Abstract

Universal Basic Education as a curriculum innovation is inevitably meant to reflect the needs, values and aspirations of the society. In Nigeria several innovations in its curricular has taken place; and it has come and gone each with its multiple problems and unsuccessful endings. This paper dwelt on the history of major reforms in the history of primary education in Nigeria- the emergence of the National Policy on Education, Nine years basic Education UBE Curriculum, Trends of enrolments under the nine years Basic Education; Teacher recruitment, and funding. It concluded that all that is required for the success and sustainability of UBE is the political will on the part of stakeholders in the education industry.

Education comprises of four basic pillars; learning to know, which encompasses general knowledge and the will to learn; learning to do, which involves the acquisition of formal or informal occupational skills, in the context of an individual’s experience and community; learning to live together, which incorporates developing understanding of other people and appreciation of interdependence; and learning to be which enables an individual to develop his/her personality and to act with greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility. (Adamu, 2011).

However, within this context of the meaning of education, we can create a whole series of functions of education. These include:
- Socialization.
- Transmission of existing culture from one generation to the next.
- Social control/Custodial
- Placement of individual/streaming.

Globalization and the Past Principles, or the Americanization of Nigerian Education

This history of Education in Nigeria is the history of the state intervention in Education as an agency for the development of the state institutions and process (FME 2004).
Initially, the Nigerian Education system at a time allowed for three tracks after pupils have successfully negotiated the eleven plus examination at the end of the elementary Schools; Secondary grammar Schooling for the more able, Secondary technical Schools for those identified as being more technically oriented (or, more likely fulfilling the government’s perception of required technical schooling), and the teacher training colleges where students were trained for the grade II Teacher’s certificate, which enable them to teach in primary schools. This system was referred to as 7-5-2-3 reflecting the year spent at each level of Education (Ojo, 1983).

The mid 1960s therefore saw the beginnings of low level reforms and experiments in education in Nigeria aimed at making the system more accountable to a rapidly changing society where there were very limited opportunities for the white-colour job market. These were intensifies when it was realized that appreciable proportion of the school population terminated their education progressively at primary and secondary schools, with a very few actually making the transition to the university, for instance, of the 56,155 secondary schools leavers in Nigeria in 1965, only 5,199 actually passed the school certificate examinations at the minimum level (i.e.) division I and II of the school certificate examination) that would enable them to proceed to the university (USAID 1967).

In Nigeria, the primary school is an institution of learning for children aged 6 to 11 plus years as contained in the NPE (1977). Since the advent of Christian missionaries in 1842, there have been three major landmarks in the history of primary education. They include:
- Missionaries period (1842-1926)
- Colonial period (1926-1960)
- Period of self – government, Post independence period and the period of national policy on education 1977.

The Emergence of a National Policy on Education

Still in search for a more effective solution to the issue of Nigeria Education in a post-independence era, in 1964 a teachers, lecturer, a don, former dean, faculty of education, education university of Ife, an author, former minister of education 1990, New York class graduate of 1955 who later become a central Icon of education planning end administrator in Nigeria, professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa conducted a survey in.

“an attempt to “sound out” the opinion of 200 parents randomly sampled over a wide geographical and representative area of a country on the primary and secondary Education system ...... 98% of all the
parents were dissatisfied with the “present system of primary education” while opinion was equally divided on secondary and tertiary education (Fafunwa, 1989:65).

As a result of the survey conducted and submitted to the government of the federation which summoned the establishment of Nigerian Education Research Development Council under federal minister of education at Yaba in Lagos. A National conference was organized between 8th-12th September 1969 which was sponsored by a government agency. The main aim of the conference was to ‘review the old and identify new national goals for education in Nigeria at all levels and provide guidelines on what the system should be doing’ (Balogun, 1970).

These views were also echoed by the federal commissioner of the during his opening address at the 1969 National curriculum conference at which he underscored government view about education in Nigeria which was:

“No doubt that the educational system we inherited was a good one. Good that is, for the country and the society for which it was planned; good for English and English society...... Adaralegbe (1969).

The conference was significant in the history of Nigerian education in three ways:

(a) It was purely initiated and organized by Nigerians
(b) It comprised all trade unions and pressure groups.
(c) It gave birth to the formation of national policy on education in 1977.


Thus, the main innovation in the Nigerian post independence educational development was what became the National Policy on Education, commonly referred to as 6-3-3-4 education system which replaced the previous 6-5-2-3 system. As explained in September (1980) during a seminar on the new system in Badaudo, Kano state, is a radical departure from the existing structure, and the third in the development of education in Nigeria.

