

# Concerns, Challenges, Prospects and Suggestions Related to Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education Delivery in North Eastern Nigeria

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## Abstract

*This study investigated the concerns, challenges, prospects and suggestions related to adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North East, Nigeria. The study had two objectives and two corresponding research questions. The study was qualitative research. Six focus group discussions were conducted for the study. Sixteen stakeholders of Adult and Non-Formal Education were respondents in each focus group. This makes a total of 96 respondents. The respondents were selected using simple random and purposive sampling technique from a drawn list of stakeholders. A structured interview was used for data collection and was validated through face validity by professionals in measurement and evaluation and non-formal education. A pre-test of the instrument was carried out on a group of 10 samples who did not participate in the main study. The reliability of responses was ascertained by crosschecking responses with verifiable data. The findings of the study showed amongst others that all states were faced with the concerns/challenges of inadequate funding, lack of logistics for monitoring and evaluation; low level of political commitment except in Bauchi State; inadequate instructional materials; inadequate facilitators and existing laws establishing the Agencies are still edicts. However, the prospects are bright for literacy and non-formal education in the North Eastern Nigeria. The paper concludes that though there are numerous issues of concern and challenges, related to the task of adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North Eastern Nigeria, there is a better prospect for literacy and non-formal education in North Eastern Nigeria.*

*Keywords: Adult Literacy, Challenges, Concerns, Non-Formal Education, Suggestions*

## Introduction

The North East of Nigeria comprises six states. These are: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. Statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics [NBS] (2010) show that the North East of Nigeria has the worst socio-economic conditions in the Country. Its average absolute poverty rate put at sixty-nine percent (69.0%) is above the national average of sixty point nine percent (60.9%). This characterizes the Zone as having the highest rate of poverty in Nigeria. Educationally, literacy rates and participation in non-formal education in the North East has been found to be low (National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education [NMEC, 2008]); National Bureau of Statistics, (2010). See Table 1 for details:

**Table 1: Adult Literacy Situation in the North East States of Nigeria**

S/No.	STATE	% LITERACY IN ENGLISH	% LITERACY IN ANY LANGUAGE
1.	Adamawa	58.4	73.3
2.	Bauchi	26.6	65.7
3.	Borno	38.1	58.6
4.	Gombe	34.5	63.9
5.	Taraba	56.9	62.7
6.	Yobe	24.2	48.9

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2010).

From the data in Table 1, it could be seen that only Adamawa and Taraba States have a percentage adult literacy rate of above 50% out of all the six States in the North East, Nigeria. All the others have between 20-30% which falls short of Bowman and Anderson's (1963) finding based on international evidence that a threshold of 40 percent adult literacy was required for a state's economic development. While, this pathetic situation is evident in the North East of Nigeria, the Boko Haram insurgency later compounded the situation. The Boko Haram insurgency led to the destruction of existing school structures, killing and kidnapping of teachers, abducting school children and even killing those identified with Western education.

Currently, the situation of the insurgency is being tackled and efforts are being put in place to rebuild the North East. The State governments and Non-Governmental Organizations such as United Nations International Children Educational Fund (UNICEF), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Education Crisis Response Programme and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are all making concerted efforts to revive the education sector in the North East. However, to ensure that education in the North East is revived, the formal education system cannot be completely relied upon.

It was in recognition of this fact that Bah-Lalya (2008), earlier submitted that the limited capacity of formal education structures to cope with the various demands on education in Nigeria calls for the present advocacy process for non-formal education. The essence is to correct the imbalances in the nation's formal education sector. Non-formal education can therefore, greatly help the vast population of youth and adults who are stigmatized as failures from the formal school system by providing the following services:

- i. Basic literacy or reading, writing and numeracy for both children and their illiterate parents, including apprentices and children of nomads and migrant fishermen.
- ii. Bridging the gaps in learning achievements of marginalised groups like girls, school drop-outs, women, prisoners, the poor and the physically challenged.
- iii. Technical and vocational education which is often lacking in our formal educational system.
- iv. On-the-job training for practitioners and professionals who may not have the time for the full-time educational options.
- v. Serving as the best means of civic or mass education, open education, aesthetic and cultural education in the present global knowledge environment.
- vi. Serving as one of the tools for personal and professional competence and community development.

