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MANAGEMENT OF MASS LITERACY, ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

AFOGU, Anthonia Nkechi
Asset Unit, Bursary Department
Federal Polytechnic, Auchi
Edo State
toniaafogu@gmail.com
Tel: +2348034721078

OMOIKE, D. O.
Department of Educational Foundations and Management
Faculty of Education and Management
Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma
Edo State

&
IRENE, Bright Ewere
Department of Educational Foundations and Administration
University of Delta, Agbor
Delta State

Abstract

The provision of quality education is often recognized as a necessity for the social, economic and political development of citizens in any given nation. Considering the constantly changing environment, scientific discovery and technological innovations, one can only expect that the goals, objectives, and blueprint of Managing Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education may constantly be reviewed to make education more relevant and functional in meeting the needs of the society in the 21st century. The importance of management in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education programme cannot be overemphasized because of the vital role it plays in organizing, planning, directing and controlling the programme. To this end, this paper evaluates Management of Mass literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education towards quality education in Nigeria in the 21st century. Some of the terms such as quality education, mass literacy, adult and non-formal education and management were examined. It was uncovered that inadequate funds, poor accessibility, shortage of qualified facilitators and manpower in the area of monitoring and evaluation, inadequate infrastructure, the problem of attrition and dearth of teaching staff are some of the challenges that stakeholders need to manage to ensure quality education in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria. The strategies for promoting Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education for Quality Education in the 21st Century Nigeria, were discussed. For these challenges to be managed, it was concluded that there is need to combat the challenges of adult and non-formal education in the contemporary Nigerian society through increased funding and use of state of art facilities such as internet technology. Consequently, it was suggested that the Federal Government of Nigeria should fully implement the policies of Mass Literacy, adult and non-formal education by providing adequate funds for the benefit of her citizens.

Keywords: Quality Education, Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education,

Introduction

Mass literacy, adult and non-formal education is an aspect of education that addresses the need to provide an equivalent of basic education given to adults, children and youths of formal school age, outside the formal school system. It is understood as an aspect of education that is targeted at transmission process of general, technical or vocational knowledge, as well as skills, values and attitudes which takes place out of the formal education system with a view to remedying early inadequacies of mature people or equipping them with the knowledge and cultural elements required for their self-fulfillment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of their societies (Seya, 2015). According to Ouane (2009) adult learning or education is now more than ever emerging as an empowering tool capable of liberating and harnessing the creative forces of people, the potential of communities and the wealth of nations in a situation of global crisis. Over the years, scholars and practitioners at both national and international levels have had intense debates on issues relating to adult education as a field of study and practice.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) in its National Policy on Education stated that the three major goals of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education are to:

a) provide functional basic education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education or who left school too early. The target groups include migrant folks, *almajiri* pupils, illiterate and semi-literate adults, youths and adolescents; persons who left the formal school system early and are now willing to

come back and continue schooling; and other categories of disadvantaged groups; who are unable to have access to the conventional educational system and therefore require other forms of educational programmes to cater for their particular/peculiar needs and circumstances, b) provide remedial and life-long education for youths and adults who did not complete secondary education, c) provide in-service, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills. (Pages 1-3)

The foregoing shows that the Federal Government's goals for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education are aimed at finding a more coherent agenda for adult education and to formulate dynamic policies that would transform adult education practice of many developing countries. Mera (2014) observed that in most countries, adult education is not a relevant part of most public policy, indeed, it is yet to be a priority. In many cases, from the perspective of government policy, adult education continues to be poor education for poor people, an education reduced to temporary efforts at literacy. Seen in a lifelong learning context, it is an inclusive education that emphasizes self-esteem, empowerment, citizenship-building, community organization, labour skills, income generations and even poverty alleviation.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) in its National Policy on Education for Adult Education, Mass Literacy and Non-formal education had elucidated on the role of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal

