

# ANALYSIS OF THE AVAILABILITY OF TEACHERS AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN CROSS RIVER STATE

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## **Abstract**

Nigeria being a signatory and a member of the Jomitian Conference made education free and compulsory with the introduction of the UBE Programme. Hence, the study ascertained whether infrastructural facilities and teachers in terms of number are adequately available for the implementation of the programme. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The “Universal Basic Education Implementation Analysis Questionnaire” (UBEIAQ) and a Structured Oral Interview were administered on 1442 respondents (1438 teachers and 4 SUBEB staff) who were selected using the multi-stage sampling procedure. The results of the data analysis were done using descriptive statistics (mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and Standard Deviation). The findings indicate that infrastructure was generally adequate (Grand  $\bar{x}$  = 2.63), while water, electricity and medical facilities was inadequate. Specifically, ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.10); teacher-learner ratio ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.47) and teachers in core subjects are inadequate for the implementation of the UBE programme. However, teachers were generally adequate to a great extent (Grand  $\bar{x}$  = 2.76). It was recommended that a well coordinated plan should be put in place for the provision of infrastructure; teacher-training institutions should be strengthened for more teacher production; and teacher entry and retention should be encouraged through fringe benefits. It was concluded that the UBE programme is at the risk of being stifled if these inadequacies are not urgently addressed.

Education is an activity that goes on in every society. The world over, education is so important that it has been acclaimed to be an instrument required to effect both individual and national development. In this regard, Article 26 of the Universal Human Right Declaration of 1948 emphasized that education should be made available to every citizen of the world, free and compulsory. In order to actualize this, about one hundred and fifty-five (155) countries gathered at Jomitan, Thailand between 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1990 where the World Bank, United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a World Conference on Education for All (EFA) (Onwuka, 2005). Arising from this, a resolution was taken to provide free and compulsory education up to the Junior Secondary level at least.

Nigeria as a signatory and a member of the Jomitian Conference made provision for free and compulsory education at this level as in the National Policy on Education (NPE). Thus Section 3:15 of the NPE provides for Basic Education which shall be free and compulsory (F.M.E., 2004). Therefore, the 9-year Basic Education comprises 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education. It also includes adult and non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary education levels to cater for adults and out-of-school youths. The major aims of the Universal Basic Education are the acquisition/inculcation of:

- i. Basic numeracy, literacy and life-long skills.
- ii. Basic skills in Science, Technology, Mathematics and ICT.

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*Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development, Volume 22 No. 2, July, 2014*

- iii. Basic rudiments for creative thinking.
- iv. High moral and ethical values as well as establish fully a positive disposition toward peace, justice, equity, anti-corruptive tendencies and good governance.
- v. The spirit and yearning for entrepreneurship (NERDC, 2008).

Hence, a new curriculum was designed to meet key targets for National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). The targets are value reorientation, poverty eradication, job creation, wealth generation, and using education to empower the citizenry (NERDC, 2008).

Before the introduction of the UBE programme, free education was introduced in the Western Region in 1955. Also in 1976, the Federal Military Government introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Nigeria. However, the UPE programme was short-lived due to certain factors (political, financial, inadequate personnel and facilities) (Ategwu, 2010). Consequently, the present study attempted to ascertain whether factors such as teachers and infrastructure are adequately provided for the smooth implementation of the UBE programme in Cross River State.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is associated with Attribution Theory with Fritz Heider (1944) as the principal proponent. This was first applied to educational setting in 1980 (Frasher & Pereomode, 1999). The central teaching of this theory is that individuals or corporate organizations like educational institutions, governments etc. interpret events around them to have been caused by a particular circumstance. It also refers to the explanation that an individual gives for his or her actions or beliefs. Similarly, Elliot, Kratochwill, Cook and Travers (2000) asserted that attribution theory rests on three basic assumptions:

1. People will want to know the causes of their behavior and that of others particularly behavior that is important to them.
2. People do not randomly assign causes to our behavior. There must be a logical explanation for the causes to which they attribute their behavior or action.
3. The causes that people assign to their behavior or action influence subsequent behavior.

