are among the minority group that are overlooked when it comes to equality, fair treatment and education. They tend to suffer in silent. The Namibian Sign Language used may seem minor, but created difficulty in communicating with hearing people. This led to the construction of communities of interaction based on language use. Additional, this created a barrier for adult with hearing impairments to express their expectations (Miles, 2005).

A major portrayal of how individuals with hearing impairments interact among hearing people can be found in the mainstream educational setting in which the majority of the deaf people participate (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2003). It is generally common knowledge that deaf adults face much more hardship than their hearing peers in terms of their educational and social development because they are always discriminated against (Caissie et al., 2001). As a result of this, their psychopathologies are impacted, most negatively.

One study that focused on the social status of individuals with hearing impairments comparing to adults with hearing individuals discovered that a large number of deaf individuals were rejected by their hearing peers as compared to only a small number of hearing children who, like adults with hearing impairments, also became social misfits (Cappelli, Daniels, Durieux-Smith, McGrath and Neuss, 1995). They were rejected because of their impairments and their social status of being unable to hear (Miles, 2005).

Additionally, another study was conducted in two Canadian provinces (2001) to investigate the perception of adults' hearing difficulties as compared to their teachers' and peers' views. The results supported previous studies done that illustrated that deaf adults had typical problems with everyday situations. Those that had some hearing had auditory interference with background noises. The same results occurred with the children's teachers and peers, supporting the conclusion that situations that are easy for

hearing people are much harder for their deaf counterparts and have much more of negative impacts (Caissie et al., 2001).

On the contrary, some studies (Cohen, Swerdlik and Smith, 1992; Harris et al., 1997) suggest that the low achievement levels that are sometimes seen among people with impairments are not a result of learning problems related to deafness itself, but are due to poor communication between teachers and the deaf students. This is however sometimes environmentally caused and not neurological.

Due to the low number of studies focusing on hearing loss and deafness, this problem generally goes unnoticed and/or is considered unimportant (Caissie, Comeau and Zheng, 2001). The question remains whether the poor communication between adult educators and adult learners with hearing impairments can be improved for effective learning environment.

Indicating the ineffectiveness of inclusion of adults with hearing impairments with other hearing adults in educational settings, due to numerous economic, social and legal changes, in the country like the United States, placement of adults with hearing impairments in their institutions has become less widespread and inclusion is now the norm (Caissie et al., 2001). However, the progression towards inclusion has resulted in much anxiety on the hearing impaired adult learners' part (Gjerdingen and Manning, 1991). The biggest problem and root cause of the increase in isolation and anxiety amongst adults with hearing impairments is communication difficulties fostered by the

inclusion. In that setting students with hearing impairments were neglected by the hearing students in terms of socialisation (Martin and Bat-Chava, 2003).

Although very few adult learners with hearing impairments may succeed with inclusion, good results are generally seen in children with hearing impairments who are included in schools with children without hearing impairments. However, they also show higher degrees of isolation and psychological problems when compared with learners who associate with other peers without hearing impairments (Vostanis, Hayes, Du Feu and Warren, 1997; Stinson and Antia 1999). The inclusion of adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme with adult learners without hearing impairments in the Namibian context is a dream which is still to be realised. This is because some of the adults with hearing impairments in the NLPN found it difficult to cope with their class activities like other adults without hearing impairments.

The motivation factor on this is that, the future for individuals with hearing impairments is not bleak; there are many untapped resources and untested ways to make life and communication easier for all parties involved (Bat-Chava and Martin, 2002). Individuals with hearing impairments have unlimited potential (McGovern, 2002), and it would be a good idea to try and recruit them into professions where they can help people like themselves. This is a fact that should be stressed. The community at large should be educated further on how to interact with individuals with hearing impairments (Frew, 2002).

If individuals with hearing impairments feel that their potential is being diminished by mainstreamed society, then they should take matters into their own hands (Bat-Chava and Martin, 2002). It is a fact that not all adults with hearing impairments can be included into literacy programmes with adults without the hearing impairments. However, there is consensus that the individuals with hearing impairments need to be supported in all possible ways to cope with stereotypes. Yet, low levels of achievement as well as discrimination that they experience in the educational setting, in their community and in their social lives should be discouraged. If this could be done, it would form part of the requirements of an inclusive society.

2.1.10 The transition of skills and knowledge learnt in the literacy programme

Globally, there are many successful individuals with hearing impairments who are performing on or above grade level (Holt, Hotto and Cole, 1994). The overall performance is typically far below what is expected (Hinzen and Pollinger, 2004). Literacy and numeracy skills acquired in literacy programmes are not sufficient in meeting the requirements of adult learners' career goals and personal growth (Gjerdingen and Manning, 1991). It has been argued that there is virtually no evidence from developing countries that adult literacy programmes for individuals with hearing impairments lead to actual economic improvements in the lives of programme participants (Wagner, 1995; Gallaudet Research Institute, 2003).

Literacy for adults is understood to be a continuum of competencies. A basic skill, such as the ability to write one's name, is followed by 'functional literacy' (Folkman and Lazarus, (1988) which UNESCO, in its Education for All initiative, defines as the ability to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of this group and community." (UNESCO, 2006, p.86). The examples that define functional literacy are that adults with hearing impairments who are confronted their own illiteracy should be encouraged to seek out educational and training programmes designed for their age groups. Emotional support from friends and family members can remove the stigma of seeking such help (Holt, Hotto and Cole, 1994).

The literacy programmes which embrace the concepts and implications of the provision of applicable knowledge and skills, for example, impoverished women, to help break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty, are particularly relevant for adult learners with hearing impairments (Fasokun, 2004). Literacy can also be established to have benefits beyond economic ones. For example, improving basic literacy skills for women has direct health and nutritional benefits for not only themselves, but for their children (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2008). Some of the examples are that women who are literate will be able to feed their children healthy foods and take them to doctors when they are sick. Another example is that a community which has women who are literate about health and nutrition will be not be prone to diseases like those communities with illiterate women.

The concept of health literacy, which means having enough literacy skills to acquire and act upon new information for health and wellbeing, is certainly significant to persons with hearing impairments and their families (Kickbusch, 2001; Wallerstein and Bernstein, 1994). Therefore, the literacy programmes which offer functional skills and knowledge as well as training which is relevant to their living conditions and can be applied to the real life situations are recommended (Indabawa, 2000; Rogers, 2005).

2.1.11 The role of literacy and importance of functional literacy in the daily lives of the adult learners with hearing impairments

Basic illiteracy, the inability to read, write and count receives the attention of most literacy programmes (Nafukho, Amutabi and Otunga, 2005). Nafukho, Amutabi and Otunga, (2005) continue to define that illiteracy is a major barrier for the people seeking improvement in health status and quality of life. According to the United Nations Development Programme (2009) report, too many vulnerable people like people with hearing impairments; illiteracy is not only a barrier to communication, understanding and knowledge, but also a condition which prevents them from seeing the world beyond their immediate surroundings. Without their ability to read, access to basic knowledge of health and strategies for improvement is beyond their reach (Gboku and Lekoko, 2007). Illiteracy denies hearing impaired adults access to the vast body of information and knowledge that is being conveyed in written form and which is essential to household individuals in dealing with an increasingly literate and numerate world around them (Nafukho, Amutabi and Otunga, 2005).

Bhola (1994) elaborates further that the main task of functional literacy is to provide a bridge from the traditional oral world of literacy. This type of literacy entails that the modern world of literacy is aimed at provision of reading and writing as well as numeracy, knowledge and skills important to the lives of those who are participating in such programmes.

In the context of this study the provision of functional literacy should be fundamentally different from formal teaching of reading, writing and counting. The researcher believes that each adult who is functionally literate is more likely to emphasise the need for children to attend school. Therefore there is a need for functional literacy programmes which can offer the basic skills that are required by adults with hearing impairments for the purpose of application to their living and working environment (Gboku and Lekoko, 2007).

The adult learners with hearing impairments need to recognise the close links between learning and the situations with events which they have to deal with in their daily lives (Lind and Johnston, 1989). The literacy programmes do not need to be confined to vulnerable groups like adult learners with hearing impairments especially those who are unable to read, write and count. So, literacy programmes should be designed to functionally equip participants with basic capacities and life skills needed to cope with specific forms of vulnerability (UNDP, 2009; Freire, 1990). The literacy programmes which are linked with health status, quality of life and economic activity would create an environment of success and capability for the participants (Gboku and Lekoko, 2007).

This research suggests functional literacy to be seen as an integral part of any national strategy for improving the condition of the most vulnerable groups like adults with hearing impairments. Functional literacy programmes should provide life skills and specific knowledge needed to survive and function in any society and should be seen as a tool for individuals, families, communities and nations to be enlightened from poverty.

2.1.12. The treatment of adult learners with hearing impairments in the literacy programme

Negative attitudes and discrimination towards individuals with hearing disabilities especially the adult learners with hearing impairments are deeply rooted and difficult to change (Foster, 1987). The primary reasons for this include limited experience in interacting with individuals with hearing impairments and prejudices and fear on the part of the hearing population (Foster, 1987). The discrimination against individuals with hearing impairments experienced in the educational setting (Gerber and Reiff, 1999) gave challenges to adults with hearing impairments in preparing for and succeeding in the work world (Marsden, 2003). The lack of confidence and low self-esteem on the part of adults with hearing impairments are key dispositional barriers to participation in adult learning which may be located deep within the self (Foster, 1987).

2.1.13 The improvement on learning environment and learning content in the adult literacy programmes

The hearing impaired adult learners' literacy levels, employment and development skills can be nurtured through literacy programmes which offer proper learning contents and techniques (Deaf Literacy Initiative, 2003). The literacy programme should not only be a tool for the acquisition of literacy skills, but it should have relevant learning contents that contribute to economic and social development (Omolewa, 2000). A growing literature shows that the proper and relevant learning contents and techniques play an important role in motivating adult learners with hearing impairments to participate in literacy programmes (Indabawa, 2000). Another aspect of the learning environment which is crucial to effective learning is the richness and accessibility of resources of both material and human values (Knowles, 1986).

2.2 Theoretical framework

The framework of this study draws upon a combination of various theories: Critical Social theory, constructivism theory, Critical Interpretivism theory, Humanist theory and Problem-Based Learning. The next sub-sections (2.2.1 -2.2.2) explain how these theories and notions inform this study.

2.2.1 Critical social theory

In case of this study, it was necessary to use the critical social theory in understanding the views of the adult learners with hearing impairments whom the society regard as people of no use and view their participation in the adult literacy programmes as insignificant (Elwan, 1999, Marsden, 2003).

The critical social theory is an examination and critique of beliefs in some societies and cultures, drawing knowledge from across the social sciences and humanities (Walsham, 1995; Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). According to Littlejohn (1992), critical social theory can be defined as a social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing society's beliefs, in contrast to the traditional theory which is oriented only to understanding or/and passively accepting such social framework. The term has two different meanings with different origins and histories: one originating from sociology and the other in literary criticism (Horkheimer, 1982). This has led to the use of 'critical social theory' as an umbrella term to describe any theory founded upon critique.

The critical social theory combines both the critique and the possibility to empower the oppressed to become social agents of social transformation (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999; Maruatona and Cervero, 2004). This theory aims to explore the larger systems in society as they shape adult literacy learning (Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005). In the context of this study the oppressed are the adult learners with hearing impairments and the transformation which is needed is them to play a role in the transformation

process by fully participating in the selection of programmes aimed at and/or for them (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

The critical social theory has a narrow and a broad meaning in philosophy and in the history of the social sciences. “Critical social theory” in the narrow sense designates several generations of German philosophers and social theorists in the Western European Marxist tradition known as the Frankfurt School. According to these theorists, a “critical” theory may be distinguished from a “traditional” theory according to a specific practical purpose: a theory is critical to the extent that it seeks human emancipation, “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 244).

The implication here is that critical social theory is about the liberation of the disadvantaged groups in the society who have been enslaved due to their statuses or circumstances in that specific society. In the case of this study, this theory implies that the hearing impaired people need to be emancipated to participate in adult literacy without any domination from other members of the society while relying on society as a basic support (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

According to Horkheimer’s (1982) definition, a critical social theory is adequate only if it meets three criteria: it must be explanatory, practical and normative. Substantively, for the critical social theory to be relevant, it must explain what is wrong with the current

social reality and identify the actors to change it and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation.

This implies that if there are obstacles in the adult literacy programme for hearing impaired adults, the programmes implementers can act upon that and accept criticism leveled against the literacy programmes by finding ways to assist the participants to achieve their learning goals.

The theorist, Max Horkheimer further describes a theory as critical in so far as it seeks “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (Horkheimer, 1982, p.246). The critical social theory is, in contrast, a form of self-reflective knowledge involving both understanding and theoretical explanation to reduce setups in systems of domination or dependence, obeying the emancipatory interest in expanding the scope of autonomy and reducing the scope of domination. This supports Freire ’s (1990) notion on the critical literacy programme by stating that literacy programmes should not be confined to teaching specific literacy skills while considering instructions within a framework of social activism and societal transformation (Degener, 2001).

Additionally, this study is compatible with social constructionism and critical-Interpretivism perspectives (Allen, 2005; Berger and Luckmann, 1966). These theories take into account individual understandings of reality as well as societal patterns and norms that help to shape interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005; Schwandt, 2000). This brings into focus the concept and practices of “discourse”.

The practices of “discourse” in the context of this study emphasise the need for the society to assist the adults with hearing impairments in understanding the role of literacy in their daily lives and the society to maintain the norms which are crucial in the interaction of their learning needs in the literacy programmes.

Discourse stems from the social domain and finds expression in text and social practices at individual-micro, organisational-meso, and societal-macro-levels (Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 1984; Van Dijk, 2004). A discourse provides “an orientation to literacy programmes, a way of constituting the adult learners with hearing impairments in the literacy programmes, their motivational factors, and a way of reporting on them” (Deetz, 1996, p. 198). Thus, different research discourses offer lenses through which to explore society differently. Interpretive and critical lenses enable study at the individual-micro, organisational-meso, and societal-macro levels (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000a; Deetz, 1996). In relation to this study, the emphasis is placed between the individual (adult learners with hearing impairments (micro), the adult educators, the literacy programmes (meso) and the society (macro) to have a good relationship in embracing the everyday participation in the literacy programmes while reinforcing the importance of literacy.

The critical social scientists believe that it is necessary to understand the lived experiences of real people in context. This is also a belief that influenced the researcher to undertake this study in order to understand the views of the adult learners with hearing impairments on how they relate the role of literacy to their daily lives. Other observers of Interpretivism (Darke, Shanks and Broadbent, 1998; Myers and Avinson,

2002) are skeptical that reality itself is a social construct or that at least our knowledge of reality is socially constructed.

In order to understand the approaches on how to assist the hearing impaired adult learners' understanding on being literate, the literacy programmes needs to apply the critical social theory. The critical social theory advocates that knowledge is power and that understanding the ways in which one is oppressed enables one to take action to change oppressive forces and help people stop being passive victims who collude, at least partly in their domination by external forces (Welton, cited in Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). In the case of this study, a critical social theory educates and shapes the literacy programmes to be accommodative to all adult learners with hearing impairments; and to grant them an opportunity to exercise their rights without being dominated by the hearing adult learners. The critical social theory advises that the programme implementers should create platforms where the participants can share their concerns without being discriminated.

In addition, the critical social theory discourages the lack of teaching and learning materials and the absence of a conducive learning environment experienced in literacy programmes (Oluoch, 2005). In this regard, the critical social theory advocates the need for literacy programmes to provide relevant and quality learning and teaching materials that enhance the participants to gain knowledge and skills which they can transfer and apply in their daily lives (Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005). The critical social theory brought the awareness that society should provide systems that are fair to all in

terms of the allocations of the resources (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). This implies that literacy programmes should treat the participants fairly and provide enough and relevant quality learning materials.

In promoting adult learning the critical social theory places emphasis on a society as the basic support for construction, acquisition and utilisation of knowledge. This theory claims that human thoughts and behaviours are products of the society; hence this theory has its origin in attempts to explore the larger systems in society as they shape adult learning (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). In addition, the critical social theory is important to adult learning and especially for this study, because it reinforces that what society does or does not do is crucial to the success of teaching-learning relationships in adult education programmes (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

The critical social theory involves the application of principles or values in order to make judgments for the purpose of bringing about positive changes (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). The positive changes emphasised here are the changes of literacy programmes to accept, understand the views and concerns of adult learners with hearing impairments and to help them regain the confidence in attending literacy classes. In the literacy classes, the critical social theory emphasises the need to assist adult learners to be critical and ask critical questions even in assessing basic assumptions. The critical social theory serves then the purpose of liberating people from oppression and it stresses that adult learning should assist adult learners to ask questions directed at revealing their social worlds and the causes of the suppression and then come to the consciousness that

they need to reconstruct their lives (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). This would assist adult learners with hearing impairments to personally explore socially relevant issues and being empowered in their professions, careers or even in their daily lives.

The theory suggests the need of literacy programmes to assist adult learners to have psychological, social and economic powers. These powers should eventually lead to empowerment and emancipation (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). This theory further emphasises that the hearing impaired should be emancipated and empowered to be the controllers and drivers for their learning (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

Furthermore, in terms of the current study, the critical social theory brings awareness that literacy programmes which can attract adult learners with hearing impairments are those which consider the reflective discourse and provide skills and knowledge which are culturally, economically and socially relevant and capable of helping adult learners with hearing impairments to deal with challenges (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999; Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006). This made the critical social theory more relevant to the context of the study as it emphasises that the challenges and impediments which are experienced in the literacy programmes should be solved for the attainment of skills and knowledge in the cultural, economic and social learning environment.

2.2.2 Humanist theory

In addition to the critical social theory, this study was again influenced by the humanist theory in understanding the need for freedom of adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme. The humanist theory was appropriate for this study because it's based on two concepts: free will and drive (Morris and Maisto, 1999, p.16). This simply implies that learning should be based on freedom of choice; hence, the need for literacy programmes to allow the adults with hearing impairments to choose what they want to learn and what they think is appropriate to their lives. Learning activities should not be imposing on them (Morris and Maisto, 1999). This supports what human rights prescribe, that it is the right of all individuals to participate in the programmes of their choice in their own society (Morris and Maisto, 1999).

This further acknowledges what Knowles (1986) stated on Andragogical model that adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives, therefore, they resent and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them. This again supports what Tough (1979) found that when adults undertake to learn something on their own, they will invest considerable energy in asking into the benefits they will gain from learning it and the negative consequences of not learning it. The humanist theory encourages adult learners to be free and to play active roles in their learning programmes; adult learners with hearing impairments should therefore be involved in designing these programmes as everything depends on their preferences and choices (Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005).

On the conducive learning environment, the humanist theory emphasises that the learning situation must not be threatening. This principle emerged from Rogers's self-theory which implies that people want to be themselves at all the times (Rogers, 1969). This further encourages the need for learning interactions that are not threatening to adult learners, but they should be allowed to express themselves freely in open, loving learning environments. In other words, adult learners function best in emotionally supportive instead of threatening environments (Rogers, 2005; Knowles, 1998).

