



**NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY**

Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State

**25<sup>TH</sup> INAUGURAL LECTURE**

**THRIVING THROUGH LIFE'S  
CHANGING SCENES:  
MY PERCEPTION OF  
ADULT EDUCATION**

**BY**

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## **DEDICATION**

This Inaugural Lecture is dedicated to God Almighty – giver of life, wisdom and knowledge, my late husband, my children and grandchildren born and yet unborn.

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# **PROTOCOL**

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Distinguished Academics and Administrators

My Beautiful and Unique Families

Respected Chiefs and Elders

Great Niger Delta University Students

Gentlemen of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

I want to first of all, bow and tremble before the Almighty God to declare that He is good. He is excellent, faithful, and great. There is none like Him. I stand before this great audience to say that He is my life and everything. He made me a Professor and qualified me to stand before you on this special day. I am most grateful to Him and I say thank you. I must once again thank my amiable Vice Chancellor, Professor Humphrey A. Ogoni who not only approved this day, but is also seated here as the Chairman of this great occasion.

## **PREAMBLE**

### ***My Academic and Work Life***

I have taught at all levels of the Nigerian educational system. It is safe to suggest that I am very acquainted with the Nigerian educational system in its entirety. I am a seasoned and trained teacher who loves teaching and also licensed to teach and practice by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). I was employed by the Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST) in 1985 to teach in the University Staff School after my Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). While still a teacher in the school, I obtained my first degree in Psychology/Guidance Counselling/English from the University of Port Harcourt and a Master's degree in Educational Management from Rivers State University of Science and Technology. The current Dean of Post Graduate School at NDU, Professor Osa Tawari was my research supervisor during my M.Ed studies. In 1999, I was offered a fresh appointment as an academic staff after a successful interview with a panel headed by Professor John C. Buseri, the Pioneer Vice Chancellor of this great University. He was then the Dean, Faculty of Technical and Science Education Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST). On assumption of duty in the Department of Educational Foundations, I discovered

that the only available programme was adult education. This was my first contact with adult education as a discipline. I was immediately captivated and resolved to study and have true knowledge of what adult education is all about in order to effectively teach it. Gradually, I discovered that adult education has the ability to offer and discover peoples' opportunities. It also has the capacity to transform them and change their circumstances and situations. It was against this premise that I made the radical decision to study adult education at the Ph.D level. I was offered admission twice in the University of Nigeria Nsukka, first on a full-time basis and then the second on part-time. I declined both due to family responsibilities and distance. I was later admitted into the Enugu State University of Science and Technology in 2004. Fortunately or unfortunately, I was told that since I did not study adult education in either first or second degree, I must register and pass all master's degree courses in the discipline before the commencement of the doctoral research. This resulted in my carrying a heavier course load than other colleagues in the Ph.D cohort. Nevertheless, I still successfully passed all the courses as required, commenced my doctoral research, completed and graduated within record time before the rest of the other colleagues that started with me.



## **Introduction**

Vice Chancellor Sir, I salute you and the University authority for granting me this opportunity of presenting the 25<sup>th</sup> inaugural lecture series of this university. This lecture is the 3<sup>rd</sup> from the Faculty of Education and 2<sup>nd</sup> from the Department of Educational Foundations.

Vice Chancellor Sir, permit me to salute my senior colleagues, Professors in the Faculty of Education with special tribute to those of them who had previously presented their inaugural lectures. The first from the Faculty of Education came from Professor Tuemi T. Asuka, and the second from Professor Akpoebi C. Egumu, the current Dean of the Faculty. Today's lecture is the first from the discipline of adult education in Niger Delta University. The lecturer is the first Professor of adult education from Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area and indeed from Bayelsa State.

Vice Chancellor Sir, today I am here to narrate my story of not only what captivated my interest to the study of adult education but to also show that it has been a journey with adult education. A journey that has been a combination of conceptual analysis and empirical investigations. Once again Vice Chancellor Sir, I reiterate that I am delighted and honoured to have the privilege to

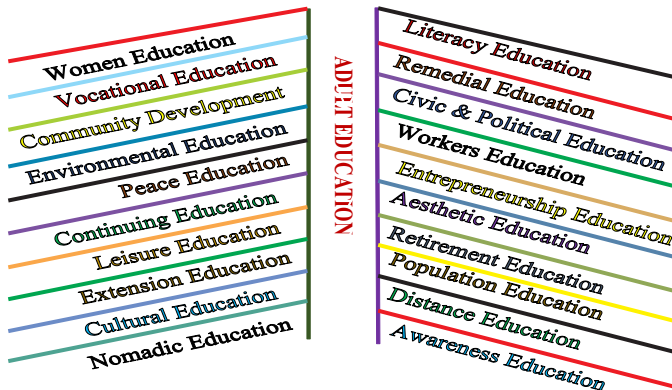
present my inaugural lecture as a Professor of Adult Education before this esteemed audience.

An inaugural lecture serves as an avenue to formerly introduce the individual professor to her/his professorial chair, postulate for future research interests and to also enable the professor present contribution in a particular field of endeavour to the public. This lecture tends to fulfil the later principle.

As a Professor of adult education, I have come to terms with the fact that adult education plays significant role in the life of every individual as such indispensable. The multifarious nature of adult education whose roles are inestimable at all stages of life have influenced this inaugural lecture which has been titled, *Thriving through life's changing scenes: my perception of adult education.*

## Thriving Through Life's Changing Scenes

Life greets us with various scenes from the cradle to the grave. During the lecture, an attempt will be made to underscore the relevance of adult education through the different scenes of life. With adult education individuals have both the programmes and avenues to facilitate lifelong thriving. Figure 1 below depicts the various adult education programmes which collectively ensure that humanity does not merely survive but also thrives.



*Fig. 1: Thriving through Adult Education programmes: Zuofa (2010)*

Vice Chancellor Sir, at this juncture, I need to state that the issue of adult education is very nebulous and cannot be dealt with in only one lecture. Consequently, the subsequent parts of this lecture will focus on providing clarity on the adult, adult education, my perception and wrapping up by providing some concluding remarks.

## **The Adult**

In the field of adult education, the concept 'adult' has over the years been subjected to several debates by its practitioners. This controversy abounded following the peculiarities and circumstances arising from the special setting of the individual. Jarvis (2002) described an adult as one who has achieved biological maturity, one who has achieved the legal chronological age which society has legislated as adulthood, achieve the age at which a person feels himself or herself to be an adult to behave in a mature manner and to be an adult is to be treated in a mature manner by their social group. Havighurst (2003) identified maturity and responsibility as the two key words in the definition of adults. According to Jegede (2015), maturity is concerned with mental and emotional quality. It is the individual's ability to accept and absorb psychological issues. Jegede (2015) further identified three types of maturity as psychological, physiological and sociological.