With regards to the present study, government in adopting the UBE programme, she probably must have been influenced by the failure noticeable in the past policies. Past policies have at various times failed to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the people and government to enhance value orientation, job creation, poverty eradication and wealth generation which are the key targets of NEEDS. These are enunciated in the UBE curriculum (NERDC, 2008).

### **The Problem**

Missionary activities in the area known today as Cross River State started in the fifteenth century (precisely in 1515). However, emergence of formal education in the area dates back to 1842. One expects that Cross River State should be among the most educationally developed States in the country. Today, a walk round most of the schools portrays a picture of neglect in terms of teacher quality and quantity, infrastructural provision, availability of instructional aids, equipment, laboratories and workshops. Even though, concerted efforts have been made to renovate classrooms in schools, much still has to be done to cover all the schools and provide adequate infrastructure and personnel.

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Recall, that the UBE programme was introduced nationally in 1999, after more than a decade, the state of affairs in our educational system is yet to change significantly for the better. Therefore, the main thrust of this study was to find answers to these questions: are infrastructural provisions and teachers adequate in schools?

**Methodology**

The design of the study is descriptive-survey. The study elicited responses from a sample of a larger population which enabled the researcher to analyze the adequacy of infrastructure and teachers needed for the implementation of the UBE programme in Cross River State.

The population comprised all teachers in public primary schools, pilot junior secondary schools and nomadic schools in the State. Hence, the population was 14,386 (teachers and the State Universal Basic Education Board – SUBEB – Staff).

The sample of the study comprised 1,442 (1,438 teachers and 4 SUBEB staff). Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in selecting the sample. Firstly, there was a classification of the UBE schools based on the educational zones (Calabar, Ikom and Ogoja).

Secondly, the schools were grouped into Regular, Pilot Junior Secondary Schools, Nomadic Schools and the teachers according to the subjects. In addition, the purposive sampling technique (Nworgu, 2006) was used to involve the teachers and SUBEB staff who fell in the categories. The SUBEB staff were the Desk Officer, Director of Pilot schools (Junior Secondary), the Architect in-charge of infrastructure and the Principal Personnel Officer in-charge of records/statistics.

Furthermore, in giving a fair representation to the entire population, proportionate random sampling technique was used to select 10% of the schools and teachers from each educational zone. Hence, the sample was 1,439 out of 14,386 teachers and 102 schools out of 1,020 schools, and 4 SUBEB officials.

The major instruments used for data collection was the Questionnaire titled “Universal Basic Education Implementation Analysis Questionnaire” (UBEIAQ) and a Structured Oral Interview. Cronbach alpha was used in analyzing the data collected involving twenty (20) teachers selected from two schools in Itu Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State (outside the area of study). A Reliability Co-efficient of 0.62 was obtained for the UBEIAQ and 0.54 for the Structured Oral interview.

The UBEIAQ was administered on the teachers. It has two parts. Part ‘A’ covers personal information which sought the name of school, class taught, type of school, gender, teaching experience and highest qualification. Part ‘B’ covers infrastructure/facilities with five items. In Part B (cluster 1), the items were structured on a four-point Likert rating scale of Very Adequate 4, Adequate 3, Not Adequate 2 and Not Very Adequate 1. For Part B (cluster 2) the items were structured on a rating scale of Very Great Extent 4, Great Extent 3, Little Extent 2 and Very Little Extent 1. Also, adequacy of qualified teachers contains five items. Similarly, improvement on the number of qualified teachers since the introduction of UBE programme in the State contains four items.

The items in part ‘B’ were structured on a four-point rating scale, while the reverse order was adopted for the negative side. A criterion mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) of 2.50 was used to determine whether teachers and infrastructure were adequate.