On the classroom activities, the humanist theory is of the opinion that adult learners seek to participate actively in the design and implementation of their learning programmes all the time. For this reason they will not tolerate activities in which they are made to be passive recipients of information and ideas; they must therefore play active roles (Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005). However, the adult learners with hearing impairments in the NLPN do not enjoy these benefits because they did not take part in the planning of classroom activities which are relevant to their daily lives.

The humanist theory also emphasises that adult learning is enhanced when adult learners are allowed to critique themselves; this was stated by Rogers in his recommendation of client-centred therapy whereby learners were put at different experiences and evaluated their performances at the end of the process (Rodda and Eleweke, 2002).

The essence of the humanist theory, especially in this study is the emphasis that interpersonal relationships are important in adult teaching and learning. Confirming this

notion, Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran (2005) suggested that “lack of interpersonal relationships affect adult ‘expectations and the contributions they are expected to make towards realising the goals of adult programmes” (p.55). This constitutes the need of literacy programmes to create interpersonal relationships between the Adult educator, the adult learners with hearing impairments and programme implementers.

2.2.3 A model for problem-based adult learning (PBL)

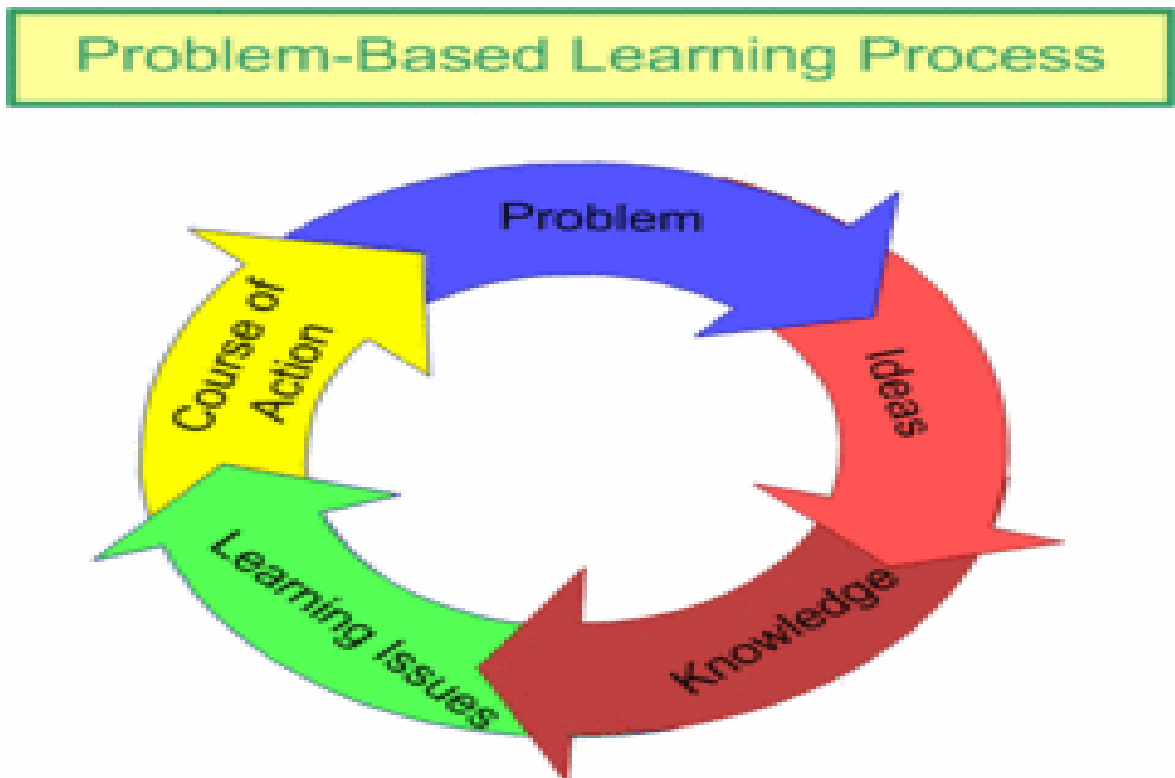


Figure 2.1 A conceptual model on the overall process that adult learners experience in PBL (SOURCE: <http://www.usc.edu/hsc/dental/ccmb/usc-csp/Quikfacts.htm>)

Problem-Based Learning addresses the need to promote lifelong learning through the process of inquiry and constructivist learning (Schmidt and Rotgans, 2011, p.793). Yew and Schmidt (2012) and Schmidt et al. (2011) Hung (2011) elaborate on the cognitive constructivist process of PBL that learners are presented with a problem and through discussion within their group, activate their prior knowledge and develop possible theories or hypothesis to explain the problem.

One of the aims of PBL is the development of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) skills. In Loyens, Magda and Rikers's (2008) discussion, SDL is defined as "a process in which individuals take the initiative in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes" p.234). By being invited into the learning process, adult learners are also invited to take responsibility for their learning, which leads to an increase in self-directed learning skills and develop critical thinking skills (Loyens, Magda and Rikers, 2008). These critical thinking skills are which critical social theory is advocating especially in the disadvantaged adult learners such as the deaf adults.

2.2.3.1 Problem-based learning (PBL) and adult education

Savery (2006) pronounces that Problem-based learning (PBL) and adult education share many of the same learning elements, objectives and outcomes which act to reciprocally enhance the benefits of the teaching and learning process for adult learners with hearing impairments. Problem-based learning is an instructional strategy that focuses on actively engaging adult learners with hearing impairments through the process of problem-solving. Within adult education, adult learners with hearing impairments are expected to take an active role in the learning process and use their prior skills, knowledge and experiences to construct, design and develop solutions to problems typically encountered in real-world scenarios (Savery and Duffy, 1995).

2.2.3.2 An outline of the active role that adult learners with hearing impairments play in PBL

There are several characteristics which have become fundamental to problem-based learning as it has expanded into a great number of instructional adult settings. They are as follow:

- The focus should be on the adult learners with hearing impairments and they must be responsible for their own learning and decide what they want to learn.
- The activities introduced to the adult learners with hearing impairments should be relevant to real-world applications and lacking in formal structure in order to

promote critical thinking and allow them to establish their own restrictions on possible solutions (Severiens, and Schmidt, 2009). This supports what the critical social theory emphasised which is that adult learners with hearing impairments should be critical and be encouraged to ask critical questions (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

- Adult learners with hearing impairments should collaborate, cross-reference, propose, debate and exchange ideas with one another about their problems to enhance their own understanding of the complexities involved in the literacy programme
- The importance of incorporating a thorough debriefing session in order to bring direction and closure to the problem is a crucial component to problem-based learning in adult education (Savery, 2006).

2.2.3.3 Role of adult educator in PBL

The adult educator needs to choose to model different problem-solving strategies or ask questions, to promote reflection and the analysis of assumptions made by learners (Merrill, 2002). The responsibility of the adult educators should be of assisting learners in developing their own problem-solving strategies which provide them with a continuously growing set of skills which have applications to solving real-world problems. This consequently, will help adult learners with hearing impairments to

become more and more confident and motivated in solving problems which they encounter in their own lives (Merrill, 2002; Savery, 2006).

2.2.3.4 Benefits of PBL in adult education

Adult education focuses on helping learners become more efficient and effective in performing tasks, solving conflicts and evaluating decisions in their lives as opposed to other forms of education which focus on preparing one for life (Smith, 1999). Problem-based learning caters for adult education by enhancing analytical and critical skills of learners and actively engaging the minds of adults by solving real-world problems which learners may face on a day to day basis (Savery, 2006).

Problem-based learning has proven to have an increased rate of retention of content for learners and provides knowledge and skills and learning benefits over longer periods of time (McLean and Van Wyk, 2006). Furthermore, adult learners with and without hearing impairments benefit directly from problem-based learning as it helps develop an expansive knowledge base, problem-solving skills, collaboration, motivation, and lifelong learning (Hmelo-Silver and Barrows, 2004). This emphasises the need for literacy programmes to accord the participants an opportunity to be involved in activities that assist them to solve problems.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter looked at existing literature on the perception of adult learners with hearing impairments on the role of literacy in their daily lives. Literature confirmed that most of the adults with hearing impairments are discriminated against and their learning needs are not fully recognised. The literature revealed further that there are a higher number of unemployed adult learners with hearing impairments. Various researchers recommend that adult learners with hearing impairments should be equipped with functional skills which are meaningful to their lives (Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005; Oluoch, 2005). The literature revealed again that socio-economic and political decisions have the biggest influence in the recognition of the role of literacy by the participants (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). Therefore, it has been maintained that only the literacy programmes which can provide the participants with conducive learning environment, human resource; and which consider the motivation factors for adult learners can attract participants to be in the literacy programmes (Rogers, 2005; Knowles, 1998).

The critical social theory which forms a basis of this study has a great influence in understanding the role that literacy can play in the daily lives of the hearing impaired adult learners. This theory emphasises the need for the literacy programme to be a reflective discourse in order to provide knowledge which is culturally, economically and socially relevant and capable of helping learners to deal with life challenges. The critical social theory also emphasises that the society should provide basic support for the

disadvantaged groups in the literacy programmes; society should also provide systems which are fair to all in terms of the allocations of the resources (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

Moreover, the humanist theory implies the need of literacy programmes to allow the adults with hearing impairments to choose what they want to learn and what they think is appropriate to their lives; learning activities should not be imposed on them. The humanist theory encourages adult learners to be free and to play active roles in their learning programmes; they should therefore be involved in designing these programmes (Knowles, 1986).

Finally, the model of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) emphasised that learners should be assisted to become more efficient and effective in performing tasks, solving conflicts and evaluating decisions in their lives as opposed to other forms of education which focus on preparing one for life (Smith, 1999; Roach, 2002). Problem-Based Learning caters for adult education, especially the literacy programmes by enhancing analytical and critical skills for learners and actively engaging the minds of adults by solving real-world problems which they may face on a day to day basis. Problem-Based Learning also strongly advocates the need for inclusive education in the literacy programmes whereby adult learners with or without hearing impairments accommodate and support each other in the learning process.

These theories (Critical social theory, Humanist theory and a model of Problem-Based Learning) helped the researcher understand and answer the research questions of this study. These theories informed the study that for the literacy programmes to succeed they should recognise the expectations of the adult learners with hearing impairments in these programmes and assist them to be free and play active roles in their learning programmes (Knowles, 1986).

The critical theory assisted the researcher in understanding that the literacy programmes need to be reflective discourses in order to provide knowledge that is culturally, economically and socially relevant and capable of helping adult learners with hearing impairments deal with challenges (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

Although there are challenges in the literacy programmes, the PBL enlighten the researcher that it is important that the adult learners with hearing impairments should/could collaborate, cross-reference, propose, debate, and exchange ideas with each other about their problems to enhance their own understanding of the complexities involved in the literacy programmes (Savery, 2006).

The PBL suggested that literacy programmes could improve if they could create a platform which caters for analytical and critical skills and actively engaging the minds of adult learners by solving real-world problems which adult learners may face on a day to day basis (Savery, 2006).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This is a qualitative research; the study dealt with the views of the adults with hearing impairments in the National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN), in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions of Namibia on the role of literacy in their daily lives. This particular chapter aims at describing the research design, sampling techniques, data collection procedures and research instruments. The chapter further discusses the results of the pilot study and the methods used to analyse the data, main research questions, data collection procedure, ethical considerations and the methods used for data analysis.

3.2 Research design

The study made use of the qualitative approach in order to build social action between the researcher and the research participants to enable them to express their views and experiences (Bondy, 1983). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and Janesick (2000) claim that qualitative research involves an *interpretive and naturalistic* approach: “This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3).

Qualitative researchers believe that the researcher's ability to interpret and make sense of what he or she sees is critical for understanding any social phenomenon, in this sense the researcher is an instrument (Hatch, 2002). Furthermore, some qualitative researchers believe that there is not necessarily a single ultimate truth to be discovered. Instead, there may be multiple perspectives held by different individuals, with each of these perspectives having equal validity or truth (Creswell, 1998; Guba and Lincoln, 1988; Hatch, 2002).

The qualitative approach was appropriate for this study, because the data collected was in the form of both words and sign language as they were presented by hearing impaired adults themselves. A phenomenological design was used in this research. A phenomenological is a study that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation (Leedy and Ormond, 2010). A phenomenological design was used in order to aid the researcher to understand the adult with hearing impairments' perceptions/perspectives and understanding on the role of literacy in their daily lives (Creswell, 2009).

3.3 Population of the study

A population is any group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common and that are of interest to the researcher (Best and Kahn, 2006). There are 13 educational regions in Namibia, but the hearing impaired adult learners' classes of the National Literacy Programme take place in only seven (7) regions (Oshana, Khomas,

Ohangwena, Omusati, Caprivi, Omaheke, Kavango and Otjozondjupa) (DAE, 2009). The target population of this study consisted of all adults with hearing impairments in the regions offering the literacy programmes to adults with hearing impairments in Namibia.

3.4 Sample and sampling techniques

According to Creswell (2008, p.152) "...a sample is a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalisation about the target population." The standard used in choosing participants and sites is whether they are "information rich" (Patton, 2001, p. 169).

The sample of this study was selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher implores people with specific characteristics to participate in a research study (John and Christensen, 2004). For example, in this case, the information- rich group consisted of: the adults with hearing impairments who are self-identified as Deaf, Deaf-blind or hard-of-hearing adult learners with hearing impairments as they hold a unique case in the society as they possess a special attribute that was relevant to this study.

The adult learners with hearing impairments in the four regions (Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana) were sampled to participate in the study, because they started the adult literacy classes for the hearing impaired adults in 2009, and these are the only four

regions, out of the seven (7) regions, that had stage three (3) of the adult literacy programme in 2011, the year in which the research was planned. Therefore, it was relevant for that stage 3 of adults with hearing impairments to participate in this study. The researcher believes that the hearing adult's learners, who were in stage three (3), had adequate experiences about what the literacy programme meant in their lives.

The sample of the study consisted of five adult learners from Khomas, four learners from Ohangwena, three adult learners from Omusati and six adult learners from Oshana regions. In total eighteen (18) adults with hearing impairments participated in this study. The small sample of the study was in line with other scholars who stated that a small sample allows a qualitative researcher a better chance to learn a phenomenon under study in depth (Harry, Sturges and Klingner, 2005 in Hamunyela, 2008, p.96).

3.5 Research instruments

The main instruments which the researcher and interpreter used in the collection of the data were one-on-one and semi-structured interviews. This was preferable because the researcher can also speak and interpret sign language because she has been a teacher for the hearing impaired and mentally challenged learners in one of the schools for learners with special needs in Namibia for nine years. However, to ensure validity and reliability in this study, the researcher used an experienced sign language interpreter in order to enhance understanding between the interviewer and the interviewees (Patton, 1990).

The semi-structured interviews were used in order for the researcher not to focus only on guiding questions, but also to be open to follow the lead of information and probing questions into areas during the interview and to also engage in interactions in order to go deep into the understanding of the participants. This helped the researcher and the participants to work together “to arrive at the heart of the matter” (Tesch, 1994, p.147).

The content of the questions was derived from the literature review and from the four main research questions which were discussed earlier. In order to test the validity of the instrument, the interview questions were given to the two supervisors of this study for their comments. The comments of these experts were incorporated into the interview questions before its administration. A pilot study was also conducted. The interview question was made up of five sections.

The first section sought biographical information of the participants (hearing impaired adult learners) and comprised of eight sub- questions. The second section sought the hearing impaired adult learners’ expectations about the programme and contained eight sub- questions. The third section required the adults with hearing impairments to indicate how they utilise the knowledge and skills they gained from the literacy programme and it contained five sub-questions. The fourth section made an inquiry on the challenges that adults with hearing impairments experienced during the process of utilising knowledge and skills gained from NLPN and it had six sub-questions. The fifth section contained six sub questions and required the hearing impaired adult learners’ opinions on how they wanted the NLPN to be improved.

The researcher kept a copy of the interview guide and a note book on a clipboard and made notes directly into the guide as the interviews proceeded while asking questions. The notes helped the researcher keep track of the guiding questions which had to be addressed. The researcher expanded the notes immediately after each interview session.

3.6 Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study among eight adults with hearing impairments of Stage 3 in the Khomas and Ohangwena regions. These included four participants from the Khomas and four participants from Ohangwena regions. The pilot study was done in a small scale piloting as this is recommended for feasibility, convenience and cost effectiveness (Harry Sturger and Klingner, 2005; Janesick, 2000 cited in Hamunyela, 2008). The pilot study included a small number of participants who had similar characteristics to those of the target group (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche' and Delpont, 2005 cited in Likando, 2008). The pilot study was executed in the same manner as outlined in the data collection procedures. Participants participated voluntarily in the pilot testing and the normal literacy classes were not disturbed.

There were several reasons that prompted the researcher to do the pilot study. These reasons are as follows: First, the researcher did the pilot study to find out whether the research instruments (one-on-one and semi structured interview schedules) were understandable. Second, the pilot study assisted the researcher to be aware of the relevance and appropriateness of the questions to be used in the study. Third, the pilot

study helped the researcher see whether the participants understood the instructions of the interview questions. Fourth and finally, the pilot study helped the researcher to find out whether the type of data obtained could be meaningfully and easily analysed in relation to the stated research questions.

3.6.1 Results of the Pilot Study

The results of the pilot study proved that the instruments were valid and consistent for the current investigation and that the majority of the questions were understood by the participants. However, there were some factors which needed the researcher's attention.

Both one-on-one interview schedules were administered to four adults with hearing impairments in Khomas region and four adults with hearing impairments in Khomas and Ohangwena regions. The participants in Khomas and Ohangwena regions were a bit concerned about the reasons why they had to answer the questions of the study and how the study will help them overcome problems they were experiencing at their centres. After a thorough explanation by the researcher and the promoter about the purpose of the pilot study, the participants managed to understand and answer the interview questions accordingly; this state of affairs encouraged the researcher as it indicated that participants gave their permission to participate in the study.

Babbie (2001) cited by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) state that the pilot study helps the researcher pretest the instruments, because no matter how carefully the data collection instruments are designed, there is always room for possible errors. Consistent with this, the pilot study done on the role of the literacy in the daily lives of the adult learners with hearing impairments revealed that there was a need to revise some parts of the instruments. The changes and the revision on some instruments were made as follow.

Instrument1, *Biographical Information of the hearing impaired adults*: The pilot study revealed that question 3 in section 1 was confusing. The question was: *Are you presently employed?* The question was rephrased as follows: *Do you have any employment at the moment?* This question was incorporated in the same section, section1.

Instrument 2: The pilot study revealed that there was a need to add another question to find out the overall expectations of the participants about NLPN. Hence question 9 on section B was added. Question 9 read as follow: *What are your overall expectations of the NLPN programme?*

Instrument 3: Skills and knowledge needed: The pilot study established the need to reduce and restructure question 3.1 in section C since it was found to be difficult and confusing to the participants. The original question was: *What knowledge and skills have you attained from NLPN so far?* The question was restructured as follows: *What type of*

activities did you learn in the NLPN so far? The follow-up question that is question 4, in section C was also reconstructed accordingly.

The pilot study further revealed that there was a need to change the interview time schedule because some of the participants were not willing to do interviews after attending literacy classes; the promoters and the participants agreed to do the interviews before they proceeded with their classes.

