

An Assessment of the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the assessment of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme (UBEP) in Ondo west local government area of Ondo state. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive research design was employed for the study. The population comprised 1827 teachers. The sample consisted of 235 teachers. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability index of the instrument was 0.64, showing that the instrument is reliable. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the data collected for the study. Findings revealed that, availability of instructional and infrastructural facilities for the effective implementation of the programme is not adequate. It was also showed that, funding arrangement is not adequate for the implementation of the UBE programme. It was therefore recommended among others that, adequate instructional and infrastructural facilities should be provided by SUBEB, e.g classes, offices, toilets, water etc. they should also renovate more classrooms, provide more textbooks in core subjects in primary and junior secondary schools. Libraries should be stock with relevant textbooks in-line with the curriculum. Also, funding is the key to any development of a programme, UBE is capital intensive, if the expected quality is to be achieved. Continuous financial support is required. The various levels of government should make an un-interrupted financial arrangement which will see to the proper implementation of the UBE programme.

INTRODUCTION

The world today is undergoing major transformations. The global transformations are multidimensional, affecting the technological, economic, social, cultural and political development of human communities particularly those of developing societies like Nigeria. Education in the generic and global context is a strategic instrument for social and economic transformation. The focus of education system all over the world is the development of the human capital required to meet present and future challenges of globalization and knowledge economy (Dike, 2014). The fact that education in Nigeria has been known as a veritable instrument for enhancing individual, community and also national development can no longer be disputed anywhere. According to national policy on education (FRN, 2004) it is “an instrument per excellence for enhancing national development”. This perhaps could be why Nigerian leaders have desired so much to make basic education available to the citizen even free education, knowing that 70% of Nigerians live below poverty line national planning commission (NPC, 2008).

Nigerian leaders knowing the above and realizing that education is not only investment in human capital but also a pre-requisite as well as correlate for economic development have over the years made concerted attempts to make basic education available to Nigerian citizens. As a matter of fact, many landmark events took place that paved way for the emergence of universal basic education (UBE) in Nigeria (Ada, 2006). At the international scene, there was declaration of human rights world-wide in 1948, which include the right of education (at least basic education), which was seen as a right for everybody. Also the 1959 U.N. declaration of child rights includes right to basic education and Nigeria is an active member of (U.N.O). In 1968 there was an international conference in Paris with “the world crisis in education” as theme. This conference threw its’ weight to previous declarations. Another international conference which gave full support to the quest for basic education in Nigeria was the Jomtien world conference on education for all (WCEFA) held in 1990.

There was also the E.9 conference for 9 nations that had highest illiteracy rate in the world which Nigeria was in attendance in Delhi 1991. In this conference the E.9 countries began initiate ways of improving on their illiteracy level. Also, the organization of African unity (O.A.U) conference in 1992 tagged “Ouagadougou 92”. The O.A.U. decade of education in Africa 1997 as well as Durban 1998 conference of commitment to E.F.A. all gave boost to UBE in Nigeria. In response to the above conferences, many nations have been making advancement towards providing basic education to their citizens. At the national scene, the quest for basic education in Nigeria dates back to colonial era when Nigeria elites/freedom fighters began to query the quality of education provided in the country by the colonial government. This struggle led to the introduction of free education in the western region in 1955 and closely followed by its adoption in 1957 by the eastern region. These free education programmes were called universal primary education (UPE) and were restricted to primary schools in 1976, the federal government lunched U.P.E. at the national level and it was enjoyed nation-wide.

According to the 1999 constitution of Nigeria section 18 subsections 1 and 3 under education stipulates that; government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy and to this end, government shall as and when practicable provide free compulsory primary education, free secondary education, free universal education and free adult literacy programme. This implies that UBE came out of a desire to implement the constitutional provision of Nigeria. These antecedents discussed above at both national and international scenes paved way for the launching of the universal basic education programme in Nigeria on 30th September, 1999. Universal basic education as used in the Nigerian context implies free and compulsory 9 years of basic education for every Nigerian child made up to 6 years of primary education and 3 years of free junior secondary school.

UBE in Nigeria is designed to cater for all children of school age (6-11 years), nomadic population, migrant people in the physically isolated settlements, urban slums, adult illiterates, school drop-outs as well as people that may be considered as learners (Abonyi, 2014). It is a programme which Ocheta and Olele (2019) defines as a mandatory education policy for Nigerian children irrespective of such bottlenecks and handicaps associated with location, occupation, religion, race and gender. This implies that social, cultural, economic, religions and location factors should not be a barrier to accessibility to basic education to the Nigerian child. This clearly shows that UBE is an attempt at eradicating illiteracy on the Nigerian soil, attempt at achieving education for all (EFA), a step towards realization of millennium development goals (MDGs) and an attempt at putting every Nigerian child at the threshold of reaping the dividend of national and global technological breakthrough. While addressing the education mini-summit in November 1999, the then education minister (Tunde Adeniran) said, “the critical issues that require the attention of UBE are access, equity and quality basic education”.