Psychological maturity is characterised by the individual's ability to control her or his emotions, show independent judgment or assessment, coordinate, keep secrets, fixed value orientation and self-identity. Zuofa (2008) averred that this maturity is the ability of the adult to have developed stability and predictability, thus

suggesting observable changes in the behaviour of the adult. The Physiological maturity refers to the biological changes that take place in the adult, which further prepares her or him to perform the social role of parenthood. Houle (1972) gave credence to this maturity as a person who has attended full physical development, and is expected to have the right to participate as a responsible home maker and a member of the society. This definition presupposes that the adult person is not only physically matured, but possesses the attributes of responsibility. Finally, Sociological maturity is concerned with the changes in social roles through life. This follows that since the adult is committed to her/his community and society, it then means that specific social roles for various categories of people are determined by societies. Sociological maturity therefore denotes the ability of an adult to be involved in social activities prescribed by the society for example; getting married and being married, to cater for yourself and other members of the family as well as holding responsible positions in both social and religious organisations.

Interestingly, with diverse views on the concept adult, parameters were also employed to describe adulthood by scholars in the field of adult education. These parameters include chronological, biological, political, historical and

others. The chronological is measured by the number of years lived by the individual; biological is observed by biological changes affecting the general appearance of the individual. Political is the attainment of the laydown criteria for individual's participation in politics depending on the society, while historical is measured by the individual's capability to recall significant experiences and happenings in the society to the advancement of future generations. It is worth mentioning that these parameters are inexhaustible following the complexity of societies and their connotations to adulthood. Therefore, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1976) proposed that anyone who has attained the responsibilities of maturity, including contributing to economy, either through the family or the community at large, and who is beyond the age at which the majority of those who go to school would normally leave should be considered an adult.

The term adult could also be an embracing category that includes both youths and adults as well as the elderly (Torres, 2003). Torres (2003) added that it refers to population that is 15 years of age and over. A good reason for that is because age 15 coincides with the conventional statistical estimations of adult illiteracy/literacy worldwide. Another salient factor is that there are no

universal understandings and uses of the categories child, youth, and adult. The convention on the Rights of the child calls a person a child until the age of 18, while in many countries, cultures and programmes, those as old as 12 years are considered adults. Depending on the environment or circumstances, the term adult is used as an embracing category to ensure that the desired objective is achieved.

In Nigeria for instance, the National Bureau of Statistics while compiling the unemployment rate, divided the total population into Labour Force (currently active) and Non-Labour Force (not currently active). Both categories cover from age 15 – 64 years. This Bureau invariably recognises 15 years and above as adults in Nigeria. Zuofa (2007a) concluded that though determining who an adult is may assume different connotations, the most outstanding factor still remains that the roles and functions of any adult irrespective of locality are distinguishable from that of a child.

## **Adult Education**

Education is central to all human development. It is a process of developing individuals towards the acquisition of specific attitudes, knowledge, skills and values. It involves awareness creation about any issue that individuals gain from. An educated person is able to initiate, embrace, manage changes, induce the information base thereby improving knowledge and increased potential for creativity. According to Fafunwa (1974), education is the aggregate of all the processes by which one develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society.

The possibility to uniformly or consistently define the concept adult education has hardly been achieved. This is informed by the simple reason that the concept has different meanings in different countries, and in different contexts. The meaning of adult education is largely influenced by socio-cultural and political conditions of each country, state and locality. Peculiar challenges confronting a particular society or individuals at any given time usually influence the definition of adult education. Jarvis (2002) was of the view that the variety of meanings given to the term 'adult' is one reason for adult education being a difficult concept to define.



Sufficient explanations have been given to support why adult education has various definitions. First, let me bring the question to this great audience, what is adult education? Better still, ask the same question to a non-adult education practitioner, what are the expected responses? From experience and research, the most popular responses are:

- It's night school
- It's teaching old people how to read and write

Although, these responses are not entirely wrong, but they only explain very minute aspect of the adult education concept. It would be very necessary however to look at some conceptual definitions and classifications of adult education.

According to Afrik (2000), adult education is divided into two broad categories: traditional or indigenous and contemporary adult education. Traditional adult education is aimed at producing an individual who is reliable, respectable, skilled, cooperative and who adheres to social order of the day. Okedera (1996) referred to contemporary adult education as all available educational activities organised for adults without legal compulsion. Scholars like Omolewa (1981), Aderinoye (1997) and Delkar (1974) perceived adult education as an

organised and sequential learning experience designed to meet the felt needs of adults. Simpson (1972) described adult education as the provision which a society consciously makes either publicly or through approved voluntary organisations of facilities for learning by any one of whatever age whose initial education in school colleges, universities, apprenticeship and initial professional training has been terminated, who wishes to learn any subject whatsoever, for any purpose whatsoever provided of course that the subject does not conflict with the fundamental principle of democratic society. This definition does not pose barrier to participation by any individual in respect of parameter that identifies her/him in any of the categories.

At the world conference on adult education in 2009 (CONFINTEA VI), UNESCO re-endorsed the definition of adult education from the 1976 Nairobi Conference which was further developed based on the Hamburg Declaration of 1997. The definition denotes adult education as “the entire body of ongoing learning process, formal or otherwise, whereby people regarded as adults by their society to which they belong develop their ability, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society”. This

definition is all embracing. Primarily, it is an educative enterprise that recognises the flexibility of mode of delivery to individuals regarded as adults in their immediate environment for their development and participation in the larger society.

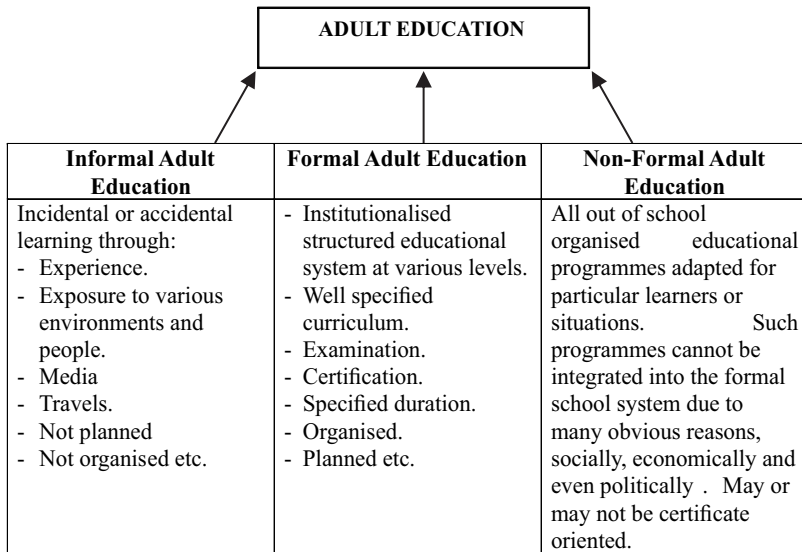
The definition of the concept adult education can go on and on without limit. The lecturer in 2006 summarised the concept by explaining that it is programmes or activities to encourage individuals of all ages to enhance their abilities and potentials through formal, informal and non-formal education (Zuofa, 2006a). This education is based on the individuals, social, economic, cultural, political and religious needs which should enhance their scope of facing immediate and future challenges. My stand on the meaning of adult education is based on my research interest over the years, but if UNESCO's (2009) definition of adult education is adopted it means that apart from literacy and other programmes, adult education includes full and part time programmes leading to the award of certificates at various levels of formal educational system. This implies that adult education is available to all individuals irrespective of age and need. No wonder, Zuofa (2013) maintained that adult education can be classified as being broad and loose. In essence, it has a wide range of activities or programmes for all time development.