Other reasons why Non-Formal education is more development-oriented than formal education are:

- i. Non-Formal education is practical and skill-oriented.
- ii. Non-Formal education is technical, need-oriented and community-based.
- iii. It deals with all types of persons, occupational background and interests at every developmental stage.
- iv. The ubiquitous nature of Non-Formal education makes it the best form of education for development in every culture.

Various adult literacy and non-formal education programmes are therefore offered in the Agencies of Mass Education to help achieve development of individuals and their communities to which they belong. Examples of

these programmes are: Basic Literacy; Post Literacy; Women Education; Functional Literacy; Nomadic Education; Continuing Education; Ajami (Arabic) Integrated Education; Literacy for the Blind; Workers' Education; Vocational Education; Literacy for the Disabled; and Prison Education. The Agencies for Mass Education have literacy and numeracy at the core with life skills as a bonus package for the more informed non-formal education projects. Hence, the functional element as specified by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) appears covered under literacy and numeracy programmes. The functional subjects include Home Economics, Book Keeping, and Hygiene/Health Education etc (Makoju, Obanya, Fagbulu, Nwangwu, Aderogba, Olapeju, et al, 2006).

However, it has been observed that adult literacy programmes often fail to meet the immediate needs of learners; there is also lack of qualified, trained educators and trainers. The shortcomings of the adult literacy programmes produce illiterates and put them off learning (UNESCO, 2003). There is little or no wonder then that Mohamed (2015) observed that adult literacy programmes in Egypt seem to be struggling to attract learners, to keep them from dropping out, to get them to pass the literacy test and to prevent them from reverting to illiteracy. Mungai's (2014) study found that most of the adult literacy programmes in Nyeri Central District in Kenya, did not have basic education resources required by adult learners; some teaching methods were better and more effective for adult learners and government played the greatest role in funding.

Gabriel, Mwangi, Lewis, Muasya, and Vengi (2016) lamented that the implementation of adult and continuing education in Kenya has a myriad of challenges ranging from poor leadership, funding, negative attitude to adult education, and low learning achievement levels among the learners. Unreliable data is another challenge in as far as governance and management of adult and continuing education is concerned. Particularly, without legal provisions in adult and continuing education to guard against misinformation or non-cooperation with respect to relevant data, those in charge of departments as well as institutions release data that is not reliable to fit their unique circumstances or hide their shortcomings (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

According to Ndiku, Muthamia, Ipara, and Obaki (2009), poor enrolment of adult learners in literacy classes in Kenya is due to the failure to hire sufficient and qualified facilitators. This scenario is compounded by the fact that there is higher turnover of staff and volunteer facilitators in adult and continuing education facilities. Some learners drop out because of language barrier due to ethnicity or dialects and being taught by what they considered to be very young teachers. Other learners remain absent or came to class late due to engagement in such economic activities as trade, planting and harvesting crops. The Republic of Kenya (2007) also identified inadequate capitation grants for instructional materials are another major challenge facing adult and continuing education. Muhammad (2013) identified challenges facing adult education delivery in Nigeria which include failure of the Universal Basic Education act to give adequate recognition to Adult education as a key sector in Basic education, accessibility, under funding and lack or inadequate number of qualified facilitators amongst others.

Agu (2006) outlined a 7-point strategy for the effective implementation of adult literacy programmes from the report for ensuring the universal right to literacy and basic education, as the following:

- Public enlightenment programmes directed at community leaders and men on the consequences of illiteracy.
- Review of existing adult literacy programmes to include relevant vocational skills and entrepreneurial education.
- Training of women instructors
- Production of pedagogical materials for rural dwellers / farmers by the Ministry of Agriculture, Education and State Agencies with the co operation of experts, United nations Agencies and interested NGOs.
- Adaptation of time - table and learning programme to suit the occupational and cultural biased of the target groups.
- Constant monitoring and evaluation aimed at improving strategies and reviewing the programme.

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- Need for the provision of adequate funding for providing learning facilities, training and retraining instructions and for ensuring permanency of literacy through follow-up education.

Nwachukwu (2000) remarked that the Nigerian Mass Literacy Campaign of 1982-1992 was a direct outcome of the recognition of the right of all citizens which can be achieved through Adult and Non-formal Education programme. Hence, Mbagwu and Nwakaire (2005) submitted that the struggle for basic education through Adult and non-formal education is the struggle for development, justice, greater equality and recognition of human dignity of all (men, women and youths inclusive).

