



# **Factors Inhibiting Universal Basic Education (UBE) Policy Implementation in Nigeria Federal and State Government Intervention**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined Factors Inhibiting Universal Basic Education (UBE) Policy Implementation in Nigeria: Federal and State Governments' Intervention. The goal of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is to ensure unfettered admission to formal basic education, provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child and reducing the incidence of “drop-out” from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency. The study revealed that factors inhibiting the programme include; Lack of funding of the programme by the government and other agencies, Lapses and anomalies in the Utilization of the Intervention Funds, incompetent to deliver effective and efficient teaching, Lack of infrastructural and instructional materials in schools, Inadequacy of statistical data, Poor supervision and monitoring of the UBE schools and inadequacy of statutory allocation to meet the needs of the UBA programme. The study recommended that Federal and State governments must take the following intervention measures; Infrastructural facilities and instructional materials like class rooms, furniture, libraries, administrative block, etc that facilitate and promote teaching and learning should be provided adequately in schools, Government should employ the right teachers for the job. The era of settling political associates with teaching jobs should be eschewed. Such teachers must be trained and retrained for the purpose of the job through frequent seminars, workshops and professional contacts with other educators, the government and other agencies responsible for providing fund for the programme should live up to date and there should be regular payment of teachers' salaries and proper motivation of teachers through loans, improved condition of services, etc to increase inputs to the success of the UBE programme in the country.

**Keywords:** Universal Basic Education (UBE), Policy, Implementation, Factors, Inhibiting, Intervention, Federal and State Government

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is the bedrock of any country's development and so any country that does not educate its populace is bound to fail. Hence, the development of a nation depends to a great extent on the level of education of the individuals that make up the nation. Such education must ensure that it brings about the physical, spiritual; social, psychological and economic development in an individual and thus, the society (Amakiri, 2014). Unfortunately, the failure of most of the educational programmes in Nigeria to achieve the desired result led to the emergence of Universal Basic Education programme. Another reason was the need to give equal educational opportunities to all citizens of the country (Social Demand Approach). This notion was supported by Labo-Popoola, Bello, and Atanda (2009) when they observed that the concept of universalization of education depicts every Nigerian child benefit from the programme, irrespective of his regional location.

The universal Basic Education (UBE) Act which was signed into law by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the then President of Nigeria on May, 2004 gave birth to Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria

under the management of the Universal Basic Education Commission. The Act provides for the right of a child of school age to compulsory free Universal Basic Education. This programme was introduced by the federal government of Nigeria, to remove distortions and inconsistencies in basic education delivery and reinforce the implementation of the National policy on education as well as to provide greater access to, and ensure quality of basic education throughout Nigeria. The objective of the programme is to ensure unfettered access to 9 years of formal basic education, provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child and reducing the incidence of “drop-out” from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency.

The programme is also expected to ensure acquisition of appropriate levels 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 (Yusha’u, 2014). The programme is expected to be universal, free and compulsory. According to Amakiri (2015), UBE appears to be much more inclusive than the UPE as it emphasizes the inclusion of girls and women (who were before now, relegated to the background), the poor, street and working children, rural and remote population, nomads, migrant workers children, refugees and the disabled.

With the laudable expectations from the UBE programme in Nigeria and the huge sum of money invested on the programme by government, parent teachers association, nongovernmental organizations and other donors, it is expected that the literacy rate would have attained a greater height. More so, considering the importance of the UBE scheme to national development and growth, there is need for a close examination of the implementation of the UBE programme which should be done since up till date, in most schools in Nigerian states, we have inadequate infrastructural, facilities, instructional material, trained teachers, funding, children taking lessons under the trees in some states, number of out-of-school children continues to grow sporadically and a very large population of illiterates still exists in Nigeria (Aluede, 2006). This was equally observed by Muhtar (2015), when he stated that illiterates’ rate in Nigeria stands at just 50 percent. This is a matter of national urgency that every agency must work to redress the literacy crisis.

The laudable programme of UBE is being hampered. There is a state of emergency for reexamination of the operations of UBE policy implementation in Nigeria. To do this, we will identify the structure of the programme, goals of the programme, the blue prints on how to achieve the broad goals, the extent of the implementation, the constraints affecting the effective implementation, possible remedies and conclusion.

