

Empowering Adult Learners of Slums Communities: Tele School as a Pathway for Literacy Skills Development

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Abstract

Blended learning, which integrates traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning components, has grown in importance in enhancing learning outcomes. Despite its potential, successful implementation is often hindered by the mindsets and qualities competencies of teachers. This study aimed to analyze the status and level of implementation of teachers' mindsets and qualities competencies mentioned in "The International Association for K-12 Online Learning" (iNACOL) framework at college level in Pakistan and to analyze the role of online literacy in enhancing educational outcomes. This research uses quantitative approach. 206 college teachers were selected randomly. Standards of mindsets and qualities domains listed in the iNACOL Blended Learning Teacher Competency Framework were used as an adapted questionnaire with 16 statements on a 5-point Likert scale. Data was analyzed by using mean and frequency of responses. The results indicate many college teachers in Pakistan have changed their traditional mindsets as they have new visions for teaching and learning. While qualities competencies are at neutral level as these are not fully implemented. It is recommended to Implement targeted professional development workshops focused on qualities competencies, providing teachers with practical strategies to incorporate these elements into their instruction. It will enhance teachers' skills and ultimately leading to more effective blended learning environments.

Keywords: *Blended Learning and Teaching, Learning Outcomes, Online Literacy, Qualities Competencies, Teacher Competency, Teachers' Mindsets*

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Introduction

The outbreak of Covid-19 led towards the paradigm shift in which educational institutions focused on transmission of educational activities through mass media. This was done not only in formal education but also in non-formal education. Non-formal education caters for the educational needs of different target groups, especially in developing countries. Pakistan is also facing serious issue of educating adults and in the capital territory of Pakistan 33.2 % of total population residing in 34 slums areas is illiterate adults (Nizami, 2012; Akhtar, 2012). The period in which coronavirus was spread, the country also took educating adults through mass media. To meet the challenging figures of out of school adults in Pakistan, educational provision through TeleSchool was initiated. As its apparent, adults are an important pillar of any nation's population and when these are illiterate, this situation becomes demanding and alarming. TeleSchool also led towards the assessment and anticipation of its long-lasting impact on illiterate adults to improve their literacy skills through it. This was also an estimation that adults in slums in urban areas would also benefit from this program and increase motivation to continue their reading skills, writing skills and numeracy skills.

As per 'Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training' under TeleSchool program, there was an engagement plan in the pandemic period for adult illiterates Response, Recovery and Resilience in Education (2020) in which it was chalked out that more than 63% households tall over the country were having television facility and TeleSchool transmission will help them acquire basic literacy skills. TeleSchool program was broadcasted from class 1 to class 12 in different subjects including Mathematics, English, Urdu and Science which were aligned to the National Curriculum SNC of the country (Zacharia, 2020, p. 3). Gallup Pakistan conducted a survey of 1200 households in 100 districts of country of age group of 5 to 15 years in which it revealed that 67% of population has accessed TeleSchool lessons among which 77% are either satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the educational contents (Zacharia 2020, p.4). TeleSchool is an efficient and cost-effective measure for having wide-ranges and far-reaching potential and growth (Ali, 2020) for learning communities, adults and students.

Envisaging the challenge erupted in terms of education loss owing to COVID-19 and to provision of education facilities to the mass, launching of TeleSchool program play very vibrant role in fulfilling the gap. Out of school children and illiterate/semi-literate adults including out of school children get advantage of the provision. Education being an imperative

factor for the decline of poverty (Mihai, Titan and Manea. 2015) and keeping in view the fact that one third of the population of slums of Islamabad is illiterate (Nizami, 2012), there was need to develop the most significant instrument to address difficulties being faced by slums inhabitants to help them for better job opportunities within fewer resources and to curtail child labor. TeleSchool program, being a most popular source of education as about 40% adults were aware of it, 67% of them learnt and 33% have accessed TeleSchool lessons (Zacharia 2020, p. 5) declared its significant potential for adult learners.