Education (NMEC). This organization is charged with the responsibilities of: (a) co-coordinating mass literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes nation-wide (b) ensuring uniform standards and quality control nation-wide (c) regulating in collaboration with national non-governmental organizations and corporate bodies for the implementation of the Mass Literacy Programmes (d) training the required manpower for the States/FCT Agencies using appropriate strategies (e) developing curricula and didactic materials based on the National Curricula for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education. f) Providing a nationally recognized basic education certificate. g) Providing appropriate programme for the acquisition of skills for inmates and other vulnerable groups. h) Organizing national and international training workshops seminars, lectures and symposia on topical issues in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, i) initiating standard methods for integrating Mass literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in the learning centres and grant necessary accreditation; and liaising with relevant national and international agencies concerned with literacy delivery in order to accelerate the development of Mass Literacy and Adult Education; carry out such other activities as are conducive to the discharge of its functions. (pp. 19 & 20)

Evaluating the foregoing responsibilities of the National Commission for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education, *Okoro and Agugum (2017)* posited that the discharge of the above could help beneficiaries of the mass literacy, adult and non-formal education programme to

actively participate at local, national and global levels only when the State/Federal Capital Territory agencies and Local Government Councils for mass education perform their duties. However, for proper decentralization of the duties across the states, the responsibilities of the State/FCT for mass education, adult and non-formal education are to: a) implement the National Policy on Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in the States and FCT, b) plan, research, organize, develop and manage State mass literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes. c) regulate, monitor and ensure quality control of all private continuing education centres, skill acquisition centres, extramural classes and other adult and non-formal education programmes provided by NGOs. d) set up and supervise the activities of the Literacy Network Committees in the states. e) liaise with non-governmental organizations in the States for the implementation of mass education programmes. f) train grass root personnel such as Area Coordinators, Team Organizers, Community Library Attendants and Facilitators, g) provide support services for adult and non-formal education including curriculum adaptation, mobile and rural Libraries, Television Viewing and Audio-Listening Centres and Studio, visual teaching and learning aids and h) ensure regular payment of salaries/allowances of NFE Facilitators and Personnel (FRN, 2013).

Considering the numerous responsibilities of the state government and the possible difficulties that may emerge in connecting people at the grassroots level to sufficiently benefit from the mass literacy, adult and non-formal education, the Local Government

Councils is also charged with the following responsibility: a) day-to-day control and administration of local mass literacy, adult and Non-Formal education programmes, b) recruitment and payment of NFE Facilitators, Part-time instructors; and enrolment of learners for functional literacy and post-literacy programmes, c) feedback to the States/FCT and Federal Ministries of Education in respect of curriculum and materials adaptation, techniques of teaching and evaluation procedures and the collection of data, d) ensuring that the Literacy Network Committee at local government, district, village, ward and centre levels are operating efficiently and effectively, e) provision of physical facilities for rural libraries, reading rooms, television viewing centres and radio listeners' clubs (FRN, 2013).

It is common knowledge that the planning of any programme is usually not as demanding as implementing or executing it. Hence, having great goals and objectives for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education is never enough; there has to be constant monitoring and evaluation to ensure that set standards and operational guides are not violated by regulatory agencies and councils. Considering the constantly changing environment, scientific discovery and technological innovations; one can only expect that the goals, objectives, and blueprint of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education are constantly reviewed to make this aspect of education more relevant to the needs of the society in the 21st century.

In light of this, the researcher seeks to examine mass literacy, adult and Non-

formal education for quality education in Nigeria in the 21st century. Hence, the rest of this paper was discussed under four major headings namely: Concept of quality education; Challenges of Quality Education in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria; Promotion of Mass Literacy, Adult and non-formal Education for Quality Education in the 21st Century and Conclusion Suggestions.

Conceptual Issues

a) Concept of Quality Education: Before defining the term quality education, it is pertinent to first clarify the term "quality". Simply put, quality can be defined as the state of "goodness" or "fitness" of a thing, substance, place or a given phenomenon. Fadokun (2005) characterized quality by three interconnected parts: (i) efficiency in the meeting of its goals, (ii) significant to human and environmental settings and needs, (iii) "Something more" which means the search for new ideas, the quest for excellence and encouragement of creativity. According to him, these three component parts are important in the measurement or description of quality. This further shows that when education delivered in an institution it is at a fit high enough to meet set standards, the institution could be said to be at a quality because it is efficient in meeting its goals, significant to human and environmental settings and needs.

