

**THE CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC  
EDUCATION IN SOME SELECTED PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

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# **THE CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION IN SOME SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study focuses on the challenges affecting the implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria using Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State as a case study. This study identifies the major challenges that stand as a bottleneck towards the implementation of Universal Basic Education. Questionnaire was administered to collect relevant data which was analyzed, using the simple percentages method. It was discovered that poor monitoring and supervision of schools, working distance, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of qualified personnel (teachers) among others were responsible for poor implementation of the programme. Having identified the problems, recommendations were further made to help in solving the problem. The researcher recommended that government needs to provide enough fund for the assessment and monitoring of the schools, provision of school facilities, recruitment of qualified teachers among others have to be vigorously pursued and achieved if the objectives of Universal Basic Education is to be ascertained.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Education is a process of acquiring skills obtaining relevant knowledge and aptitudes in order to survive in this world. It is the process whereby individuals are provided with the means, tools and knowledge for understanding their society and its structures. Hence, education encompasses the social life that helps people create a meaningful environment as well as been able to influence their environment positively.

Education could be seen as an activity which goes on in the society in which it takes place. Such activities may include any purposeful human endeavour that is capable of providing learning experiences. Education in a broader sense could be seen as a process of socialization. It constitutes all the processes

through which individuals are trained in the social norms and values of their immediate society, so as not to become a misfit of that society.

The overall philosophy of Nigerian education according to the National Policy on Education (2004 revised) is based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen; the full integration of the individual into the community; and the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system.

The goals of education as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004 revised) are therefore:

- (a) the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;



(b) the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;

(c) the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and

(d) the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

Primary education serves as the foundation in the formal process of ensuring changes in the behaviour of the growing members of the society. The success of any subsequent level depends, to a great extent on the effectiveness of the foundation. Hence, the primary formal education occupies a natural prime of place in any nation's educational system. In light of this, Mallison (1980) described primary education as the keystone of the whole

educational structure. As a foundation, it invariably determines what the outlook of subsequent higher levels of formal education will be.

Primary education deals with young children coming fresh from their homes without any exposure at all to the outside world. This level exposes the child to become an integral part of the society. It exposes the child to adapt to situations out of the home environment. He/she begins to associate with peer groups out of the family setting.

The objectives of the primary education in Nigeria as spelt out in the National Policy on Education (2004, revised) states:

- (a) The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively;

- (b) The laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- (c) Citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- (d) Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes;
- (e) Giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity;
- (f) Developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment;
- (g) Providing basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

To this end, the government made primary education free and universal by launching the Universal Primary Education Scheme in September, 1976 and proposed to make it compulsory.

The Scheme was to provide educational opportunities for all the children regardless of their socio-economic background across the country. Thus, it was to bridge the gap in the educational development of various states in the country.

However, the Scheme was faced with several challenges because structures were hurriedly put in place, teachers were trained haphazardly and there was an inadequate funding of the primary education sector. This however, brought about declining enrolment in public primary school. Teachers to pupil's ratio were high and at the long run, education was meant only for the wealthy children (not for all the children as proposed earlier).

Children who are supposed to be in the school learning are outside the street hawking goods for their parents. The vision of Education for All (EFA) regardless of their socio-economic background was ignored.

The origin of Nigeria's educational policies could be traced back to the 1955 Universal Primary Education in the Old Western Nigeria, 1957 Universal Primary Education (UPE) of the Eastern region and 1976 Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme.

Each of the policies existed and was established by different government administrations and was criticized when a new government came into power. As Utibe (2001) asserted, "the UPE contributed to a lowering of the standard of education in Nigeria at the primary school level".

Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the Old Western Region offered the opportunity of putting his concept of Universal Primary

Education into practice. Thus, as the leader of the Action Group Party, he placed priority on primary education by drawing up a comprehensive educational development plan and adhering strictly to this policy. He believed that to educate the children and to enlighten the illiterates and adult was to lay a solid foundation not only for the future but to attain a social and economic progress of the nation. He therefore, introduced a free, Universal and compulsory Primary Education (UPE) in 1955. However, the Federal Government of Nigeria became conscious in educational opportunities in the nation's states and therefore introduced the Universal Primary Education Scheme throughout the federation in 1976. Thereafter, there was regularization of primary education system throughout Nigeria. The differences that had existed in the different regions were checked by the Federal Government with the decision that all states of the federation must run similar programme.

Despite the implementation strategies and Government responsibility towards the achievement of the primary objectives of the Scheme, the Scheme was not able to meet up with the world's standard.

The Universal Primary Education Scheme failed because the Federal Government of Nigeria under-estimated the number of pupils that would be involved in the programme, the number of teachers, school buildings and the amount of money that was required to make the programme functional.

Utibe (2001) asserted that, 'the Universal Primary Education programme in the country was improperly planned and hurriedly executed' leading to a waste of millions of Naira.

The relevance of primary education in national development cannot be over-emphasized. National development is a product of sartorial effectiveness. Thus, development is a multi-facet process,

and no society can comfortably progress on the path of national development when the vast majority of its citizens lack at least the basic education.

The objectives of primary education in Nigeria centered on producing literate and numerate citizenry who will, apart from laying the ground work or foundation for further education, provide low-level manpower needed in the country in all the sectors of the economy.