An important question may be asked again, how could it be identified that an activity or programme is adult education? For any activity or programme to be classified as adult education, certain criteria must be visible:

- it must have a minimum of educational component.
- it must be intentional, deliberately organised and systematic enterprise.
- it could involve activities outside the school system or within the school system.
- its activity/programme should be relevant to meet the situational needs of the participants.
- it should be linked with intention to improve personal living, whether in social or economic terms and national development (Zuofa, 2013; UNESCO, 2001; and Bockarie, 1991).

Invariably, adult education programmes create opportunity for individuals to acquire knowledge relevant in their needs without compulsion.

It has earlier on been stated that adult education could be informal, formal and non-formal. This lecture acquaints you with these various forms as shown in Figure 2:



**Fig. 2: Forms of Adult Education: Zuofa (2006a)**

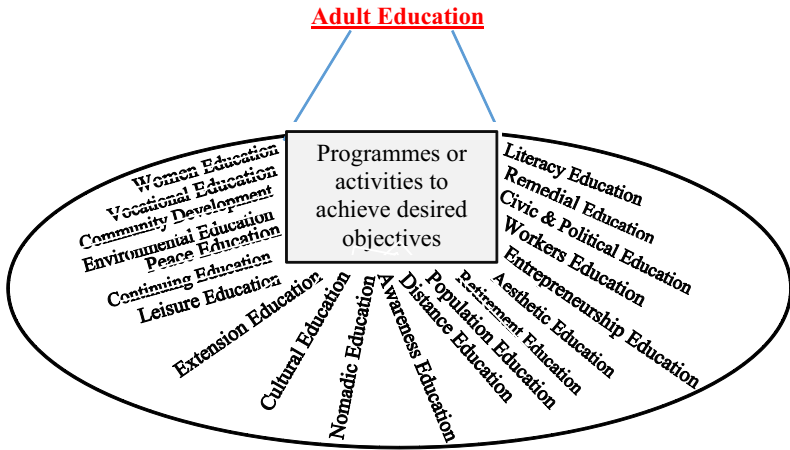
As highlighted in the figure above, the various forms of adult education demonstrate that all planned educational programmes are achieved either through formal or non-formal adult education except the informal adult education which is not planned or organised.

## **The scope and programmes of Adult Education**

The scope of adult education is wide ranging and the programmes inexhaustible. The studies of Anowor, Ezema & Umezuluike (2001), Nzeneri (2008) and Zuofa (2009d) affirmed that the scope of adult education is as broad as life. They also suggest that this covers a wide spectrum of activities affecting the wellbeing and progress of human beings. Discussing the scope, UNESCO (1976) maintained that adult education is an integral part of life long education that can contribute decisively to economic and cultural development, social progress and world peace as well as the development of educational systems. Nyerere (1978) clearly revealed that the scope of adult education incorporates anything which enlarges men's understanding, activates them, help them to make their own decisions and to implement these decisions for themselves. Nyerere (1978) further reiterated that adult education covers many subjects learned at school and also applies to all learning endeavours which involve every individual without exception. This suggests that there are always opportunities to learn. Individuals, irrespective of class or educational status usually can learn in adult education. Those who have never been to any school, those who never attended secondary school or university and those

who are educated at all levels still have what to learn. For instance, learning about work, other areas of knowledge and life in general that were not taught in school. This scope extends to learning about and understanding of the human environment and the best way it can be utilised to improve and make progress in life. The scope of adult education also covers all educative experiences required to meet varying interests at various levels of ability changing roles and responsibilities in the society as well as being able to comprehend diversity in character and attitude (Zuofa, 2011).

Furthermore, Zuofa (2007b) explained that the scope of adult education is expressed through its numerous programmes. These programmes afford individuals opportunity to acquire various skills and vocations as well as create awareness and inculcate the need for sound economic development of a democratic system. Zuofa (2006a & 2007a) identified programmes of adult education to include the following aspects shown in figure 3.



**Fig. 3:** Zuofa (2006&2007)

Apart from these programmes other ones emerged as human needs increase and adult education continues to thrive. Some other programmes that emerged included voter education, labour education, retirement education etc. These and other adult education programmes make it possible for individuals to cope with influx of changes in the world as a result of technological innovations, globalisation and modernisation which are in continuous expansion. Invariably as new programmes emerge based on needs of individuals, community, state and nations, the scope of adult education continues to widen.



## **My Perception**

Vice Chancellor Sir, My perception of adult education is woven around the low level of commitment by various Governments in Nigeria (Federal, State and Local Government Authority) over this life thriving discipline. The National Policy on Education (NPE) which has been revised severally, 1981, 1998, 2004, 2013 and 2014 provides a good basis to question the policy provision for adult education. First, Section 6 of the National Policy on Education (NPE) described adult education as Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education. Article 31 in this section specified that mass literacy adult and non-formal education encourages all forms of functional education given to youths and adults outside the formal school system, such as functional literacy, remedial education and vocational education. From this article, the limitation of what adult education is and what it can achieve emerged. It is described as education given to youths and adults outside the formal school system. This negates the fact that adult education has role to play in the formal school system. Zuofa (2004) research on “*Globalising the School Curriculum for National Growth and Productivity: Adult Education in Perspective*” noted that the Nigerian Policy on Education expects the basic education to include adult and non-formal education

programmes in the nine year duration of primary and junior secondary school levels. However, Section 13 of the policy document, Articles 15 and 16 stated that basic education shall also include adult and non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary levels for adults and out-of-school youths. In the same vein, the goals set for adult and non-formal education are instrumental to the achievement of goals set for all levels of basic education. These goals are specified for adult and non-formal education as well as the first two tiers of formal school system. This constitutes basic education under the national policy in Section 6 Article 32 among others which includes functional literacy and continuing education, remedial education, further education, workers education, vocational and professional training necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education. The same policy however limits the envisaged beneficiaries of adult and non-formal education to out-of-school learners. Mass literacy, adult and non-formal education stipulated under Article 31 encourages all forms of functional education given to adults, outside the formal school system, while as stated earlier, the adult and non-formal education included in basic education under Article 15 was meant for out-of-school youths. My perception here Vice Chancellor Sir is that there is need for integration of adult education programmes into the formal school

system. This however has not been achieved despite several reviews of policy. There is need to do that including the revision of the school curriculum.

