

CHAPTER V
LITERACY AND ADULT
EDUCATION IN EGYPT

Introduction:

This chapter set out to examine the issue of Literacy and Adult Education in Egypt. The chapter discussed the current status of Literacy and Adult Education in Egypt and the policies undertaken by either the Government or Non-government Organizations (NGOs) to provide programs to educate Adult Learners, and face the Illiteracy problem which remains one of the principal issues that limit the development and social transformation in Egypt.

Most of the Arab Region still deals with Adult Education as a “literacy issue”; while Adult Education has become more diversified recently in terms of levels, goals, content, methodologies, teaching and learning skills, monitoring of progress and evaluation of results [43]. It should not just target literacy but must also promote contemporary thought, critical thinking, and adaptation to the changing marketplace, tolerance and acceptance of the other, and integration with the technology of this era [15]. Iskander [16] argued that adult learning in Egypt is still narrowly defined. It is considered equivalent to acquiring literacy skills, or at most may expand to include vocational education

Concept of Literacy and Adult Education There is no officially recognized definition of Literacy and Adult Education. For a long time, it was seen as a means to provide people who did not finish school with education opportunities. For this reason, literacy was the major component of Adult Education. Over time, the concept of Literacy and Adult Education widened and now also includes other kinds of education, such as training for employment, education on rights, health, etc

Adult Education can also be defined as any organized and sustained educational activities that take place both within and outside educational institutions, for persons of all ages [47]. It aims at meeting the educational needs of learners not enrolled in formal education, those who have dropped out of school or those who have never had a chance to receive formal schooling, due to a complex and intricate set of social, economic reasons as well as the failure of basic education systems to retain students. These may be adults, youth or children

2.2. The Importance of Adult Literacy for the Egyptian Society:

- education is an indispensable vector for social economic and political progress in any society.
- “Since women and girls have been denied the opportunity of acquiring knowledge and skills; they are severely under-represented in the commanding height of the social, political and economic life of a large majority of the countries of Africa”
- Improving society requires making democracy work. And making democracy work requires that schools take this goal seriously: to educate and nurture engaged and informed democratic citizens

3. Current Status of Adult Education in Egypt :

- many youths in Egypt who complete schooling do not acquire sufficient reading, writing and numeracy skills which they need to access knowledge on health, education, the environment, and the world of work. More importantly;
- Egypt suffers from low enrollment rates with almost 20% of young boys and girls never having been to school. Young people end up dropping out of schools at alarming rates and those who drop out, do so at as young as ten years of age
- According to the recent and comprehensive 2010 Survey of Young People in Egypt (SYPE), about one third of those in the poorest households have never been to school and another 24% of them dropped out before finishing basic education
- The illiteracy rate is reported to be 24.9% of the population, concentrating among female population and in rural areas.

4. Egypt's Policies to eradicate Illiteracy

4.1. The General Association for Literacy and Adult Education (GALAE) .The 1992 law stipulating the establishment of the General Association for Literacy and Adult Education (GALAE)

4.2. Caritas Egypt Adult Literacy Program. Caritas Egypt was founded in 1967 by Caritas international “to establish social justice and serve the poorest of the poor” in Egypt [8]. Caritas Egypt helps adults analyze and resolve problems of daily life through literacy, dialogue, and problem-solving.

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4.3. The Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education (ANLAE). The Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V), which was held in Hamburg in 1997, provided a comprehensive and holistic view of Adult Education

4.4. The Community Based Education Initiatives. Despite the Ministry of Education's effort to ensure access to all school age children, there are some groups who remain outside the school system, including children who have dropped out of mainstream schools

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4.5. Vodafone's National Initiative to Eradicate Illiteracy. Vodafone Egypt Foundation launched a national initiative to support in the illiteracy eradication efforts under the title of "Knowledge is Power". This initiative is considered, by virtue of its ambition and scale, as the largest initiative led by a civil society organization (CSO) in the area of literacy