Quality is a measure of how good or bad the products of education institutions in terms of their academic achievement and the meeting of their established standard (Asiyai & Oghuvbu, 2009). This definition is quite restrictive in that, it

simply considers two indices – “academic achievement” and “established standards” for measuring quality. In the context of a learning institution, Article II of the World Declaration on Education (2003) sees quality as a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses all the functions and activities in a school. Such activities include but are not restricted to teaching, research and scholarship, community service, staffing, students, infrastructures and educational facilities, equipment and the academic environment.

The other term “education” is a social service that is considered to be an all-important tool needed to promote national development. Beyond this account of the origin, the word ‘education’ has since assumed a wider definition and meaning. Education in a broad sense is a process by which an individual acquires the many physical and social capabilities demanded by the society in which he/she is born into to function (Uwadia, 2010). Similarly, Parankimalil (2012) sees education as a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude. It is concerned with the development of all faculties of the child. It performs the functions of the physical, mental, aesthetic, moral, economic and spiritual development of the individual so that the individual may get rid of his animal instincts by sublimating the same so that he becomes a civilized person. Little wonder then that John Lock said: “plants are developed by civilization and men by education”.

According to UNESCO (2009), the fundamental aim of education is the

physical, intellectual, emotional and ethical integration of the individual as a social instrument for developing human resources and for human capital formation. It is considered as the most important factor for development as well as for empowering people. In the national policy on education, the Federal Republic of Nigeria recognizes that Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on the following set of beliefs: a) education is an instrument for national development and social change; b) education is vital for the promotion of progressive and united Nigeria; c) education maximizes the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development of the society; d) education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges; and e) education is to be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society (FRN, 2013).

From the foregoing, this philosophy of Nigerian education is based on the development of individuals into a sound and effective citizen and the provision of equal opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system. The definition of “quality” and “education” clearly argues that any aspect of education such as mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education can be best rated to be quality when it operates at a fit on one or more of the earlier mentioned indices.

b) Mass Literacy: Mass literacy should clearly be viewed as a match for the policy of “basic education” and “education for

all." Mass literacy education was conceptualized by the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) to embrace the education given to everyone in order to eliminate illiteracy among its people. In order to promptly eradicate illiteracy the national policy on education (FRN, 2013) stipulated that: a) there shall be a nation-wide mass literacy campaign based on various strategies including that of "each-one-teach-one" or "fund-the-teaching-of-one." Participatory Rural Appraisal (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques" PRA/REFLECT), Literacy by Radio and other innovative approaches; b) States and FCT Agencies for Mass Education shall be responsible for the regulation of all Adult and Non-Formal Education classes/ Programmes; c) Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education shall continue to be under the supervision of Ministries of Education and FCT Education Secretariat; d) Mass literacy programmes shall be provided free by government to the beneficiaries; e) IT and other infrastructural facilities, such as Libraries, Viewing Centres and Reading Rooms shall be provided in every community); f) Community radios and radio literacy programmes shall be encouraged; and g). Public-Private Partnership should be encouraged in the organization and funding of mass literacy. These goals clearly show that the federal government's intention for mass literacy is geared towards using every available medium to eradicate or reduce at least to barest minimum illiteracy amongst its citizens.

The Federal Ministry of Education shall, in the light of the above, be a),

Responsible for the formulation of the National Policy on Mass Alphabetization, Adult and Non-Formal Education; (b) the appropriate body to enter into dialog with International Development Partners on cooperation in the field of Mass Alphabetization, Adult and Non-Formal Education; (c) the provision of adequate funds to the National Commission on Mass Alphabetization, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) for additional funding; d) responsible for mobilizing States/FCT and Local Governments to provide matching grants for the provision of Adult and Non-Formal Education (FRN, 2013).

c) Adult Education: Adult education is a concept that embodies two distinct terms which include "adult" and "education". Concerning the former "adult", different parameters are used in defining adulthood amongst which are Biological, Chronological, historical, psychological, economic, 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 as 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).