The Structured Oral Interview was administered on the SUBEB officers. Each officer responded to the items that are related to his/her job schedule. The instruments were administered on the participants through the Direct Delivery Technique (DDT). Also the researcher was assisted by some research assistants who were duly briefed on how to handle the exercise. The researchers distributed 1439 copies of the questionnaire while 1438 were retrieved.

### **Research Questions**

Two research questions were posed to guide the study:

**Research Question 1:** How adequate are infrastructural provisions in schools for the effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme in Cross River State?

**Research Question 2:** What is the extent of the availability of the required number of teachers to cope with the envisaged population explosion as a result of the introduction of the UBE programme in Cross River State?

### **Results**

The results of the data analysis are presented in the tables below:

**Research Question 1:** How adequate is the provision of infrastructure in schools for the effective implementation of the UBE programme in Cross River State?

**Table 1: Mean Response of Respondents on the Adequacy of Infrastructure in Schools**  
N = 1,438

S/N	Item	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
7	Classrooms	2.93	0.75	Adequate
8	Laboratory & Library Facilities	2.90	0.73	Adequate
9	Water, Electricity & Medical Facilities	2.10	0.60	Inadequate
10	Chairs, Tables and Desk	2.6	0.65	Adequate
11	Staff Rooms	2.5	0.65	Adequate
<b>Grand (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>		<b>2.63</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

Analysis of the data in respect of research question one as shown in Table 1 indicates that items 7, 8, 10 and 11 met the criterion mean of 2.50 and above in the four point scale rating. Hence, majority of the respondents hold the view that classrooms, laboratories and library facilities; chairs, desks and tables; and staff rooms are adequate for the implementation of the UBE programme in the State. These yielded the following mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) scores 2.93, 2.90, 2.60 and 2.50 respectively. Conversely, item 9 did not meet the criterion  $\bar{x}$  of 2.50 and above, but it recorded 2.10 indicating that water, electricity and medical facilities are inadequate for the effective implementation of the UBE programme in the State. In addition, a grand mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) of 2.63 was obtained indicating that infrastructure was adequate for the implementation of the UBE Programme in schools.

**Research Question 2:** What is the extent of the availability of the required number of teachers to cope with envisaged population explosion as a result of the introduction of the UBE programme in Cross River State?

**Table 2: Mean Response of Respondents on the Adequacy of the Number of Teachers in Schools for Effective Implementation of the UBE Programme**

**N = 1,438**

S/N	Adequacy of	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
12	Teacher-pupil ratio (1 – 25)	2.47	0.66	Less Extent
13	Teachers teaching subjects outside their areas of specialization	2.87	1.6	Great Extent
14	Teachers teaching core subjects	2.1	0.60	Less Extent
15	Two different classes sitting together due to shortage of teachers	3.08	0.75	Great Extent
16	Pupil/student population in a class (more than 25)	3.07	1.7	Great Extent
<b>Grand (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>		<b>2.72</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>Great Extent</b>

Analysis of data in respect of research question 2 in Table 2 reveals that items 13, 15 and 16 met the criterion mean of 2.50 and above with mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) scores of 2.87, 3.08 and above with mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) scores of 2.87, 3.08 and 3.07 respectively at the four-point rating scale. On the other hand, items 12 and 14 with mean of 2.47 and 2.1 respectively did not meet the criterion mean of 2.50 and above. These imply that teacher/pupils ratio (1-25) and number of teachers teaching core subjects are available to a little extent while teachers teaching subjects they did specialize in, merging of classes due to shortage of teachers and learners' population in class (more than 25) were available to a great extent. Apparently, there is seems to be a contradiction in the opinions of the respondents in terms of teacher-learner ratio. The earlier opinion (item 12) indicates that it is negative while the latter shows it is positive. In addition, a grand mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) of 2.72 was obtained indicating that there was adequacy of teachers for the implementation of the UBE programme to a great extent.

