

SUSTAINING THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL

Patrick Oladunjoye (Ph.D)

Abstract

The paper examines the state of the Universal Basic Education delivery in Nigeria. It also examines the role of the various agencies towards improving and sustaining the UBE. It is evident from the data collected that, basic education in Nigeria is frustrating, disappointing and pitiable. 2000 respondents were selected randomly from basic education teachers and school heads in five states. A questionnaire containing items on the sustainability and improvement of the UBE were drawn in line with the three research questions raised for the study. The data collected were analysed using the simple frequency. Fundamental problems facing the UBE programme are funding and management. The study recommended among other things that public and private owned schools must be closely supervised and the necessary human and material resources needed for sustaining and improving the programme be provided if education for ALL in the millennium development goal must be achieved.

Introduction

With the birth of Western Education in 1842 in the shores of Nigeria, the Federal Government have taken keen interest in educating her citizenry hence, the first education ordinance for Lagos and Gold Coast 1882, the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Western Region on 17th January, 1955, the introduction of the Universal Primary Education in the Eastern Region in February 1957, the introduction of the Universal Primary Education in Lagos which was then the Federal Territory in January 1957, the publication of the National Policy on Education in 1977, the launching of the Universal Free Primary Education on 6th September 1976 and the launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) on 30th September, 1999.

As part of the millennium development goal, the year 2000 was set as the year for achieving Education for ALL (EFA) by UNESCO.

Despite this, the literacy rate in Nigeria presently estimated to be 52 % according to (Babalola 2000) in the UNDP report. 40% of all heads of households in Nigeria has no formal education at all. 21% had only primary education 14% had up to Secondary Education while 5% had Post Primary Education. Data from the Federal Ministry of Education, (1996) shows that only 14.1 million children of school age are enrolled in primary schools out of the 21 million children of school going age.

In 1950, the universal declaration of Human Rights asserted that “everyone has a right to education” This declaration however spurred the entire world to universalize education hence, in Africa, at the Addis Ababa conference

of 1961, the African Ministers of Education set 1980 as the target year for all countries to universalize education. Though some countries made concerted effort to actualize this dream. But it was not too feasible for many. At the World conference on Education for ALL (EFA) held in Jometien Thailand from 5th to 9th march, 1990 organized by the World Bank UNDP, UNESCO AND UNICEF , a blue print titled “World Declaration on Education for ALL and framework for Action to meet Basic Learning Needs” was issued . Nigeria therefore embraced the Universal Basic Education which was formally launched by President Olusegun Obadanjo on the 30th September 1999 as part of the millennium development goal on education.

Statement of the Problem

Education remains the basic need for all, but in the process of universalizing it, a lot of problems are bound to be contended with. There is the major problem of funding and management of human and material resources.

The Universal Primary Education (UPE) witnessed a major set back as a result of the confused and ad-hoc nature of its origin coupled with the prolonged military presence as noted by Ogbonna (2002). For the UBE to succeed, a lot of technical and logistic problems must be settled.

Purpose of the Study

The main aim of this study, is to identify the factors that could lead to the effective sustenance of the UBE programme in Nigeria. The study sought to:

1. examine the role of the government in the effective sustenance of the UBE Programme
2. ascertain factors that could lead to failure of the programme
3. determine the role of the social agencies in the effective sustenance of the UBE in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions.

1. What is the role of the government in the effective sustenance of the UBE programme in Nigeria.
2. What are the factors that could lead to failure in the effective sustenance of the UBE Programme.
3. What is the role of the social agencies in the effective sustenance of the UBE Programme.

Literature Review

Education has remained as instrument per excellence for national development. The first responsibility of any nation is to educate her citizenry. Some countries have been more successful in achieving this than others. The Universal Basic Education as the name implies, is that form of education, which

Sustaining the Universal Basic Education Programme in the Millennium Development Goal

remains the foundation, or the bedrock of formal education. It is the form of education that is given in the first level of the child's formal education.

It is expected to be free and compulsory hence, it is universal. The primary goal of this form of education according to UNICEF (1993) is to universalize access to basic education, provide a conducive learning environment and eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria within the shortest possible time.

In the "implementation guideline for the UBE programme" as presented by the Federal Ministry of Education (2000). The programme is aimed at.

1. Developing the entire citizenry a strong commitment to the vigorous promotion of the UBE.
2. The provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age.
3. Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency
4. 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 of basic education.
5. Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

The sustainability of the programme :

The Role of the Government - There is no gainsaying that the success of the UBE programme rest majorly on the government – Federal, State and Local Government.