#### **Origin of Universal Basic Education**

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was launched by the federal government in 2004 by an Act of National Assembly, known as the compulsory, free, Universal Basic Education Act, 2004. The purpose was to achieve Education for All (EFA) and key up with the Millennium Development Goals by world nations (2000), which proposed that by 2015, children of educable age should have free, affordable and accessible education. So, the programme was to eradicate illiteracy and ignorance among Nigerian children of school- going age.

The prime objective of the programme is to ensure unfettered access to 9 years of formal basic education, provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child and reducing the incidence of “drop-out” from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency. It is also expected to ensure acquisition of appropriate levels 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. Being universal makes the programme for everyone irrespective of anything like class, tribe, religion, or culture; being basic makes the programme a fundamental right and not a privilege to every individual of a particular society within the jurisdiction in which the policy operate (Aluede, 2006; Eddy and Akpan, 2009). With this mission statement, the programme is aimed at mobilizing the nation’s creative energies to ensure that Education for All becomes the responsibilities of all (Abutu, 2015; UBE, 2005).

### **Goals of the Universal Basic Education**

According to (Edho, 2009), universal basic education programme aims at ensuring the continuous access of Nigerians to 9 years of basic education; having the education scheme free and accessible to all the citizens of the country who should be going to school at their current age; improving the efficiency, quality and relevance of education in the country to reduce the likelihood that students will discontinue from their formal schooling; and ensure that the rights skills and values are embedded on the students to help them in their life-long education endeavors.

According to Mufiahu and Ha.zri (2015), the purpose of UBE is to make educations accessible and available for free for the benefit of every Nigerian child; while the objective of the programme is to attain objective thinking, relevant judgment, improved communication skills, increasing productivity within the family and society, and understanding the role of the individual in relation to the pursuit of national progress and development. The UBE Act of 2004 explicitly provides the design for the implementation of the programme. The Act provides for the establishment of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to co-ordinate the implementation of the programme at the state and local government levels, though the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA5) for states and local governments respectively (Yushau, 2014).

Federal government must provide the necessary assistance to different regional and local governments. Sec. 11(1) of the UBE Act 2004 states that the implementation of the UBE shall be financed from Federal Government block grant of not less than 2% of its Consolidated Revenue

### **Structure of Universal Basic Education**

Universal basic education is a 9 years duration programme, which comprises 6 years of primary education and 3years of Junior Secondary education (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004). The Act establishing UBE in Nigeria also made provision for one year of Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) within which the child will qualify to enter into basic one of the programme. Fund contribution is in form of Federal Guaranteed Credits and Local and International donor grants. Similarly, Sec. 11(2) of the Act provides that for any state to qualify for the Federal Government block grant, such State shall contribute not less than 50% of the total cost of the project as its commitment in the execution of such project. The current sharing formula of the FGN UBE Intervention Funds is composed of matching grants to States (50%), Educational imbalance (14%), Good performance (5%), Physical and mentally challenged fund (2%), Teachers professional development fund (10%), Instructional material fund (15%) and UBE Implementation fund (2%). From the Aule (2017) presentation at a 4-day interactive meeting of UBEC with Directors of Finance, Internal Auditors and Accountants, between the year 2005 and 31st October, 2017, the total FGN-UBE Intervention funds released by the Federal Government to the Universal Basic Education Commission stood at N709,972,977,13 8.49. The total statutory releases by the Federal Government as FGN- UBE Matching Grant stood at N380, 052,513,491.76 (representing 80%) has been disbursed to 36 States and FCT Abuja. The total balance un-accessed stood at N76, 119, 05 1,481.86 representing 20%. The total statutory releases by the Federal Government as Special Education Fund stood at N14, 374,059,502.73. A total of Ni 1,347,612,495.63 (representing 79%) has been disbursed to 36 states and FCT, Abuja. The total un-accessed stood atN3, 026,447,007.10 (representing 21%). The total statutory releases by the Federal Government as Teacher Professional Development Fund stood at N57, 3 19,801,064.14. A total of N40, 378,583,088.72 (representing 70%) has been disbursed to 36 States and FCT, Abuja. And the total balance un-accessed stood at N16,833,804,023.40 (representing 30%).

The act also empowers non-governmental groups like business enterprises, the parents-teachers association, alumni and community development committees to participate in the funding of the Universal Basic Education in Nigeria (Nakpodia, 2011).