This same work Zuofa (2004), examined some other sections of the National Policy on Education (NPE) that have to do with the development of Nigerians in the school system from the early age. In Section 2, Article 13 among other purposes of pre-primary education which is currently housed under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme stipulated the:

- inculcation of social norms.
- inculcation of the spirit of enquiry and creativity.
- development of sense of cooperation and team spirit and;
- inculcation of good habits (FRN/NPE, 2014:8).

The primary education level of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) was mandated by the National Policy on Education (NPE) as well to:

- inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively.
- lay a sound basis for scientific thinking.
- give a citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.

- mold the character and develop sound attitude.
- develop in the child ability to adapt to the child's changing environment.
- give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of child's capacity and;
- provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality (FRN/NPE, 2014:11).

Specific goals were also set for the secondary education in Section 5 of the National Policy on Education (NPE). Those objectives that have direct bearing with human growth included the following:

- offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles.
- provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub professional grades.
- inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence.
- raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of

others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and good citizen and;

- provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development (FRN/NPE,2014:14)

Vice Chancellor Sir, my perception is that most of these set goals cannot be achieved through conventional formal teaching in various subject areas; rather, they could only be achieved in the domains of affective and/or psychomotor components that are beyond instructional procedures. Gagne (1977) and Anowor (2006) observed that attitudes and values can hardly be influenced by mere information transfer. Zuofa (2009) maintained that inculcation of attitudes and values are beyond the scope of the conventional training given to mere classroom teacher. Illich (1970) stated that adequate provision of attitude and value education is not made in the conventional school curriculum and time-table. This is why Knowles (1970) explained that adult education through its andragogical procedures for all skills development attitude and value inculcation, capacity building and behaviour modification is well suited to achieve all these. Vice Chancellor Sir, my perception is that adult education should be included in the formal

school system in Nigeria for the attainment of the set goals. Apart from including it in the school system, functional trained manpower (facilitators) should be part of the teaching staff in the formal school system. It has been proven that adult education possesses the ability to provide educational programmes designed around the needs of learners and educational policy-makers. It therefore has the capacity of developing human potentials starting from the early childhood to late adulthood.

Vice Chancellor Sir, adult education does a lot in all facets of human endeavours. Many of the roles of adult education have been documented in the lecturer's researches of which one or two are included in this segment. Zuofa (2012) in a study titled “*Gender Equity, Women Empowerment and Development in Nigeria: The Role of Adult Education*”, ascertained that the sex of an individual in Nigeria could limit or promote the level of participation in societal affairs, socially, economically, politically and otherwise. It was also established that the ability to participate was influenced by how well the individual was empowered to understand her or his self as well as the society because empowerment of an individual created opportunity for both personal and community development. Specific adult education programmes such as literacy education, civic and

political education, and community education among others were strategies utilised to achieve the desired objectives.

In the diversified nature of adult education, Zuofa (2010c) established how through adult education programmes relevant skills, aptitudes and competences that could make individuals more functional, useful to themselves and the society were achieved. This seminal work examined the Nigerian educational structure and system from pre-independent era to the present and recommended a review of the policy provision to integrate adult education at all levels of the educational system. The big question is, has this been done? I use this forum once again to explain that infusing adult education into the formal school system for all the categories of learners equips them with living patterns that encourages and maintains sustainability.

Finally, Zuofa (2007a) in a paper titled, “*Creating Learning Opportunities for All Through Adult Education in Niger Delta*” articulated that in recent times there had been violence and other incidents that are seen to be anti-peace in the region and other parts of Nigeria especially youth restiveness. The obvious reasons for this kind of situation is very familiar to all of us – unemployment,

poor self-esteem and attitude. Various programmes of adult education that could be used to improve these people were identified as, remedial education, vocational education, literacy education, community development, civic/political education and many others. The paper recommended that government organisations and other providers of adult education, should adhere to UNESCO (1976) goals of adult education which if well implemented would create peace, unity and progress in individuals' lives and that of the society. These goals are:

- promoting work for peace, international understanding and cooperation;
- developing a critical understanding of major contemporary problems and social changes with a view to achieving social justice;
- developing increased awareness of the relationship between people and their physical and cultural environment, and to respect nature, the common heritage and public property;
- creating understanding and respect for the diversity of customs and to develop solidarity at the family, local, national, regional and international levels;
- acquiring either individually in groups or in the context of an educational establishments, new knowledge, qualifications, attitudes or forms of



full majority of the personality;

- ensuring the individual's consciousness and effective incorporation into working life by providing men and women with and advanced technical and vocational education so as to develop the ability to create individually or in groups new material goods and new spiritual or aesthetic values;
- developing the ability to critically use mass communication media, in particular radio, television, cinema and the press, so as to be able to interpret the various messages addressed to modern men and women by society and;
- develop an aptitude for learning how to learn.

Vice Chancellor Sir, my perception is that adult education thrives in all and for all.

Vice Chancellor Sir, another perception highlighted in this lecture is literacy education which is one of the programmes of adult education. Conceptually and empirically proven, literacy education has the capacity to achieve the following among others:

- community development.
- economic empowerment.
- control of economic empowerment.
- a veritable tool for improving livelihood.

- access economic resources.

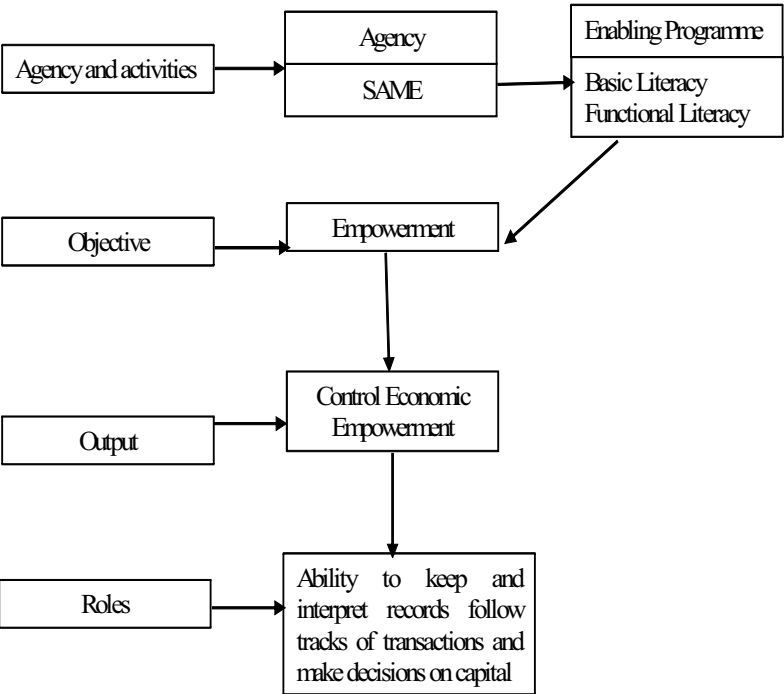
These and other areas, on the relevance of literacy education the lecturer has extensively researched into. For instance in a work titled “*Community Development: The Role of Literacy Education among Rural Women in Bayelsa State of Nigeria*”. Zuofa (2009b) identified that literacy level was very low in Bayelsa State especially among the rural women. The study appraised the activities of the State Agency on Mass Education (SAME) in providing literacy education to the rural women. Many women who benefited from this programme improved firstly in their perception of the world around them, enhanced their participation in developmental activities in the communities and application of the acquired literacy skills to the improvement of their daily living and health care.