Adult education is essential for minimizing illiteracy (Rashid, 2020). About 7.7 % of Islamabad's population living in 34 slums spread in developed sectors whereas about 33.2 % of total population residing in these slums areas is illiterate. There is 47.3 % literacy of the population of age 15-24 residing in slums (Akhtar, 2012. p. 19). About 40% of adults were aware of TeleSchool whereas being the most popular source, 67% of them learnt about TeleSchool and 33% have accessed TeleSchool lessons (Zacharia, 2020; p. 5) which reveal its potential for adult learners. Television is an effective media to impart distance learning as it covers widespread audience, supply equality education and learning to big audience mass (Saglik, Ozturk, 2021). Keeping in view the effective role of Pakistan Television being most viable source of provision of education for distance learners, likewise other countries, Government of Pakistan also launched TeleSchool program covers the mass of marginalized areas which help to minimize inequalities and challenges (Malik, 2020). One of the aims of TeleSchool program was to improve literacy rate, reduce children drop out, address adult education and to reach 22.5 million out of school children and for this purpose, government is determining to continue this program after lifting of lockdown. (Mansoor, Afzal, 2021). TeleSchool program mitigates the challenge of loss of education caused pandemic by providing educational facilities (Gurr, 2020). TeleSchool is an efficient and cost-effective measure for having wide-ranges far-reaching potential and growth (Ali, 2020) for learning communities, adults and students.

This exploratory study assumes that education is a key variable in poverty alleviation (Janjua and Kamal, 2011). TeleSchool program provided better opportunities to the adult learners of slums communities to improve their learning. Various research has been conducted to study living conditions of slums communities, their social-economic structure, deficiency of physical facilities, and environmental issues but no study was done on TeleSchool program that to what extent TeleSchool program played role to improve literacy skills of adult illiterates. During

the period country imposed on account of COVID-19, adults of slums communities were confined to remain in their homes thus they gained sufficient opportunity to seek and learn from TeleSchool program however there is no data/information regarding perception of adult learners about TeleSchool program and getting benefit from this facility for improvement in their learning potential. This study would also help to explore the motivation of adult learners to continue their basic literacy (reading, writing and basic numeracy) skills through TeleSchool program.

Problem Statement

TeleSchool program is a new intervention launched by the government of Pakistan with the aims to facilitate the mass beyond age limits during COVID-19 crisis (Naviwala, 2020). This program is watched by millions of people including out-of-school children and illiterate adults. People living in slums communities lack education and need basic facilities as well (Sattar & Zhang, 2017). Education is an imperative factor which helps to reduce poverty (Mihai, Titan & Manea. 2015). There is a need to study to understand the school participation of children from slum areas (Sattar & Zhang, 2017). The data relating to adult learners of slums communities is very limited. The proportion of primary level children in the country who can read a story was 24% in 2019 which dropped in 2021 to 22% (ASER, 2021). Since TeleSchool initiative seems to be effective for slums communities' population, however, there is very limited data on TeleSchool program and transmission of literacy skills among adult illiterates of slums communities. There is also no data regarding effectiveness of TeleSchool program for provision of General and Islamic knowledge to adult learners; and no information regarding motivation of adult learner of slums communities regarding continuation of their basic literacy skills (reading, writing and numeracy) etc. through TeleSchool initiative. Keeping this in view, this study was aimed to explore "Empowering Adult Learners of Slums Communities: TeleSchool as a Pathway for Literacy Skills Development".

Delimitations

This study was delimited to:

- Population of slums community located in Noorpur Shahan, Islamabad
- Adult Literacy Center, Noorpur Shahan, Islamabad including adult learners.

TeleSchool program in the following literacy areas:

Areas	TeleSchool programs
Islamic knowledge	Prayers, Pillars of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (SAW-PBUH)
General knowledge	Pakistan, Provinces, Body parts, Cities and Monuments
Literacy activities	Reading & Understanding of both English and Urdu Counting/ numeracy and understanding of basic Mathematic

Limitations

This study had the following limitations:

- Large scale data collection couldn't be done due to time and access.
- Most of the data on adults benefitting from TeleSchool was not reported officially. So, study conducted in literacy centers. That data would increase the significance and worth of TeleSchool initiative in more detail.

Objectives

1. To explore TeleSchool program in developing and enhancing Basic literacy skills among slum communities' adult learners.
2. To explore TeleSchool program in developing and enhancing Knowledge among slum communities' adult learners.

Methodology

Population. This study focused on Adult Literacy Centre, located in slums communities, Bunna Mohalla, Noorpur Shahan, Islamabad. From these literacy centers, adult learners were taken as a population. The following is the table which shows details of population and its characteristics:

	Gender	Population
Momena Adult Literacy Centre, Bunna Mohala, Noorpur Shahan, Islamabad	Females	29

Sample and sampling techniques. This study was comprised of a sample of 10 adult learners registered in selected Adult Literacy Centre. This Sample size was taken through systematic random sampling technique. List of enrolled adult learners of the target Adult Literacy Center was

arranged alphabetically, and K^{th} value was applied to determine the participant of the study by using following formula:

$$K^{\text{th}} = (\text{total population}) \times (\text{serial number})$$

$$K^{\text{th}} = (10/29) \times (\text{serial number of individual} / \text{population})$$

So, every 3rd participant in the list was selected.