National Primary Education Commission (1999) Report; that the total pupil enrolment as at 1998 was 15.5 million or 12.9% of a total population of about 120 million.

Even with the meager enrolment population estimate, the National Primary Education Commission Study in 1999 revealed that the Federal Government contributed N50 per pupil per annum at a time when per pupil recurrent cost of education had risen to an average of N891 in 1995 to N1,030 in 1996.

Legislation on enrolment and funding remains the primary function of the government if UBE is to be sustained.

Factors Affecting Sustainability of the UBE Programme

Several comments have been made about the factors that could inhibit the UBE. Eya (2002: pp. 350) noted that in seeking to achieve the objective of the programme, these nine factors must be vigorously approached.

- i. Public enlightenment and social mobilization for full community involvement

- ii. Data collection and analysis
- iii. Planning, monitoring and evaluation
- iv. Teachers: their recruitment, education, training, retraining and motivation
- v. Infrastructural facilities
- vi. Enriched curricula
- vii. Textbooks and instructional materials
- viii. Improved funding
- ix. Management of the entire process.

The Role of Social Agencies/Community

The social agencies are expected to be catalyst in the proper and effective sustenance of the UBE programme as noted by Ogbonna (2002).

In trying to bring education to the doorstep of every Nigerian child regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation, physical and mental disability and socio-economic background, the social agencies must be involved. Since education is aimed at improving the life of the individual and community at large, community participation through Parent Teacher Association must be encouraged.

Methodology

2,000 respondents were selected from basic education teachers and schools heads in five states, - Ondo, Edo, Anambra, Nasarawa, Kano, using the stratified random sampling technique. Section A sought information on personal data of the respondent while section B sought information on the role of the government and social agencies/communities concerning the sustainability of the UBE Programme as well as the availability and non availability of basic infrastructures that would help to sustain the UBE programme in Nigeria.

The researcher employed the services of research assistants to administer the questionnaire. Out of the 2,000 questionnaires sent out, 1,740 were returned.

A questionnaire titled "Sustaining the Universal Basic Education" was designed by the researcher which was properly validated by experts. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistics was used to test for the reliability of the instrument using the test – re-test method. The result was established at 0.80 showing that the instrument is reliable.

Result

Table 1

The Role of the Government in Sustaining the UBE Programme

	Not Adequate	Adequate
Building of schools	983 (56.49%)	757(43.51%)
Provision of teaching facilities	1002(57.53%)	739(42.47%)
Curriculum implementation	879(50.51%)	861(49.49%)
Supervision	999(57.41%)	741(42.59%)
Public Enlightenment	1001(57.52%)	739(42.48%)
Effective planning	1300(74.71%)	440 (25.29%)
Funding	1004(57.7%)	736(42.29%)
Training and retraining of staff	1001(57.52%)	739(42.48%)

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Table 1 above shows that 56.49% of the total respondents agreed that the role of government in building schools is not adequate however 43.51% agreed that the buildings are adequate. In the provision of teaching facilities, 57.53% agreed that the teaching facilities are not adequate 50.51% of the total respondents agreed that the implementation of the curriculum is not adequate as 51.41% also agreed that supervision is inadequate.

In sustaining the UBE Programme, 57.52% of the total respondents are of the view that enough public enlightenment campaigning has not been carried out by the Government as 74.71% also agreed that effective planning for the programme is not adequate. 57.51% agreed that funding by the government is not adequate. While 56.32% agreed that the training and retraining of staff for the programme is not also adequate if the programme is to be sustained.

Table II

Factors Militating Against The Sustainability of UBE

	Not Adequate	Adequate
Classrooms	1003 (57.64%)	737(42.36)
Teachers	1430(82.18%)	310(17.82%)
Teaching Aids	1300(74.71%)	440(25.29%)
Effective data collection	1043(59.94%)	697(40.06)
Infrastructural facilities	996(57.24%)	744(42.76)
Curricula	419(24.09%)	1321(75.91%)
Textbooks	1332(76.55%)	408(23.45)

Source:Field Survey, 2009.

In identifying the factors militating against the sustainability of the UBE programme, 57.64% of the total respondents agreed that the classrooms are not adequate. 82.18% also agreed that the teachers are not adequate. 74.71% identified insufficient teaching aids, and 59.94% complained of ineffective data collection. However, 75.97% agreed that the curriculum is adequate but 75.55%

agreed that insufficient textbooks remain a factor militating against the sustainability of the UBE programme.

