

EXTENT OF ACHIEVEMENT OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION OBJECTIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ENUGU STATE

Dr. C. A. Ezeano

***Department of Science and Computer Education,
Enugu State University of Science & Technology,
Enugu.***

Abstract

Nigeria like other nations of the world continues to make efforts to educate her citizenry. In attempt to achieve this, many educational programme has been launched. The 1999 Universal Basic Education (UBE) launched by Olusegun Obasanjo has laudable objectives that should be achieved between 1999-2015. The UBE programme has lasted for 10 years now and some children of school going age are still seen on our streets, workshops and market places, during the school period. This study investigated the extent to which the UBE objectives have been achieved. The five UBE objectives guided the study. The major finding of this study is that four out of five objectives have been achieved to moderate extent in Enugu state while objectives 4 has only been achieved to a very little extent. The implications is that school children still drop out of school and complementary approaches are not adequately provided and promoted for basic education.

Education involves all the processes or activities exposed to a learner or a child to develop his/her abilities, attitudes, attributes and other forms of positive behaviours. Education of the masses is indispensable for meaningful nation's development. Nations of the world yearly set aside a part of the annual budget for education.

Nigeria in attempt to educate her citizenry has been changing from one educational system to another. Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced in 1976. This provided free primary education for Nigerian children. The programme somehow failed because of poor implementation or achievement of its laudable objectives which partly stem from shortage of qualified teachers (Okoye 2000). In September 1999 a similar programme, Universal Basic Education (UBE) was introduced by the then president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo. The programme (UBE) according to Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2000) is aimed at equipping Nigerian Children with knowledge, skill and attitude that will enable them to:

- ❖ Live meaningfully and fulfilling lives.
- ❖ Contribute to the development of the society.
- ❖ Derive maximum social-cultural and economic benefits from the society and
- ❖ Discharge their civic obligations competently.

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According to Federal Government white paper on the implementation guideline on UBE issued by FME 2002:2, the objectives of UBE are to:

- ✓ Develop in the entire citizenry of Nigerian state, a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotions.
- ✓ Provide a free universal basic education for every Nigeria child of school going age.
- ✓ Reduce drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency.
- ✓ Cater for young persons who, for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling children/adolescents through appropriate forms of complementing approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- ✓ Ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, and manipulative, communicative, moral and civil values needed for laying a sound foundation for life-long learning.

The achievement of these objectives will amount to sustainable national development, where children and even adults desire to be educated, read and acquire manipulative and communicative skills for self reliance. The UBE programme has lasted for about ten years now and evidences have also proved that the nation has spent much money on retraining of teachers, supplying of furniture and books and writing materials and renovation of some primary school building. A lot of changes have been observed or witnessed in the Nigerian educational system. As much has been spent on education of our children in terms of time and material resources, there is need to estimate how far the objectives of UBE have been achieved.

If the objectives of the programme are being achieved or have been achieved, there will be evidences in the positive attitudes of our children. Looking around our streets, various workshops and our markets, (to mention but a few), children of school going ages are seen roaming about, hawking and begging, serving as apprentices at various workshops and helping at various shops, even though the Federal Government has provided free and compulsory education for all children of school-going age. Some of our children are interested in using hand-sets and speaking the same jargon they text and speak in their hand phones. This observed behaviour is putting a question on the achievement of UBE objectives for sustainable development.

Within our society, we frequently hear of kidnapping, ritual killings and human trafficking, pointing to the fact that our youths who should have partly benefited from the UBE programme are still misfit in the society. Actually such youths have not achieved maximum socio-cultural and fulfilled lives. Academically, our society is not wonderful. There are incidences of examination malpractice and poor achievement in both internal and external examinations.

With all the evidences above, there is an urgent need to asses the extent of achievement of objectives of the UBE programme on which the national development rests.

Research Questions

1. To what extent have a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion been developed in the entire citizenry of Nigeria state?
2. How has free compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian of school going-age been adopted?
3. To what extent has drop out rate from school system been reduced through improved relevance, quality and efficiency?
4. How are the drop-out, out of school children and adolescent catered for through vigorous forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education?
5. To what extent have appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy manipulative skills needed for laying the foundation for life-long learning been achieved?

Methodology

The design for this study is a survey. The sample is 150 respondents drawn from 10 primary and junior secondary schools in Enugu State. Junior Secondary and Primary Schools were chosen because they both benefit from the UBE programme. The instrument for data collection is a four point scale of different degrees of extent, (very high extent (VHE(4), moderately extent (ME(3), low extent (LE(2) and very low extent (VLE(1). The data was collected by the researcher and were analysed using descriptive statistics mean (\bar{X}) Any mean score above and equal to ≥ 3.00 is regarded as very high extent. (VHE), that is above and equal to ≥ 2.50 is regarded as moderate extent (ME) while mean score which is less than and equal to ≥ 2.49 is regarded as very low extent.