Research Tool. There were two questionnaires prepared by the researcher. All the scales were in Urdu for better comprehension of learners as per following detail:

Research Questionnaire on TeleSchool Program: A questionnaire based on multiple choice questions consisting on 5 sections (i.e. Islamic knowledge, Urdu, language, English language, General knowledge and Numeracy/basic Arithmetic) was developed for holding pre-test to explore existing knowledge of participants (adult learners) in basic Mathematic, Islamic & General Knowledge and subsequently, to hold post-test to assess increase in knowledge/education of the participants after educating (by presenting / showing recorded videos) through TeleSchool program. Similarly, demographic sheet was developed to obtain demographic data of participants.

TeleSchool Pre and Post test:

TeleSchool pre and post-test were used on broadcast programs on literacy skills imparted by using broadcast programs on TeleSchool. Holding pre & post-test of participants are as below:

Areas	TeleSchool programs
Islamic knowledge	Prayers, Pillars of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (SAW-PBUH)
General knowledge	Related to Pakistan, Provinces, Body parts, Cities & Monuments
Literacy activities	Reading & Understanding of both English and Urdu Counting/ Numeracy and understanding of basic Mathematic

Validity and Reliability. Content validity of tools was done through obtaining opinions of experts. Afterwards a pilot study was conducted.

Data Analysis. Data collected analyzed through descriptive i.e. mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics i.e. t-test.

Results

Analysis of Demographic Information of Participants

All the participants were females as Adult Literacy Centers (ALC) caters for only females' literacy needs. Demographic information of 10 participants enrolled in adult literacy center was obtained which included questions regarding name, age, roll number, education number, education level, subject feel easy to study, subject feel difficult to study, subject feel difficult to study, motivation for taking admission in Adult Literacy Centre (ALC) and motivation to seek further education. Demographic data of the participant was obtained through a questionnaire delivered and collected by researcher himself. Details of collected data are as under:

Table 1

General Demographic characteristics of participants in terms of Age

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>f (%)</i>
Age in years	18-25	10
	26-33	40
	34-41	30
	42 & above	20

Table 1 shows that big strata of participants were mature adults (40%). This shows that more mature adults were 20% under the age range of 42 and above. This comparison leads towards the conclusion that though they were all adults however, mature adults were more which had meaningful attachment for literacy skills through TeleSchool program. of the participants were within the age range of 26-33 years.

Table 2

Awareness of participants about TeleSchool program:

	<i>Aware</i>	<i>Unaware</i>
Awareness about TeleSchool program	80 %	20 %

Table 2 exhibits that majority of participants (80%) were had an awareness about TeleSchool program. So, their involvement in the literacy experiment was meaningful and deliberate. They knew that the

government initiative of TeleSchool educational program is broadcasted through Pakistan Television Ltd.

Table 3

General Demographic characteristics of participants in terms of their favorite subject

	<i>Urdu</i>	<i>English</i>
Favorite subject	90 %	10 %

Table 3 indicates that the majority (90%) of the participants selected Urdu as their favorite subject in their study which they feel is easy to learn.

Table 4

General Demographic characteristics of participants in terms of motivation of participants to get more education

	<i>Agreed</i>	<i>Not Agreed</i>
Motivation of participants to get more education	90 %	10 %

Table 4 indicates that majority of the participants (90%) were motivated to get more education.