Administrating the instruments during the pilot study was time consuming because the researcher travelled extensive distances to reach the literacy centres which were sparsely located. However, after the researcher identified all these logistical and resource related difficulties, the researcher revised the data collection procedures and at the same time re-examined the feasibility of the study and reorganised the instruments. Careful attention was given at the format, the meaning and the length of the interview questions.

3.6.3 Refinement of the research instruments

After the construction and piloting, the revision of the research instruments was done. Comments from the supervisors, colleagues and experts in adult education were also incorporated.

3.7 Data collection procedures

After the researcher had requested and received an introductory letter from the Faculty of Education of the University of Namibia, the researcher wrote a letter to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and requested permission to conduct her study in the selected regions namely: Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions. A second letter requesting permission to carry out the study was sent to the Directors education of the selected regions. A copy of a permission letter from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education was appended to the Directors and Regional literacy officers' letters. The researcher attached the interview schedule to the letters. The researcher made follow-up phone calls to ensure that the letters reached the intended persons and the participants for their consent. The researcher then set dates for interviews.

The adult learners were interviewed before attending literacy classes in order to avoid disruptions of their lessons. Some of them adult learners with hearing impairments were asked to be interviewed at their convenient times, because, they had multiple responsibilities associated with being adults and learners at the same time. The adult learners with hearing impairments were asked to create their own identification codes that could not be traced by others. Therefore pseudo- identification was necessary for them to remain anonymous. The researcher and the sign language interpreter conducted the interviews. However the researcher did the note taking. After piloting, testing and refinement of the research instruments, interviews were conducted among the adults

with hearing impairments in those respective regions. The data collection from all the adult learners with hearing impairments in Oshana, Khomas, Ohangwena and Omusati, was carried out during the month of November 2011. The researcher and the sign language interpreter conducted the interviews. The interview questions whereby participants had to fill in their biological information were handed out to the participants. The researcher and sign language interpreter assisted the participants to complete the interview questions to fill in the information by making a cross on the interview questions to the information which was applicable to them. This was the case with regard to question 1 in section A.

3.8 Ethical consideration

The researcher informed the participants before interviewing them about the purpose of the study as well as the procedures used during the study. The researcher informed the adult learners with hearing impairments about the duration of their involvement in the study. They were informed about consent to ensure that their participation in the study was voluntary. Furthermore, the researcher reassured the adult learners with hearing impairments that there were no wrong or right answers, but that their honest perspectives were the most desirable outcomes of the conversation. In addition, the participants were also informed about their rights to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. The adult learners with hearing impairments were assured that the information obtained from them was only for research purposes and would be treated with confidentiality. The participants were further informed that the rights to remain

anonymous would be respected. The participants used their identification codes to protect their identities. The data was analysed according to the information provided by the research participants during interviews and on short hand written notes. The short hand written notes would be kept by the researcher for a period of five years after which it would be discarded. The adult learners with hearing impairments were assured that questions were not harmful to them and their families. Finally, the interview questions' instructions were clearly indicated and well explained before the interviews were conducted.

3.9 Data analysis

After the data collection, the data was prepared and the researcher used typological analysis to draw the meaning from the collected data (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Each interview was then transcribed to find meanings. The field notes taken during the interviews were read and entries that related to typologies were marked accordingly and organised into categories using the Microsoft excel spread sheet (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). The researcher then analysed, identified and recorded the main ideas relating to the identified typologies in entries in a summary sheet. The researcher then used the main ideas by looking for patterns, relationships and themes within the typologies then read data according to patterns identified. Records were kept of all entries using research questions and interview themes.

With the information that was provided in the summary sheets, the researcher started to look for meanings within the data by looking at the similarities (things happening the same way), differences (happening in predictably different ways), frequencies (how often they happen), sequence (order in which events happened), corresponding (relations of events to other events) and causation (how one event appear to cause another). Data excerpts that indicated the same idea were coded and marked yellow in order to distinguish them from the other categories. The unrelated data excerpts were read and coded in blue to ensure that all excerpts would neatly fit into categories to make judgments whether the category was justified by the data.

In order to support the categories, identified verbatim quotes of the researcher participants (informants) were used as low inference descriptors. This was used in order to be able to hear what the participants thought and felt about issues and experiences. The discussion on these identified categories was then divided into themes and each theme discussed accordingly. The main categories were then brought together into one whole, followed by the interpretation of data where the researcher explained the findings, attached significance to particular results and placed patterns into an analytic framework and wrote a report.

The analysis of data collected was not easy because of the nature of the participants in the study (the adult learners with hearing impairments). Most of the information provided by the interview questions was almost the same even though they carried

different meaning. This made it difficult for the researcher to analyse the meanings. The interview questions were coded and the data was entered into the computer using Microsoft excel spread sheets. The researcher had to re-read the notes taken during the interviews to get the correct meaning of the identified categories which were then divided into themes.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter described the methods that were found applicable in the collection and analyses of data. The chapter also included a brief discussion of the ethical considerations that were taken into account when conducting this investigation. The population of the study comprised of all adults with hearing impairments in the regions offering literacy programme to adults with hearing impairments in Namibia. Purposive sampling was used. Data was collected using the interview questions and interviews. The interview questions were coded and the data was entered into the computer using Microsoft excel spread sheets.

The next chapter presents the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This study investigated the role of literacy in hearing impaired adult learners' daily lives in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions of Namibia. The results obtained from them are viewed as a foundation to understand the importance of adult literacy in their lives. The researcher found it necessary to combine what she learned from the literature reviewed with information she collected through empirical studies in order to learn more on how adults with hearing impairments view the role of literacy in their lives. Data analysis has been constantly linked to the literature reviewed related to the study, as Hatch (2002) advises that anyone who can analyse data should be familiar with the existing knowledge in the literature and theoretical framework linked to the study.

The researcher embarked on this study because there seems to be no empirical evidence of the role of literacy in hearing impaired adult learners' daily lives in Namibia. This chapter presents the results of the study.

In this study, pseudo-identification was used for participants to remain anonymous. However, terms such as 'deaf adult learners'; 'participants'; informants', learners', hearing impaired adult learners' and 'adult learners with hearing impairments' were used interchangeably.

The researcher and the sign language interpreter used the one-on-one and semi-structured interviews in the collection of the data. The data was collected at the National Literacy Programme Centres in Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions.

The results of the study are presented in sub-sections. Firstly, 4.2 presents the biographical information of hearing impaired adult learners. Secondly, 4.3 illustrates the adult learners with hearing impairments' expectations of the national literacy programme (NLPN). Thirdly, 4.4 presents how adult learners with hearing impairments utilise the skills and knowledge they gained from the programme. Fourthly, 4.5 explain the challenges which adult learners with hearing impairments experienced during the process of utilising skills and knowledge gained from NLPN. Finally, 4.6 reports on the hearing impaired adult learners' opinions on how they want the NLPN to be improved.

The following figures present the biographical information of the participants. They mainly focus on participants' gender, age, self-identification, area of residence and employment status.

4.2 Biographical information of participants

4.2.1 Participants by gender

Figure 4.1 below presents the information of eighteen interviewees.

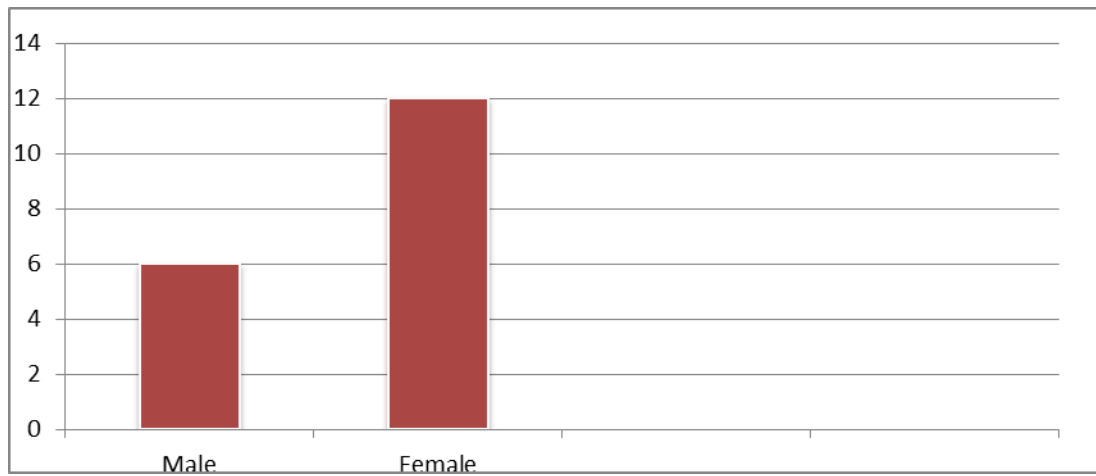


Figure 4.1: Numbers of participants by gender

The figure above indicates that the female participated highly in the literacy than their male counterparts

4.2.2 Age of the participants

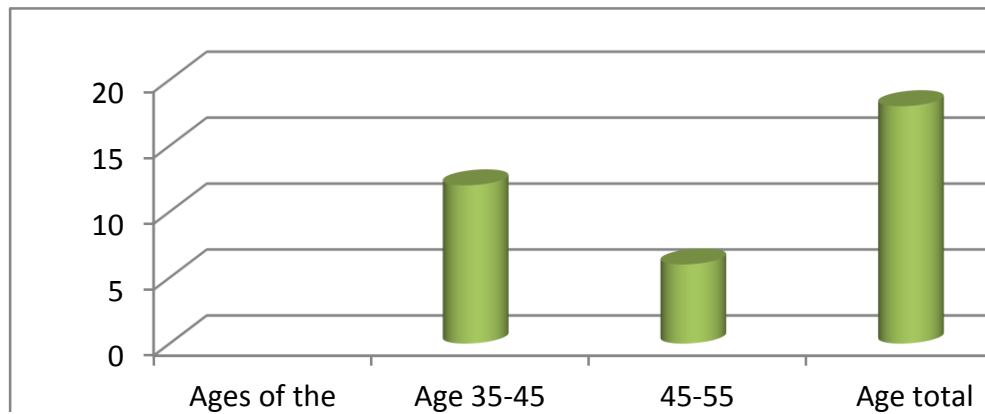


Figure 4.2: Numbers of the participants by age

As indicated in figure 4.2 above, the majority of the participants' ages were between 35 and 55 years.

4.2.3 Participants' self-identification of their degree of hearing impairments

Out of the eighteen (18) participants interviewed, seven (7) identified themselves as deaf, while eleven (11) identified themselves as hard-of hearing. All eighteen (18) participants used Namibian Sign Language as their primary mode of communication.

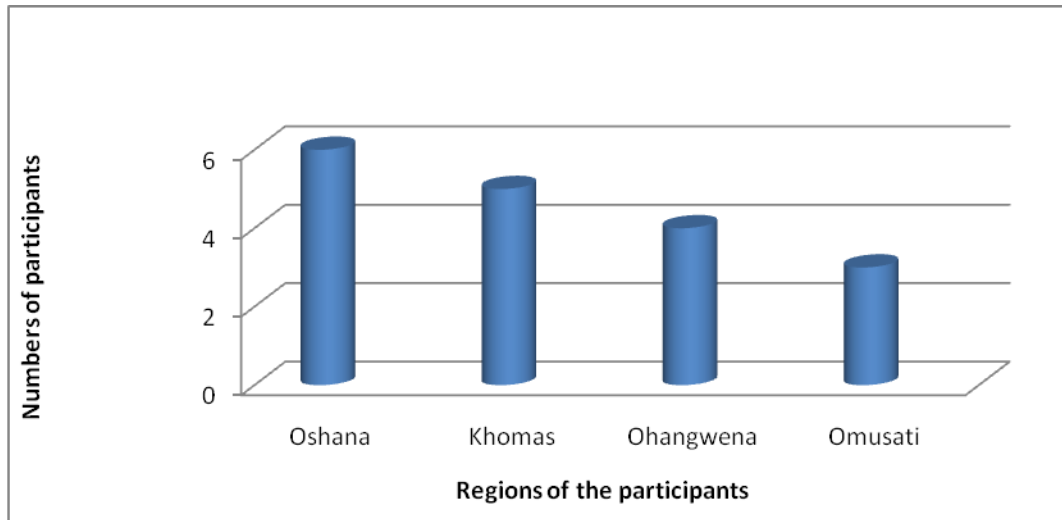


Figure 4.3: Numbers of the participants by regions

Figure 4.3 illustrates that all eighteen (18) participants in the study were born in Namibia and lived in four different regions. The participants were from the following regions: five (5) adults with hearing impairments were from Khomas, four (4) from Ohangwena, three (3) from Omusati and six (6) from Oshana.

4.2.4 Participants' living conditions

All the eighteen (18) of the participants did not own houses or have mortgages. Some were either living with their parents and pay no rental fees while others lived in shacks (corrugated iron structures) and paid rent. Four (4) of the participants lived with their spouses and children, while another four (4) lived alone in shacks (corrugated iron structures) that they rented. Ten (10) lived with their parents.

4.2.5 Participants' employment status

A total of sixteen (16) of the participants interviewed were unemployed and had no income. They relied on the Namibian government disability grants. Only two (2) participants were employed and had a source of income. Another two (2) participants were self-employed and were assisted by their families to sell their products.

Twelve (12) of the unemployed participants pointed out that they were unemployed because they did not have any qualifications which could help them get employed. They hoped that after they had finished the programme they might get jobs in future. The rest of the participants mentioned that they were unemployed because it was difficult for them to get jobs, since even those who could speak were jobless.

Gweelu, one of the unemployed participants, answered:

'No, I am not working! It is very difficult for us to get jobs, even those who can communicate are jobless, imagine if it is us hearing impaired people' (Gweelu (52), 13 November 2011).

The unemployment situation was again emphasised by Gabi who stated:

'My parents provide me with most of my daily needs' (Gabi (37), 13 November 2011).

Only two (2) of the participants were self-employed. They owned small gardens and were assisted by their families to sell what they produced in their gardens. Nghilinganye remarked:

'I have a vegetable garden; my family is the pillar of my strength. They assist me in selling the fresh produce that I produce such as cabbage and carrots' (Nghilinganye (55), 13 November 2011).

Of the eighteen (18) participants, sixteen (16) depended on the government grants to survive and to meet their everyday needs. However, the participants complained that the government grants they received were not enough to meet the demands of their daily lives. In the same vein, other participants were of the opinion that, despite the fact that the government grants were not enough, it is better than having nothing. They said they used the government grants to meet their basic needs.

This is how one of the beneficiaries of the government grants, Shikongo, responded:

'My living cost depends on my grants from the government. It helps me a lot, I am unemployed' (Shikongo (45), 13 November 2011).

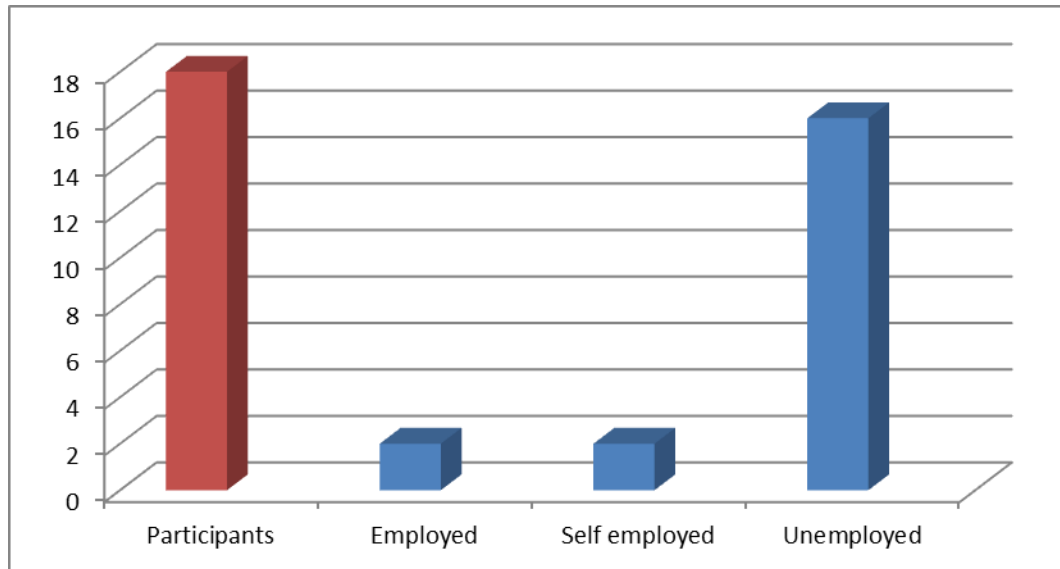


Figure 4.4: Employment statuses of the participants

4.2.6 Descriptions of the communities where the adults with hearing impairments were situated

The researcher finds it logical to familiarise readers with the environment where the data were collected. Thus the next paragraph describes the communities where the participants lived.

In accordance with the data collected, the adults with hearing impairments interviewed lived in communities situated below the poverty lines. The majority (90%) of the community members were unemployed because they were illiterate and mainly survived on the government grants. Although community members were aware of what education was; and specifically the role of literacy in their lives, they were unemployed.

However, participants who better understood the need for literacy appraised literacy as important in the acquisition of reading and writing skills. These participants attended literacy classes. One such participant was Gweelu, who had this to say:

'It was very difficult when I could not read and write because, I had to ask for help from my children and sometimes they did not have time. For me it is through literacy classes that I was able to learn reading and writing skills' (Gweelu (52), 13 November 2011).

Another respondent, Joe, added that literacy is a source of respect:

'Many things changed. Only educated people are viewed as human beings and respected' (Joe (37), 14 November 2011).

The second category consisted of people who at least knew that there were literacy classes, but they did not have any interest to attend literacy classes. Jason said:

'Literacy is an opportunity that opens the mind of people, who for a long time have been living isolated like us, but I really do not have courage and time to attend' (Jason (35), 14 November 2011).

As mentioned earlier, the researcher used the information that was collected from the participants during the interviews, categorised them into main themes and sub themes according to the research questions of the study.

The following is a presentation of the data about what adult learners with hearing impairments expected from the National Literacy Programme.

4.3 Adult learners with hearing impairments' motivation and expectations of the national literacy programme

The participants were asked to express their views on what motivated them to join the literacy programme before and what their expectations were at that present moment. The participants explained that they joined the literacy programme for the purpose of learning how to read and write. Participants further expressed that they felt embarrassed when they were with their friends who could read and write. Joe was one of those who felt ashamed because he could not read and write. He said:

'I joined the NLPN because I want to know how to read and write. I felt ashamed among my friends who could read and write at school and community meetings' (Joe (37), 13 November 2011).

Another reason given was that the participants decided to join the literacy programme because they believed that life would be easier for them if they were literate because they

would be able to search for work in order to support their families. Hilia, one of the participants, said:

'I decided to join the literacy programme because I wanted to have a job and support my family like my neighbours; those who studied have a better life' (Hilia (40), 13 November 2011).

The participants believed that by becoming literate, they would be uplifting their communities. They expressed that they would be able to bring new development to their communities through projects. The majority of the participants stated that they enrolled in the programme to acquaint themselves with contemporary information on HIV and AIDS. Loide expressed the same sentiments by stating:

'I really want to have more information on HIV and AIDS because this disease is wiping out our community .This is why I decided to join the literacy classes' (Loide (50), 13 November 2011).