Results

Table 1

Summary of the Extent of Achievement of UBE Objectives

S/N	Objectives 1 Extent of development of a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion in the entire citizenry of Nigeria.	Very High Extent VHE (4)	Moderate rate Extent ME (3)	Low Extent LE (2)	Very low Extent VLE (1)	Mean \bar{X}	Decision
1	Nigerian children have developed a strong consciousness for education.	30	100	-	20	2.93	ME

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2	They now have developed a strong commitment to UBE promotion	20	80	40	10	2.78	ME
3	The children take their studies serious:- pay attention in the class, do their assignment and copy notes.	64	56	30	-	3.03	HE
	Ground mean					2.88	ME
	Objective 2 Event of provision of compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian of school going age.						
4	Every Nigerian child of school-going age now go to school.	30	70	40	10	2.80	ME
5	Children of school-going age are still seen on the streets begging and hawing.	31	21	50	48	2.23	VLE
6	Children of school-going age especially the boys are no longer seen in various Workshops, market.	10	32	68	40	2.80	ME
7	All Nigeria parents presently encourage their children to go to school.	80	38	22	10	3.25	HE
8	Children do not pay school fees	61	51	28	10	3.09	HE
	Ground Mean					2.83	ME
	Objective 3 Extent of drastic reduction of drop-out rate from formal school system through improved relevance quality and efficiency.						

9	Nigerian children no longer drop out from school.	10	50	45	43	2.18	ME
		VHE(4)	ME(3)	ME(2)	VLE(1)	Mean X̄	Decision
10	The relevance of education from children's perceptive has been improved by UBE programme.	18	92	30	10	2.79	ME
11	Since the period of Universal Basic Education, children desire to go to school.	58	60	22	10	3.11	HE
12	The population of school children has exploded since the inception of UBE programme.	90	44	18	8	3.44	HE
	Ground Mean					2.88	ME
	Objective 4 Extent of catering for drop-outs, out of school children and adolescent through various forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.						
13	School drop outs, out of school adolescents are given complementary training to provide and promote basic education.	10	40	30	70	2.13	VLE
14	They are encouraged to learn trades and skills that will help sustain them in life.	-	56	42	52	1.93	VLE
15	Remedial classes are organized for them to bridge the gap or the grounds they have lost.	10	38	42	60	1.99	VLE

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16	They resort to doing other manual works instead of striving to be educated	25	53	31	41	2.41	VLE
	Ground Mean						
	Objectives 5						
	Ensure the extent of acquisition of appropriate level literacy, numeracy, manipulative skills (as well as ethical, moral, civic values, needed for laying the foundation for life long learning.					2.12	VLE
17	The literacy level of pupils has been improved since the beginning of the UBE programme.	10	98	42	-	2.79	ME
18	The numeracy or pupils understanding of basic Mathematics has improved with UBE programme.	-	100	28	22	2.71	ME
19	The UBE Programme has exposed the pupils to various manipulative skills and they can now be independent.	40	50	50	20	2.73	ME
	Ground Mean					2.76	ME

Summary of the Findings

From Objective 1

- Nigerian children of school-going age(s) have developed to moderate extent a strong consciousness for education mean score (\bar{X}) 2.93.
- The children have also developed to moderate extent strong commitment to UBE vigorous promotion (mean \bar{X} =2.78).
- This study in addition revealed to a high extent that Nigerian children in primary and junior secondary take their studies serious (mean \bar{X} = 2.33).

Objective 2

- The result showed that, to a moderate extent, every Nigerian child of school-going age go to school. (mean $\bar{X} = 2.80$).
- Children of school-going age, to very low extent, are seen on the streets, begging and hawking (mean $\bar{X} = 2.23$).
- The results also showed that Nigerian parents encouraged their children to go to school and that no tuition was charged (mean $\bar{X} = 3.25$ and 3.09 respectively).

Objectives 3

The result of this study revealed that the drop-out rate from formal school system, through improved relevance, quality and efficiency has only been reduced to moderate extent (Grand mean $\bar{X} = 2.88$).

Objective 4

The study revealed that the objective has only been achieved to a very little extent (Grand mean $\bar{X} = 2.12$). This means that the drop outs, out of school children and adolescents are not being catered for through various forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.

Objective 5

This study indicated that the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy, numeracy manipulative skills needed for laying the foundation for life long learning has been achieved only to a moderate extent. (Grand mean $\bar{X} = 2.76$).