Nigeria as a country has signed many international agreements which relates to education. These agreements include the Education for All, Millennium Development Goals, and the Sustainable Development Goals with the pledge to eradicate illiteracy, ensure greater access to education and promote equity in education. It is therefore imperative that literacy and non-formal education delivery be scaled up especially in the North East which despite having low socio-economic indices, became affected with insurgency which worsened the already bad situation. The researchers therefore became motivated to find out the issues of concern, challenges, prospects and suggestions related to the task of adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North Eastern Nigeria.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Literacy and non-formal education is needed to ensure that citizens can read, write and calculate as well as become productive in the society. The North Eastern Nigeria is no exception to this fact. Despite the fact that Agencies for Mass Education were established since the 1980s, literacy rates and participation in non-formal education in the North East has been found to be low (National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education [NMEC], 2008). Only Adamawa and Taraba States have a percentage adult literacy rate of above 50% out of all the six States in the North East, Nigeria. All the others have between 20-30% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). This percentage of literacy population falls short of Bowman and Anderson (1963), finding based on international evidence that a threshold of 40 percent adult literacy was required for a state's economic development.

Earlier empirical studies such as Mungai (2014) investigated factors that influence the implementation of Adult literacy programmes in Nyeri Central District, Nyeri County in Kenya. The study was delimited to Nyeri Central District and was a quantitative study. Ameh (2015), also evaluated the management of mass literacy Programmes in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study was delimited to Kogi State and was a quantitative study. Atkin, Anthea, and Rosie (2005) examined the provision of, and learner engagement with, adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL in rural England. The study was comparative in nature and used a combination of standard qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques. None of these studies investigated the challenges of adult literacy and non-formal education at a geo-political zone level. Nor did any of these studies adopt a completely qualitative type of research. This prompted this study on the concerns, challenges, prospects and suggestions related to the task of adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North Eastern Nigeria.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were to determine the:

1. concerns and challenges related to the task of adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North East Nigeria.
2. prospects and suggestions for adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North East Nigeria.

#### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What are the issues of concern and challenges, related to the task of adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North East Nigeria?
2. What are the prospects and suggestions for adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North East Nigeria?

### **Scope of the Study**

This study covers the issues of concern, challenges, prospects and suggestions related to the task of adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North Eastern Nigeria. The States covered were all the six North Eastern States of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States respectively. The respondents were delimited to State Agencies for Mass Education management team members; notable literacy and non-formal education experts; literacy organizers/supervisors; leaders of literacy and non-formal education-focused civil society, non-governmental organizations and faith based organizations; members of centre based management committees for literacy and non-formal education delivery. The method of data collection was also delimited to focus group discussion to ensure a qualitative research essence.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is significant to the following beneficiaries: Team of the Presidential Initiative on Rebuilding the North East, International Donor agencies working in the field of literacy and non-formal education, Researchers, and Students of Adult Education Departments. The Team of the Presidential Initiative on Rebuilding the North East will find useful information on the concerns, challenges, prospects and suggestions related to the task of adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North Eastern Nigeria. This would help them to plan the programmes of literacy and non-formal education to citizens excluded from schooling due to the insurgency in the North East. International Donor Agencies working in the field of literacy and non-formal education will also find information that would help them mitigate challenges in providing literacy and non-formal education to the large population of people who have been excluded from education due to insurgency in the zone. Researchers and Students of Adult Education Departments will also find this study useful in getting literature for further studies. Lastly, it will inform policy makers of the direction of which to make right policies concerning adult literacy and non-formal education delivery.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a qualitative design. According to the Qualitative Research Consultants Association (2017), qualitative research is used when a researcher wants to reveal a target audience's range of behaviour and the causal perceptions, in line with specific topics or issues. In-depth studies of small groups of people guide and support the construction of hypotheses in qualitative studies. Results obtained from qualitative research are descriptive rather than predictive. This study adopted qualitative design because it used focus group discussions and interviews to data on concerns, challenges, prospects and suggestions related to the task of adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North Eastern Nigeria with a view to understanding reasons for the current situation on ground in North East Nigeria.

Sixteen stakeholders of Adult and Non-Formal Education were respondents in each focus group. This consisted of three management team members in each of the six State Agencies for Mass Education; one literacy and non-formal education expert; six literacy organizers/supervisors; two leaders of literacy and non-formal education-focused civil society/non-governmental organizations; one Christian and one Islam faith based organizations representative; the Chairman and Secretary of non-formal education centre based management committees for literacy and non-formal education delivery. This makes a total of 96 respondents.