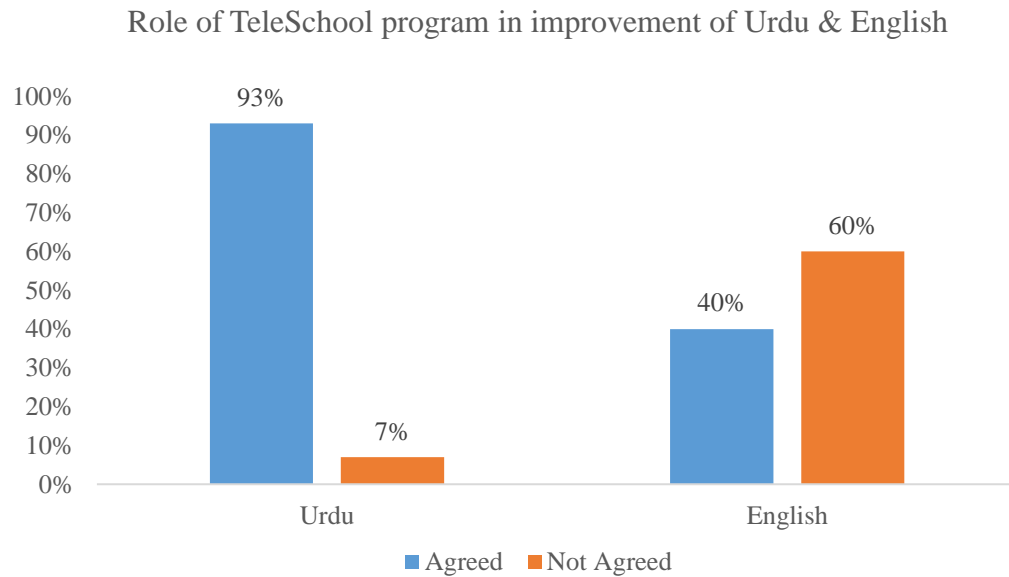
Table 5

Motivation of participants for admission in Adult Literacy Centre to seek education.

	<i>Self-motivated</i>	<i>Convinced by others</i>
Motivation for taking admission in ALC	70 %	30 %

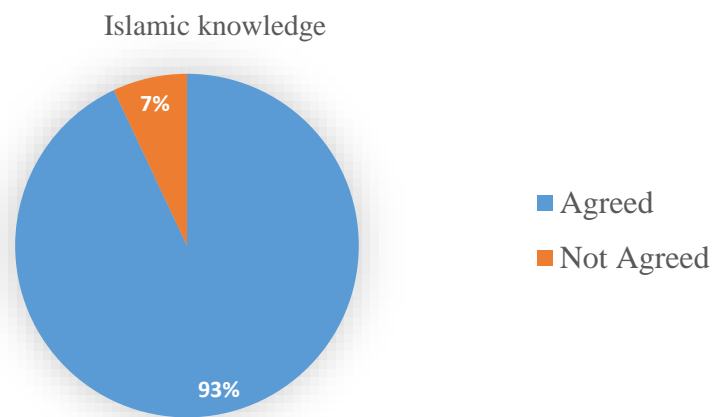
Table 5 shows that 70% of the participants have been enrolled to the Adult Literacy Centre to seek education by self-motivation.

Figure 1
TeleSchool program in improvement Urdu & English skills.



Results envisioned that TeleSchool program has significant effectiveness for adult learners in developing Urdu literacy than English literacy skills.

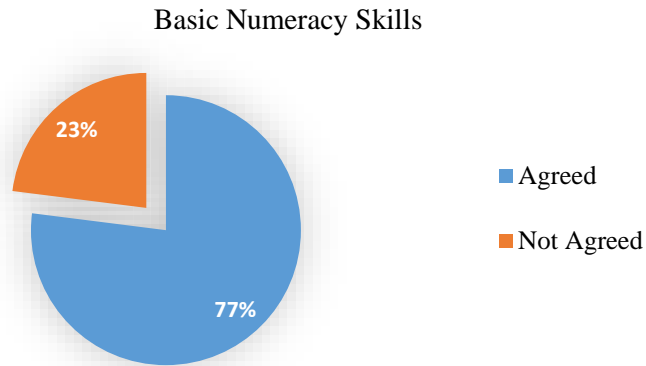
Figure 2
TeleSchool program in improving Islamic knowledge



Majority of the adult learners shown their perception and complete understanding about TeleSchool educational program for improvement in their Islamic knowledge.

Figure 3

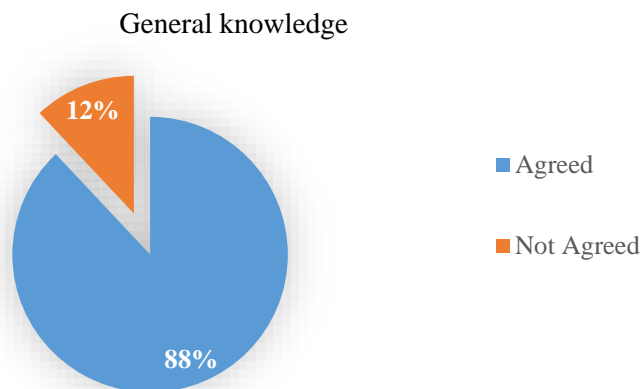
TeleSchool program in mathematics and counting Literacy skills



Majority of the adult learners shown their perception and complete understanding about TeleSchool educational program for improvement in their mathematic and counting skills.