Other views of participants were that they felt that they were often left out during parent-teacher meetings as they were unable to understand English. Helena expressed her need for registering in the literacy programme:

'In parent meetings at school, they talk about many things, which I had missed since I could not understand English. I therefore

decided to come learn English in the programme' (Helena (43), 13 November 2011).

In addition, the participants stated that they joined the literacy programme to enable themselves to read their children's reports and help them with homework. Aina remarked:

'When children come from school with homework, I was unable to help them because I was illiterate, therefore, I joined the literacy programme to learn how to read and write' (Aina (54), 14 November 2011).

Furthermore, participants continued to lament that in church they were also unable to read from the Bible and Hymn books. Therefore, after realising their weaknesses in these areas, they decided to enrol for literacy classes.

The participants explicitly expressed their joy saying that joining literacy classes was a golden opportunity for them to learn technological skills like sending text messages (such as death notices) via cell phones to the radio; completing forms in the Post Office, and at the Bank, withdrawing money from the Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs). Johanna explained how the need for technological skills motivated her to register for literacy classes:

'When I bought a cell phone and was unable to operate it, I realised that I needed to attend literacy classes to learn how to read and write in order to start using my cell phone' (Johanna (38), 14 November 2011).

Another participant added:

'I was always impressed to hear that people could send death notices via SMS to the radio, this motivated me to join the literacy classes because I wanted to learn how to send SMS's' (Hilia (40), 14 November 2011).

The participants further revealed that due to the high rate of employment opportunities in Namibia, they were motivated to join and complete all the stages of the literacy programme in order to acquire the necessary skills which could increase their employability. The participants hoped also to get employed or become self-employed.

This is how Wetu described her motivation:

'I joined the literacy programme in order to get the necessary skills and get employed or become self-employed after the completion of NLPN' (Wetu (39), 14 November 2011).

Once the researcher had learnt what motivated participants to register in the literacy programme, the researcher asked them to explain their expectations of the NLPN programme. The participants' expectations toward NLPN programme are divided into various themes: functional-literacy related classroom activities; income generating projects; development skills; employment opportunities; communication and social skills; respect and acceptance; credentials of literacy certificates, entrepreneurship and income generating skills.

4.3.1 Functional literacy- related classroom activities

All participants were expecting practical activities in the classroom, but this was not the case in the literacy classes; most of the classroom activities were based on theory, only. Some participants felt that they could read and write fairly; therefore they needed to do other practical classroom activities rather than doing reading and writing only. Shikongo said:

'I was expecting to do more practical activities such as new production and cultivation techniques to make Good use of what the community has' (Shikongo (45) 15 November 2011).

In support, Nghilinganye added:

'I wanted to learn more about gardening and how to do beads work, not only reading and writing' (Nghilinganye (55), 15 November 2011).

Other participants felt that they needed proper practice that would help them learn and develop skills and knowledge as well as to have application ability on handcraft, farming and gardening. The participants felt that if they had skills and knowledge on handiwork, farming and gardening, they would be able to produce and sell their products. Martha's response indicated the need for using her hands:

'I came to learn how to read and write but I also want to know how to do (create) things with my hands' (Martha (35), 16 November 2011).

In addition, participants pointed out that they needed these skills to produce food for their families and generate income. Rauha said:

'I need to learn more about gardening, how to do the beads work and how to make different clothing patterns in order to feed my family' (Rauha, 16 November 2011).

4.3.2 Entrepreneurship and income generating skills

The findings of the study also showed that adult learners with hearing impairments expected more skills and understanding that would help them to be able to start their own income generating projects. Some of the participants stressed that they were old enough to look for employment. They believed that if they had the skills and better understanding on how to start and manage income generating projects. As well as how to market their products, they would be able to sell what they produced from their projects. This would help them support their families financially. The following was Shikongo's expression:

'I wanted to learn how to make clothing, sell them and make a profit' (Shikongo (45), 15 November 2011).

Nghilinganye expressed the same sentiments:

'I need to learn more about gardening, bead work and how to fix different things in addition to reading and writing'
(Nghilinganye (55), 15 November 2011).

Amen expressed similar views:

'Knowing how to read and write is good but, I also want to know how to produce vegetables apart from wheat or mahangu. I want to sell my vegetables to get income' (Amen (54), 16 November 2011).

In addition, the participants mentioned that they expected the programme to teach them proper skills on how to become successful entrepreneurs in their communities. A total of fourteen (14) participants mentioned that knowledge with regard to entrepreneurship would help them to learn how to sell and create job opportunities for their own communities.

This is how Uugwanga expressed his opinions on the entrepreneurship skills:

'I do not earn a lot now, in my small business, because I do not know how to price my products. I expected to learn more entrepreneurial skills on how to start my own business and how to price my products to make a profit' (Uugwanga (36), 22 November 2011).

Aina a self- employed participant added:

'I expected to learn entrepreneurship skills because when I am changing money in the markets I lose a lot of money. In the end there is no profit. This is not good, because, I either cheat my clients or my clients cheat me' (Aina (39), 22 November 2011).

4.3.3 Employment opportunities

The participants revealed that they were expecting the government to provide them with job opportunities upon their completion of stage 3 of NLPN. The participants said that they hoped to use the certificates they would obtain from the programme to get employed by the government and non-governmental institutions.

These views were expressed by Peetu:

'I am still expecting to get job, even in factories after the completion of stage three, because I can read and write now' (Peetu (40), 22 November 2011).

Similarly, Rauha remarked:

'I am expecting the government to give us jobs after we complete stage 3 of NLPN; we really need to show others that with literacy certificates one can make it in life' (Rauha (52), 16 November 2011):

4.3.4 Communication and social skills

Although some of the participants could communicate fluently in Namibian Sign Language (NSL), most of their family members could not communicate through sign

language. The participants wanted to be taught how to teach NSL to their families and friends who could not communicate in the Namibian Sign Language. This communication breakdown caused the hearing impaired people not to be heard when expressing their feelings, concerns and problems to their families and community members and vice versa. Lot narrated her frustration:

'We do not have enough information in the community because even if people wanted to communicate with us it is very difficult because, they cannot speak sign language. I therefore expected to learn how to assist my community members to communicate using sign language' (Lot (50), 16 November 2011).

The participants further stated that they expected to learn social skills in order to help other people with the same or different learning impairments in their communities. This is what Naira said about the social skills:

'I expected to attain social skills on how to work with people with different disabilities in my community and also some knowledge on how to take care of others, responding to their needs and respecting them' (Naira (39) 16 November 2011).

4.3.5 Respect and acceptance

Despite the fact that the participants have hearing impairments, all eighteen (18) of them demanded to be treated with respect, love and acceptance. They felt that this treatment should not be directed at them because of their impairments, but because they are human beings; all human beings deserve to be treated with love and respect. The participants further stressed that they were regarded as useless people in some communities and they were being discriminated against by being treated differently in their own communities. Helena demonstrated her emotions when she said:

'People in our community sometimes discriminate against us and do not want to be associated with us; we also deserve love and respect. Being in the literacy programme puts us in a better position in the community. These two aspects are lacking in our community if you are illiterate' (Helena (43), 16 November 2011).

In view of this, the participants added that they needed a non-discriminatory learning environment where their learning needs were acknowledged and their impairments were not used to discriminate them. They said that they should be treated like other human beings. This is what they genuinely expected from the literacy programmes.

This is how Gwiimalwa encouraged a non-discriminatory learning environment:

'We are tired of being discriminated for being deaf; therefore we expect this programme to be a non-discriminatory programme. Literacy programme should teach us all the important skills and knowledge without any discrimination' (Gwiimalwa (51), 16 November 2011).

4.3.6 Credentials of literacy certificates

Participants revealed that due to the unemployment difficulties in their communities, they were expecting to use their literacy certificate to get jobs. Naira expressed her opinions as follows:

'I am expecting to use my literacy certificate to find a job and be employed because I do not want to stay idle at home. There are already many people who are unemployed in my community' (Naira (39), 22 November 2011).

Lot added:

'I am expecting to use my literacy certificate to have a better life, denouncing poverty and suspend the suffering' (Lot (50), 23 November 2011).

The next sub- section will present the participants' responses to how they are utilising the skills and knowledge that they gained from attending literacy classes.

4.4 Utilisation of skills and knowledge gained from lliteracy programme

The second research question of the study explored the adult learners with hearing impairments' experiences, skills and knowledge that they learnt and gained from the NLPN; and how they utilised those skills and knowledge in their daily lives. Participants indicated that the skills and knowledge attained in the literacy programme were reading, writing, and communication and numeracy skills.

A total of sixteen (16) participants mentioned that knowing how to read and write was a big achievement to them because they could not read and write before they attended the literacy programme. They further mentioned that at least then they could read simple notices and assist with their children's homework. The following was how Uugwanga expressed his joy and here are his exact words:

'I acquired reading and writing skills. I am happy that I can now at least read short notices and assist with my children's homework' (Uugwanga (36), 16 November 2011).

Martha could also not hide her delight when she stated:

'In the past, I was ashamed when I had to sign documents. Now, I already know how to write my name and I can sign documents, I am so happy' (Martha (35), 17 November 2011).

Another skill the participants claimed that they learnt was how to communicate and give the same information to others in a class and in their communities. Gwapeetu indicated her optimism when she said:

'I have learnt how to communicate through sign language and I am optimistic to teach others' (Gwapeetu (55), 18 November 2011).

Toivo added how attending literacy classes helped him to be able to communicate with others:

'When I joined the programme my communication improved a lot, I can communicate well with my classmates and I am willing to teach others' (Toivo (44), 18 November 2011).

The other equally important skill gained by the participants in the literacy programme was the numeracy skill. The participants pointed out how they could count and take stock of assets such as animals and products. Two (2) of the participants mentioned how they used numeracy skills to verify their products in their vegetable gardens. Amen put it as follows:

'Numeracy helped me know how to count my cabbage and onions before I sold them to my customers' (Amen (54), 18 November 2011).

According to Peetu, numeracy is a matter of improving existing skills as he stated:

'Before I started attending literacy classes, I used to give the wrong amount of change to my customers. At least now I am able to count my money accurately and give the correct amount of change to my customers' (Peetu (40), 18 November 2011).

4.5 Challenges experienced by the adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme

The third research question aimed to reveal the challenges experienced by the adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme. The findings are categorised into the following groups, namely: personal, drug abuse and gender violence, lack of facilities, incompetent promoters and absence of further study opportunities.

4.5.1 Personal challenges (Absenteeism)

The participants mentioned that the first personal challenges they faced in the literacy programme was absenteeism. Absenteeism was brought about by factors such as

household duties that they had to perform which included tasks such as having to take care of the children and grandchildren. They also mentioned that field work involving cultivating *mahangu* was also one of the impediments that led to their absence. Other factors that contributed to absenteeism were problems such as chronic illness, death in families as well as hunger due to drought. Peetu's response summarised the problem of fellow participants on absenteeism when he stated:

'It is so difficult for older people to attend classes every day due to different issues in communities such as death and sickness which occur almost daily' (Peetu (40), 17 November 2011).

Helena's response indicated additional causes to adult learners with hearing impairments' absenteeism:

'No one will attend a class when the family is hungry! Due to common floods, most adult learners have important roles to play in their homes such as to search for food and all other necessities for their households. These make it difficult for them to attend classes regularly' (Helena (43), 18 November 2011).

Other participants mentioned that they were discouraged to attend literacy classes on a daily basis due to the long distance travelled to the literacy centre. Hilia expressed how the long distance to the literacy centre was a challenge to her:

I want to attend literacy classes everyday but the centres are so far as I have to walk almost one hour to the centre and this is a problem for me (Hilia (40), 17 November 2011).

Nghilinganye supported Hilia when he said:

'Literacy classes opened my mind, as I have been isolated when it comes to education for a long time but, the centre is so far away, almost five kilometers from my home. I find it difficult to reach the centres on time and everyday' (Nghilinganye (55), 18 November 2011).

The participants further pointed out that after travelling such long distances to the centres, they were always hungry and this led to most of the learners dropping out from literacy classes. Gwiimalwa noted:

'The hunger is really my main concern here, because you do not expect me to attend literacy classes on an empty stomach every day' (Gwiimalwa (52), 12 November 2011).

Helena had the same complaint:

'No one will attend a class when she feels hungry after having travelled such an awfully long distance of 8 kilometers'

(Helena (43), 13 November 2011).

The data further revealed that the long distances that participants travelled to the centres were really disturbing, because sometimes they became sick afterwards and that made it difficult for them to reach the centre. Gwapeetu made her concerns known:

'Ah! This long distance is really making us sick, especially during the summer season when most learners stay home because we cannot afford to get sick every day' (Gwapeetu (55), 12 November 2011).

The participants also mentioned that they lived in the flood-prone areas; during the rainy season they had to travel long distances through flood waters to attend literacy classes.

On this Nghilinganye said:

'Yes, the distance is really long and makes it difficult for us to reach the centre on time, especially during the rainy season and seasonal floods' (Nghilinganye (55), 13 November 2011).

4.5.2 The adult learners with hearing impairments' perceptions of the value of their qualifications

Participants did not see the value of their literacy because they could not compare their literacy certificates with certificates of learners from formal education. Some of the participants felt it was a waste of time to come and attend literacy classes. They indicated that there were still countless numbers of people with different qualifications who were unemployed in the country. Loide revealed her fear when she stated:

'I am afraid that I will waste my time attending this programme and be without any job, because of the high unemployment rate in our country' (Loide (50), 18 November 2011).

The literacy programme was found to have suffered from negative attitudes towards literacy certificates; these negative attitudes often discouraged learners from participating in the programme, hence escalating their social and economic vulnerabilities.

The participants revealed that some of the community members overlooked their sign language, culture and potential in literacy classes. Lot expressed his feelings accordingly:

'Sometimes I fail to understand why the community members hate us and undermine our potential; this makes me unhappy' (Lot (50), 18 November 2011).

The participants said once more that some of the people in their communities constantly discouraged them when they saw them going to attend the literacy classes. This often discouraged them and made them less eager to attend classes regularly. This is how Shawana explained it:

'Although I am happy to attend the literacy classes, I felt bad that some community members are discouraging and laughing at us when we are going to attend literacy classes' (Shawana (39), 18 November 2011).

Due to the lack of understanding of the importance of literacy among the community members, especially the men, those who attended literacy classes were hesitant to openly say that they attended literacy classes. They feared that their peers would laugh at them because of their personality. This experience made them less eager to attend literacy classes every day. This is how Johanna narrated the situation:

'I am happy that the literacy classes created awareness about our right for education but still there are many male learners who are ashamed to reveal that they attend literacy classes. They do not want

to be seen going to attend literacy classes because, they believed that people will laugh at them' (Johanna (38), 18 November 2011).

In support, Jason added:

'In reality, not everyone understands the importance of attending literacy classes, therefore some male learners drop out after attending a few days due to the community's negative insolence and influences' (Jason (35), 19 November 2011).

4 .5.2 Drug abuse and gender violence

The participants cited that the social problems experienced in their communities were alcohol abuse, passion killings, rape, as well as women and children abuse. These adversely affected the hearing impaired adult learners' daily class attendance. Instead of attending literacy classes, learners would show up at funerals, court or visit sick relatives in hospitals. This is how Weulu narrated the effect of the social problems which interfere with their learning:

'Each day has its own crisis: If one is not attending a funeral she / he will appear at court cases caused by passion killing, women and child rape or due to drug abuse and irresponsible drinking. This in reality disturbs our class attendance' (Uugwanga (36), 20 November 2011).

The data indicated that there was an absence of motivation among the learners and promoters. Participants explained that learners themselves were not motivated to attend literacy classes every day. This is because the promoters did not use interesting and relevant teaching and learning materials to inspire the learners. Another factor referred to was that the family and the community at large were not supporting the participants who attended literacy classes regularly. Aina summarised the feelings of other participants as follows:

'Everyone seems to care less about literacy classes! There is no motivation from both sides whether is from the promoter's side, learners themselves or the community at large. This is really disheartening' (Aina (54), 21 November 2011).

4.5.3 Lack of teaching and learning facilities

The participants pointed out that poor learning infrastructure was one of the challenges that they experienced in the programme. The following subsections is intended to us help understand the learners' responses on the infrastructure as a challenge.

4.5.3.1 Venues for learning and teaching

The data indicated that the adult learners with hearing impairments were faced with many challenges on infrastructure such as the lack of classroom facilities. This includes items such as chairs, tables and toilet facilities. Literacy classes and venues are

frequently shared with other community members such as youth groups, men and women network groups and community meetings. This sometimes delayed them to start their literacy classes on time. The participants further pointed out that most of their literacy classes were held under trees and this was a very serious discouragement to them. Martha who experienced this situation, explained:

'We share the same venue with different community groups and sometimes we have to wait for them to finish their meetings. This makes us start our classes late' (Martha (35), 20 November 2011).

Gwapeetu added:

'Our classes are being held under the trees and we just sit on the ground, no chairs to sit on at all' (Gwapeetu (55), 20 November 2011).

The data revealed again that accommodation was one of the crucial challenges the adult learners experienced. Learners alleged that they needed accommodation facilities at the literacy centres, so that they would be able to attend the literacy classes regularly and on time. Helena said:

'The distance is too long to travel and arrive at the literacy centre. The government should strive to make accommodation available near the literacy centre, in order for learners to attend classes on time and regularly' (Helena (43), 20 November 2011).

4.5.4 Incompetent promoters

The participants highlighted that they experienced challenges with the human resources in the programmes. The data collected showed that there was a shortage of professional promoters who were professionally trained to teach literacy classes for adults with hearing impairments in the programme. Lusia expressed her concern on this as she stated:

'Some of the promoters do not talk professionally to the adult learners in literacy classes; they really lacked professional skills on how to work with adults with hearing impairments' (Lusia (37), 21 November 2011).

In addition, participants asserted that some of the promoters did not show interest in working with hearing impaired adult learners. This attitude was demonstrated by absenteeism and / or late coming to the literacy classes. The participants further pointed out that their promoters' lesson presentations were sometimes unexciting and full of repetitions of what had been learnt already.

Joe testified:

'Sometimes our promoters are not on time and sometimes they ignored our questions during the lesson, we really need promoters who are well trained to work with people like us' Joe (37), 21 November 2011).

Aune criticised promoters' presentations as she stated:

'Doing the same class activities in the class every day is very boring; the promoter needs to understand that irrespective of our impairments we need exciting class activities not a repetition of activities' (Aune (44), 22 November 2011).

The participants thought that what their promoters taught them could not help them obtain jobs in various work places as well as to apply what they learnt in their everyday lives. Gabi commented:

'I know that what I have learnt so far from the promoter cannot assist me apply it practically. Therefore with these skills that I learnt, I am not sure if I can get a job' (Gabi (37), 20 November 2011).

4.5.5 Absence of further study opportunities

The participants felt that it was a necessary for all adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme to continue their education, after they completed the three stages of NLPN instead of them going back home after the completion and forgetting everything. They suggested that learners who want to continue with their studies should be allowed to do so at any recognised institution. This is how some participants expressed it:

'There is no opportunity for further study for us, in the programme and this discourages us because, after the completion of NLPN, we will just go and sit at homes because the AUPE programme is too difficult for us. In fact AUPE's content is not appropriate for us' (Wetu (39), 21 November 2011).