A total of six focus group discussion was conducted for the study. The respondents were selected through simple random sampling technique from a drawn list of stakeholders. A structured interview guide was used as the instrument for data collection. The questions were centred on the objectives of the study which were on the concerns and challenges, related to the task of adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North East Nigeria. The instrument was validated through face validity by professionals in measurement and evaluation and non-formal education. A pre-test of the instrument was carried out on a group of 10 samples who did not participate in the main study. This enabled the researchers to remove redundant items and modified the items which would affect the smooth conduct of the main focus group discussions. The reliability of responses was ascertained by verifiable data. This was done by cross-checking responses with documented records. As such,

only verified responses were used for the study. Responses were recorded and transcribed for this study. The focus group discussions were arranged at the earliest convenience of the stakeholders concerned. The respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and their consent to participate was sought. Only those who consented to participate engaged in the study. It took a period of one month to complete the study.

## **Results**

### **Research Question 1: What are the Concerns and Challenges Related to the Task of Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education Delivery in North East Nigeria?**

In Adamawa State, the concerns and challenges were unstable tenure of the State governments. This is because Court judgements have led to the removal of three of the last seating Governors. This has implications for political support enjoyed by the Adamawa State Agency for Mass Education. One female discussant in the focus group discussion had this to say on the issue:

*Just when we are about to receive approval of a groundbreaking submission from a seating State Government, the next thing we hear on the news is that there is a regime change. We then lost all efforts put in, and start the process afresh.*

In addition, the Edict establishing the Agency is still an old one. This old edict lack financial backing for the Agency. Added to this was lack of logistics for monitoring; as there is even no grounded vehicle in the State for monitoring. There is also the issue of interference from the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and the Ministry of Education. For instance, the United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) desk officer of SUBEB now dominates over the Desk officer in the Adamawa State Agency for Mass Education. Another issue is the non-approval of memos submitted by the Adamawa State Agency for Mass Education as none of the memo's ever submitted ever scaled through in the past few years.

In Bauchi State, there was the issue of mobility to prosecute literacy. This affected the ability of the Agency to constantly monitor literacy and non-formal education delivery in the State. Also, facilitators who have retired or died are not being replaced.

In Borno State, retraining of staff is a serious issue of concern, instructional materials are lacking or inadequate, the State also lack classes for literacy and non-formal education delivery. The facilitation environment for literacy and non-formal education delivery is not conducive. There are also the issues of access to literacy and non-formal education in the State. Transportation was also cited as one of the challenge confronting the Agency. Insurgency which has for the past eight years hit the State was also cited as a challenge as it has led to the closure of literacy and non-formal education centres in most of the Local Government Areas. No wonder, one of the respondents of the focus group discussion had this to say:

*Out of the 27 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Borno State, 20 were overridden by Boko Haram. This consequently led the inhabitants to flee. As such, literacy centres in all these over-run LGAs by Boko Haram were closed between the period of 2013-2015. Till date, some of these literacy centres are still closed.*

In Gombe State, there was poor working environment even in the headquarters. This is visibly seen in the Headquarters. One discussant in the FGD indicated:

*Look at our office; look at how obsolete the office furniture are. We share our office with Lizards and Termites. The woods used for office demarcations and some of the ceilings have been destroyed by Termites. This place needs a total renovation.*

Other challenges are: Low political commitment of the State government; Lack of follow-up for graduates of basic literacy programmes which results into relapsing into illiteracy, hence the need for continuing education; Poor perception of community members about what adult education is and what the practitioners do; Area officers lack logistic support to effectively carry out their duties. Also, most of the instructors in the area offices are inadequate as it was not surprising to find as low as five instructors in a local government area and in most cases, literacy staff do not even have offices in the local government areas.

In Taraba State, there is limited funding, inadequate training of facilitators, inadequate instructional facilities, lack of logistics for monitoring and evaluation, lack of a multipurpose centre in the State Headquarters and the security of the organization. One male discussant indicated that:

*Despite the nature of the topography in Taraba State, efforts were made to ensure that literacy programmes are in all the Local Government Areas of the State. It is lamentable however, that adequate funds are not made available to run the programmes and monitor them.*

In Yobe State, some literacy and non-formal education programmes such as workers education, nomadic education have become extinct. There is decreased interest in literacy and non-formal education programmes. There is also little or no monitoring and evaluation in the learning centres due to lack of logistics. There are inadequate vehicles to carryout statutory responsibilities. There is shortage of mobile cinemas to boost literacy and non-formal education efforts in the State. Computers at the learning centres are lacking. Funding for adult literacy and non-formal education activities are inadequate.