More so, there must be community ownership of schools including participation in decision- making process in schools. Every parent shall ensure that his/her child or ward attends and completes primary school education and junior secondary school education. The stakeholders in education in a local government area shall ensure that every parent or person who has the care and custody of a child performs the duty imposed on him/her under the Universal Basic Education Act, 2004. Parents who do not enroll or

who withdraws his/her child from school contravenes sec. 2(2) of the UBE Act, and therefore commits an offence and be liable (RSUBEB, 2004).

To ensure improvement of literacy, numeracy and communication skills of pupils and students, the act demands for recruitment and training of teachers as well as retraining of existing teachers through seminars, workshops and professional contacts with the members of the teaching force in the country (Muftahu and Hazri. 2015; Adeyemi, 2007). For success of the programme too, the Federal Ministry of Education instituted supervision and support system, appropriate continuous teacher professional development, and full involvement of members of the teaching force to the educational development to serve as a watchdog on the activities of teachers (Federal Ministry of Education, 2005).

For increase enrolment in schools, the act demands for establishment of new schools, provision of new equipment and resources; and the services provided in UBE schools shall be free of charge including tuition, books, instructional materials, furniture and mid-day meal. Finally, the governments expect the blue print and ensure effective and efficient achievement of the educational goals of the UBE.

### **Concept of Implementation**

Ogbonnaya (2003) defined implementation as the process of carrying out objectives or a plan. So also Okoli (2007) described it as the state where the preparation made earlier, the plans, designs and analyses proposed are tested to see how real they are. It connotes the activities of transforming ideas and policy into an identified objective. And Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) define it in terms of a relationship to policy as laid down in official documents. Policy implementation encompasses those actions by public and private individuals or groups that are directed at the achievement of objectives set forth in policy decisions.

The agency charged with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of UBE programme in Nigeria is the Universal Basic Education Commission (Aule, 2017). The Universal Basic Education Commission co-ordinates the implementation of the programme at the state and local government levels, through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) for states and local governments respectively (Yushau, 2014).

### **Assessment of the extent of Implementation of UBE Programme in Nigeria**

The assessment of the UBE programme implementation would be based on the progress so far made by government and other agencies towards the execution of the project. From collection of evidences and researches carried out on the implementation of UBE programmes in some states and Nigeria in general, there is a clear indication that the effectiveness of the programme is still slight in Nigeria. In the country, we still have about 50% of Nigerian population being illiterate as submitted by Yusha'u (2014). We equally have a lot of school drop outs in the country.

Ogunjinu (2009) revealed that of the 42.1 million children below 14 years of age, only 25.8 million, representing 61.2% of the total population, were in school at the secondary school level only 30% of the population that should be in school are in school in Nigerian primary schools. The implication is that the remaining part of the population is outside the school system. The cases of drop-out pose a serious challenge to the achievement of UBE programme (Obasola (2008), Olupchunda, (2013) and Ogunjinu (2009) as it betrays the universalization of education in Nigeria.

The rationale for the introduction of UBE in Nigeria is fundamentally based on the fact that many Nigerians, both youths and adults, are illiterate, poor and do not contribute meaningfully to the development of the nation (Abutu, 2015). Basic education which was supposed to be free is not free in some states. A case in point, in Rivers State, each pupil must pay a minimum fee of N13, 500.00 per annum in what the State Government christened "Chargeable services". Worst still, school Head teachers and Principals have converted the chargeable services to a profit making venture. Any child who refuses or delays to pay the fees is sent home and asked never to return until the fees are provided by his/her parents. Consequently, in our streets, we still notice children of school ages hawking in streets during school hours instead of attending classes. Does this give weight to the programme? absolutely no.

Till date, most schools in Nigeria are ill equipped with infrastructural facilities and instructional materials (Abutu, 2015, Muflahu & Hazri, 2015). Some schools lack adequate classrooms. Most pupils learn under trees. Many of the buildings are already deteriorating, resulting in the creation of learning environments

which are not conducive at all (Moja, 2010). In some schools, the spaces to accommodate the requirements of the universal basic education are lacking. According to Igbuzor (2006), the process of learning and teaching which has been practiced in Nigeria were not able to yield the anticipated results such as the increase in the productive and technical skill of the students.

#### **Factors that inhibit effective implementation of UBE Programme in Nigeria**

The issues of implementation of UBE programme in Nigeria have given a great concern to researchers and educational administrators. The following factors have been identified by both administrators and researchers as impediment to the effective implementation of UBE programme in Nigeria.