Table III

The Role of the Social Agencies/Community

	Not Adequate	Adequate
The role of the Church	1200 (68.96%)	540(31.04%)
The role of mass media	1043(59.94%)	697(40.06)
The role of the home	1143(65.68%)	597(34.32%)
Community/school relationship	1032(59.31%)	708(40.69%)
Parent Teachers Association	1042(59.88%)	698(40.12%)

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The respondents identified the role of the social agencies and community. 68.96% of the total respondent desired the role of the church, 59.94% desired the role of the mass media, 65.68% desired the role of the home while 59.51% desired the role of the community/ school relationship and 59.88% desired the role of the parent/teachers Association.

Findings

The results o the analysis of data shows that the role of the government is not adequate considering the needs and aspirations of the people. 56.49% considered the schools available for the Universal Basic Education as not adequate. 57.58% holds that the teaching facilities available in most schools are not also adequate. 50.51% believed that the curriculum implementation of the programme is not adequate. 57.52% of the total respondents opine that the public enlightenment campaign to sensitize the people towards the new programme is not adequate as 74.71% believed that thee is no effective planning and 52.71% believed that funding is inadequate to cope with sustaining the programme. 56.32% asserted that the training and retraining of staff for the basic education is not adequate. There are in line with the discoveries of Yoloye (1992) and Onah (1998) 52.87% believed that the teachers are not sufficient.

Concerning other factors that could militate the effective suitability of the UBE, 82.18% of the total respondents complained that the number of teachers are not enough to sustain the programme as 74.77% also believed that the teaching aids are not adequate. 59.94% asserted that the data collection method is faulty as planning is based on data.

The infrastructural facilities are considered inadequate by 57.24% of the total respondents. 75.91% complained that the textbooks are not adequate. These are some of the factors identified by Eya (2002).

The role of the church, Mass Media, the home and especially the community is well desired by a greater percentage of the respondents. Infact 59.88% desired that Parent teacher Association and private partnership must be encouraged in education as highlighted by Ogboona (2002).

Conclusion

- Government should be more focused in handling the Universal Basic Education by providing the needed human and material resources.
- More schools should be provided to house the basic education needs of the people in all states of the federation
- Teaching facilities should be provided to enhance the sustainability of the programme
- The curriculum of the UBE: should be well implemented by teachers
- There should be adequate supervision and monitoring of the programme by the inspectorate divisions and all agencies associated with supervision.
- A better public enlightenment campaign should be adopted by the mass media and other social agencies.
- The programme can only succeed through efficient and effective planning by the government
- Fund should be made available by the government to sustain the programme
- There should be training and retraining session for teachers employed in the programme
- The various social agencies should be encouraged to propagate the gospel of the UBE.
- Textbooks should be designed for the programme

The UBE should be regarded as the best opportunity for the Nigerian child to leap out of ignorance and disease to a life full of hope, and positive aspirations.

References

Babalola, S.K (2000) Blue print for the management of the UBE at the secondary level. Paper presented at the national workshop of effective school management and challenges of conducting school examinations in Nigeria. Organized by all Nigeria conference of secondary school principal (ANCOL'SS). Ibadan March.

Eya, P. (2002). The extent of primary school teachers' awareness and involvement in universal basic education in Enugu. In *international journal of research in basic and life long education* Vol 1 (1 x 2L Dec) 2000 pp 350 – 5b.

Federal republic of Nigeria (2000) *Implementation guidelines for the UBE programme*. Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja, February

NPEC (1999b) *Nigeria primary education in the 21st century*, Kaduna, NPEC.

Ogboona, D.O. (2002) Providing legal basis for community based participation In educational development in Nigeria in UBE forum. *A journal of basic education in Nigeria* Vol 2. No. 2 pp 1-10.

Onah, V.A.M (1998) The teaching condition of the teacher presuppose the learning condition and success of the student. *The Rainbow: A magazine of the all Nigerian conference of principals of secondary schools (ANCOPSS)*, Enugu State, Vol 1. No 1.

UNESCO unit for Inter-Agency cooperation In Basic Education (1995) *Education for all*. Paris.

Unicef (1997) *Situation and policy analysis. Basic education In Nigeria*. National report.

Yoloye E.O. (1997) The management of human and material resources for the primary education system in Nigeria in a period of economic reconstruction. In A. Adaralegbe (Ed) *education in Nigeria: teacher education for the 6-3-3-4 system*. Proceedings of the 1989 and 1990 conference of the Nigeria academy of education.