It was based on this reason that the Taiwo Commission of 1960 was charge to investigate the crisis bedevilling the Universal Primary Education Scheme in Nigeria. He reported among other thing: a fall in the standard of education and a disparity in the educational opportunities of the young ones in the country. Most children roam the streets in our major cities during school hours, hawking fruits, pure water, snacks, oranges, sweets etc. others are



also found at the motor parks doing their daily activities (hawking).

This situation calls for much concern of all and sundry especially the stakeholders in the educational industry. The Dike Commission therefore, recommended the abolition of the Universal Primary Education Scheme and its subsequent modification.

The general outcry in the falling standard of Universal primary education and a sharp depreciation in the morals of primary school children brought about the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE).

The Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) item two adopted by world nations in 2000 proposed that, by 2015, children of educable age should have free, affordable and accessible education. The item is a response to the world conference of

Education for All (EFA) held in Jomitten, Thailand from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1990, which was the major trigger for the birth of Universal Basic Education (UBE). The conference, which was well attended, and Nigeria was also a signatory (participant) came out with a blue print document entitled: “World Declaration on Education for All” and framework of actions to meet basic learning needs. (FGN/UNICEF, 2003). Nigeria as a world nation became encouraged to set up educational activities to achieve “Education For All (EFA) goals.

In response to the world’s expectation, President Olusegun Obasanjo formally launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1999. The programme is intended to be universal, free and compulsory. This term according to Obanya (2000) implies that appropriate types of opportunities would be provided for the basic education of every Nigerian child of school

going-age; that parents have an obligation to ensure that children in their care avail themselves of such opportunities; and that sanctions will be imposed on persons, societies, or institutions that prevent children, adolescents and youths from benefiting from Universal Basic Education.

It is worthy of note that Universal Basic education is a new innovative trend in Nigeria educational industry particularly as it is programmed to be for 9 years. That is, it is designed to cater for a child's education from primary school to the end of the junior secondary school.

Universal Basic Education is broader than Universal Primary Education, which focused on providing educational opportunities for primary school age children. Universal Basic Education stresses the inclusion of girls and women and a number of non-privilege groups: the poor, street and working children, rural and

remote populations, nomads, migrant workers, indigenous people, minorities, refugees and the disabled. It also extends to the first level of secondary education (JSS 3).

**Universal Basic Education Statement:**

*“ At the end of 9 year of continuous education, every child through the system should have acquired appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, communication, manipulative and life skills and be employable, useful to himself and the society at large by possessing relevant ethical, normal and civic skills”*

It stated further that, Universal Basic Education shall:

*Serve as a prime energizer of a national movement for the actualization of the nations Universal Basic Education vision working in contact with all stakeholders thus, mobilizing the nations creative energies to ensure that, Education For All (EFA) becomes the responsibility for all.*

Moreover, the objectives of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) stated in the implementation guidelines are as follows:

- (i) To develop in the entire citizenry a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
- (ii) Provide free, compulsory universal basic education for all the Nigeria child of school going age;
- (iii) To reduce drastically drop-out rate from the formal school system through improved relevance and efficiency;
- (iv) To cater for drop-out and out-of-school children or adolescents through various forms of complementary approaches to the provisions and promotion of basic education;
- (v) To ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy manipulative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civics) needed for laying the foundation for life-long learning .(UBE, 2000).

However, it is important to note that some of the problems that led to the failure of Universal Primary Education (UPE) which was launched in 1976 still manifest in the implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme among which are: poor infrastructure, inadequate supervision and monitoring, shortage of teachers, inadequate funding among others.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria's educational system has witnessed a catalogue of changes in educational policies and programmes. Some of the changes have appeared to a number of people desirable while others have not been able to meet the desired target.

Many of the changes in educational policies in Nigeria have been a product of inadequate planning. There is therefore, a high level of uncertainty which is bedevilling the implementation of

this programme in Nigeria schools. This situation call for much concern as the young ones is the future leaders of this country.

This study aims at carrying out a research on the challenges affecting the implementation of the Universal Basic Education in some selected primary schools in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the objectives and problems associated with the implementation of Universal Basic Education and suggest possible solutions which will assist to overcome the challenges faced by the programme.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- (i) To what extent has this programme (Universal Basic Education) been able to cater for the children in Ijebu-Ode Local Government and its environment?
- (ii) Does the Programme make available recruitment of qualified teachers in primary schools?
- (iii) Is there any significant relationship between the ratio of teachers to pupils?
- (iv) Does Universal Basic Education Programme provide adequate facilities at the primary level of education?
- (v) Does the Universal Basic Education Programme provide adequate instructional materials to enhance teaching/learning effectiveness in all the primary schools?
- (iv) To what extent has the monitoring unit (i.e Inspectorate division) been effective?



(vii) Are these schools charging fees in spite of the government policy?

(viii) Are there library provision in the primary schools?

(ix) Are the pupils exposed to computer training in this modern technological age?

(x) Do the primary schools possess adequate sporting equipment?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study will be of great importance because it will examine the challenges associated with the implementation of Universal Basic Education in primary schools and it will also provide valuable strategies of curbing these problems.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study centers on some selected primary schools in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

## 1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

**Universal Basic Education (UBE):** A 9 year educational programme starting from primary to junior secondary level in Nigeria.

**Universal Primary Education (UPE):** An educational programme made compulsory by the Federal Government for all children in the states of the federation in 1976.

**Pupil:** A child at school, who is being taught in a primary school.

**School:** A place of teaching and learning of skills, knowledge and aptitudes.

**Primary Education:** The lowest level of formal education.

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