- Before 1960, the pattern was 8-6-2-3 in which students spent 8 years in Primary School.

- In 1955, the pattern was changed to 6-5-2-3 structure in which students spent 6 years in Primary School.

- In 1969 recommended a 6-3-3-4 which was delayed till 1982.
Reasons/Factors/Pressure for Change Includes:
(a) Changing needs, values, aspiration and objectives of the society.
(b) Population explosion
(c) Rapid changes in terms of technological Advancement
(d) Results from evaluation of students’ results/performance.

Nine (9) Year’s Basic Education Programme (UBE)
As documented in the National Policy on Education (2004) that:

“Basic education shall be of 9-years education comprising 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education. It shall be free and compulsory. It shall also include adult and non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary education levels for the adults and out of school youths”.

“The specific goals of basic education shall be the same as the goals of the levels of education to which it applies (i.e. primary education, junior secondary education and adult and Non formal education)” Section 3 item 15 -16.

Nigeria’s policy of universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched in 1999, but implemented as continued in the national policy on education 2004, with aim of equipping all children with basic literary, numeracy life skills employability and capacity for responsible citizenship. This reform measure reflected a strong commitment to the Education for all (EFA) goals and was seen as a means of fighting poverty and reinforcing democracy. Within the policy, priority is given to securing the completion of primary and junior secondary education by all suitable age, although attention is also given to early childhood care and education and is non-formal basic education.

The UBE policy and programme were in part a response is serious decay in the Educational system, Particularly at Primary level.

The Curriculum of 9 - Year Basic Education
The goals of 9 – year Basic Education Programme are:

Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.

Providing free and compulsory, Universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age.
Reducing drastically the incidence of early leaving from the formal system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency).

Catering for the learning needs of young persons who, for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.

Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life-skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values for laying a solid foundation for life – long learning (NPE, 2004).

Nigerian children are to be in school for 9 years of continuous schooling made up of 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education.

The first 6 year (Primary Curriculum) as documented in the National Policy on Education section 4 items 19 sub-section (6) include:

i. Language
   a. Languages of the environment
   b. English
   c. French
   d. Arabic

ii. Mathematics
iii. Science
iv. Physical and Health Education
v. Religious Knowledge
vi. Agricultural/Home economics
vii. Social studies and citizenship Education
viii. Cultural and creative Arts (Drawing, handicraft, music cultural activities).
ix. Computer Education

The following Education services shall be provided:

i. School Library
ii. Basic health scheme
iii. Counselling
iv. Educational resource centre
v. Specialist teacher of particular subject such as Mathematics Science Physical Education Language Arts Librarian, Music fine art and home economics.
3 Years Junior Secondary School Curriculum

As documented in the National Policy on Education section 6 items (a) the Junior Secondary school shall be both pre-vocational and academic. It shall be tuition free, universal and compulsory, it shall teach subject, which will enable pupils to further knowledge and skills. Every student shall offer:

i. A minimum of 10, and maximum of 13 subjects.
ii. All subjects in group A
iii. At least one subject each from groups B and C

Group A: Core
- English
- French
- Mathematics
- Language of environment
- One major Nigeria language
- Integrated science
- Social studies and citizenship Education
- Introductory technology

Group B: Pre–Vocational Electives
- Agriculture
- Business studies
- Home economics
- Local crafts
- Computer Education
- Fine Art
- Music

Group C: Non-Prevocational Election
- Religious Knowledge
- Physical and health Education
- Arabic

Key issues in the Implementation and Assessment Policy of 9 year Basic Education

Obioma, (2013) identified the following key issues in the implementation and adopted assessment policy of UBE.

Curriculum made flexible for adaptation to the socially marginalized (including nomadic and other migrant groups), vulnerable communities, and adult and special needs learners.
Infusing of such emerging issues as HIV/AIDS education, anti-corruption studies etc.

The inclusion of strategic life – long skills as well as positive national values, civic, moral and ethical education as a course of study.

Consolidation of some contents and subjects in the basic education context thus reducing subject/content overload.

Infusion of element of critical thinking

Infusion of relevant and functional entrepreneurial skills using the relevant subject contents as drivers.

Linking learning to the work of learners in the cultural context

Identification of minimum competencies and aligning these to the methodology of classroom transactions (including pedagogical skills needed), instructional materials and suggested evaluation activities.

Emphasis on functional literacy, numeracy and strategic communication skills.

Abolition of terminal examination for primary 6 pupils, pupils who successfully complete primary 6 will proceed to JSS 1 without a selective (placement) examination.

Introduction of selective (placement) examination for graduating JSS students who are potentially bound for senior secondary (post basic) education.