Zuofa & Igbo (2009) study on the “*Perceived Influence of Duration of Literacy on Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Bayelsa and Imo States, Nigeria*”, established that irrespective of the duration of participation in the literacy programmes, its influence was positive and impactful. The study revealed that rural women from both states whose participation varied in terms of duration, perceived the influence of literacy education on their economic empowerment as positive.

Some of the recommendations made suggested more sensitisation exercises to encourage the participation of rural women in literacy education programmes as well as providing adequate and more literacy centres in both states.

In 2010, Zuofa investigated the activities of State Agency on Mass Education (SAME) in both Bayelsa and Imo States, in a research titled “*Perceived Influence of Literacy Education on Control Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Bayelsa and Imo States of Nigeria*”. The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of literacy education programmes and their ability to have control economic empowerment. The study concluded that the control economic empowerment in relation to decision making, keeping of records of business transactions and occupying leadership position brought to light the role of literacy education among rural women. The researcher had earlier on observed that the rural women who participated in literacy education handled their business and other family issues with ease and broader outlook. Sadly part of the result of the research revealed that some rural women irrespective of benefiting from literacy education remain disempowered due to social and cultural practices.

Figure 4 represents a diagrammatic description of the provision of literacy education by State Agency on Mass Education (SAME), objective, output and roles.



**Fig. 4:** *Control Economic Empowerment Model*  
*Adapted from Zuofa (2010b)*

Zuofa (2011) in paper titled “*Literacy: A Veritable Tool for Improving Livelihood in Nigeria*” examined the literacy situation in some states in Nigeria as indicated in table below:

**Table 1: Literacy Situation in Some Selected States in Nigeria**

States	Projected population 15 years and above	Literates	Illiterates	Percentage illiterates
Abia	1,399,394	565,101	864,293	60.0
Adamawa	1,133,498	3,383,931	7,95,105	70.1
Akwa Ibom	2,334,538	1,580,389	754,139	32.3
Anambra	2,748,822	1,662,459	1,186,363	42.0
Bayelsa	1,182,452	705,448	477,004	40.3
Benue	2,848,694	1,332,058	1,516,636	53.2
Borno	2,614,308	643,376	1,970,930	75.4
Grand Total % illiteracy rates				

**Source:** *Education for All (EFA) Report in Aderinoye (2007a)*

It was found that there was need for increased provision of literacy education programme considering the number of adults that were still incapacitated due to their illiteracy level. The study identified the gains of literacy in many African countries including Nigeria and how the beneficiaries tended to be more willing to take initiatives

in developing and diversifying their livelihoods, became more productive, understood family planning and enjoyed better quality of life. Finally, it advocated for effective integration of literacy and livelihood as well as provision of more literacy programmes.

Zuofa & Olori (2011) study on “*Rural Women Perceived Influence of Literacy Education on Access Economic Resources in Bayelsa and Imo States, Nigeria*” examined the perception of rural women who benefited in literacy education on how it influenced their access to economic resources. This research revealed that literacy education had great positive influence on rural women because it enabled them develop the ability to take decisions and utilise economic resources such as finance, farmlands and animals, family ownership and possession of property.

Vice Chancellor Sir, I can go on and on stating my perception on this beautiful subject of adult education, but it would interest this audience to have more insight on the concept literacy education. Literacy Education has been defined in various ways as influenced by several circumstances. UNESCO (2004) defined literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. It involves a

continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve her or his goals, to develop her/his knowledge and potentials and participate fully in the wider society. This definition clearly indicates that literacy education is all encompassing. It has the ability to enable individuals read, write and use numeracy information, express ideas and solve problems as family members, workers citizens and lifelong learners.

Literacy eliminates hopelessness, powerlessness and poverty as such, essential for both self and national development (Zuofa, 2005 & 2011; UNESCO, 2010 and Bhola, 1983). Grass root development must be tied to literacy education because it requires the kind of education that would translate into improved productivity and participation. Wagner (2000) explained that illiteracy rate in rural areas are more than twice as in urban areas. The study added that the larger majority of the illiterates are women. Zuofa (2008) observed that literacy education is capable of empowering these women and change their status. This research also added that empowerment through literacy has been a constant refrain since the inception of literacy campaigns. It is important to note that adult learning can be based on people's own heritage, cultural value and prior experiences. The diverse ways in which these approaches are implemented through literacy

enables and encourages people to be actively involved and have a voice. Having voice means being empowered and empowerment is the center piece of all education including adult education. In fact, much of the rhetoric surrounding the importance of literacy utilises the metaphors and imagery that connote empowering the individual against potential oppression and a great deal of anecdotal evidence shows that empowerment can be a product of literacy education. UNESCO (2004) was versed in reports from several countries including India, Nepal, Senegal, South Africa, Kenya, Turkey to mention but a few where empowerment has been achieved through literacy education.

Vice Chancellor Sir, may I reiterate that the government should provide more literacy education programmes for the people in the rural areas especially the women. There is a lot that literacy education can do in the life of individuals especially women. My mother, Mrs. Huldah Chioma Anuforom of blessed memory was an epitome of the veracity of a rural woman. She had a little exposure to literacy education which equipped her in life. She wrote all her letters and kept records in her native dialect. She was a confident woman, a home doctor, nutritionist and chief caterer, sanitary inspector, baby carer, seamstress and a great organiser. She was committed to her family,



church and the local community. She lived an exceptional honest and God fearing life because of her understanding of who she was. Women need various forms of literacy. The rural women are waiting. Let the government arise and provide more literacy education for the populace.

Vice Chancellor Sir, my next perception is Women Education. What is women education? Even adult education students when confronted with that question as pre-course evaluation exercise, usually respond thus – education provided for women to teach them how to cook, take care of themselves and family. Women education is much more than that. Zuofa (2006b) posited that women education in Africa and Nigeria in particular involves the analysis of educational attainment by women and the difficulties experienced in attaining such. It refers to the systematic involvement of the female in all educational activities of the school system. This education is also an enlightenment strategy to eliminate all unwholesome cultural and traditional practices that work against not only women, but the entire society. In addition, it touches on fundamental issues of gender disparity which of course is not limited to Nigeria or Africa alone but ancient and global (Akinkugbe, 1994). This gender disparity which is deeply rooted in Africa and Nigeria culture in particular is basically responsible for having women education and not men education.