The objectives of universal basic education in Nigeria as highlighted by universal basic education hand book (2007) include:

1. Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a committee to its vigorous promotion.
2. The provision of the free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age.
3. Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency).
4. Catering for young persons who for one reason or the other have had to interrupt their school as well as other out-of school children/adolescents through appropriate form of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
5. Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethnic, moral and civic values needed for laying a strong foundation for life-long learning. (p.8). As can be seen that the objectives also point to the fact that Nigeria wants all her citizens not just to get basic education but quality education, whether they are in urban or rural areas, primary or junior secondary schools. The curriculum of UBE breaks the nine years of basic education into three viz: lower basic education (primaries 1-3) middle basic education (primaries 4-6) and upper basic education (JSS1-3). The curriculum of the middle basic education level differs from the lower by the inclusion of French language, while the upper differs from the middle by the inclusion of basic technology. In addition, local craftsmen and women are supposed to be brought in to teach local crafts to pupils in UBE schools.

From the several attempt to achieve education for all in the country and after about several years of UBE existence, one would have expected that the literacy level would be high in the country, however, statistics showed that only about 35million Nigerians are literate out of about 150million (new Nigerian, 3rd September 2009) this startling figure point to the fact that all the previous basic education programmes in the country failed woefully, more so that most of them died naturally indicating that there were lapses either in the planning of implementation or both. Doggoh (2019) however states that, "Nigeria hardly lacks in policy formulation but fails in implementation", Mpka (2015) also noted that, the most critical problems of our country (Nigeria) lies, not in the enunciation of policies, indeed not in the prescription of potential viable strategies in education and other areas of our nations life, but rather at the implementation stage. The nation's education history is punctuated with numerous instances of brilliantly conceptualized policies and programmes that failed to achieve the desired goals at the end of the day. In each case the problem arose at the implementation stage. This then calls for assessing the implementation of the UBE programme which has existed for over a decade in the country to ascertain the journey so far. It is important to note that if timely assessment of the implementation of the assessment components of UBE are not done and problems identified are tackled, the programme may go the way its predecessors went like UPE, and the nation will continue to roll out increasing list of basic education programmes that do not meet their objectives fully and continue to waste her resources and wallow in underdevelopment. This is one of the reasons why this study is necessary or needful.

Assessment according to Allen (2000) involves the use of empirical data on student learning to refine programs and improve student learning. Huba and freed (2010) sees assessment as the process gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what should be known, understood, and can do with knowledge as a result of a person's educational experiences" In other words, they see assessment as a process for evaluating the strength and weakness of a programme with the aim of providing a base for efficiency. Assessment is also seen a process of measuring the level of performance of an individual or group in a particular area or field of endeavor.

Assessment is also a tool for measuring the level of success of programs in the school system. It can involve both active and passive form of observing a program. A programme like UBE can be assessed to ascertain the attainment of its strength and weaknesses (Ejebo 2010).

Assessment needs to be a regular monitoring activity which will not only enhance programme effectiveness but the achievement of programme objectives. Both assessment and evaluation are often used interchangeably. However, evaluation is broad and involves assessment and other strategies while assessment is based on an internal standard of the result of measurement, all in an attempt to ascertain the level and value or worth of progress made or changes observed. Technically, assessment is seen as a subset of evaluation and both are integral part of education (Grondlund, 2016). Assessment is the process of collecting, synthesizing and interpreting information to aid in decision making. (Okoro 2010)

Content of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme

The UBE programme is intended to be universally free and compulsory. This term implies that appropriate types of opportunities will be provided for the basic education of every Nigerian child of school going age (Obanyan 2010). The UBE programme has enormous implications for various spheres of the nation. From budgetary expenditure to other developmental programmes, the programme must fully justify the opportunity cost that goes with its implementation. The objectives of the UBE programme according to Obanyan are far reaching and they include:

- Pre-primary education sector
- Handicapped children sector
- Primary education sector
- Junior secondary education sector
- Senior secondary education sector
- Technical education sector
- University education sector and
- Adult and continuing education sector

The content of the programme is indeed even much more expensive as it covers all dimensions of the various sectors above. According to Obanya (2010) its scope covers the provision of:

1. Programme initiatives for early childhood, care and socialization.
2. Education programmes for the acquisition of functional literacy.
3. Out of school and non-formal programmes for updating knowledge and
4. Special programme for nomadic.
5. The formal school system from the junior secondary school and among others.