Figure 4

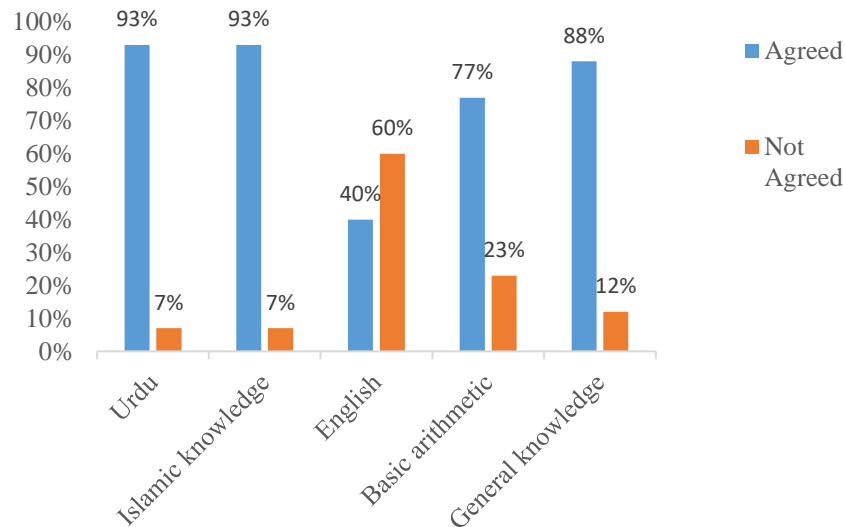
TeleSchool program in enhancing general knowledge



Majority of the adult learners indicated their perception and complete understanding about TeleSchool educational program for improvement in their general knowledge.

Figure 5

Comparative Analysis of Literacy Skills Acquired through TeleSchool in different subjects



The comparison of the results of each subject separately, indicated sufficient increase in literacy skills development in English, Urdu, Mathematics and General Knowledge. The post-test results indicate that in Urdu and Islamic studies, the improvements were at the highest levels of 93%. This may be attributed that Urdu being national language may be learnt with full understanding as learners have basic knowledge, vocabulary and understanding of Urdu when it is spoken. Same is the case with Islamic teachings because this is related with religious values which adults already know. So, that's why in these two areas, there is a significant increase of literacy skills.

Next subject which received much improvement was general knowledge in which there was 88% responses. This is also due to the probability that adults are mature people, and they are listening to many things daily irrespective of the fact that they cannot read or write. Their power to grasp the spoken information is very high. This helped them in their performance in general knowledge.

The subject which was understood by adults in the third number was mathematics. This is an interesting subject and subject of daily living. Adults are doing their business and are involved in money purchase and sale activities. This skill is also associated with their previous knowledge. So, TeleSchool programs enhanced their mathematics skill 77%.

The subject which showed least improvements was English with 40%. This indicates that learners had difficulty in acquiring literacy skills in English subject as this is international language and not from the culture of Pakistan. Adults are usually not encountered with vocabulary and meanings of different words in English that's why their performance in this subject was very low. Further, results envisioned that TeleSchool program has significant effectiveness for adult learners for seeking education through it. Majority of adult learners show their perception & complete understanding about TeleSchool educational programs for improvement in their knowledge, motivation for continuation of their literacy activities.

Table 6

Difference between academic achievements (pre & post-test) of adult learners in improvement of knowledge

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Pre-test	58.20	6.48		
Post-test	82.20	4.73	4.729	.001
Increase (%)	24.0 (41.23 %)			
<i>95% Confidence Level</i>				

Table 6 indicates academic achievement of participants of post and pre-test. There was a statistically significant difference between pre, and posttest mean scores as it was a 41% increase after intervention through TeleSchool recorded videos. The calculated p-value ($.001 < 0.05$) indicates that there is statistically significant difference between academic achievements of both tests which reflects that getting education through TeleSchool program has its effectiveness as learning through communication media, participants have shown better performance (increased results). Hence, null hypothesis is accepted that there is significant usefulness of TeleSchool program to enhance general knowledge of learners from slums.