According to Zuofa (2006b), education in traditional African society was informal until the entry of the Christian missionaries as well as other early Europeans who came in for various purposes. The education of people depended to a great extent on the role each individual played in the society. For instance, the males were educated to be warriors, hunters, wrestlers, blacksmiths etc while the females were educated in ways that would enable them function adequately as mothers and wives. Invariably, the education of women in the traditional African societies was to equip them with skills to enable them play role as wives and mothers effectively. Fafunwa (1974) observed that in the traditional African societies, education was informal and was provided for both male and female, although females were limited to only education that would prepare them to fulfil the deep rooted social tradition which clearly spell out the primary roles of women. These roles Fafunwa (1974) added were centred around child bearing and domestic pre-occupation. Amukka (1986) confirming this, asserted that it is generally believed among Nigerians that girls should be trained informally to become good wives and mothers in future; this Amukka (1986) stated is regarded as traditional role of women. Opara (1996) also observed that Nigerian culture assigns traditional sex roles which are naturally exclusive to females and males. These

specific assigned roles for the females along with various cultural practices relegated the position of women, to that of deprivation, degradation and subjugation in the society. The women should be “seen not heard” syndrome was the order of the day or the attitude displayed. The discrimination against the female was very pronounced from the family level up to the larger community. The only family plan was to get married in which case the proceeds (dowry etc) were used for the training of male children in the family. The traditional education of women in the Nigerian society aimed at producing:

- meek and docile wife.
- child bearer and carer.
- tiller of the soil, sower of good crops and fish farmer.
- invisible workhorse – a robot, and above all
- human pleasure giver.

Interestingly, the Nigerian woman gladly performed the above functions and saw herself as a companion to the man, being in the family to make peace, manage the family with unreserved love, loyalty, joy and total submission to the husband. Sadly, this privilege of the woman's servitude is mostly abused by almost all African men.

Following the arrival of Western Civilization in Nigeria, formal education was introduced. Fafunwa (1974) reported that early Catholic Missionaries visited Benin in 1515, established a school in the Oba's palace for his sons and sons of his chiefs. King Eyo of Calabar and his sons were already literate during the exploratory mission of the church of Scotland Mission in 1846. Gradually, more schools were established, but the emphasis was on the training of males who they used as administrative assistants, clerks, teachers, clergymen, messengers and interpreters. The effect was that while the males were making progress via Western education the females were busy attending to domestic duties believed to be more relevant to them as future wives and mothers. Thus formal education became the exclusive privilege for males to the detriment of females. Where girls were allowed to attend schools, it was subject to review depending on the needs of the family. The result was that most of them never had opportunity to complete primary education. Those that managed to complete were discouraged from going beyond that level. Osinilu (1994) wrote on women education and explained that the first girls' school (CMS Girls' seminary) came into being in 1869, ten years after the boys' school was established. Fafunwa (1974) also explained that the curriculum of the girls' school was sex stereotyped. Only Home Economics and Arts subjects

were taught. It was also observed that the Girls Grammar School was a sort of finishing school where girls were prepared for their future roles as wives and mothers.

Vice Chancellor Sir, this background once again underscores the reasons why there is women education and no men education. My perception here has been highlighting the need to encourage females in educative activities, discouraging those cultural practices that discriminate against them as well as relegating them to the background. Zuofa (2000) examined “*Women Education in Nigeria: Purpose and Inherent Obstacles*”. This highlighted the purpose of women education, the role of the woman in the family and society at large as well as identifying those factors that hindered women education. Among other recommendations was that the school curriculum should include aspects of family life education in primary and secondary schools' social studies. This would gradually build up a better attitude towards the family more especially on the education of women. Reorientation of attitudes of females irrespective of age towards education to encourage positive development of self-image and evaluation.

Zuofa (2006b), in a book, “*Issues in Women Education in Nigeria*”, appraised women education during pre-

colonial, colonial and post-colonial era. Various factors that hindered women education were identified. From the book, it was observed that in the post independent Nigeria, many leaders made effort to ensure that more educational opportunities were made available to encourage both children and adults irrespective of sex. Other significant steps taken by government to improve both access and quality of education were 1969 National Curriculum Conference, 1973 Seminar which finally gave rise to National Policy on Education, establishment of Women Education units in both Federal and State Ministries of Education, Blue print on Women Education and several other policy decisions to improve not only education in general but the education of women. It was however highlighted that although great percentage of women have acquired education, it has not stopped the country from being a male dominated society (Zuofa, 2006b). Well defined roles have been specifically given to women-daughter, sister, wife, mother-in-law, grandmother and widow. These roles the society sees as inferior to male roles. This is the conception of most men in Nigeria as most of them feel threatened when they have women who are educated, understand themselves and their world around them. Vice Chancellor Sir, women education will continue to strive to educate not only the women to educationally improve themselves for greater

self-relevance, to their families and the society but also to encourage the men to ignore those unprogressive traditional practices that are hinged on selfishness against women for a better family and societal progress.

Vice Chancellor Sir, the next perception is that adult education is a tool for sustainable human development. Nigeria as a nation was involved in four development decades targeted on national income as measured by GDP – Gross Domestic Product, Physical Infrastructure and increase in energy consumption, agricultural and mineral productivity etc by the United Nations. These observed development decades were 1960 – 1970 [first UN Development Decade (DD)], 1971 – 1980 (second UN Development Decade), 1981 – 1990 (Third UN Development Decade), and 1991 – 2000 (fourth UN Development Decade).

These evolutions suggest that development is a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structure, attitudes and institutions for accelerated economic growth, reduction on inequality and eradication of poverty. Igbokwe & Agala (1995) explained that development is for the people, and must therefore meet their needs. It is hitherto a state to increase its human resources with the aim of achieving higher outcome of

production for the satisfaction of basic needs of majority of its citizens and empowering them to make demands on the government. This means that development is seen as a process progressively satisfying basic human needs which entails the need for self-determination, self-reliance, political freedom and security, participation in decision making, national and cultural identity and choice of purpose in life and work. As people oriented, Chukwuezi (2009) maintained that it is a change from the condition of community dependency to that of self-reliance, and stage where decision making is all encompassing. Nyerere (1978) indicated that development has to contribute to an enlargement of man's ability in every way. In particular it has to help men to decide for themselves in cooperation what development is. It must help men to think clearly, it must enable them to examine the possible alternative course of action; to make a choice between these alternatives in keeping with their own purposes and it must equip them with ability to translate their decision into reality (Nyerere 1978 cited in Ezimah, 2004:38). Thus, development is conceived as a structural transformation, which comprises cultural, political, social and economic changes. It is this transformation evident in the four development decades that culminated to the increasing realisation of those quantifiable dimensions that gave birth to human development.