The content is a functional set of approaches geared towards effective organization and implementation of the programme which include;

1. Public enlightenment and social mobilization for full community involvement.
2. Data collection analysis
3. Planning monitoring and evaluation
4. Teachers' recruitment education, training, retraining, motivation.
5. Infrastructural facilities
6. Enriched curriculum.
7. Text books and instructional materials.
8. Improve funding.

9. Management of the entire process Source E.M.E (2000)

This area of the UBE programme is far reaching and is important to the successful organization of the programme. Therefore the basic school subjects necessary for instruction, the scope as confirmed above and the highlighted organizational areas make up the full content of the UBE programme.

Universal basic education (UBE) programme launched in Nigeria in September, 1999 is an offshoot of several previous effort of federal government of Nigeria to make education available to all citizens. This programme which makes the first nine years of schooling (from primary 1-6 and JSS 1-3) free compulsory for all Nigerian children of school age, is one of the nation's effort to wipe out illiteracy in the country by 100% (UBEC, 2005) and to fulfill the nations commitment to education for all (EFA) in the nearest future and the MDGs. Also looking at the global trends and development, one can see clearly that the basic education is the minimum requirement for participation in global science and technological advancement and that anyone who cannot afford it will remain an impoverished residue of a by-gone age and will continue to suffer the pangs of underdevelopment. Nigerian government being aware of this reality has set in motion this programme in order to prepare her citizens for the voyage into global technological revolution and to put them in a vintage position to partake in a technological advancement and comfortable life. The UBE programme has the potential of the above to make the citizens useful and productive to themselves, country and the world at large if properly implemented.

Unfortunately, after 16 years of existence of UBE programme, young children are still roaming about on the streets begging and hawking during school hours (Ajaegbo, 2019), the population of under-aged mothers (young mothers who should be in secondary schools) still looms high and school drop-out cases appear to remain intractable. The UBE programme is in due need of about 40,000 qualified teachers, 336,467 classrooms, 336,144 additional chairs and desk and also about 950,430 units of toilet (nut, 2017), and road map to Nigerian education sector, (2009). The free and compulsory promise attached to the programme also seems to be only a paper work and might appear to be mirage. The teachers of UBE also appear to be dissatisfied with their remuneration and conditions of service in addition to poor or inadequate provision of teaching and learning facilities like libraries, laboratory equipment, books, etc. the morale of teachers also appears to remain low indicating poor motivation, while the curriculum of UBE also appear not to be implemented fully in UBE schools (Nwagwu, Ehiam, Ogunu&Nwadiani 2011). It is against this background that this research is out to assess the implementation of the universal basic education programme in Ondo west local government area of Ondo state.

Research questions

In order to carry out a precise research, the following research questions were posed to give direction to the research:

1. How adequate are the available instructional and infrastructural facilities for the effective implementation of the UBE programme?
2. How adequate is funding for the effective implementation of the UBE programme?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This research design allows the researcher to gather quantifiable information that can be used to make statistical inferences from respondents using questionnaires. This design was appropriate as it enabled the researcher to obtain information from a small group representing a larger group so much so that the conclusion obtained using small group could be said to hold for the larger group. The population of the study consists of all teachers in public primary schools as well as teachers in junior secondary schools in Ondo west local government area of Ondo state. There are

forty-nine (49) primary schools with seven hundred and eight (708) teachers, also there are twenty-seven (27) secondary schools with one thousand, one hundred and nineteen (1119) teachers. All together there are one thousand, eight hundred and twenty-seven (1827) teachers in both primary and secondary government schools. A total of two hundred and thirty-five (235) out of one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven (1827) teachers was used as sample for this study. Data was collected using a questionnaire titled: an assessment of the implementation of the universal basic education programme in ondo west local government area of ondo state. The content validity of the research instrument was ascertained by three experts. In establishing the reliability of the instrument, the researcher randomly selected twenty (20) teachers from two different schools that are not part of the study but has similar characteristics with those of the study. The data collected was analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha formula to obtain the reliability coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.64 was established proving that the instrument is reliable. The researcher seek the permission of the school principals, headmasters and headmistresses before administering the questionnaires to teachers, make clarifications where necessary to reduce wastage and also waited to collect the completed questionnaire. In analyzing and interpreting the data generated from the study, descriptive statistics (mean) was used to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.5 was used for interpretation, i.e a mean value of 2.5 and above the criterion mean shows that there is effective implementation of the universal basic education programme. But a mean value less than the criterion mean shows that there is low effective of the implementation of the universal basic education programme.