Findings

- Majority of adult learners (93%) indicated that TeleSchool program is effectively enhancing basic literacy skills in different subjects including Urdu and Islamic studies.
- Next major finding was related with improvement in general knowledge. Majority of adult learners (88%) exhibited that TeleSchool program enhanced their general knowledge which spectacles effectiveness of the program for adult learners. Further, thus results envisioned by TeleSchool program have significant effectiveness for adult learners for seeking education through it.
- Considerable number of participants (77%) reflected positive role of TeleSchool recorded videos to enhance basic mathematics skills and counting skills.
- However, 40% participants indicated improvement in English readings and understanding which reflects that they consider English as difficult subject for them to learn and understand. The subject which showed least improvements was English with 40%. This indicates that learners had difficulty in acquiring literacy skills in English subject as this is international language and not from the culture of Pakistan.
- The significance effectiveness of the TeleSchool program for adult learners with regards to seek improvement in their knowledge has been inferred from the academic achievements of post-test with respect to pre-test as value of p (.001) is less than .05. An average increase of 35.40 % has been observed as mean academic achievements. Thus, null hypothesis is accepted that there is significant effectiveness of TeleSchool program for adult learners regarding enhancement of their general knowledge.
- The comparison of the results of each subject separately, sufficient increase in academic achievements observed in Islamic knowledge.
- More increase has been witnessed in Urdu reading and understanding than English.
- Sufficient increase in basic mathematics has been reflected. These results indicated substantial increase in their performance and reflect that getting education through TeleSchool program has its effectiveness for adult learners regarding enhancement of their knowledge.

Discussion and Conclusion

The current study was conducted on Empowering Adult Learners of Slums Communities: TeleSchool as a Pathway for Literacy Skills Development. This study focused on basic literacy skills enhance through recorded videos of TeleSchool program in different subjects including English, Urdu, Mathematics and General Knowledge of adult learners. Results shown that Urdu and Islamic studies, the improvements were at the highest levels (93%). Similarly, 93% participants agreed that TeleSchool program is beneficial for the adult learners for enhancement in their Islamic knowledge, 88% participants agreed that TeleSchool program played very vital role for enhancement in their general knowledge and 77% agreed for improvement in basic mathematics and numeracy skills. This is an interesting subject and subject of daily living. Adults are doing their business and are involved in money purchase and sale activities. Whereas 40% responded that English reading is improved. Thus, this research reflects that majority of participants agreed that the TeleSchool program played a positive role for enhancement academic achievements and is beneficial for provision of educational facilities. This finding is supported by one such study by Nicolaou (2021) in which he did a pilot case study on adult learners on 'Audiovisual Media Communications in Education'. The objective two of the study was assessed by Knowledge Assessment Test (KAT) scale regarding evaluation of the effectiveness of TeleSchool program for adult learners for improvement in their knowledge. Academic achievement was analyzed based on scores that participants (adult learners) secured in their pre & post test administered by the researcher. The mean difference of academic achievements of whole test evidence increased by 35.40 %. Similarly, academic achievement in each subject also showed considerable increase in academic performance of the participants and value of p (.001) in every case observed less than .05. Hence, analysis of results unveiled that getting education through TeleSchool program has its effectiveness as through learning it as participants has shown better performance. Thus, null hypothesis is accepted that there is significant effectiveness of TeleSchool program for adult learners regarding enhancement of their knowledge. Similar results are shown by Galagedarage (2021). He conducted a study on the role of Television to empower Sri Lankan students of rural areas as an educational medium during COVID 19 Pandemic. This study revealed television as an effective mass media for this purpose.

Study results determined that TeleSchool program is beneficial and played constructive role for the adult learners for enhancement in their

knowledge. So, it is concluded that participants have good perception and complete understanding about TeleSchool educational program for improvement in their knowledge. The signified positive role of TeleSchool program emphasizes its importance for adult learners of slums communities. Hence, TeleSchool program may be continued for the larger public.

Recommendations

- Basic literacy skills are enhanced through TeleSchool program. However, English subject lacks the most, so it is recommended that adult learners may receive intervention on English through mass media on TeleSchool program to play a very vital role in this subject also.
- Keeping in view the perception of adult learners about TeleSchool educational program for improvement in their knowledge and motivation for continuation of their literacy activities through TeleSchool program, it is recommended that education through relevant basic level technical / professional courses may be included in the TeleSchool program for adult learners to enhance their skill in their relevant field.
- Education related to socio-cultural norms/value/rules may be imparted to the adult learners of slums community through TeleSchool program for development of ethical, moral, peace, harmony, tolerance etc.
- Significant predictors of academic achievement of adult learners may be taken into consideration while planning curriculum, content development and designing & broadcasting of TeleSchool program.

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