### **Discussion**

The finding as regards research question 1 indicates that there was adequacy of infrastructure for the implementation of the UBE Programme (Grand Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 2.63 > 2.50). However, a cursory look at the data indicates that water, electricity and medical facilities were inadequate ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.10 < 2.50). Studies by Chukwunke (2010) and Yoloye (2004) revealed shortage/lack of computers, laboratory equipment and facilities and poor electricity supply in schools.

The Handbook on the Guidelines for the effective implementation of the UBE programme (2002) stipulates that all these facilities are indispensable for the programme to succeed. In addition, Ogbonna (2006) and Maduwesi (2005) asserted that water and electricity are basic essentials for the success of the UBE programme. The lack of electricity and water is worrisome because the use of ICT and laboratory equipment would be hampered hence stifling our crave for development in science and technology.

A cursory look at the mean scores recorded in terms of the adequacy of classrooms, chairs, tables, desks and staff rooms does not really indicate that they are adequate with all learners and teachers catered for fully. The mean scores reveal that a huge number of schools, teachers and learners still need to be provided for in this regard. The provision of these facilities would no doubt boost their morale and also engender commitment towards achieving the programme's objectives.

Furthermore, the result of the data analysis as regards research question 2 revealed that the number of teachers in schools was generally adequate (Grand  $x = 2.72$ ). However, that there were contradictory opinions on teacher-learner ratio, that is, the respondents at one instance sounded positive and at another they sounded positive. This notwithstanding,  $x$  scores still indicate that much still have to be done in terms of engaging more teachers. Also, the  $x$  score of 2.1 reveals that the number of teachers teaching core subjects such as Mathematics, English Language, Basic Science and Technology etc are inadequate. Obanya (2004) had decried the shortage of qualified teachers in essential areas. Also, Olalube (2007) bemoaned the lack of qualified and motivated teachers in schools.

It is obvious that the role of the teacher in the process of education is crucial. This is because he/she organizes and co-ordinates all other vehicles for effective learning to take place. Thus, the teacher stimulates learning. Also, factors that border on the teacher in terms of number, knowledge, methods, personality and motivation influence learning (Ogar, 2007).

It is also asserted that the number of people going into the teaching profession is a larger problem. Compounding this is the fact that so many trained teachers leave the profession after graduation (Oklahoman editorial adventure, 2013). In addition, teachers may be available in droves in other subjects but there may be shortage in key areas such as English Language, Mathematics and Science.

### **Conclusion**

The conception of the UBE programme is laudable in terms of its objectives of promoting moral and ethical values, acquiring basic numeracy, literacy and life-long skills, acquiring entrepreneurial skills etc. However, the gains may not be maximally realized if adequate infrastructure and personnel are not put in place. Therefore, the UBE programme is at the risk of failure or being stifled in Cross River State if these inadequacies are not urgently addressed.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made for the effective implementation of the UBE programme in Cross River State:

1. A well coordinated plan should be put in place for the provision of infrastructure such as classrooms, tables, desks, chairs, library, and laboratory facilities in schools. Hence, actual budgetary allocations for this purpose should be progressive in each fiscal year. The provision of these facilities should not be left to government alone but organizations, like old girls/boys associations and individuals should be encouraged to come to the aid of schools.
2. Teacher training institutions such as colleges of education, the National Teachers' Institute and faculties of education should be strengthened to produce more teachers especially in the core subjects where they seem to be adequate. The programmes mounted in the institutions should be structured to meet the needs of the UBE programme.
3. Government and school administrations should put programmes in place to encourage entry and retention of teachers in the system. Hence, there should be annual financial allocation for teacher employment. Also, fringe benefits such as subsidized housing, car/motorcycle, medical schemes should be provided by Government, schools and Teachers' Unions. Where the schemes exist, they should be better strengthened through funding and display of high transparency among the operators. It is reasoned that these would enhance their retention rather than attrition.

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