The concept of human development is multidimensional and complex. This is closely related to the complexity of human nature – the interaction with each other as individuals and social groups the perception of the ecosystem and human reaction to the environment. Human development is therefore about placing people at the centre of development. It is about people's realisation of their potentials, increasing their choices and enjoying the freedom to lead lives they value. This development is the process of enlarging people's choice and creating an environment which affords opportunity to individuals to develop their full potentials and lead lives that they value. However, choices in principle can be infinite and change over time. In essence, human development is much more than economic growth which is only a means of enlarging people's choices. Building human capabilities is the most fundamental thing to enlarging the various choices which centre on the range of things that people can do or be in life. The most basic capabilities for human development are characterised with three essential features that are eminent:

- for people to live a long and healthy life;
- acquire knowledge, and;
- access resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community.

Without these, many opportunities in life remain inaccessible. Consequently, Agosin, Bloom & Gitli (2000) observed that human development is a vital instrument which helps to promote human and social capital of the countries, leading to the economic and social development and, of course, the human well-being of people in such countries. This implies that the sole aim of human development is to enhance the quality of life. Human life as determined by a set of interrelated factors that cuts across many disciplines with varied perspectives. These include, but not limited to the prevailing culture, health status, economic performance, political and social conditions, the building of human capacity and capabilities as well as institutional development. By implication, any environment characterised by enhanced quality of human life, has people who are expected to live long and productive lives, enjoy good health, have access to knowledge and educational opportunities, have regard for others, participate in governance decisions that affect their lives and the community in which they live is said to have attained human development. Invariably, this development could rightly be conceived as the expansion and enlargement of people's freedom to long living, healthy and creative lives capable of advancing other goals they have value for, and actively engage in shaping

development equitably and sustainable on the environment.

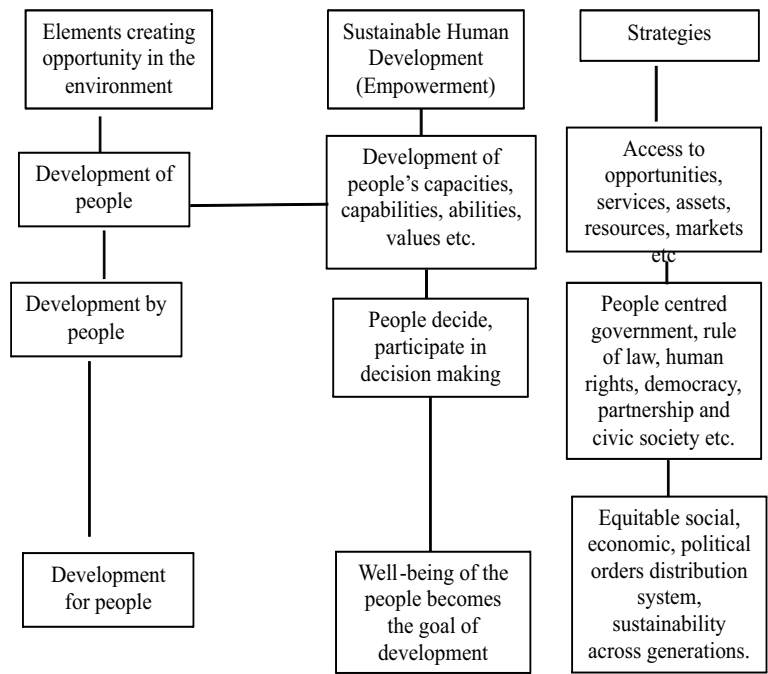
The environment is closely linked to sustainable development. Sustainable development was a term that was first used in a publication titled: “*Our Common Future*” which was a report from United Nation (UN) World Commission on Environment and Development (*WCED*) in 1987. This report is also referred to as a Brundtland Report in recognition of one time Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland's role as the chair of the commission that produced it. According to this report sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The definition of 'needs' in particular the essential, needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given and the idea of limitations imposed by the environment ability to meet present and future needs (*WCED*,1987). This view underscores the fact that sustainability is an obligation to future generations (towards meeting their needs), as such intergenerational allocation.

Giving credence to this, Awan (2013) observed that after a three successive earth summits, held by over 170 countries in 1992, 1997 and 2002, sustainable

development was identified as giving special attention to the worldwide conditions that pose severe threats to the sustainable development of the people which include chronic hunger, malnutrition, foreign occupation, armed conflict, illicit drug problems, corruption, natural disasters, communicable diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. It is not surprising that the overall goal of this development is the long-term stability of the economy and environment (Emas, 2015). Emas (2015) added that this can only be achieved through the integration and acknowledgement of economic, environmental as well as social. Social dimension encompasses workers health and safety, impact on local communities, quality of life that benefits the disadvantaged groups. The economic is concerned with the creation of new markets, opportunities for sales growth, cost reduction through efficiency improvements and reduced energy and raw material puts to creation of additional value, while environmental effluent generates emission to the environment, reduced impact on human health, use of renewable raw materials and elimination of toxic substances. The protection of the environment from toxic and other dangerous substance underscores the need for sustainable human development.

Sustainable human development is a dynamic self-driven process that comprises both people centred and society focused. It is the development that promotes the integral development of the people today without compromising the development of the people tomorrow (Gutierrez, 2000). It has as its ultimate goal the wellbeing of all people. No wonder it is conceived as people-centred. This implies the development of people by people and for the people. Development of people denotes investing in developing the capacities and capabilities of the people, while development by people implies that the people make or participate in the decisions about their own development, whereas development for people entails that the sustained well-being of all people on earth over generations is the ultimate goal of development.

Figure 5 shows a modified component of sustainable human development.



**Fig. 5:** *Modified Components of Sustainable Human Development by Zuofa (2010c)*

Figure 5 is indicative of the fact that Human Sustainable Development is a development that not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably, that which regenerates the environment rather than destroying it, that which empowers people rather than marginalising them. It gives priority to the poor, enlarging

their choices and opportunities and providing for their participation in decisions affecting them. In effect sustainable human development is a development that is pro-poor, pro-nature, pro-jobs, pro-women and pro-children.

Zuofa (2010a) established that to cope with the necessary adjustments, people must learn new ways. These new ways are incorporated in various forms of learning activities as needed by the people. According to Zuofa (2010c), this development enhances capabilities of today's generations and maintains resources to maximise capabilities for future generations. Hence, a powerful instrument of economic growth and development since it is the source of the sustained human and social capital leading to the sustained well-being (Agosin, Bloom & Guitli, 2000). This development involves two complimentary strategies namely: empowering people and creating an enabling environment for the sustained achievement of their goals and aspirations. Sustainable human development is therefore an integrated development that seeks to reconcile in a holistic, mutually reinforcing way, people's social economic, cultural, political and environmental goals and values, including moral, ethnical and spiritual dimensions.