**The Journey so far**

Since 1999 significant efforts have made by the UBE programme, SPEBs, LGEA’s and development partners to address some of the problems. The UBE programme has itself constructed model School buildings in every local government area. It has also (with world banks assistance) promoted self-help projects for schools and LEAs in which local communities participate.

Since 2002 it has distributed learning and teaching materials to the value of 2.23 billion Naira (Over 10 million pounds). The pivotal Teacher Training programme has upgraded many teachers and a “cluster in service” teacher programme is being piloted in 19 states HIV/AIDS Education is being integrated in the curriculum. States are becoming more creative in their approach to UBE; donors and other development patterns are showing increased interest in assisting (Joint Nigeria-British Journal conference – 2003).
(a) Summary of Primary Education Enrolment 2006 – 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>M</th>
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<th>MF</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>FM</th>
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<td>11895194</td>
<td>982295</td>
<td>21717789</td>
<td>596897</td>
<td>547198</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>11086997</td>
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<td>20469395</td>
<td>596506</td>
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<td>10252000</td>
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<td>516742</td>
<td>495172</td>
<td>1011914</td>
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<td>10154860</td>
<td>8663684</td>
<td>18818544</td>
<td>637036</td>
<td>625396</td>
<td>1262432</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>10215179</td>
<td>8826988</td>
<td>19042167</td>
<td>812507</td>
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Source: FME 2010, Nigeria: Digest of Education Statistics

(b) Summary of Teachers Count 2006 – 2010

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<td>439330</td>
<td>20797</td>
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<td>28007</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>12094</td>
<td>15016</td>
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<td>130040</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>265831</td>
<td>234463</td>
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<td>32162</td>
<td>43737</td>
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Source: FME 2010, Nigeria: Digest of Education Statistics

(c) Summary of Nomadic School Statistics 2007 – 2010

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<th>2010</th>
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<td>Total Schools</td>
<td>2304</td>
<td>2289</td>
<td>2953</td>
<td>3060</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Enrolment</td>
<td>432411</td>
<td>415426</td>
<td>483557</td>
<td>484694</td>
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<td>Total male Enrolment</td>
<td>246475</td>
<td>237268</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female Enrolment</td>
<td>185936</td>
<td>178158</td>
<td>215488</td>
<td>215752</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Teachers</td>
<td>8667</td>
<td>12059</td>
<td>14233</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Female teachers</td>
<td>3640</td>
<td>5065</td>
<td>6120</td>
<td>5954</td>
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<td>Total Pupils ratio</td>
<td>01:49</td>
<td>01:34</td>
<td>01:34</td>
<td>01:35</td>
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</table>

Source: FME 2010, Nigeria: Digest of Education Statistics

(d) Junior Secondary Education

Trends of Enrolment in JSS for both Private and Public

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<th>Sex</th>
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<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,653,753</td>
<td>1,942,672</td>
<td>2,150,037</td>
<td>2,413,235</td>
<td>2,703,938</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,281,219</td>
<td>1,530,466</td>
<td>1,784,024</td>
<td>2,022,016</td>
<td>2,305,289</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,934,972</td>
<td>3,473,138</td>
<td>3,934,061</td>
<td>4,435,251</td>
<td>5,010,227</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: FME 2010, Nigeria: Digest of Education Statistics
Summary of Teachers for both Private and Public JSS

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<th>YEAR</th>
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<th>MF</th>
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<td>68,166</td>
<td>41,945</td>
<td>110,111</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>69,452</td>
<td>39,849</td>
<td>109,301</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>79,889</td>
<td>60,690</td>
<td>140,579</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>79,469</td>
<td>81,472</td>
<td>160,941</td>
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Source: FME 2010, Nigeria: Digest of Education Statistics

Grant Allocation to States (36 State and FCT)

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<tr>
<th>YEARS</th>
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<td>21,336,000.00</td>
<td>21,308,459,363.00</td>
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<td>24,710,000,000.00</td>
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<td>280,730,349.10</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>23,042,932,732.728.68</td>
<td>5,787,358,505.03</td>
<td>17,255,574,227.09</td>
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Source: FME 2010, Nigeria: Digest of Education statistics

Conclusion, Summary and Recommendation

All that is required is the political will on the part of all the stakeholders in Education industries to see the realization of basic Education objectives. Evidence of the political will is indicated in the inauguration of a presidential task force on Education on 5th January 2011 by its Excellency, President Good luck Ebele Jonathan. The task team was charged among others Refocus and structure existing policies at all levels of Education especially the concept and implementation of the 9-3-4 system of Education.

References