Adult education refers to any form of learning undertaken by or provided for mature men and women outside the

formal schooling system (Seya, 2005). The main targets are specifically defined as youths (girls and boys over 15 years of age, but sometimes younger) as well as women and men, generally poor or socially disadvantaged. According to Seya (2015) adult education is seen as: a transmission of process of general, technical or vocational knowledge as well as skills, values and attitudes, which takes place out of the formal education system with a view of remedying early education inadequacies of mature people or equipping them with knowledge and cultural elements required for their self-fulfillment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of their societies.

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 creates 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 its own purpose. As long as poverty remains a distinctive feature in Nigeria, adult education will impose itself as an unavoidable ingredient of the development process (Seya, 2015). For us to effectively attain the aforementioned objectives of Mass Literacy, Adult and

Non-Formal Education, the challenges hindering quality education in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria needs to be identified.

d) Mass Literacy and Adult Education Management: The importance of management in Mass Literacy and Adult Education cannot be overemphasized because of the vital role it plays in organizing, planning, directing and controlling the programme. Management in the contexts of mass literacy, adult and non-formal education has several dimensions. Managers are responsible for planning, managing people, administration and accountability towards ensuring that the values and ethics of mass literacy and adult education are adopted or sustained. It is important that the management system should reflect the guiding principle and management committees should include the organizers, students, tutors and other relevant stakeholders. Management structures often vary according to the context in which the mass literacy and adult education process take place.

The key points in relation to mass literacy, adult and non-formal education management are: Planning and administration, Recruitment, Internal communication, Program evaluation, Training and development, Contact with students, Monitoring and evaluation. The management of mass literacy, adult and non-formal education for quality education in the 21st century is facing a lot of challenges. These challenges sometimes stem from the adopted notion of the term "quality" that is defined differently by many entities (Mbwette,

2006). In the current era of globalization, Nigeria is expected to prepare its own mass literacy, adult and non-formal education quality as defined by its current and future expectations. However, given these challenges highlighted, the management of mass literacy, adult and non-formal education for quality education in Nigeria in the 21st century needs to be critically reviewed.

Challenges of Quality Education in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria

The challenges confronting the Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria include but are not restricted to: inadequate financing, poor accessibility, shortage of qualified facilitators and manpower in the area of monitoring and evaluation, inadequate infrastructure, recruitment and training of teacher, the problem of attrition and death of staff. These challenges are briefly discussed below :

Inadequate Funding: The problem of inadequate funding of education has been a bane of the challenge to the delivery of quality mass literacy, non-formal and adult education in Nigeria. Considering the age and possible work nature of beneficiaries of this programme, the demands for quality delivery of the programme in terms of human workforces, materials, time, money among others is enormous. Unfortunately, the budgetary allocation for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education at all levels of government is grossly inadequate, especially when compared to the formal education sector. More importantly, Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education is excluded in the

share of two per cent Consolidated Fund meant for Basic Education in spite of policy provision that guarantees her inclusion (Obanya, 2016).

Okoro and Agugum (2017) submitted that the problem of financial accountability and transparency in the management of funds allocated to the non-formal education sector may have also compounded the challenge of fund inadequacy. For instance, statistics have shown that Federal Government expenditure on education between 2000 and 2016 has been below 18 per cent of overall expenditure. As at 2016, the earmarked budget for education by the federal government was not up to 15 per cent while a huge amount of the nation's budget goes to salaries and allowances of political office holders (Peretomode & Chukwuma, 2017; *Okoro & Agugum, 2017*). While much attention has been given to the formal education sector, the much allotted to Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education programme goes towards overhead: leaving little for infrastructural cost. Consequently, very little funds are available for the development of infrastructure which is in despair and even the purchase of obsolete teaching materials in adult education centres in the country. Many of the promises to provide adequate funds in mass literacy and adult education centres in Nigeria have not been met by the federal government (*Okoro & Agugum, 2017*). This has seriously affected quality in the programme and hindered the attainment of the predetermined goals of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria.

Poor accessibility: One of the problems of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria is the lack of access. Most learners find it difficult to attend their evening and morning classes due to their personal commitment to provide for themselves and their families even though the programme is tuition free. Most of the learners are breadwinners in their homes; therefore, the learners find it difficult to combine studies with other work which is considered paramount as their means of livelihood.