'I want to further my study at an institute such as Valombola vocational centre or at any training centre that can accommodate the hearing impaired people in order to advance my skills' (Shikongo (45), 22 November 2011).

4.6. Adult learners with hearing impairments' opinions on how NLPN should be improved

The fourth and last research question of the study explored the improvement the participants would like to see in the literacy programme.

4.6.1. Improved teaching and learning (environment) facilities

The participants suggested that they would like to have modern teaching and learning equipments that fit the conditions of people with hearing impairments. Qualified hearing impaired promoters were also mentioned as part of the improvement on NLPN.

Rauha, suggested:

'I feel that if the programme could have modern teaching and learning materials which are appropriate for us (hearing impaired adult learners) it will motivate other learners to realise why we are attending the literacy programme' (Rauha (52), 25 November 2011).

4.6.2. Qualified / Sensitive promoters

The participants revealed that they like the literacy programme and they would be happy to see the programme having qualified promoters with social skills and who are able to handle their daily concerns such as social and educational concerns.

Aune complemented:

'The programme will be so much more exciting if there were qualified hearing impaired promoters who knew how to handle us' (Aune (44), 25 November 2011).

4.6.3. Basic needs / Accommodation considerations

Conducive infrastructure such as classes, toilet facilities and accommodation at the centres for the learners who travelled the long distances to go to the literacy classes on a daily basis were suggested to be provided for programme improvement.

The participants added that it would be great if they could be accommodated at the literacy centres because this would help them to share their problems: This was how Lucia felt:

'The distance is too long to travel to the literacy centre, please tell the government to provide accommodation in order for us to stay nearby the literacy centres' (Aune (44), 23 November 2011).

In support, Wetu added:

'If we are accommodated at the centres this will help us learn, share our problems and find solutions where possible. Most of our family members might not be able to understand our problems, as they cannot speak sign language well' (Wetu (39), 24 November 2011).

The participants pointed that they wanted to see the literacy programme provide them with basic needs. The basic needs that the participants referred to were among others food, clothes and soaps. Toivo begged:

'Please give the adults with hearing impairments food and other basic needs at the literacy centres, they are suffering' (Toivo (44), 24 November 2011).

Participants further mentioned that the management (Directorate of Adult Education) should visit houses or the places where the adults with hearing impairments live. The visit was suggested so that the programme management could witness the conditions in which adults with hearing impairments lived and their suffering on a daily basis.

Martha's invitation statement was:

'Visit the places we stay to see the conditions in which the hearing impaired people live. You will then realise how much we are suffering' (Martha (35), 25 November 2011).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a descriptive synopsis of the results obtained from the interviews which assessed the views regarding the significance of the role of literacy in the lives of the hearing impaired adult learners. The researcher and the sign language interpreter used two main instruments, which were interview questions and interviews in the collection of data. Finally the responses from the adult learners with hearing impairments in the Khomas Oshana, Ohangwena and Omusati regions provided more insight on the role of literacy in their daily lives.

The next chapter deals with interpretations and discussions of these findings.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the interpretation of the data and the discussion of findings in relation to the research questions of the study. The interpretation will be conducted in relation to the literature reviewed on the role of literacy in the daily lives of hearing impaired adult learners.

5.2 Background information of participants

The study revealed that adults with hearing impairments, in the literacy programme, were mostly of the ages 35 to 55 years. The findings imply that adults with hearing impairments were eager to learn notwithstanding their ages; this suggests that nobody is too old to learn. This is supported by Mpofu (1998) who suggests that all adults can participate in the learning activities in which their capacities and capabilities are developed irrespective of their ages.

According to the findings of this study, female adult learners with hearing impairments constituted the majority of the adult learners in the literacy programme of the Khomas, Omusati, Oshana and Oshana regions. This finding entails that male adult learners

with hearing impairments in the four regions were yet to realise the importance of literacy in their lives. This finding is supported by the Namibian Directorate of Adult Education's documentation which also showed that the numbers of female participants who participated in the literacy programme are higher than their male counterparts (DAE, 2008). Complementing these findings in Namibia, the evaluation studies done on NLPN by Kweka and Namene (1999) as well as by Kiria (2010) also revealed that the numbers of female participants in the literacy programme are higher than their male counterparts. The evaluation studies mentioned above stressed again that gender imbalances had been identified as a major setback in the NLPN programme. Culturally, men generally do not deal with acknowledgement that they do not know how to read and write and they need help, compared to women.

The discovery that a high number of female participants attended NLPN is in line with some findings in existing literature in Africa. According to Lind and Johnson (1990), the African continent is abounding with literacy programmes dominated by more women than men. In support of Lind and Johnson, Indabawa and Mpofu (2000) point out that whereas men will make use of vocational and on-the job training opportunities, women are more likely to participate in literacy programmes to enlighten themselves in order to be able to support their families.

What is surprising about these findings is that prior studies, Mpofu (2000), UNESCO (2010) and UNESCO (2012) have noted that despite the higher number of female participants in the literacy programme, women and girls make up nearly two thirds of illiterate adults and youth population in the world, especially in Asia and Africa. This tells us that despite the high number of women attending literacy classes, there are still a high number of illiterate women and girls, especially in Asia and Africa.

Based on this study's findings, gender has been identified as having an influence on the hearing impaired adult learners' views regarding the role of literacy in their lives. Therefore, there is a need for the Directorate to assist both genders (male and female) to realise the significance of literacy in their lives. However, these findings might as well be explained by a number of different factors. Firstly, there are cultural factors which define men as superior to women. This practice contributed to some men in Africa (including those who are illiterate) pronouncing themselves as literate (Oluoch, 2005). For such men, enrolling in literacy classes would be a tantamount to shaming themselves; they would rather stay away (Lind and Johnston, 1990; Oluoch, 2005; Mwansa, 2006; McGivney, 2004).

Secondly, factors such as lack of time, lack of support from relatives and friends (Oduaran, 2005). As well as no access to information about programme offerings can be some of the factors contributing to the failure of male and female hearing impaired adult learners' participation in the literacy programmes (UNESCO, 2012; Oluoch, 2005).

Thirdly, communities' influences and laziness (Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005) among male adult learners with hearing impairments could not be ruled out. Fourthly, males do not understand the value of attending literacy classes. Although these findings could not be applied to all male adult learners with hearing impairments in the studied regions, the researcher supports the view that in planning and designing adult education programmes for hearing impaired adult learners, a deliberate step should be taken to consult the participants. For they know best about what their essential needs are (Indabawa and Mpofu, 2006).

The finding that there are a higher number of female participants than males in the literacy programme has important implications for the Directorate of Adult Education. It is very crucial that the Directorate of Adult Education develops a practically tailor made literacy programme which would encourage a high number of male adults with hearing impairments to participate in the programme.

The present findings did not inquire further into reasons why there are more females than males in the literacy programme. Henceforward, the study suggests a further study with more focus on female and male participation in the literacy programmes. The study further advises the church to play a leading role in encouraging hearing impaired adults to attend literacy classes. Community mobilisation and literacy campaigns could also contribute to this encouragement.

The study finding revealed that almost fourteen (14) of the adult learners with hearing impairments participating in the literacy programme were unemployed and had no yearly income. This finding may mean that the lack of relevant qualifications, impairments and high unemployment rates in their regions and in the country were contributing factors to the unemployment statuses among the adults with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions.

Conversely, these findings on the employment status of the adult learners with hearing impairments are not strange to the Namibian context, where the unemployment rate is at 51.1 % among the Namibian youth (Mwinga, 2012). It should be noted that the findings on the employment status among the adults with hearing impairments corresponds with the real life situation of unemployment in Namibia. This means that there is a necessity to train and equip adults with hearing impairments with skills which could assist them with surviving and delivering themselves from extreme poverty and unemployment.

This finding on unemployment further suggests that adults with hearing impairments are living in challenging situations that make it difficult for them to realise the importance of literacy in their lives. Therefore, there is a need for them to be trained and taught a different range of skills which will enable them to survive in these situations.

Scholars like Gerber and Reiff (1999) who support these findings claim that adults with learning disabilities face challenges in finding the right educational institutions and succeeding while they are there. These adults with learning disabilities also have difficulties in preparing for and succeeding in the working world and in social settings. The same findings was again supported by Marsden (2003) who claimed that most adults with hearing impairments were unable to get the job opportunities they wanted because they were either discriminated against due to their impairments or because of limited employment opportunities. The “hearing impairment” label in itself can increase the probability of unemployment / decrease employability. This is because some people believe that the impairments might affect the performance at the workplace which in reality is not a fact, at all.

5.3 Community’s level of understanding of the literacy programme

The findings of the study revealed that community members were divided into two groups; the first group being the group which consisted of people who understood the importance of knowing how to read and write and therefore attended literacy classes. The second group consisted of people who acknowledged the existence of literacy but did not have the courage to attend literacy classes. These findings imply that there is a need for the Directorate of Adult Education to mobilise the communities on the importance and necessity of attending literacy programmes. This will help people who need literacy skills to be motivated and consider attending literacy classes.

These findings are in accordance with Wlodkowski's (1999) assertion that adult learners participate in educational activities seeking education out of a sense of need. This was supported by Long (1998) and Merriam and Caffarella (1999) when they commented that in communities there is always goal-oriented adult learners who wish to achieve some definite external objective such as a certificate or to be able to solve immediate problems through education. However, Rogers (2001) argues that when training and staff development form part of the conditions for employment, adult learners might have little or no sense of need of attending classes.

From the literature review and this study's findings it is clear that it was not possible to identify encompassing reasons why some people in communities wanted to be involved in literacy programmes while others did not want to be involved. However, it seems that adults can readily be involved in learning that can be linked to some circumstances in their life worlds -problems, challenges or needs arising from their social life tasks (Knowles et al., 1998). However, this study's findings revealed that the level of understanding in the communities about the importance of literacy deeply discouraged those who are attending the programme and affected the progress of such literacy programmes. Therefore, the need to explore adult learners with hearing impairments' views, their expectations of the literacy programme and to engage them in negotiation about what they want to learn from the literacy programme is evident.

5.4 Adult learners' motivation to attend literacy programme

According to the findings, participants in the literacy programme were motivated to join in order to learn how to read, write and acquire numeracy skills. This finding indicates the willingness of adults with hearing impairments to learn how to read, write and acquire numeracy skills which they thought necessary in their lives.

The findings on the motivating factors of adult learners with hearing impairments are also in line with one of the goals of the Directorate of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Namibia, which is to provide and promote literacy and numeracy programmes for the adults. Motivation to learn supports the main objectives of NLPN as its objectives are: to promote literacy in local languages and in English, to provide basic numeracy and to improve the livelihood of adults who were previously discriminated and marginalised under the colonial dispensation (Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture (MBEC/ UNICEF), 1997).

Motivation is described as an energiser or a driving inner force, a desire or an urge that causes individuals to engage in certain behaviours (Mwamwenda, 2004). Marsden (2003) regards motivation as an important consideration for all learners. Marsden continued to elaborate that motivation presents particular challenges for persons with learning impairments who more often live in the face of low expectations, perceptions of incompetence, and a lack of access to experiences that build confidence. In agreement, Vella (1994) elaborates further that motivation to learn depends upon many factors,

including the success a learner anticipates as a result of engaging in learning a task and the individual's perception of the value of completing the task.

In addition, Knowles (1999) indicates that motivation to learn could also be a response to a life event, which supports the researcher's interpretation of this study's data, indicating that adult learners are motivated to acquire knowledge for various reasons such the maintenance or establishment of social relationship, to serve others, to satisfy a personal interest, to advance their careers and / or to meet external expectations.

More so, the findings of this study revealed further that, they were factors that motivated participants to join the literacy programme. These factors are such as to learn how to read and write, to get employed as well as to start their income generating projects. Nevertheless, participants also mention that some people in their communities did not motivate them to attend the literacy programmes. The reason given was that, some of their community members did not accept their impairments; hence they used their impairments as the barriers to be literate.

Additionally, Erickson, Koppenhaver, and Yoder (1994), point out that literacy is important across multiple life domains, particularly for persons with hearing impairments because when they increased their levels of literacy, it brought them increased perceptions of competence from others. Donahue and Prescott (1988) acknowledge that literacy helps the adults with hearing impairments to readily be accepted by their peers without impairments.

This however refutes the findings of the study; because the participants in the study highlighted that despite their willingness to be literate they experienced rejection from their peers without hearing impairments. This in turn demotivated them to be at ease while attending literacy classes.

On the other hand, Fasokun, Katahoire, and Oduaran (2005) remark that a successful literacy programmes always considers motivating factors which could attract the adults with hearing impairments to join the literacy programme. For this reason, adults with hearing impairments need motivation in order to enhance and facilitate their learning.

Fasokun, Katahoire, and Oduaran (2005) add that the adult learning programmes which are well attended and show high enrolment figures are those in which motivation plays an important role. This is opposite to the findings of this study, because the findings revealed that there is a low enrolment and drop out figure in the literacy programmes. Hereafter, there is a prerequisite to consider the adult learners with hearing impairments' learning needs and relevant teaching and learning aids in the literacy programme to motivate them to join and stay in the literacy programmes.

Richardson, Koller and Katz (1988) argue further that apart from providing basic skills of reading and writing, adult literacy programmes should be responsive to the needs of the participants to have a wider range of vocational options than their peers who are illiterate, as this will motivate others to join the programme.

The provision of appropriate content and techniques will assist adults with hearing impairments to work on their literacy levels, employment and independent skills and this also serves as a motivation to them (Deaf Literacy Initiative, 2003). Omolewa (2000) notes that literacy programmes should not be construed and constructed virtuously as a tool for the acquisition of literacy skills but that it should be adopted and used as a skill for economic and social advancement. Motivating learners, expressing positive expectations and sharing objectives with learners should be the starting point of each learning session, if the NLPN is eager on improving this.

The findings of the study further revealed that the advancement of information technology is another motivating factor for the participants to join literacy programmes. These findings concur with Imel's (1995) observation that learning to read and write is typically associated with formal school. In developed countries, most people with learning impairments are supported to be well advanced in technology. The researcher believes that the popularity of technology, particularly computers, has placed increasing demands on individuals to be information literate. Imel (1995) continues that at the core of being literate in today's world is the ability to deal with information in all the various aspects of everyday life, technologically. Being literate refers to the ability to locate, understand, evaluate, utilise, and convey information at home, at work, and in the community; and all these demand one's technological skills (Imel, 1995).

The level of literacy required to function in everyday life is constantly shifting, adults with hearing impairments need to be assisted to develop, maintain and continuously

advance their literacy skills in order to live and survive in a knowledge-based and information-intensive society (Nafukho, Amutabi and Otunga, 2005).

The results of the study revealed that participants joined literacy programmes hoping to acquire enough skills which would enable them to get employed or be self-employed. The findings suggest that NLPN should cater for skills that are necessary for adult learners with hearing impairment to acquire jobs or be self-employed. This interpretation is in line with the evaluation of NLPN which recommended the revision of the policy guidelines of NLPN in order to expand literacy programmes which accommodate learning skills for the adult learners such as the Community Learning and Development Centres (CLDCs) and Adult Skills Development for Self Employment (ASDSE), (Kweka and Namene, 1999). Walberg and Ugurogin (1989) comment that the accommodation of skills development in literacy programmes will assist participants gain various skills which they can utilise in their daily lives, whether employed or self-employed.

On the other hand, Erickson, Koppenhaver and Yoder (2002) advise that there is a need to consider that it takes time for adult learners with hearing impairments to personally learn meaningful and relevant materials which will help them pick up skills which are relevant for the improvement of their lives. However, Dunlap and Funton-Pierce (1999) state that it is important that the learning environment provides activities and materials which are interesting and motivating to learners as this will help them to have an opportunity to develop skills that are indispensable in their lives.

5.5 The hearing impaired adult learners' expectations of NLPN

The findings of this study showed that adults with hearing impairments expected functional literacy classroom activities. Nevertheless, the participants acquired only writing and reading skills during their literacy classes. This finding implies that the literacy programme needs to target and implement functional literacy activities in the classroom which are vital for the adult learners with hearing impairments to ensure the effectiveness of the NLPN programme.

Oluoch (2005) acknowledges that some adult learners with hearing impairments in literacy programmes recognise the crucial role literacy plays in socio-economic development and as a stepping-stone for further studies and to compensate for lost educational opportunities. This, of course, contradicts the findings of this study because adult learners with hearing impairments who participated in the NLPN regarded their presence in the programme as unexploited opportunities as they felt that with the exception of attaining reading and writing skills, so far they did not learn any other important skills that are applicable to their lives.

However, Oluoch continues to caution that provision of adult learners with hearing impairments with occupation-oriented skills necessary for increased economic productivity in the classroom has been of great concern worldwide. This partly supports the findings of this study because the participants alleged that the literacy programme did not equip them with functional literacy skills.

The literature reviewed further revealed that the consideration of learners' expectations about any programme is very important. Good and Brophy (2000) suggest that expectations and perceptions are important and special considerations for literacy, especially for persons with hearing impairments are needed. Without efficient consideration of hearing impairments as worldwide efforts to ensure functional literacy for all adults with hearing impairments and their expectations are considered as well, failure is inevitable.

Supporting the ideas of Good and Brophy (2000) are Joseph and McLachlan (2003). They point out that without direct attention being asserted on impairments and careful attention to what adult learners with hearing impairments expected from the literacy programme; the possibility remains open that promoters should not expect individuals with hearing impairments to apply what they learnt and successfully attain functional literacy skills.

This supports the researcher's interpretation of this study's data which indicate that the educators' considerations on what the adult learners are expecting from the literacy programme are very crucial in assisting learners to reach and achieve their different learning goals. The fact is that, once adult educators are aware of what adult learners with hearing impairments want to learn and achieve in the literacy programme and more especially the kind of activities they need and want to do in the classroom, it would help adult educators plan the class activities in accordance with their expectations.

As a result of not considering the expectations of the adult learners with hearing impairments, the current status of NLPN's provision of reading and writing skills only, will not go without any debate just like any other programme that caters for adult literacy in Africa and in the world, but do not supplement their programmes with the content and techniques in accordance to their learners' needs (Oluoch, 2005). Thus, there is a need for adult literacy programmes in Namibia to provide adult learners with the necessary skills that are useful to their lives.

Furthermore, the findings of the study indicate that participants expected to learn different skills such as income generating project skills, communication and social skills that are relevant and meaningful to their daily lives. However, the findings show that these skills were not well addressed in literacy programmes.

This finding indicates that participants' expectations about their learning needs for acquiring income generating projects skills, communication and social skills in the literacy programme are still to be realised. The same finding contradicts one of the objectives of NLPN which, amongst others, is to enhance the capacity of both youth and adults for more productivity and self-reliance and to enhance people's communication capacity, self-confidence and information base (MBEC/ UNICEF, 1997).