Discussion

Table 1 revealed that the objective 1 of the UBE programme, to develop in the entire citizenry of Nigeria state, a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion has been achieved to some extent. The ground mean score is 2.88, a mean less than 3.00 which implies that the objectives 1 has only be achieved to a moderate extent. This signifies that even though a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion have been developed in Nigerian children to some extent, much still needs to be done to meet the academic needs of the nation. The result may be because teachers whose duty it is to implement and help in the achievement of the objectives could not do much in developing our children to have a strong consciousness for education. As no educational system cannot rise above the quality of its teachers (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN (2004) the objective 1 was only achieved to a moderate extent.

The table also proved that the second objective of UBE programme, on provision of free, compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age, has been moderately achieved. Item 4 has a mean score of 2.80 revealing that to a moderate extent, Nigerian children of school-going age now go to school.

Item 5 has a mean score of 2.23 showing that children of school-going age are seen in the street hawking and begging only to a very little extent. In addition the study

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also exposed the fact that Nigerian parents in Enugu State encouraged their children to go to school. This finding is in consonance the view of Igbonweka and Agbanta (2005) who opined that Nigerian parents are always willing to enroll their children in schools despite adverse economic conditions. The findings is a pointer to the fact that the article 2 of Enugu State on UBE Law (2005) which states that every parent shall ensure that every child attends and completes primary and junior secondary school education by endeavouring to send the child to public primary and junior secondary school provided that the child is not physically or mentally challenged, is been fulfilled.

Objective 3 to reduce drastically drop-out rate from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency has been achieved only to a moderate extent, according to the result of the study. Items 9 and 10 have mean scores of 2.18 and 2.79 respectively, indicating that Nigerian children have moderately stopped dropping-out of school. Secondly, the study revealed that relevance of education from children's perspective have, also been improved moderately. The findings of this study proved that there is an improvement from the findings of Ifelunni 2006) and Amodu (2007) who found out that greater number of Nigerian children are out of school. Even though this study showed that many children desire to go to school and that the population of children in the school has improved, some of Nigerian children of school-going age are still not in the school. The present situation posses a doubt to the desire of the Federal Government to equip every Nigeria child with knowledge, skills and attitude that will enable him to contribute to the development of Nigerian society. (FME 2000).

Concerning objective 4 of the UBC programmes which deals with catering for the drop out, out of school children and adolescents through various forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education, the result revealed that little or nothing has been achieved. Items 13, 14, 15 and 16 have mean scores of 2.13, 1.93,1.99 and 2.41 respectively. All the mean scores are all very low (below the acceptable mean score of 2. 49 for VLE signifying that the objectives have only been achieved to a very low extent. So much is needed to be done to cater for drop out, out of school children and adolescents to provide them with complementary educational approaches which according to UBE reform Bill of 2004 may involve, adult literacy and non formal education, skill acquisition programmes and education of special groups like normads, migrants, girl child, women, almajiri, street children and disable groups.

Evidence of non-achievement of objective 4 are seen in the ill-activities of our youth; incessant kidnapping, ritual killings, human trafficking and the like (Ocho 2010 which would have been taken care of if the objective was achieved.

The fifth objective on ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative skills (as well as ethical, moral, civic values) needed for laying the foundation for life-long learning has been moderately achieved with the ground mean of 2.74. Items 17, 18 and 19 which stem from objective 5 have mean scores of 2.79, 2.71, 2.73 signifying that the objective has only been achieved to a moderate extent. There is still gap to filled in terms of literacy, numeracy and manipulative skills levels. Also the ethical, moral and civil values needed for laying the foundation for life

long learning has not been acquired to a large extent. This amounts to education and social security and a hindrance to national development.

The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Onyishi (2010) who opined that illiteracy and innumeracy are forms of insecurity as illiterate persons are scarcely comfortable while interacting with people with basic education.

Conclusion

The Federal Government of Nigeria aims to educate every children of school-going age is a step in the right direction. The UBC programme objectives considered in this study have been achieved just to a moderate extent, showing that a lot needs to be done to fully actualize the goal of the UBC programme and to develop Nigeria children to be self reliant. Objectives 1,2,3, and 5 of the UBC programme which this study revealed have been achieved to just a moderate extent, implied that some grounds are still left uncovered. Objective 4 which is concerned with catering for drop-out, out of school children and adolescents has only been achieved to very little extent. Since the goal of UBC is scarcely achieved, the United Nations Development programme (UNDP) which gave Nigeria a very low rating in human development for the year 2002 is right. Therefore all hands should be on deck to bring about full achievement of the UBC objectives. The children, the parents and even the Government will make efforts to see that Nigerian citizenry are fully developed for sustainable national development.

Recommendations

From the finding of this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Every Nigeria child should be made to develop strong consciousness for education and should be in the school during school period so that the UBC objectives will be full achieved.
2. The school drop out, out of school children and adolescent children should be exposed to complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education to make them self reliant.
3. Awareness should be created to reach all nooks and crannies of this country by public mobilization and enlightenment campaign to further emphasize the importance of education for all. (Ezeano 2000).

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