

Adult education aims at improving the situation of people by increasing their skills, knowledge and awareness. It is the adult that could transform the nations not children. Adult education brings a great sense of dignity and self-esteem, enhanced respect of others, an ability to take control of one's life and a greater desire to participate in society. The paper examined challenges facing adult education delivery in Nigeria which include failure of the Universal Basic Education act to give adequate recognition of Adult education as a key sector in Basic education, accessibility, under funding and lack or inadequate number of qualified facilitators amongst others. The emerging perspectives are on HIV/AIDs, mainstreaming, inter-sectoral linkages and information and communication technology. The paper finally proffers suggestions as review of the Universal Basic Education act to accommodate Adult and Non-formal education, increase in funding, establishment of more centres and make them affordable, upward review of facilitators' honorarium amongst others

## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Adult education is one of the fields of academic endeavour that is saddled with the responsibility of solving socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental problems. There is positive association between adult education programmes and increased levels of self-esteem and high levels of knowledge and skills which thereby encourage positive and active engagement of people in their own development (Umar, Eshak, Bichi, & Aujara, 2010). Adult education is narrowly interpreted as literacy only. From 1960-1980 movements and campaigns on adult education were largely confined to literacy the results were very discouraging because the programmes were too prescriptive in their content, structure and duration and insufficient resources and efforts were put into their design and implementation. Hence with some exceptions, large proportion of those who participated in the literacy campaigns dropped out and up to half of the participants who passed the test relapsed into illiteracy (Aderinoye, 2004)

The concept of adult education is difficult to define because people define it from different perspectives. However, scholars agreed that it is an education that has adults as its clientele. This also brings us to another concept of who is an adult? Different parameters are used in defining an adulthood amongst which are Biological, Chronological, historical, psychological, economical, political and social amongst others. Nzeneri (2002) defines an adult as one who is physically and psychologically matured and is socially, economically and politically responsible. According to Adesanya (2005) the term adult is difficult to define because it varies from one society to another and has changed over time. The boundaries that determine who is considered an adult can depend on actions (i.e. legal age to fight war, drive a car and vote amongst others), activities (i.e., age that one can begin to work) and /or

responsibilities (i.e., marriage age, age to begin supporting family). UNESCO (1976) gives a recommendation of who an adult is: it is a person regarded by the as such by the society to which he /she belongs.

Adult education deals with adult human materials and it gives joy, fascination and enthusiasm. However, working with adults establishes confidence and impressions which allows the learners to realize their dreams. The fact that formal schooling is an unquestionable priority in the education sector does not justify adult education being left out. To make children compete with their parents in the education process is dangerous as it make create a break between two entities that are mutually dependent. A child's schooling performance is largely determined by the level of education of his or her parents. Therefore trying to achieve primary education at the expense of adult education defeats it own purpose. As long as poverty remains a distinctive feature in Nigeria, adult education will impose itself as an unavoidable ingredient of development process (Seya, 2005)

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Adult education changes the social and psychological minds of adults more than any other profession, instills lost hope in them and liberates them from their prejudice of seeing themselves as not being capable of learning. Adult education awakens adult learners to become aware of their environmental (social, economic, cultural and political) and psychological potentials and hidden abilities. It also exerts enormous influence on the larger society in terms of national development (Onyenemezu, 2012). A lot of problem is bedeviling adult education in Nigeria despite numerous prospect which include inadequate funding, failures of the UBE act to give adequate recognition to Adult and Non-Formal Education as a key sector of basic education etc.

## **PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

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