Capacity development to increase staff capabilities is low. For some time now, the celebration of International Literacy Day does not include the celebration of graduates of literacy and non-formal education which itself publicizes literacy efforts. Hence, there is the need to re-introduce it. One discussant explained that:

*In the past, during the celebration of International Literacy Day which comes up 8<sup>th</sup> September every year, graduates of literacy and non-formal education are celebrated. This publicizes literacy efforts and serves as a motivation to both the graduates and the prospective adult learners. However, today, reverse is the case. As graduates of adult literacy and non-formal education just go to the Headquarters and collect their certificates without the knowledge of their instructors who made them literate.*

The level of partnership and collaborations is still inadequate as more active partnerships and collaborations are still needed. There are inadequate permanent instructors in the State; there is the need for the Yobe State government to increase funding to the Agency to enable it employ permanent instructors. The low level of coordination between Local Government Councils and the State Government is impinging on literacy efforts; and community mobilization level in the state is inadequate.

## **Research Question 2: What are the Prospects and Suggestions for Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education Delivery in North East Nigeria?**

In Adamawa State, the edict establishing the Agency has being submitted for review. It is hoped that when the reform is passed, 2% of LGAs internally generated revenue would be given to The Adamawa State Agency for Mass Education. This would help alleviate some of the financial constraints faced by the Agency. Education Crisis Response (ECR) programme of United States Agency for International Development have also prepared the grounds for better impact of literacy and non-formal education in the State. It is therefore suggested that adequate funding, increased government's commitment, provision of resources and a greater recognition of literacy and non-formal education as a development partner be vigorously pursued in the State. One male discussant had this to say:

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*It is our hope that the state of emergency declared by the current governor's administration will yield a positive result. Because the government has asked for our inputs, identified relevant coordinating ministries and we are now meeting to forge a way forward.*

In Bauchi State, it is hoped literacy and non-formal education will be competitive in future hence the need for collaborations with NGOs and donors to handle literacy issues. In Borno State, it is hoped that if the challenges of funding, training, and advocacy are addressed, it would move literacy and non-formal education to a greater height. An elderly discussant had this to say in the FGD:

*A State like Borno, which is ravaged by insurgency, needs a lot of restoration particularly in the field of education. Consequently, the imperatives of adequate funding, training and advocacy are not negotiable.*

A bright future exists for literacy and non-formal education in Gombe State. The following suggestions would therefore go a long way in realizing the future for adult and non-formal education in Gombe State: Need to review the organogram to make it like that of Bauchi State Agency for Mass Education, where the Agency is headed by an Executive Secretary and Heads of Departments assume the status of Directors of their respective Departments. The State government should come to the aid of Gombe State Adult and Non-Formal Education Agency. There is need for autonomy of the Gombe State Adult and Non-Formal Education Agency. Increased training and workshops should also be conducted for relevant staff.

There is a bright future for literacy and non-formal education in Taraba State especially when the promulgation of the Taraba State Mass Education Board is passed. It is however suggested that the Literacy by Radio programme should be revitalized. One discussant indicated that:

*The literacy by radio programme, though expensive to run, remains one of the most potent instrument or programme for reaching every learner. We have been met at various times with the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education and International NGOs such as UNESCO. We have received training, but are yet to commence the programme.*

In Yobe State, there is also a bright future for literacy and non-formal education. The suggestions to ensure this include: Management committee should put more effort in increasing literacy delivery. Learners should be encouraged more than it is at present. There is the need to involve staff at the zonal and area offices in the certification process.

Adequate vehicles should be provided to the State Agency for Mass Education to carry out its statutory responsibilities. More mobile cinemas should be provided to the State Agency for Mass Education to boost literacy and non-formal education efforts in the State. Computers should be provided to the learning centres in Yobe State. Adequate funding for literacy and non-formal education activities should be provided to the Agency. Capacity development to increase staff capabilities should be undertaken regularly. Each-One-Teach-One approach to fighting illiteracy should be re-introduced. The celebration of International Literacy Day should include the celebration of graduates of literacy and non-formal education which itself publicizes literacy efforts. More active partnerships and collaborations are still needed. One discussant cited:

*If we could get the kind of support we got during the United Nations Development Project of 1995-1997 in which full scale assistance was given to make millions of Nigeria literate in which equipment including technical and financial resources were made, we could impact immensely on adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in Nigeria.*