Vice Chancellor Sir, my perception on Sustainable Human Development is that it is a development that is pro-nature, men, women, youth, children, and even the poor in the society. This development accommodates their necessary adjustment, creates room for knowledge acquisition, which involves learning. UNESCO (1997), maintained that there are many unsatisfied Basic Learning Needs (BLN) among children, youths and adults in various settings such as home, community, school, out of school, cultural and recreational centres, work place, mass media and everyday life activities. They believe that these Basic Learning Needs (BLN) are not just one face off thing, but occur throughout life. This means that it is not just during a specific period in the life of an individual, but change overtime as such must be updated as realities and knowledge evolve. Torres (2003) also noted that learning for human development purposes requires not only good education and training, but ensuring and enhancing all types of learning environments, relationships and practices where children, youths and adults learn individually, collectively and from each other, at home, while playing and working, by reading and writing, by socialising and associating with others through community participation and through practice of citizenship.



Vice Chancellor Sir, Zuofa (2010c) identified that adult education, through its numerous programmes accommodates and addresses all learning and adjustment needs that are relevant to achieve sustainable human development. The study further established that through literacy, entrepreneurship, vocational, civic, women education, community and environmental education programmes, environmental and ethical developmental issues, value, standards skill and behaviour consistent with sustainable human development were achieved. Also in another study carried out by Zuofa and Adeyemo in 2013, in four local government areas of Bayelsa State, titled “*Adult Education in Nigeria: Effects on Food Security, Women and Youth Development*”, it was found among others that there was positive effect of adult education programmes in the development of both rural women and youths. Previous studies by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) corroborated that adult education contributes meaningfully to the growth and development of individual and society.

Vice Chancellor Sir, part of my perception is that sustainable human development effort is not to lose focus that the world in recent times is confronted with major challenges which include but not limited to effects of globalisation, economic recession, increasing

unemployed youths, unemployed rural women and so many unsatisfied learning needs that cut across all categories of individuals. In addition, the demographic trends with population explosion, as well as the labour market which is gradually changing, partly because of fast technological developments are all challenges that are tackled with the emergence of more knowledge – based economies and societies . This makes training and education more important than ever before. Supporting these, Obanya (2015) stated that the key elements in promoting, sustainable human development is having an appropriate type of education that is needed by all. For instance, not only is it relevant for people to update their skills, but also to acquire new ones in order to live and prosper in a modern society, and also for personal satisfaction and fulfilment. The moi-moi seller wants to learn a better way to prepare and package moi-moi. The farmer in the rural community is interested in improving farming and the yields. What is required to achieve all these is appropriate adult education programme which thrives through life's changing scenes.

## **Concluding Remarks**

Vice Chancellor Sir, there is no doubt that I have been able to educate this great audience that adult education is not just a night school. It is not also education for only old people or to learn how to read and write. Adult education is an organised and sequential learning experience designed to meet the needs of all. By assisting individuals to increase competence or negotiate transitions in their social lives, and solve personal and communal problems, adult education integrates individuals into a level of consciousness where they know and believe in their potentialities to a point of active participation that brings about desirable change in the society.

I bring this lecture to a close by making the following recommendations:

1. Review of the education policy by relevant authorities to integrate adult education into all levels of educational system in Nigeria.
2. Funding is key to the success of any programme. The various Agencies of adult education should be adequately funded to achieve desired objectives.
3. Women affairs ministries and Orientation Agencies need adult education experts either as staff or consultants as well as employing adult education graduates to facilitate their various activities.

4. There should be integration of local indigenous culture with modernity through adult education in order to achieve the much talked about sustainable human development.
5. Both Federal and State Ministries of Women Affairs and Youth Development should encourage more adult education programmes especially literacy and women education.
6. Functional trained facilitators should be recruited as teaching staff in the formal school system.
7. Providers of adult education should strictly adhere to UNESCO'S recommendation of goals on adult education.
8. Relevant authorities should intensify effort to ensure that family life education is included in the school curriculum.
9. Federal, State and Local Government Agencies should coordinate their activities for effective adult education delivery.
10. In-service training should be provided for facilitators of various adult education programmes regularly.

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## **Brief profile of Professor Comfort Chiegenashi Zuofa**

Prof. Comfort Chiegenashi Zuofa was born over 60 years ago to Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Anuforom of Obokwe Mbieri in Mbaitolu Local Government Area of Imo State. She completed her primary education at Mbieri Central School, Mbieri. Her secondary school education was in both St. Catharine's Secondary School Mbieri and Asa High school. She undertook a one year pivotal course at St. John's College, Diobu and was awarded the Teacher's Grade II Certificate. Comfort Zuofa also attended Rivers State College of Education and was awarded the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). She obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology/Guidance & Counselling/English from the University of Port Harcourt.

She was awarded a Master of Education degree in Educational Management from the Rivers State University of Science and Technology and a PhD in Adult Education from Enugu State University of Science and Technology.

Interestingly, teaching is the only employed profession she has engaged with for her entire life. She was employed by Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST) to teach in the university's staff school in 1985

and later was re-employed as a university lecturer in 1999. She taught in Rivers State University of Science and Technology till 2006 when she transferred her service to Niger Delta University as a Lecturer I. Comfort Zuofa became a Reader in 2012 and Professor of Adult Education in 2014.

Professor Comfort Chiegenashi Zuofa was married to late Professor Kwaku Zuofa. The family is blessed with two children, Barr. Inetimi Mac-Barango and Dr. Tarila Zuofa. She is blessed with two grandchildren, Master Otonye Ethan Mac-Barango and Master Bomailate Craig Mac-Barango.

Professor Comfort Chiegenashi Zuofa has held several administrative and management positions within the University system. At the Niger Delta University, she was acting Dean of Student Affairs and later Dean Student Affairs. Acting Head of Department, Department of Educational Foundations. Coordinator of Adult and Community Education Unit. She was a Department Coordinator of Part- Time Programme in RSUST for several years. She was also a Hall Warden and has served in several university committees.



Prof Comfort Zuofa has over fifty academic publications to her credit published internationally and nationally. She has attended many national and international conferences and workshops where she shared her knowledge on adult education. She is also a member of many academic and professional associations including the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE) and the Teachers, Registration Council of Nigeria. Professor Comfort Chiegenashi Zuofa is a reviewer for many national and international journals including Niger Delta Journal of Education and British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science.

She dedicated so much time to community service and served in the following capacities:

- First, Vice President and Ag President Unitech Women Association (UWA) Rivers State University of Science and Technology.
- Second, Vice President and Chairperson Unitech Women's Association Daycare Centre.
- Treasurer Unitech Women Association (UWA).
- Welfare coordinator Unitech Women Association (UWA).
- Marriage counsellor, Christ Embassy Central Church 1, Port Harcourt.

Above all, Professor Comfort Chiegenashi Zuofa is an ardent follower of Christ and ordained Deaconess in Christ Embassy.

## **WE ASCRIBE GREATNESS TO OUR GOD**

We ascribe greatness to our Lord and God.

His work is perfect and all His ways are just  
(2x).

Chorus:

He's a God of faithfulness  
Without injustice  
Good and upright is he (2x).

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