- a. Lack of funding of the programme by the government and other agencies. No educational programme can be effectively implemented without the adequate availability of funds (Ogbonaya 2003). This was supported by Abutu (2015), a major problem facing UBE programme in Enugu state is that government does not mobilize enough funds for the vigorous activities needed for the realization of the programme objectives, and even the ones mobilized is being embezzled through contract falsification. According to Yusha'u (2014), the challenge facing UBE implementation is the attitude of some state governments of not accessing their funds for many years now. Most of the state governments are only interested in collecting the federal government's funds without paying their counterparts' funds. Others use the fund to award contract to their political
- c. Many of the teachers are incompetent to deliver effective and efficient teaching. This is as a result of unorganized manner in which teachers are recruited in the programme. Some states used the programme to settle their political supporters. Consequently, many of them could not pass through the recruitment process. Others take up the job without adequate commitment with the notion of "na government work". Hence, teaching-learning suffer greatly. The presence of teachers who were poorly trained and unmotivated has been apparently one of the main reasons on the failure of this educational scheme (Muftahu and Hazri, 2015).
- d. Lack of infrastructural and instructional materials in schools affects teaching learning. According to Sobechi (2004), some UBE schools lack infrastructural facilities and instructional materials especially in the rural areas; because what passed as schools are makeshift structures that look more like farm shades. Such a situation hinders the fulfillment of educational objectives.
- e. Inadequacy of statistical data affects the provision of educational resources such as books, laboratory equipment, audio-visual materials, among others, which in themselves constitute major challenges to the successful implementation of the UBE programme (Abutu, 2008).
- f. Poor supervision and monitoring of the UBE schools in the country is a constraint to UBE implementation. Supervisors no longer do the work of supervision but a compromise between them and teachers as they receive pay packet and lunch at the expense of intensive supervision of lesson notes, truancy, negligence, etc. according to Obinaju (2001), educational supervision is concerned with those particular activities and aspects which maintain and promote the effectiveness of teaching and learning in school. It is an action directed towards the implementation of teaching/learning process (Onoyase, 1991).
- g. It has been argued that statutory allocation has been inadequate to meet the needs of the UBE programme (Enouch and Okpede, 2000). Unfortunately the nongovernmental organizations like business enterprises, Parent Teachers Association, Community Development Commission, among others that would have assisted the government in raising fund for education are not giving encouraging support. Hence, the programme suffers a great set back as the various governments alone cannot cater the teeming needs of education in the country.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The study examined the Universal Basic Education Policy in Nigeria and the extent of its implementation. The study discovered that UBE programme took off in Nigeria as early as 2004 under President Olu Ohasanio administration. Among its goals was elimination of illiteracy in the country by imbuing literacy, numeracy, and communication skills in the citizenry. Though the programme is gifted with laudable objectives, the implementation stage is still mean and shrouded with a lot of constraints. Among

such constraints include lack of infrastructural and instructional materials, poor funding, misappropriation of funds, poor supervision and monitoring, etc. it was recommended among other things, employment of qualified teachers, training and retraining of teachers, motivation of teachers, effective supervision, creation of more consciousness to arouse the interest of both the government and other non governmental agencies on the need for funding of UBE programme as way forward for the UBE policy in Nigeria.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve the goals of UBE in Nigeria, the government must take the following steps:

1. Infrastructural facilities and instructional materials like class rooms, furniture, libraries, administrative block, etc that facilitate and promote teaching and learning should be provided adequately in schools.
2. Government should employ the right teachers for the job. The era of settling political associates with teaching jobs should be eschewed. Such teachers must be trained and retrained for the purpose of the job through frequent seminars, workshops and professional contacts with other educators.
3. Government must institute an effective supervision of teachers and pupils in schools. This will be achieved by setting up a watchdog on the school supervisors and providing the supervisors with vehicles for monitoring, office accommodation, transport equipment, adequate time and funds.
4. The government and other agencies responsible for providing fund for the programme should live up to date. The intervention fund can be checked through freezing of the Matching Grant account and withholding further disbursement of the Intervention Funds, confirmation of State Counterpart Fund from banks before Matching Grant is released, quarterly routine financial monitoring, follow-up monitoring and spot checks, among others.
5. The welfare of teachers should be a priority. There should be regular payment of teachers' salaries and proper motivation of teachers through loans, improved condition of services, etc to increase inputs to the success of the UBE programme in the country.

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