One other related literature to these findings about participants' expectations of income generating projects skills, communication and social skills is the notion of Oduaran (2000) who comments that adult learners' prioritise other aspects of life and that they are

more interested in acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes that they can apply in their daily lives. Oduaran further suggests that adult learning especially in Africa should often take place in the context of practical survival realities such as scouting for new sources of water, food, farming or shelter and developing skills which can be used in the workplace or to generate income. This again supports the researcher's interpretation that the hearing impaired would gain functional literacy if they are provided with opportunities to participate in the Adult Skills for Self Employment (ASDSE) training to learn more entrepreneurship skills as this will help them start their own small businesses.

Other researchers and studies carried out documented that some adult learners with hearing impairments struggle with reading, writing and communication in the classroom and they should be assisted to attain practical skills (Long and Beil, 2005; Antia, Reed and Kreimeyer, 2005; Mallory and Long, 2002; Johnson and Johnson, 1986; Karchmer and Mitchell, 2003). Others indicated the need for practical and communication skills which would help adult learners with hearing impairments interact directly with their hearing peers (Basil and Reyes, 2003). This was confirmed by the findings of this study, as the participants felt that there is a need for proper communication with their hearing peers as this would help their hearing peers to understand them better. This will again help their peers who are willing, to assist them where possible.

In addition, Dansereau (1988), in a programme of research on cooperative learning, found that practical skills, interaction and communication with peers, instructors and experts produce the quickest, longest lasting and most transferrable learning outcomes. This implies that the adult literacy programmes should therefore be designed for the acquisition of all skills, especially for those outside the framework of the formal school system and for those with learning impairments.

Moreover, the findings of the study found unacceptance of the hearing impaired people in communities and discrimination towards them, especially when they went to attend literacy classes.

Other participants stated that they were faced with ignorance based on their language and culture in the literacy classes. This finding proposes that a number of adjustments need to be made to make the hearing impaired adults play the same role as hearing people without being discriminated. The study therefore, suggests that the unacceptance of people with hearing impairments is one of the biggest obstacles with regard to literacy class attendances. The participants therefore expected to be treated with respect and acceptance and to be taught in a non-discriminatory learning environment.

The findings further revealed that most of the participants' impairments were not accommodated in their own families and in the communities. This contributed to them being labelled as useless people in their own families and community hence; they asked to be treated with respect and acceptance.

The findings of this study again divulged that some people in their communities have a negative attitude towards adult learners with hearing impairments, more especially when they see them attending literacy classes. This negative attitude had an influence on their attendance.

These findings mean that the NLPN programme should create a pleasant learning atmosphere for adults with hearing impairments in order for them to see the purpose of being literate and realise the programme's role in their lives.

In support of these findings, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) assert that respect in an educational environment is about values and the integrity of each person; a person should be allowed to express true self without fear of threat or blame. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg further claim that in an atmosphere where adult learners know that they are respected, they always feel safe, capable and accepted. In the context of this study, this implies that a learning environment for adults with hearing impairments should be characterised by respect and acceptance of the value of adult learners as human beings (Vella, 1994a).

This finding is supported by Goduka (2000) who points out that many generations of adult learners understand how to work together through interrelatedness, interconnectedness and interdependence. Adult learners understand that nothing exists in isolation because every human being relates to every other human being.

This was again supported by Hanson (2002) when he stated that there is a need to be more specific with the learning context and the settings in which deaf adults learn as well as their relationships with their fellow learners and their educators. This is because all these factors influence the way the learners need to be treated in different social and cultural contexts. In the context of this finding, the researcher felt that there is a need for the literacy programme to offer an easy-going learning environment which contributes to the totality of the participants. This will help them feel accepted.

5.6 Skills and knowledge attained from attending literacy classes and how they were utilised by the adults with hearing impairments

All eighteen participants indicated that they attained reading and writing skills; as well as some communication and numeracy skills. The findings further indicated that some of the participants lacked confidence in using the attained skills (reading and writing skills, communication skills and numeracy skills). The findings further revealed that the adult learners with hearing impairments did not attain enough skills and knowledge applicable to their daily lives. This study's finding implies that the participants in the literacy programme are yet to realise and explore ways in which to utilise the skills attained from the programme.

Nevertheless, the findings on the attainment of skills and knowledge by adult learners with hearing impairments in the literacy programme support what Jessup (1997) said about the adults with hearing impairments who attend the literacy programme as he

stated that “learners may gain basic literacy and numeracy skills but may leave without job readiness skills and knowledge” (p.75). Jessup continues to state that literacy and numeracy skills acquired in literacy programmes are not sufficient in meeting the requirement of adult learners’ career goals and personal growth (Jessup, 1997).

A similar observation is made by Wagner (2000) regarding the findings about insufficient knowledge and skills on literacy programmes enabling the unemployed to obtain jobs. In support of Wagner (2000), Long and Beil (2005) went so far to debate on the necessity of literacy among adult with hearing impairments when it was stated that “there is virtually no evidence from developing countries indicating that adult literacy programmes for the adult learners lead to actual economic improvements in the lives of programme participants” (p.68), contributing to the overall impression of negativity about the role of literacy among adult learners with hearing impairments.

Furthermore, Wagner (2000) states that as long as there is no conclusive evidence on how literacy helps the adult learners with hearing impairments to have job opportunities, they, themselves might not be able to see the role and importance of literacy in their daily lives.

The literacy programme need to come up with quality and relevant learning content that will help the adult learners with hearing impairments to enrich themselves with other necessary skills and knowledge that are relevant to their daily lives. It is very important

that the learning content of the NLPN reflect the learning needs of the learners (Olouch, 2005).

The findings suggest that the participants in the literacy programme have a strong will to learn different practical skills, but the programme did not realise their learning needs to offer these skills. Therefore, if the literacy programme could introduce live teaching and learning content that can offer practical skills such as practical handiwork, farming and gardening skills to the participants. Such content would enhance participants' willingness to learn different practical skills applicable to their practical lives.

The findings of this study concur with the findings in other researches done in Africa which also highlighted that some literacy programmes in Africa lack practical skills and relevant teaching and learning materials (Oluoch, 2005).

5.7 Challenges experienced by adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme

The findings of this study revealed that there are personal obstacles facing adults with hearing impairments in the programme. The adults with hearing impairments used to be absent from classes many times because of social challenges such as relatives' and acquaintances' death, sickness and funerals as well as the long distance which they have to travel to reach the centres. The findings of this study also revealed that the participants in the literacy programme are living in poverty and they have to look for

food for their households. This prevents them always from attending literacy classes. The participants also experienced negative attitudes toward literacy classes in communities.

Likewise, the findings of this study further revealed that there is a lack of understanding about the importance of literacy and its role among the participants in the literacy programme. Equally important, the findings show that due to the poor learning content and materials, participants and promoters lacked motivation to attend classes regularly. The findings of this study are strongly supported by Indabawa (2005) who states that adult learners are confronted by family problems and social problems on a regular basis and it is extremely difficult for them to settle down comfortably in order to learn.

It is worth noting that the results demonstrated that these personal challenges are equally experienced by all participants in rural areas and in towns, in and outside Namibia.

The findings of previous research studies (Strong, 1988; Kweka and Namene, 1999; Rogers, 2005; Oluoch; 2005) have also revealed common personal challenges such as hunger, poor health, insecurity, tiredness and anxiety as obstacles to adult literacy in developing countries. Brookfield (1998) differentiates felt needs and prescribed needs which should feature in programmes for adult learners. Felt needs are the conscious awareness of the learners' wants, desires and wishes. Prescribed needs are premised upon educators' belief concerning the skills, knowledge, behaviours and values that they feel adults should acquire.

The finding on personal obstacles facing adult learners with hearing impairments in the NLPN support Gravette's (2005) argument that adult learners seek education in order to address problems, challenges or needs arising from their life roles. In addition, the critical social theory in terms of adult education brings the awareness that programmes which will attract adult learners are those programmes which really involve reflective discourse and provide knowledge that is culturally, economically and socially relevant and capable of helping adult learners deal with personal challenges (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

Therefore, the Directorate of Adult Education could address the personal challenges of the participants in the programme. This can be done by identifying the challenges of participants in literacy classes in order to plan accordingly and find ways in which to address their challenges. There is also a need for the management of the Directorate to visit the classes regularly in order to familiarise themselves with the challenges which confront adult learners in the programme.

This study found that personal challenges for participants mentioned above had a negative effect on adult learners' realisation of the significant role that literacy can play in their lives. There is a need to remove learning barriers for adults with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions. Hence, adult learners with hearing impairments' personal challenges need to be understood and addressed in order to take appropriate steps to deal with them before they actually hinder effective learning.

The result of the study on the challenges of adults with hearing impairments on human resources and infrastructures showed that adult learners with hearing impairments are experiencing unfriendly classroom facilities, poor teaching and learning materials, lack of accommodation facilities, incompetent promoters and poor interest from promoters.

The study found that most participants in literacy programmes do not have classroom facilities such as chairs and tables. They also used trees as classroom facilities. This condition was described by most participants as unfriendly and discouraging. This finding maintains what Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran (2005) point out when they mentioned that the environment in which learning takes place may also be a significant hindrance. Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran further advice that the classroom should provide an environment that is conducive to learning. This includes the availability of toilets, ventilation, chairs as well as quality teaching and learning materials or aids.

On the other hand, Oduaran (2002) advises that for adult learners, learning is the inner process that is affected by external factors in the learning environment as the learner tries to acquire and then apply new learning. This implies that learning is a predisposition that should lead an individual to the process of acquiring knowledge and other survival skills in a rapidly changing world and it will depend on the learner to use the acquired skills and knowledge to get a job or not (Oluoch, 2005).

This finding of this study emphasises the fact that literacy programmes for adults with hearing impairments were confronted with poor learning and teaching materials as teaching and learning materials were not effective enough to address the learning needs for the adult learners with hearing impairments.

This study recommends the improvement of the quality of classroom facilities in order to attract other participants with hearing impairments to join the programme as well as to motivate those learners who are already in the programme to value the role of literacy in their lives. Moreover, Erickson (2005) observes that learning materials in the literacy programmes need to be chosen appropriately to reflect the academic levels of the participants in order to determine their certificates.

Marsden (2003) adds that there is a call for literacy programmes catering for the hearing impaired adult learners. This call can be attended to by assisting them to use real-life materials obtained from various businesses and workplaces and utilise them within the programme. This will aid the adult learners with hearing impairments in familiarising themselves with workplace activities. The best thing to do is to evaluate and determine the best learning environment and go with the adults' strengths (Marsden, 2003).

Although the matter of lack of infrastructure and human resources has been raised in the previous evaluation by Kweka and Namene (1999), the NLPN programme seems to have not effectively responded to it. It is important, however, to note that although these challenges are not confined to a particular class or gender; they seem to affect adults

with hearing impairments more than other adult learners without hearing impairments in the NLPN programme, hence the need to address these challenges could not be underestimated.

The lack of infrastructure and human resources in the NLPN further supports what Indabawa and Mpofu (2005) state when they classified learners' learning challenges into situational factors such as the lack of support from educators, relatives and friends. The two scholars identified institutional factors such as relevant course materials and dispositional factors such as learners being too old to go back to school (p.76). They added further that situational and institutional factors can heavily affect the learning process in any literacy programme.

Moreover, the study found that adult learners with hearing impairments were of the opinion that they could not use literacy programme certificates for employment. This is a big challenge to them as they felt that it was a waste of time for them to be in the programme. Based on this finding, it could be argued that the NLPN programme in the four regions studied has little to give in responding to the hearing impaired adult learners' opportunities to use their literacy certificates to get employment.

These findings show the need of the Directorate of Adult Education to create awareness amongst employers about the potential of hearing impaired adult learners. These findings also indicate the requisite for the Directorate Adult Education to team up with

various workplaces in order to support career development for the employment of adult with hearing impairments in education and within other sectors.

The findings of this study supported Oluoch (2005), Holt, Hotto and Cole (1994), and Eden' 2000 assertions. They stated that the credential of literacy certificates was the biggest challenge facing the adults with hearing impairments in most of the literacy programmes.

Other new challenges revealed by this study were the accommodation and the provision of basic needs at the literacy centres. The study established that there was a need for NLPN to provide accommodation facilities at the centres in order to assist those learners who lived very far from the centres to be closer to the centres for them to be able to attend classes on a regular basis.

The need for accommodation and the provision of basic needs at the literacy centres support Kimmel et al.'s (2000) and Khattar et al.'s (2003) affirmation that inadequate physical educational facility establishments and the lack of basic needs for people with impairments have a negative effects on learning and that adults learners with hearing impairments coped well when they lived closer to their learning centres (Burke and Grosvenor, 2003). This is not the case in Namibia as the findings of this study revealed that participants lived further away from literacy centres and they were not provided with basic needs.

The researcher advocates that the provision of accommodation facilities and basic needs for programme participants should be seen as motivating factors that can attract other learners with or without hearing impairments to join the programme.

This finding suggest the Directorate of Adult Education to pay attention to the needs of the participants in the programme in order to help them participate well and gain skills that will help them succeed in their lives.

Moreover, lack of opportunities for continuation of studies in literacy programmes or elsewhere are also some of the major findings of this study as there were no opportunities offered in the NLPN programme in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati, and Oshana regions. After adult learners had completed stage 3, which is considered to be equivalent to the completion of Grade four of formal education, they were unable to further their studies. The AUPE (Adult Upper Primary Education) which is equivalent to Grade 7 was found to be difficult for the learners who had just completed stage 3.

Oluoch (2005) noted that there are many different learning opportunities provided by various agencies that can contribute to functional knowledge, skills and practices among literacy learners. Oluoch (2005) suggests that literacy programmes may not be the sole change agent to the learning opportunities for adult learners, but should work hand in hand with other agencies. Thus, this study finding implies that there is a need for NLPN to open adult learners with hearing impairments' eyes to see the possibilities of

partnerships with local agencies and institutions that provide further training such as Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) and Vocational Training Centres.

5.8 The hearing impaired adult learners' views on the improvement of literacy programmes

The findings of the study on the improvement of literacy programmes illustrates that the programmes need improvement on teaching and learning materials, provision of competent promoters for adults with hearing impairments as well as favourable infrastructure. The programme participants showed consternation on the quality of teaching and learning materials as they felt that these were contributing factors to their insufficient attainment of skills and knowledge necessary for their survival.

The aspects on the improvement of literacy would be addressed if literacy programmes would design modern learning and teaching that would accommodate the learning needs of all literacy participants.

The study further found that some of the promoters with hearing impairments were incompetent. This finding supports Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran's (2005) observation that the use of incompetent facilitators could affect the adults' participation and enrolment in the adult learning programmes. There is a need for the hearing impaired promoters to be well trained on a regular basis on how to work and interact

with adult learners with hearing impairments as this might encourage the participant's confidence in the literacy programme.

This finding proves that the NLPN does not escape the criticism levelled against many literacy programmes in Africa, that of not attempting to differentiate the modern learning and teaching techniques in accordance with the needs of the various partakers, poor management and unmonitored and supervised literacy programmes (Mpofu, 2005 Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005).

The findings also revealed a worrisome situation of the participants' sufferings due to harsh weather conditions when they attended these classes in improper structures. There were no guaranteed measures for classes that were held at community places such as halls and churches because they were shared with other groups. This finding is in accordance with what Oluoch (2005) observed, that most adult learning in Africa is conducted in improper structures such as under trees. In this study a respondent in the Ohangwena region attested to this situation and affirmed that since she started the programme, their literacy classes were held under a tree. If there would be a proper understanding on the obstacles in setting up the proper structures for adult learning programme and if appropriate steps to deal with them would be taken, effective learning of the participants can be guaranteed.

5.9 Conclusion

Following the interpretations and discussions of the findings of this study, the following key findings emerged: The analysis of data revealed that adults with hearing impairments in the Khomas Ohangwena, Omusati, and Oshana regions seem to have acquired reading, writing, communication and numeracy skills. Participants expressed uneasiness with the ways they were treated by their community members as well as the promoters' attitude during the teaching and learning process.

Most of the learners felt that some of the skills which they had learnt could not be applied in real- life situations and therefore emphasised the need for being taught entrepreneurial skills and project- related skills in order to be able to start their own businesses. The hearing impaired adult learners' suggestion for more practical classroom activities as well as qualified deaf promoters and conducive learning environment should be considered by the Directorate of Adult Education. The Directorate needs to do more in assisting them to realise the role and effectiveness of literacy in their daily lives.

The next chapter deals with the critical reflections, recommendations and conclusion of a thesis.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION, CRITICAL REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Education is a fundamental right treasured in all major United Nations and other international charters. The need to provide adult literacy for deaf adults in order to provide them with occupation - oriented skills for economic development has been a great concern worldwide (Oluoch, 2005). About 650 million people worldwide live with physical, sensory (blindness, deafness) intellectual or mental health. United Nations Educational Science and Cultural Organisation estimated that perhaps 97% of these people had either never attended school or had left school too early to have mastered basic literacy and numeracy skills and this resulted in low literacy rates in developing countries (UNESCO website, 2009).

In Namibia, the National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) was launched in 1992 by the Ministry of Education through the Directorate of Adult Education (DAE). The National Literacy Programme in Namibia provides the adults with literacy and numeracy skills free of charge. The Programme offers stages 1, 2 and 3 of basic literacy and numeracy to improve the livelihood of adults who were previously discriminated and marginalised under colonial dispensation (DAE, 2008). The Directorate of Adult Education started to offer literacy classes for the adults with hearing impairments in

2009 with the assistance of ICEIDA (Icelandic International Development Agency). The Icelandic International Development Agency supported the Directorate of Adult Education through the sponsoring of three weeks of training for the hearing impaired promoters to teach adults with hearing impairments as well as payment of their honoraria up to December 2010 (Iceida Annual Report, 2009; Matengu, Nuujoma and !Haosemab, 2009).

The NLPN has an important role to play in enhancing the adult learners with hearing impairments' understanding on the role of literacy in their daily lives. The adults with hearing impairments experienced impediments in NLPN classes in the Khomas, Oshana, Erongo, Kunene-Namutoni and Oshana regions. However, they were able to recognise the importance of literacy especially in their socio-economic development. The adult learners with hearing impairments perceived NLPN as a programme that had the potential to empower them to overcome their learning and economic needs.

The adult learners with hearing impairments also regarded the NLPN as a programme that would allow them opportunities to get different skills that would help them clarify their vision for sustainable development, a society of hope and common goals. They were expecting to acquire more skills and knowledge that would help them in their day-to-day functioning such as entrepreneurship, design and tailoring, agricultural skills and carpentry. The researcher feels that the absence of the provision of necessary skills and knowledge in the literacy programme is a worrisome situation as the participants ought to have these knowledge and skills in order to solve their cultural and economic needs.

Therefore the need for highly consideration of these skills and knowledge in literacy programmes is necessary.

This study used a qualitative methodology to obtain data and to answer the research questions. Through the literature review, the overview of different perspectives and empirical investigation on how the adult learners with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions perceived the role of literacy was investigated. The study looked precisely at the expectations of the adults with hearing impairments with regard to the NLPN, the utilisation of the skills and knowledge gained in the literacy programmes as well as the barriers in using the gained skills and knowledge. In order to address the diverse needs of the adults with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions, the study also looked at the challenges and the improvements participants wanted to see in the NLPN programme.