Failures of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC 2004) Act to give adequate recognition to Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education as a key sector of basic constitute another challenge. In the world of rapid changes, adult education should be established at the doorsteps of all the interested adult learners so as to avail the opportunity for learning. However, all citizens should have the opportunity to develop themselves throughout their life at whatever age, to acquire knowledge and know-how to better pilot their life transition, to improve their quality of life, to develop their potential, to experience the joy of learning. In that perspective, no area should be left. In that context, the rise of other material resources such as books and other reference materials needed for learning may be another challenge to most learners who may not have the with withal to purchase them.

Shortage of qualified facilitators and manpower in the area of monitoring and evaluation: Another challenge facing the implementation of the adult programme is the lack of qualified manpower in monitoring and evaluation.

It is as a result of inadequate Adult and Non-Formal Education (ANFE) educators and facilitators in teaching and learning in Adult and Non-Formal Education (ANFE) programmes. Hassan (2009) submitted that the government was not funding Adult and Non-Formal Education adequately in Nigeria and this has affected the recruitment of well-qualified professionals/facilitators/educators in the sector.

Even when few qualified manpower is recruited, their services are short-lived as a result of poor conditions of service, low motivation, a very poor salary which discourages commitment of professionals/facilitators. There are also concerns about inadequate staff development programme through in-service and continuous professional development training for facilitators. Thus, the programme does not attract the highest caliber of teachers as would a higher institution of learning. Appointment of non-professionals and untrained facilitators who do not understand the use of pedagogical techniques, primary school teachers and even school certificate holders are usually appointed as facilitators. According to National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC, 2017), Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) should be the minimum teaching qualification in compliance with the provision of National Policy on Education to ensure the quality delivery in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal and Adult Education. It has been observed that there are still Grade II teachers and even less qualified personnel teaching in the Non-Formal Education centres that are

not fully trained in the pedagogical methods (Obanya, 2010).

Another challenge to effective implementation is *the government's negative attitude* towards Adult Non-Formal Education (ANFE) programmes and insufficient evaluation and monitoring of programmes. Their politicizing ANFE has equally influenced implementation of education policy which is a continuous process that has failed the education sector, particularly in the last decade (Obanya 2010). However, for ANFE to achieve its goals; there must be constant programme evaluation, monitoring and supervision in which this sector is lacking. The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) Annual report of the year 2017/2018 showed that ANFE programmes lacked constant evaluation and monitoring as a result of the problem of inadequate funds, equipment and personnel to carry out this exercise effectively.

Lack of the inadequate number of literacy instructors or personnel who possess Information and Communication Technology skills is a serious challenge to Nigeria's desire of becoming a key player in the information age. Lack of personnel with Information and Communication Technology skills across the Non-Formal Education (NFE) centres inhibit the effective use of Information and Communication Technology for Non-Formal Education delivery in the country. Lack of trained monitoring and evaluation personnel in the Non-formal education sector is a serious problem to the development of the sector since monitoring is a *sine qua non* to a

successful adult and Non-formal education programmes. It involves the management of a large database. Monitoring is a vital ingredient for the successful implementation of NFE as such it should be integrated into the programme action plan. Adequate funds are not provided and required information about the status of the programmes is not available. Lack of proper monitoring and evaluation in the Non-formal education has resulted in variations in the types of programmes available and offered across the states of the federation.

Inadequate Infrastructure: The Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education policy, by the Federal Government of Nigeria, made provisions for some equipment that will enhance the teaching and learning of this programme, such as mobile phones, rural libraries, television, viewing centres and audio listening centres, but most of these things are near absent in these settings, even where there is any; the poor condition of electricity will make it impossible to run them. Akillaya (2005) observes that the facility for record keeping and effective teaching and learning are grossly inadequate. This has seriously affected the database needed for adequate plan and implementations of the Non-Formal Education intervention programmes. This also has affected the tracking of learner's achievement and transition from one level to the other.

Aside from human resources, the quality of non-formal education and adult education is dependent on the quality and quantity of material resources put in place in learning centres. The lack of infrastructures such as laboratories,

workshops, libraries and electricity may affect quality assurance on the programme. For good quality delivery, these facilities provided must meet the minimum standard specified by the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC). The acute shortage of educational facilities in most adult learning centres in Nigeria has led to a declining in the quality of mass literacy, adult and Non-Formal Education in the country. For example, most learners on the Mass Literacy and Adult Education programme in Nigeria learning in dilapidated buildings which are poorly ventilated, illuminated, furnished and environmentally depressing and disabling situations (Odetunde 2014; Asiyai, 2015).