This statement suggests that Yobe State government should increase funding to the Agency to enable it employ permanent instructors. There should be increased level of coordination between Local Government Councils and the State Government. Lastly, there is the need to improve the level of community mobilization for literacy and non-formal education in the state.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The finding of this study was that there were numerous concerns and challenges facing literacy and non-formal education in the North East Nigeria. This finding agrees with that of Adedokun (2013), who found that poor condition of service was evident in Oyo State. As such, the agency is currently running very limited number of adult (education) literacy classes making use of local Adult Education Officers as facilitators pending the approval of payment of honorarium monthly stipends to the facilitators needed for the programme. Since the facilitators are not motivated, they were less likely to show any sign of commitment. In the learning centres, desks and benches which are not so comfortable for adults are mostly used. Consequently, it may not promote adult learning. The adult (literacy learners) were only supplied free exercise books (2A, 2B, 2D) and primers by the State government. All these were not adequate and unless a bold step is taken to improve the situation efforts on adult education will move down the drain. Training and re-training programme (which is also a programme of adult education) for effectiveness of on the job performance must also be taken seriously because it is about developing human resources to its fullest potential.

Muhammad (2013) submission also supports this finding when he found the problems confronting adult education to 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. The emerging perspectives are on HIV/AIDs, mainstreaming, inter-sectoral linkages and information and communication technology.

The first findings in this study also agrees with Behraves (1969) who found that the challenges confronting adult education in less developed arid regions include: (1) entrusting adult education to agents who may not have the necessary qualifications; (2) a shortage of suitable teaching materials prepared by competent authors and lack of suitable audio visual aids; (3) the need for regular professional supervision and on-the-job training; (4) lack of adequate funds for implementing adult education programs; and (5) the role of local traditions and customs as a reason for resistance from adults.

The second finding agrees with the submission by Ogunbiyi (2015) who suggested that governments at all levels need to make pragmatic legislation as well as improved funding for the relevant agencies of government saddled with the execution of the mass literacy programme. He also, suggested that literacy inclined groups and other related NGOs ought to step up activities and campaigns to increase awareness of the importance of literacy. The second finding of this study also agrees with the National Bureau of Statistics' (2010) recommendations on the ways to promote literacy in Nigeria. Thus:

1. Give more emphasis to adult literacy programmes in the development agenda.
2. Raise the level of literacy education of adults in the formal and non-formal education.
3. Make adult education a key sub-sector of education in Nigeria with requisite recognition and status.
4. The government should establish literacy centers in every Local Government Area in the country.
5. Recruitment of qualified teachers to meet the work the workforce requirement in both formal and non-formal education institutes.
6. Promoting gender equality as the third goal of the MDGS, which support girls' education.
7. The Mass Literacy Centers should have adequate teaching and learning materials.
8. Providing in-service training for the adult literacy teachers to equip them with requisite skills and knowledge to offer quality teaching and motivate learners.
9. Finally, adult and continuing education should not just be a responsibility of government alone. Civil Societies, Faith-Based Organizations, the Private Sector, individuals and Communities should also

contribute to the human capital development and the provision of conducive and quality learning environment.

### **Conclusion**

This study set out to describe the concerns, challenges, prospects and suggestions related to adult literacy and non-formal education delivery in North Eastern Nigeria. From the data gathered from six focus group discussions carried out, it could be concluded in this study that all states were faced with the concerns/challenges of inadequate funding, lack of logistics for monitoring and evaluation; low level of political commitment except in Bauchi State; inadequate instructional materials; inadequate facilitators and existing laws establishing the Agencies are still edicts. However, the prospects are bright for literacy and non-formal education in the North Eastern Nigeria, especially if the old laws establishing the Agencies for Mass Education in the zone are reformed making provisions for improved funding, organizational structure and motivational incentives. This implies that if adult literacy rates are to be significantly improved in North East Nigeria, there is the need to mitigate these concerns and challenges.

### **Acknowledgments**

We wish to acknowledge the high level of cooperation given to the researchers by management staff of Agencies for Mass Education, and other stakeholders of adult and non-formal education in North Eastern Nigeria, that assisted the researchers obtained data for this study.

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**Authors Contribution**

Aishatu Sakir put the article together.

Tijjani Kalli transcribed the notes of the focus group discussions.

Omovigho Rani Ebireri conducted all the six the focus group discussions.