6.2 Opinions about the meaning of literacy programme

6.2.1 Perceptions about literacy programme

According to literature, literacy especially among the adult learners with hearing impairments is regarded as a social practice through which adult learners can be nurtured and developed (Lewis and Del Valle, 2009). It is the underlying principle that literacy is important across multiple life domains particularly for persons with hearing impairments because, when they increased levels of literacy, it brought them increased perceptions of

competence from others (Erickson, Koppenhaver and Yoder, 1994). The idea of literacy is being defined as "multiple [in sense] is an integral part of the socio-cultural lives of individuals and communities" (Lewis and Del Valle, 2009, p. 18).

Literature further stressed that literacy programmes improve when the learning environment guides a community of learners to learn and cooperatively share ideas, skills and knowledge as well as opinions that are necessary for their personal growth and working environment (Phillips, 1996; Dansereau, 1988). Moreover, scholars such as Cross (1986), Brookfield (1986), Sessay (1999) and Oduaran (2002) disclose that literacy is regarded as a predisposition that leads an individual to the process of acquiring knowledge and other survival skills in a rapidly changing world. This implies that literacy programmes should consist of curricula that are organised around the acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary for the participants to earn a living (Knowles, 1984).

Internationally, there is consensus that literacy programmes help the deaf adults be focused and be literate (World Bank, 2003). However, the adult learners with hearing impairments are facing challenges in finding the right educational institutions (Harrington, 2000; Kluwin and Stewart, 2000; Redden, Davis and Brown, 1978; Stewart and Kluwin, 1996). It is also assumed that the skills that most adults with hearing impairments gained in literacy programmes did not guarantee them job opportunities and they are either discriminated against because of their impairments or limited employment opportunities (Marsden, 2003).

In Africa, literacy is regarded as an opportunity that allows disadvantaged groups (including adult learners with hearing impairments) to have opportunities for joyful learning to enable them to discover knowledge and emancipate themselves from unequal labour and social relations (Indabawa, 2000; Oluoch, 2005).

In Namibia, the literacy programme aims to assist the previously disadvantaged adult learners acquire reading and writing as well as numeracy skills. However the participants in this study identified the gap to be filled in the NLPN. Participants felt that apart from being advance in reading, writing and numeracy skills, they need and want to learn practical as well as agricultural skills that will help them sustain their lives.

It is also believed that only a literate person is able to contribute fully to the development of the community. The literacy programme's key purpose is to considerably assist all Namibian adults to be literate (DAE, 2008). The National Literacy Programme in Namibia aims to give a chance of to all marginalised and neglected adults to gain new skills and confidence and enable them to exercise their rights and responsibilities as Namibian citizens (Mutorwa, 1996).

6.2.2 The uses of literacy in a society

According to literature, the utilisation of literacy within the greater context of society can be "potentially empowering, emancipatory or even oppressive" (Worthman, 2008, p. 446). The disadvantaged and marginalised groups in which the hearing impaired are

categorised can benefit from being literate because they would be better informed and they would also be able to make decisions, exercise their rights and live meaningful lives (Street, 1993).

Moreover, it has been acknowledged that literacy helps the adults with hearing impairments to be more readily accepted by their peers without impairments (Donahue and Prescott, 1988). The literature further illustrated that the idea of literacy should go beyond the functional tasks of reading and writing and focus more on the tightly woven network that consists of skills and knowledge, language learning, the individual and the community (Evans, 2004). The participants in this study indirectly confirmed their understanding on the importance of functionally literacy when they stated repeatedly their wish to learn knowledge and skills on the practical activities. They believed that practical activities would assist them to obtain jobs, to generate income and support their families financially.

6.2.3 Critical social theory and the role of literacy among adult learners with hearing impairments

The critical social theory emphasises that literacy makes people construct meanings and design actions that matter in their daily lives (Kliwer, Biklen and Kase-Hendrickson, 2006). The critical social theory brings awareness to literacy programmes that, the literacy programmes which attract adults with hearing impairments are really those which involve a reflective discourse and provide knowledge which is culturally,

economically, and socially relevant and capable of helping learners deal with challenges (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

The critical social theory emphasises that societies are basic support for construction, acquisition and utilisation of knowledge. This theory stresses the need for the society to empower adult learners in their professions, careers or even in their daily lives. Merriam and Caffarella (1999, p.340) maintain that ‘individual learning is shaped by the learners’ society, culture, structure and history.’ It is believed that what a society does or does not do is crucial to the success of any adult education programmes (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

Furthermore, this theory serves the purpose of liberating people from oppression and it criticises the domination of external forces. In the context of this study, this theory emphasises the requisite for adult learners with hearing impairments to be mentally liberated, to be involved in the planning for literacy programmes and in new developments about the programme instead of being told what they must do even if it is not appropriate for them. The adult literacy programme should help the adult learners have psychological, social, and economic power that lead them to their empowerment and emancipation.

6.2.4 Adult learner with hearing impairments' motivational factors to attend literacy programme

Literature states that motivation is an important consideration for all learners, but presents particular challenges for persons with learning impairments who more often than anything experienced the face of low expectations, perceptions of incompetence and a lack of access to experiences that build confidence (Marsden, 2003). However, adults' motivation to learn in Africa is explained by various reasons such as to maintain or establish social relationships, to serve others, to satisfy a personal interest and to advance their careers or to meet external expectations (Fasokun, 1994).

Once more, adult learners are motivated to attend literacy classes by internal pressures such as the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem and issues on life quality. (Abadzi, 2005). Furthermore, apart from providing basic skills of reading and writing, the literature review revealed that literacy programmes which motivate adult learners are those which are responsive to their needs because by responding to their needs other illiterate adults will be motivated to join the literacy programmes (Oluoch, 2005). The findings of this study however identified demotivating factors facing adult learners with hearing impairments in the literacy programmes. These demotivating factors are discrimination and stereotypes against adult with hearing impairments by their peers and their community members. These factors instigated the adult learners with hearing impairments not to attend literacy classes regularly. This led to the low enrolment and absenteeism among adult learners with hearing impairments in literacy classes.

6.2.5 Problems experienced by the adult learners with hearing impairments in the literacy programmes

The literature review revealed that the sociocultural, political and economic environments prevailing in a given country can help adult education, and in particular, literacy programmes to prosper (Phillips, Norris, and Mason, 1996). Additionally, the environment in which learning takes place may also be a significant hindrance. Different scholars stipulated that an environment that is conducive to learning is the one which includes quality human resources, the availability of toilets, ventilation and chairs as well as appropriate quality teaching and learning materials (Dansereau, 1988, Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005; Marsden, 2003). Gerber and Reiff (1994) argue further that the hearing impaired adults are being challenged in finding the right educational institutions and of being discriminated against due to social settings (Marsden, 2003).

The findings of this study indeed confirmed that the lack of teaching and learning, accommodation, infrastructure as well as incompetent promoters heavily affect the progress of the participants in the literacy programme.

6.3 Summary of the study's findings

In total eighteen (18) adult learners with hearing impairments participated in this study. The ages of the participants were between 35 and 55 years. The participants interviewed lived in the communities situated below the poverty lines. Only two of the eighteen (18)

participants are employed, the other sixteen (16) participants were unemployed. Business opportunities were also limited in their communities.

The community members were aware of what education was, and specifically the role of literacy as well as its importance in their lives. Participants for NLPN in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions experienced more or less the same challenges.

The qualitative approach used provided the present participants ‘experience of reality, whereby’ the researcher and the research participants were enabled to express their views and experiences” (Bondy, 1983; Henning, and Smith, 2004, in Hamunyela, 2008, p. 152). The researcher and sign language interpreter used interview questions and interviews as the main instruments in collecting the data.

6.3.1 Expectations of adult learners with hearing impairments from NLPN?

Interviews conducted among the adult learners with hearing impairments reported findings which indicated some attainment of their expectations about the NLPN such as reading, writing, communication in English, numeracy, some technological skills, contributions during parent meetings and assisting children with homework. However, there are other expectations of the adults with hearing impairments participating in the literacy programme for Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana that are still to be met. They are as follows:

6.3.1.1 Functional literacy related classroom activities

Some of the classroom activities were based on theory only. Some participants felt that they could read and write fairly and therefore needed to do other practical activities rather than reading and writing only.

6.3.1.2 Entrepreneurship skills

The adults with hearing impairments expected skills and knowledge that would enable them to start and manage their own income generating projects because they are old enough to be employed. They expected income generating projects and entrepreneurial skills in order to assist their families financially.

6.3.1.3 Employment opportunities and credential of literacy certificates

The participants were expecting to use their stage 3 of NLPN certificates to look for jobs in government and in non-governmental institutions.

6.3.1.4 Communication and social skills

The adult learners with hearing impairments s' family members could not speak sign language. For this reason, they expected to be taught how to teach Namibia Sign Language (NSL) to their families and friends who could not communicate in Namibian Sign Language.

6.3.1.5 Respect and acceptance

The adults with hearing impairments felt that they were discriminated against and treated differently in their own communities and were being regarded as useless people in some communities. They are expecting to be treated with love and respect in the NLPN because all human beings are entitled to that.

6.3.2 How the adult learners with hearing impairments utilise the skills and knowledge they gain from the NLPN

Significant findings on how the Participants utilised skills and knowledge they gain from the NLPN were identified through the hearing impaired adult learners' views. The adult learners with hearing impairments asserted that knowing how to read and write was a big achievement for them because they could not read and write before they attended the literacy programme. Participants further mentioned that at least now they could read simple notices. They also expressed that they gained numeracy skills as they could count and take stock of assets such as animals and products.

6.3.3 Challenges experienced by the adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme

The challenges experienced by the adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme were explored and strategies to overcome these barriers were examined. They mentioned that they had personal challenges such as travelling long distances to

the literacy centres, absence from literacy classes due to field work, chronic illnesses and death in families. The participants further indicated that household duties such as having to take care of children and grandchildren and searching for food for families due to hunger often caused by the drought were also some of the challenges. Other challenges mentioned were: discrimination, drug abuse and gender violence. In their literacy classes, learners experienced the lack of quality learning and teaching materials; lack of physical facilities, incompetent promoters and the absence of further study opportunities.

6.3.4. How the adult learners with hearing impairments want the literacy programme to be improved

The participants suggested that they be provided with modern teaching and learning materials that fit the conditions of people with hearing impairments. Qualified hearing impaired promoters were also mentioned as a part of the improvement on literacy programme.

Conducive infrastructure such as classes, toilets and accommodation facilities at the literacy centre to cater for the adult learners who travelled long distances to the literacy centres were suggested.

6.4 Attainment of research questions

Empirical support of whether the adult learners with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions viewed the role of literacy in their

daily lives was found. The study exposed evidence that the adults with hearing impairments understood the importance of literacy in their daily lives. The study also found that the participants' prior expectations (reading, writing, numeracy) from NLPN were met. However, the participants felt that much was still to be done in order for NLPN to meet their other expectations such as practical and entrepreneurship skills.

Moreover, there was evidence that literacy is important in the lives of the NLPN's participants. Therefore, the adult learners with hearing impairments were motivated to attend literacy classes despite the long distance which they had to travel to reach the NLPN centres.

The findings of the study confirmed that the participants were motivated by various reasons to attend literacy classes such as to advance themselves in reading, writing, numeracy skill and technology skills. They also wanted to be accepted by their community. This is an indication that communities need to accept the adult learners with hearing impairments and their impairments should not be used as a weapon for discrimination. Their impairments should therefore be used as a weapon for consideration of other people's human rights. The communities need to be nurtured through awareness campaigns about the rights of every person to be educated irrespective of any sort of impairment. This has been also stipulated in the Namibian constitution Article 20, Article 23, Article 10 and Article 8 (Ministry of Information, 1991).

Participants again believed that only educated people were valued in their community. The findings of the study assured a level of success for the adults with hearing impairments in the NLPN programme as most of them highlighted how attending literacy classes taught them some skills in their lives.

The disappointing part of this finding was that irrespective of those skills and knowledge that the participants attained, they were unable to apply these skills and knowledge on their own. This is because the participants need learning institutions where they could practice these skills. The researcher would like to emphasise that practical activities during lessons, attachment to workplaces or at market places, provision for further study opportunity to vocational training centres are some of the opportunities the Directorate of Adult Education can use for the adult learners to practice what they learnt in the literacy programmes. This would build the confidence of the hearing impaired adult learners in utilising the gained skills and knowledge.

Moreover, the researcher concurs to a certain extent with the literature that some adult learners with hearing impairments found it difficult to attain reading and writing skills, this is due to their degree of impairments. However, in the case of this study's finding the researcher would like to point out that a number of the hearing impaired adults in Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions attained reading and writing skills.

In addition, the researcher was convinced by the literature that some of the adult learners with hearing impairments found it very difficult to attend literacy classes because they

hearing impairments to conquer their fear in order, for them to achieve their expectations from the literacy programmes.

There are a number of things that participants in the literacy programme did in realising the role of literacy in their daily lives. These include:

- The National Literacy Programme in Namibia engaged deaf adults and community members to have a good relationship in promoting literacy. Conversely, some community members showed no interest hence, they discouraged the participants not to attend the literacy classes.
- The adult learners with hearing impairments understand the role of literacy and as a result they attend literacy classes in order to gain status and remain friends with those who are literate.
- Most adults with hearing impairments were positive about literacy and understand the role of literacy, thus travel long distances to attend literacy classes.
- Despite the discouragement from the community members, female adult learners with hearing impairments attended classes regularly.
- Notwithstanding the challenges of physical facilities, learning and teaching materials and untrained deaf promoters, the participants were eager to attend literacy classes as they believed that an uneducated person did not have value in any community and that attending literacy programmes is the only means in which one can relinquish poverty.

- Even though the participants lived in poor communities and were in dire need for basic needs, some continued to attend literacy classes in order to gain skills and knowledge.

6.5 Critical reflections

This study made a supportive contribution to the literature. Many researchers and writers mentioned unpromising findings of deaf literacy practices from impairment perspectives and believe that providing literacy to the adults with hearing impairments was meaningless. This study disapproves the existing shortage perspective and generally acceptable beliefs in society that adults with impairments do not need to acquire any education as it would be worthless to them.

This study identified many aspects in which the adult learners with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana proved to understand the role of literacy in their daily lives. Those aspects are praiseworthy and serve as examples for other regions which offer literacy classes for adult learners with hearing impairments

The adults with hearing impairments are persuaded to become powerful and not to be powerless as they are often regarded (Marsden, 2003). They are informed that by becoming literate they are reinforcing their rights to be educated. The perspectives that deaf adults are passive victims who collude and are partly dominated by external forces (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999) are not part of the findings of the study.

In fact, from the findings of this study, this viewpoint that deaf adult learners do not need to be literate does not only diminish the participation of deaf adults in the literacy programme, but undermines the efforts given by adult learners with hearing impairments in attending literacy classes. Moreover, this perspective also represses confidence and discourages the adults with hearing impairments from participating in the literacy programmes. This is because the findings of this study confirmed the eagerness of the adult learners with hearing impairments to be functionally literate in order for them to make their living and to be the productive members of their societies.

The participants in the literacy programme in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions expressed impediments that they faced in attending the literacy classes. Their concerns were about the learning environment, especially the quality of teaching and learning materials, lack of physical facilities, incompetent promoters and many other factors. This is another indication that the deaf adults understood and realised that without those necessities they were unable to be functionally literate. In reality, they need to be supported by overcoming these concerns in order for them to realise the role of literacy in their daily lives.

It is important to be aware of and appreciate the existing efforts and attempts made by the adult learners with hearing impairments in participating in the literacy programme despite their impairments and many challenges. The researcher lends support to the notion of Carl Roger's concept of self-theory that implies that people want to be themselves all the times and learning interactions must not be threatening. If adults are

to learn, then adults must be allowed to express themselves freely in open and loving learning environments. In other words, adult learners function and learn best in emotionally supportive instead of threatening environments which do not have materials that facilitate the learning and teaching process. The researcher again lends support to the idea of Lindeman (1926) that if adult learning is to be revived, there is a need for new concepts, new motives and new methods that need experimenting with the provision of qualitative aspects of education to all human beings. This notion also encourages the literacy programme to be ready, to revive and change its curriculum in accordance to the needs of all the participants.

The views of the critical social theory emphasise the need for adult learners with hearing impairments to have support from the society and have enough teaching and learning equipment, this has also influenced the researcher. The critical social theory made the researcher believe that, any adult learning programme can only be successful when it provides the knowledge and skills that are culturally, economically and socially relevant to the learners. The critical social theory assisted the researcher to apprehend that all adults irrespective of any situation and impairment should be literate as through gaining literacy skills they will be liberated mentally to be functional members of their societies.

Some of the deaf adult learners in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions are hard workers and eager to attend literacy classes. This was evident as they travelled long distances to reach the literacy centres despite the hunger, wind and the scorching heat from the hot sun experienced during their journeys. They did this for the

sake of wanting to be functionally literate, so as to be financially independent, to support their families and to be accepted in their communities. The findings of this study nonetheless disclosed that, the adult learners with hearing impairments are yet to obtain functional literacy skills

Furthermore, the literature review revealed that some illiterate adults, especially those respected in society and those with hearing impairments felt ashamed to be seen attending literacy classes and feared of being identified as illiterate (Oluoch, 2005). However, the findings of this study indicated how some of the adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme demonstrated the willingness and exhibited their understanding on their rights to be educated. Instead of the adult learners with hearing impairments considering their impairments as a prohibition factor for them to be educated and be literate, they stood up and attended literacy classes. The society, in particular, the community where they lived, should be a stepping stone which they should use to succeed and fully be functional members of their society.

The peers and communities mindset about impairments especially the way they rated the adult learners with hearing impairments by regarding them as useless members of the society created barriers for them to realise their dreams of being functionally literate. These barriers can be overcome when their peers and communities are taught and directed on how their acceptance of the adult learners with hearing impairments will serve as motivation for the deaf adult learners to be literate.

6.6 Recommendations and implications

The role of literacy in the lives of the adults with hearing impairments is associated with the provision of skills that support the adult learners to be functionally literate in their communities. Skills such as reading, writing and communication skills entrepreneurship skills, income generating skills and agricultural skills were mentioned as some of the major skills that can advance the lives of the participants in the NLPN. The following are the recommendations for all the stakeholders who are involved adult literacy for adult learners with hearing impairments.

6.6.1 Recommendation to the Ministry of Education

The findings from the regions under the study indicated that the participants in the literacy classes are attending free of charge and did not pay for the learning and teaching materials. In order to promote lifelong learning, the researcher would like to recommend that the Ministry of Education provide funds to build literacy centres for the adult learners especially in the regions where there are high numbers of attendances. The lack of basic needs among the participants came out clearly in this study. The researcher therefore recommends that the Ministry of Education should come up with a budget to assist with basic needs of all participants in the literacy programme. This study recommends again the improvement of the quality of classroom facilities by the Ministry of Education in order to attract other participants with hearing impairments to

join the programme. This will also serve as motivation to those adult learners who are already in the programme to value the role of literacy in their lives.

The Ministry of Education should assist in creating links between adult education and formal education subsectors to ensure experience sharing and support and to allow easy entry and exit. The Ministry of Education should again create a link between the private sector to secure job attachments and placements.

The Ministry of Education should increase the salaries and other remuneration for the literacy personnel to boost their morale.