Recruitment and Training of Teachers:

The method of recruitment of people into adult education and their subsequent training skills lack seriousness and vision. School dropouts still find their way into teaching, thus turning teacher training institutions into a dumping ground for those who could not make headway elsewhere. The successful implementation of any nation's educational policy depends to a large extent on the quality and quantity of its teaching force. Lamenting on this, Ifunanya, Onyia and Iketaku (2013) submitted that there is no massive investment in the professional development of teachers recruited for the Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education and this may have resulted in the attainment of the programme goals.

The problem of attrition and dearth of teaching staff: There is a dilemma of recruitment and declining enrolment of

teachers in the teaching force. The terms of service for teachers are not adequate to recruit and maintain the best minds for the program of mass literacy, adult and non-formal education (Durosaro, 2006). In addition, Ajayi and Shofoyeke (2003) argued that the continued uncomplimentary image of teachers perceived by the public may not likely attract the right caliber of individuals to be retained in the teaching profession. Today, in banks, hotels, immigration, airways, and so on, holders of professional qualifications in education serve. This has brought about the dearth of teachers for Mass literacy, adult and Non-formal education in Nigeria.

The challenge of mass literacy, adult and non-formal education brought by high attrition of teachers is compounded by the fact that experienced academic and administrative staffs are short in supply (Bamiro, 2016). Interestingly, the quality of any educational programme depends to a great extent on the quality of teachers. The quality of teachers determines the quality of teaching and knowledge imparted on learners on adult education programme (Akpan & Ita, 2015). Consequently, when teachers are in short supply, it becomes a problem. Buttressing this, Asiyai (2016) submitted that the reason for the dearth of quality teachers for adult education is the problem of brain drain or high attrition rate. Brain drain has led to a declining in mass literacy, adult and non-formal education in Nigeria *vis-à-vis* the disappearance of research institutes in adult learning centres. Some of the rare gems who could have been absorbed to teach mass literacy, adult and non-formal education have joined into the business world, politics and left for better

services in other sectors.

Poor staff development programmes:

Most Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education learning centres in Nigeria lacks staff development programme for training and re-training of staff. A well-planned staff development programme on a continuous basis will help academics and non-academics to clarify and modify their behaviour, attitude, value, skills and competencies. In this way, they grow and develop in their knowledge and thus become more effective and efficient in the performance of tasks. Staff development is paramount because knowledge of today is only sufficient for today. In this era of knowledge explosion and emergent knowledge-based economy, staff development should be the priority of any nation.

Peretomode and Chukwuma (2017) submitted that manpower development is relevant to the development of all programmes. They added that the lack of staff development programmes accounted for the decline in quality of non-formal and adult education in Nigeria. Similarly, Adeogun (2006) submitted that a facilitator who is not trained and exposed to continuous retraining in the modern methods and new discoveries in his or her field will soon become irrelevant in the teaching and adult population in mass. Due to lack of opportunity for retraining and non-mentoring, many teachers are not exposed to new ideas, facts, theories and research findings in mass literacy, adult and Non-Formal education learning centres (Ajayi, 2017; Kolawole, 2017).

Promoting Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education for Quality Education in Nigeria in the 21st Century

The purpose of adult and non-formal education, according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) includes to: i) provide functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education (dropouts). These include the nomads, migrant families, the disabled, and the disadvantaged gender, ii) provide functional and remedial education for those who did not complete secondary education, iii) present education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills, iv) provide in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills, and v) give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural, and civic education for public enlightenment.

As laudable as the above appear to be, adult education as implemented in Nigeria has not succeeded in achieving the so set objectives. Adult education is expected to be re-positioned to excessively launch the present adults into the orbit where they can respond to the challenges of the 21st century and make meaningful contributions to national development. Policy makers and the planners of adult education programmes in Nigeria may need to incorporate into adult education those innovations which have made the 21st century unique. A fundamental requirement which adult education programme planners need to incorporate into its schedule is the

knowledge and practice of information and communication technology.