The analysis was done using SPSS version 21.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Research Question 1:

To what extent are the available instructional and infrastructural facilities adequate for the effective implementation of the UBE programme?

Table 1: Mean ratings of availability of instructional and infrastructural facilities.

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	The staffs are accommodated in an adequately furnished office	2.35	0.666	Low extent
2	There is a functional library which are equipped with library facilities and up-date textbooks	2.31	0.586	Low extent
3	Classrooms are well ventilated and there are adequate furniture for students/pupils	2.50	0.507	High extent
4	There is a functional science laboratory for the implementation of the UBE programme	2.00	0.888	Low extent
5	Provision of first aid are manned by professionals	2.35	0.646	Low extent
	Grand Mean	2.30	0.659	Low extent

Criterion Mean = 2.5; N = 235

Result in table 1 reveals a grand mean of 2.30 which is lower than the criterion mean of 2.5, this depicts that availability of instructional and infrastructural facilities for the effective implementation of the programme is not adequate.

Research question 2:

How adequate is funding for the effective implementation of the UBE programme?

Table 2: Mean ratings of funding arrangement for the implementation of the UBE programme.

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	DECISION
6	Government votes adequate funds to UBE programme	1.59	0.519	Low extent
7	Funds voted for UBE programme are released as at when due	1.57	0.505	Low extent
8	There is transparency in the disbursement of UBE funds	1.60	0.492	Low extent
9	The school is not short of funds in executing projects	1.52	0.501	Low extent
10	Available funds are targeted in areas which will really make difference in the school e.g., buildings, equipment, textbooks etc.	2.63	0.902	High extent
	Grand Mean	1.78	0.584	Low extent

Criterion Mean = 2.5; N = 235

Result in table 2 shows a grand mean of 1.78 which is lower than the criterion mean of 2.5, this indicate that funding arrangement is not adequate for the implementation of the UBE programme.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Result in research question one shows that availability of instructional and infrastructural facilities provided are not adequate in the effective implementation of the universal basic education programme in Ondo west local government area of Ondo state. This means that instructional and infrastructural facilities are in short supply. Up-date textbooks, functional laboratories, classrooms, etc were inadequate to accommodate the increasing population of students/pupils. This result is in agreement with okpara (2019) that the nine years basic education will need substantial amount of classrooms, laboratories, etc. similarly, Enaohwo (2019) observed that infrastructural provision is one of the determinants of quality and functional education. In another view, Obanya (2010) and Adeyemi (2017) reports that to achieve strong educational foundation, the Nigerian primary educational system therefore needs adequate facilities such as classrooms, furniture, instructional materials, libraries and other school equipments in other to enhance learning environment. These are expected to be provided for; conducive classrooms, effective classroom communication climate and conducive teaching and learning atmosphere. This study therefore indicates that availability of instructional and infrastructural facilities are not adequate for the effective implementation of the programme.

Result in research question two shows that the funding arrangement is not adequate for the effective implementation of the universal basic education programme in Ondo west local government area of Ondo state. Funding might be available for some primary and secondary schools in the urban centers, but as to whether or not funds get to the targeted area cannot be ascertained. Funds are not directly released to local government education authorities, but through the state universal basic education board. However, poor management of available resources and corruption also contribute to the weak financial capacity of the educational sector in Nigeria. This finding is in consonance with Egonmwan (2019) rightly observed that when corruption penetrates the implementation process, policy/programme becomes mutated and desired goals may not be achieved. This findings show that funding arrangement is not adequate for the effective implementation of the universal basic education programme in Ondo west local government area of Ondo

state.

CONCLUSION

Taking perspective from the data analyses and the results generated, it is concluded that the extent of availability of instructional and infrastructural facilities and funding arrangement are not adequate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking the findings of this research work into consideration, the researcher made the following recommendations.

1. It is pertinent to recommend that adequate instructional and infrastructural facilities should be provided by SUBEB, e.g classes, offices, toilets, water etc. they should also renovate more classrooms, provide more textbooks in core subjects in primary and junior secondary schools. Libraries should be stock with relevant textbooks in-line with the curriculum.
2. Funding is the key to any development of a programme, UBE is capital intensive, if the expected quality is to be achieved. Continuous financial support is required. The various levels of government should make an un-interrupted financial arrangement which will see to the proper implementation of the UBE programme.

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