6.6.2 Recommendations to the Directorate of Adult Education

It is evident that the DAE did a remarkable job in initiating literacy programmes for illiterate adults. However, the notion of Freire (1970) that adult learners should be the focus when designing programmes with regard to the selection of contents and materials is very vital. The researcher therefore, would like to recommend that the Directorate of Adult Education take measures to ensure that in planning and designing adult education programmes for a group of people, irrespective of their impairments, class or gender consultation with them is recommended for they know best what their priority needs are.

Adult education is regarded as an empowering process (Literacy for Tomorrow, 1997). Thus, the Directorate of Adult Education should make sure that the formerly neglected men and women with hearing impairments are more productive and effective in their communities, in social and personal relationships and as citizens. In this regard, the

Directorate of Adult Education should focus more on specific kinds and levels of literacy required by each society as well as by specific groups within that society.

The Directorate of Adult Education should make sure that as society changes, the curriculum should be changed to adapt to the needs of the society and individuals. The curriculum of NLPN should accompany the promoters' manuals to include suggestions on teaching methods for different educational objectives (Oluoch, 2005).

The Directorate of Adult Education should conduct a needs analysis in order to develop quality and necessary learning and teaching materials that would enhance adult learners with hearing impairments achieve important skills. For this reason, this study proposes further that the Material Development Subdivision of the Directorate of Adult Education should start tailor-made materials for literacy programmes for all unreached and disadvantaged groups in society, and make sure that the content of teaching and learning materials includes the learning needs of the adult learners with hearing impairments. Furthermore the Directorate of Adult Education should pay attention to the needs of the participants in the programme in order to help them to participate well in the programme and gain skills that will help them to succeed in their lives.

The Directorate needs to have mechanisms for ensuring the rights of all adult learners in the programme. Learners should be treated as individuals. Each person has a different learning style. The high numbers of male participants in the programme would be encouraged if the literacy programme implementers should separate men and women to

learn in separate classes to avoid gender related problems predominant in the adult literacy classes. This may correct the gender barriers restricting participation in the adult literacy learning centres (Oluoch, 2005, Indabawa, 2000).

The Directorate of Adult Education needs to strengthen the promoters' initial training. The two-week initial training is not sufficient as particular attention is needed to develop pedagogical and adragogical skills that can make deaf promoters see the adult learners as active participants. During these training sessions the deaf promoters should be introduced to live teaching and learning content that can offer practical skills to the participants such as practical handiwork, farming and gardening skills.

6.6.3 Recommendations for the adult educators for the adults with hearing impairments

The teaching of adults requires different strategies because an adult is characterised by self-directing behaviour that is not typical of children (Lieb, 1999). As a result, adult educators should use a variety of quality learning materials and locally made resources as well as a process of measuring the performance of the learners by giving them prompt feedback during the teaching and learning process.

Adult educators must be well versed in the application of the principles of motivation by engaging the learners in the activities which are interesting, as this inspires them to actively participate in the learning process. Other findings suggest that adult learners

need to know why they need to learn something before they take time to learn about it (Kirsch, 2001). Therefore, adult educators should make sure that the lesson objectives are clearly spelled out.

Adult educators should create open forums for discussions and sharing where the adult learners with hearing impairments can share their experiences and their grievances. The educators should try by all means to address them within a limited time frame where possible.

6.6.4 Recommendations for the adults with hearing impairments in the literacy programme

The findings of the study indicated that the participants were strong, willing and knew the purpose of attending literacy classes irrespective of impediments that they were facing in attending the literacy classes. The researcher therefore, recommends that the adults with hearing impairments should share their concerns and their learning desires with their adult educators to ensure that they gain skills and knowledge that are significant to them.

The adult learners with hearing impairments should motivate themselves as this will encourage those who are not yet in the literacy programme, especially their male counterparts, to partake in adult literacy.

6.6.5 Recommendations for community members

The critical social theory places emphasis on society as a basic support for construction, acquisition and consumption of knowledge. The researcher thus recommends that the community members play a leading role in the determination of the adult educational needs and the best possible ways of tackling them so that, scarce resources may not be wasted on programmes which are unsuitable for the disadvantaged people's needs and expectations (Indabawa, 2000; Omolewa, 2000).

Some of the participants in the NLPN expressed a concern that their communities discouraged them to attend literacy classes. The researcher recommends that the community members respect, tolerate and accept and change their mind-set about the hearing impaired people. The adult learners with hearing impairments need the support of the community in order for them to freely attend literacy classes.

6.6.6 Recommendation for other stakeholders in education (Universities, government agencies, civil society, non-governmental organisations, youth groups)

According to CONFINTEA V Midterm Review (UNESCO, 2003), adult education and adult learning worldwide has not received the attention it deserves. Therefore, there should be collaboration and coordination among government agencies, civil society, non-government organisations and youth groups in promoting adult learning. This can

be done through the provision of materials, finance, seminars and more information about adult learning from the stakeholders (Nafukho, Amutambi and Otunga, 2005).

6.7 Limitations and strengths of the study

The participants answered all the interview questions well with the assistance of the sign language interpreter. The researcher took notes on the answers of all participants in the study. Although at some literacy centres some of the deaf adult learners were not keen on being interviewed. After, the promoters' explanation about the importance of the interview and the right to remain anonymous, they later agreed to be interviewed.

The study used purposive sampling which is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher implores people with specific characteristics to participate in a research study (the adults with hearing impairments in the four regions of the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana). The adult learners with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana were sampled to participate in the study because they started the adult literacy classes for the hearing impaired adults in 2009, and these are the only four regions out of the seven (7) of thirteen (13) regions that had stage three (3) of the adult literacy programme in 2011. Therefore, the ability to generalise the results from the literacy classes in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana to all other literacy centres in other regions is limited.

Another limitation was the accessibility to the literacy centres due to the floods that were experienced in some regions during the period of the study. However, with the assistance of the community members, the researcher managed to arrive at all the literacy centres in all the four regions. Proper planning on the period of the study is an important consideration in this matter.

The interviews provided rich data about the role of literacy in the daily lives of the adult learners with hearing impairments in the regions under study. Nonetheless, the researcher could have acquired more information if the interviews were done at the homes of the participants as they would be more comfortable compared to when they are together at the literacy centres.

The findings of the study would have provided more information had it been possible to get information from all hearing impaired adults in other regions and from hearing-impaired adult learners that had stopped the programme. There is a need to carry out the same research in other regions to probe the same questions and to get adult learners' responses.

The strengths of this study lie in the use of the following strategies:

- Actual understanding of the participants learning conditions. Being in four regions at different literacy centres helped the researcher understand the actual situation and the conditions in which the participants attended literacy classes as well as how they

defined their situations. For that reason, the participants' accurate words are provided in direct quotations in this study.

- Numerous viewpoints - The study explained how different theories and writers explain the role of literacy among the adult learners with hearing impairments.
- Peer analysis - Discussions of my interpretations with my colleague who is familiar with research provided useful interpretations and better insights about the findings.
- Method and data triangulation - The use of the qualitative method adds to the strength of this study as it produces complete knowledge necessary to add to the existing theory (Johnson and Omwuegbuzie, 2004 in Hamunyela, 2008). The current data collection excluded the promoters' views as well as the management of DAE. Although this can be a limitation, the researcher acknowledges that their views were better heard in the NLPN evaluation of 2003, 2008 and in 2010 Family Literacy Programme evaluations.

The study on how the adults with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions view the role of literacy in their daily lives resulted in a new development in the perception that the adults with hearing impairments appreciate the role of literacy in their daily lives.

This study strengthened the idea that literacy is important in the lives of the participants. Thus, irrespective of their impairments, the adult learners with hearing impairments are willing to attend literacy classes in order to be functionally literate. The adult learners with hearing impairments in the NLPN can achieve more because with determination everything is possible; with the experiences they get from literacy classes, they attain more knowledge.

6.8 Further research

The study focused on how literacy plays a role in the daily lives of the adult learners with hearing impairments. There is a need for research which provides more information on which strategies can be used to attract deaf male adults to the literacy programme to ensure the success of literacy in all adult with hearing impairments in the society.

These findings are based on the adult learners with hearing impairments who are attending the literacy programme only. Further study on those who gave up the literacy programme and those who never attended literacy classes should be conducted in order to share their reasons as this might help with further improvement of the literacy programmes. This type of research will help measure the understanding of the society about the role of literacy.

From the hearing impaired adult learners' perspectives, many are interested to learn functional skills such as agricultural, entrepreneurship and income generating project skills for survival and economic reasons. Therefore, there is a need for action research to

find out the best strategies on learning and teaching the adult learners with hearing impairments about the functional skills which they would like to attain.

Suggestions on how to make literacy classes more exciting, flexible and furnished with necessary teaching and learning materials and other necessities should be the starting point in any research on adult literacy for adult learners with hearing impairments.

Further studies should focus more on how the collaboration and coordination among various players such as government agencies, civil society, non-governmental organisations, community leaders and organised youth and adult groups can assist in different areas for the adults with hearing impairments to be fully functional.

The notion of the critical social theory is to liberate the disadvantaged groups (like the adult learners with hearing impairments) of any society to participate in the planning of their programme in order to generate knowledge that is culturally, economically and socially relevant. This will assist adult learners with hearing impairments to deal with challenges (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). Complementing the ideas of the critical social theory is the Problem-based learning (PBL) model which emphasises the adult learners with hearing impairments play an active role in the learning process and use their prior skills, knowledge, and experiences to construct, design, and develop solutions to problems typically encountered in real-world scenarios (Savery and Duffy, 1995).

The researcher therefore recommends further research on how to include adult learners with hearing impairments in the planning of their literacy programmes as well as how to

assist them to play an active role in the learning process whereby they can use their prior skills, knowledge, and experiences.

In addition, the critical social theory and humanist theory emphasises also the need for adult learners with hearing impairments to have support from the society and have enough teaching and learning equipment (Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005; Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). The researcher recommends further research on ways that would help the society and more especially the communities to be supportive to the literacy programmes of the adult learners with hearing impairments and other participants in general.

6.9 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how the adult learners with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions view the role of literacy in their daily lives. It is concluded that the views of the adults with hearing impairments in the, studied regions are important in determining the role of literacy. Their views on the role of literacy can also assist the Directorate of Adult Education planners to plan literacy programmes that are meaningful and relevant to all adults with hearing impairments. This would also enable the programme implementers to look at how the programme is received and what role it plays among all recipients in the regions under study. Their views and attitudes are important because they would give more light on reasons why adults with hearing impairments participate in the literacy classes. This might also shape

educational experiences in ways that would support the expansion of adult education in general and of the adult learners with hearing impairments in particular.

From literature reviewed, analysis of the results and discussions of the findings, several conclusions are made and presented.

The necessity for quality literacy education that encourages all adults to attend literacy classes irrespective of their ages and impairments has featured in several discourses on adult literacy (Iyambo, 2012; Kiria, 2010; Nafukho, Amutambi and Otunga, 2005; Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005; Gravett, 2001; Lind, Indabawa and Mpfu, 2000; Merriam and Caffarella, 1999; Mpfu, 1998; Johnson, 1990). Lately, there has been a concern on the provision of adult literacy for hearing impaired adult learners. This further urged the researcher to put emphasis on the need to ascertain the role that the literacy programme plays in the daily lives of the participants in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions.

The adult learners with hearing impairments in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions are aware of the significance of literacy in their daily lives. However, they emphasised the need for being taught skills that would help them to get employed to sustain their lives. On this note, the Directorate of Adult Education is challenged to revisit its curriculum content and make it more responsive and adaptable to the learning needs of the adult learners with hearing impairments participating in the NLPN programme in the Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions. Additionally, the

Directorate of Adult Education should address the challenges that are currently experienced in the studied regions.

The findings of the study revealed other factors such as: teaching and learning materials, accommodation facilities, addressing of participants' basic needs and provision of a conducive learning environment. These challenges need to be addressed for the adult learners with hearing impairments to realise the role of literacy.

There is a need for the literacy programme to come up with quality and relevant learning content and training that equip the adult educators in teaching the adults with hearing impairments the appropriate skills. The adult educators need more training on dialogical teaching that implies that the educator, adult learner and knowledge should be in a dynamic reciprocal unity in determining the skills and knowledge gained (Gravett and Henning, 2005).

In addition, the study has shown that long distances travelled to literacy centres, social problems such drug abuse and gender violence, death, and hunger negatively affecting the attendance of the hearing impaired adults. In fact it is unbelievable to think that DAE can eradicate or provide enough solutions to these social problems. However, DAE could help significantly by assisting in uplifting the living conditions of the hearing impaired adult learners. The Directorate of Adult Education could assist participants by considering the environment in which learning takes place as this may also be a significant hindrance (Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran, 2005). As a result, it is not clear

what the DAE will do to solve or to lessen the effects of these constraints; steps need to be taken in order for the adults with hearing impairments to appreciate the importance of literacy in their lives.

Finally, the researcher finds it appropriate to say that this study revealed that adult learners with hearing impairments are willing to be functionally literate. They need support from the society, community, DAE, stakeholders and from everyone who is concerned about how literacy programmes can be used to make the adult learners with hearing impairments realise their dreams.

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Interview Questions

1.1 Tell me about yourself

.....
.....
.....

1.2 With whom do you live?

.....
.....

1.3 Do you have any employment at the moment?

.....

1.4 Do you live in this community?

.....

1.5 What is the community like?

.....
.....
.....

1.6 How close or far are you from the literacy centre that you are attending?

.....
.....
.....

1.7 How do community members encourage or discourage you to attend literacy classes?

.....
.....
.....

SECTION B: EXPECTATIONS

2. 2 Expectations about the literacy programme

2.1 Why did you decide to attend NLPN?

.....
.....
.....

2.2 How long have you been attending classes?

.....
.....

2.3 What type of activities do you do in the classroom?

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.....
.....

.2.4 What other kinds of activities you expect to do in the classroom?

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.....

2.5 What would you like to learn next?

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.....
.....

.2.6 Where do you want to do this learning and why?

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.....
.....

2.7 Did you have dropouts in your class and what were some of the reasons for this?

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.....

1.2.8 What could have been done to keep those who drop out in the class?

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.....

.....

1.2.9 What are your overall expectations of the NLPN programme?

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.....

SECTION C: SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE NEEDED

Question 3

How do the adults with hearing impairments utilise the knowledge and skills they gained from NLPN?

3.1 What types of activities did you learn in the NLPN so far?

.....
.....
.....

3. 2 Would you like to learn other skills and knowledge?

.....
.....
.....

3.3 How do you intend to use those skills and knowledge?

.....
.....
.....

SECTION D: CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Question 4

What challenges do the adults with hearing impairments who are participating in the NLPN programme experienced during the process of utilising knowledge and skills gained from the programme?

4.1 How do you feel about yourself being in this programme?

.....
.....
.....

4.2 How do you plan to plough back what you learnt in the programme to your community?

.....
.....
.....
.....

4.3 Can you apply what you learnt in the programme in real life situations?

.....
.....
.....

4.4 What problems do you think you will experience in applying what you learn from the programme?

.....
.....

4.5 What other difficulties have you encountered in the programme so far?

.....
.....

4.6 Any suggestion to these challenges?

.....
.....

SECTION E: PROGRAMME IMPROVEMENT

Question 5

How do adults with hearing impairments want the literacy programme to be improved?

5.1 What do you like about the programme?

.....
.....

5.2 What do you not like about the programme?

.....
.....

5.3 What did you learnt that makes you proud of the programme?

.....
.....
.....

5.4 What improvements you would like to see in the programme?

.....
.....
.....

5.5 Why do you think you need this improvement in the programme?

.....
.....

5.6 Any other information or experience you want to share about the programme?

.....
.....

Thank you for your time and information.

. Appendix Two: Permission letter to the Ministry of Education

University of Namibia
Private Bag 13301
Windhoek
17 October 2011

Mr Alfred Ilukena
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education

Cc.The Directors of Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana

Educational Regions

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: PERMISSION FOR ACCESS TO KHOMAS, OHANGWENA, OMUSATI AND OSHANA REGIONS FOR AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON HEARING IMPAIRED ADULT LEARNERS.

I'm an employee at the Ministry of Education (Directorate of Adult Education) and a student at the University of Namibia (Stn 201058171) pursuing a Master of Education(MEd) in Adult Education and Community Development. As a part of fulfilment of a Master programme, I am required to do research. I'm interested to study the perceptions of deaf adult learners towards the National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) with a special focus on those based in the, **Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana régions.**

The study is entitled: **The roles of literacy in the daily lives of the hearing impaired adult learners in the Khomas, Ohangwena, and Omusati and Oshana régions.** The result of this study will help the Directorate of Adult Education and the Ministry of Education at large to know how the programme is received and what role it plays among the deaf adult learners in the selected regions. The findings of this study will identify possible ways that might shape educational experiences in ways that will support the expansion of Adult Education in general and among deaf adults in particular.

The study is scheduled to take place in the beginning of November 2011, care will be taken to avoid interruptions of normal office working hours. Hence, interviews will be administered at conveniently suitable times that will not disrupt official duties.

Participation in the study will be entirely on a voluntary basis and all data collected will be treated confidentially. The findings and conclusions of the study will be made available at the Head Office as well as at Khomas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana Education Regional Offices.

I thank you in advance

Yours Sincerely



M.N.P Jonas

Appendix Three : University of Namibia Recommendation Letter

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

Private Bag 13301, 340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pionierspark, Windhoek, Namibia



TO : Permanent Secretary and Directors of Education
 Ministry of Education

FROM : The Head of the Department Lifelong Learning and Community Education

DATE : 15 October 2011

RE : Research for Master Studies

Dear Sir

This letter serves to inform you that Ms.M.N.P.Jonas is currently registered in the Masters Degree (Adult Education) at the University of Namibia. The second part of her studies entails research in her approved area of research. The topic of her research is: **The Role of literacy among the hearing impaired adult learners in Oshana, Omusati, Ohangwena and Khomas Regions.**

In order to collect the data for this research she needs to visit the respondents in the above regions. Therefore she seeks approval to conduct her research in these regions.

Thank you for your attention.

Dr.H.A.Beukes (Tel.061 2063435 E-mail: hbeukes@unam.na)



Appendix four: Ministry of Education Approval Letter

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Tel: 264 61 2933200 /
Fax: 264 61 2933922
E-mail: mshimho@mec.gov.na
Enquiries: MN Shimhopileni

Private Bag 13186
 Windhoek
 NAMIBIA
 9 November 2011

File: 11/1/1

Ms. M.N. P. Jonas
 University of Namibia (UNAM)
 P/Bag 13302
 WINDHOEK

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN KHOMAS, OHANGWENA, OMUSATI AND OSHANA REGIONS

Your letter dated 17 October 2011, seeking permission to conduct a research in four regions, has reference.

Kindly be informed that the Ministry does not have any objection, in principle, to your request to conduct a research in the identified regions.

You are further advised to contact the Regional Council Offices, Directorates of Education, for authorization to go into the educational institutions you intend to visit.

Also take note that your research activities should not interfere with the normal educational activities at the institutions concerned. Participation should be on a voluntary basis.

By copy of this letter the Regional Directors are made aware of your request.

Yours faithfully


 A. Ilukena
 PERMANENT SECRETARY

cc: Directors: Khoimas, Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana Education Directorates