The 21st century is characterized by the exposition of knowledge and hi-technology which has aided development in different sectors. A century where communication and infrastructural facilities such as telephones fax and computers, internet services and artificial intelligence systems are employed tools that are turning the world into a global village. Practically, in the 21st century, all fields of human endeavor have been technologically oriented. This led to a change from the "industrial era to the era of information." Its desire to reach people regardless of distance, to bring improvements to human issues, is synonymous with the century.

Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education are also required to step in line with this age of accessibility to information and communication technologies and skills. For this to be done, it might be important to implement and integrate e-learning facilities such as projectors, computers and internet systems into adult education in order to educate adult members of the Nigerian community to ensure peace and harmony. In recent past, events in some states show that educational institutions where we have our youths and young adults have turned out to be breeding grounds for violence and educated adult elites employ the services of these young adults to execute assassination of opponents, rig elections, rape, kidnap and lead rebellious gangs, commit fraud and pen robbery among others. These are some of the anti-social behaviours that mass literacy, adult and non-formal education can help to

correct through proper information technology.

The public perception of mass literacy, adult and Non-Formal education as an area of study for old people is undoubtedly partly responsible for its low patronage as a discipline in Nigerians Universities (Aruma, 2011). This aspect of education is considered informal, crude and less important compared to the formal education setup. This is the reason Information technology may have one or more roles to play in given people the right orientation and stimulating significant interests of people to harness the inherent benefits of the programme. However, Aruma (2011) noted that publicity for mass literacy, adult and Non-Formal education programme is not enough. He argued that the full integration of Information Technology devices is not only needed to make teaching-learning more creative, interesting and appealing but also required to ensure the quality education is provided to beneficiaries of the mass literacy, adult and Non-Formal education programme in Nigeria.

The agenda to tackle the global concern of eradicating illiteracy and promoting Universal Primary Education through the Education for All (EFA) agenda of the United Nations; member nations (Nigeria inclusive) have thereby developed strategies to minimize mass illiteracy among citizens. To this end, there is the need for the three tiers of government – federal, state and local levels to allocate adequate finance to adult education programmes especially mass literacy and continuing education programmes in order to make substantial progress in the 21st century. Substantial progress in this

regard connotes rising to the level of becoming one of the top 20 nations by year 2020 and bring the nation to a state where children, their adult parents, and migrant population such as nomads or fishermen are not educationally excluded by reason of lack of access or means to functional and quality education.

The government should as well provide adequate funds to take care of adult literacy including the little stipend for instructors, which constitute serious disincentive for regular attendance in adult literacy classes. Also, the issue of lack of adequate instructional materials and qualified personnel to handle adult literacy centres should be addressed. Finally, it must be emphasized that overhaul in adult education, in general, is essential for the generation and sustainability of new knowledge that can be in harmony with globalization in the 21st century.

Conclusion

The relevance of the mass literacy, adult and Non-Formal education in promoting the Education for All (EFA) agenda and reducing the number of illiterate Nigerian citizens cannot be overemphasized. There is need to "raise the bar" of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education to a level that would make beneficiaries of the programme compete favorably with their counterparts in the regular or formal education sector in the 21st century. Unfortunately, several challenges such as inadequate funding, poor accessibility, shortage of qualified facilitators and manpower in the area of monitoring and evaluation, inadequate infrastructure, high attrition and dearth of teaching staff confront the attainment of quality

education in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria. To combat these challenges of mass literacy, non-formal and adult education in the contemporary Nigerian society, the use of state-of-the-art facilities such as internet technology, e-learning facilities and computers is expedient for learning simulation.

Suggestions

Based on the pieces of information reached in this examination, the following suggestions are made:

- That the Federal Government of Nigeria should fully implement the policies of adult and non-formal education for the benefit of her citizens.
- That the products of Adult Education should be given their rightful place of employment for the course to gain relevance
- That there should be the effective mobilization of the tools of mass media in disseminating information on adult education programmes
- Proper orientation should be given to the public as to actual programme participants of Adult Education and non-formal education.

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