ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) PROGRAMME IN ANAMBRA STATE.

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Abstract

The study is on assessment of the implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State. Literature related to the study was reviewed. Survey research design was used for carrying out this study. Four (4) research questions were used. The population of the study comprised all the 262 principals and 5,632 teachers in the 262 public secondary schools in the 6 zones of the state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 2 zones(Awka &Onitsha zone).Out of the 2 zones 200 teachers and 20 principals were selected using purposive sampling technique. The instrument for data collection is a Universal Basic Education Questionnaire (UBEQ). Percentage, Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study were that: Most facilitates for implementing the UBE program are available but inadequate; Quality teachers are used in implementing the UBE programme in the state but the teacher student ratio is grossly inadequate; Universal Basic Education Programme's has not done much in giving access to free basic education to school children in the state and there are inherent challenges in effective implementation of the UBE programme in the state. Based on these findings, there is still need for improvement in the programme delivery to meet the demands of quality basic education in the state. Hence, in conclusion the major educational implication of the findings of the study is that the objectives of the UBE programme are still far-fetched with the current state of art and government efforts in the state. Among others, it was recommended that government should make effort to equip schools with basic educational service and facilities like laboratories, libraries etc.

Key words: Assessment, Implementation, Universal basic Education.

Education plays a very powerful role in national development. In realization of the role which education plays in national development, the government of Nigeria has ventured into various educational policies and programmes with the great expectation that, the felt socio – economic and political needs of the citizenry would be met (Omotayo, 2011). For instance, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced nationwide by the Federal Government of Nigeria in September 1976 with the major intention of taking care of the educational demands of Nigerians. UPE was launched across all the states of the federation and sought to address the issues that affected the 1955 educational policy. The policy was designed to expand access to education and increase the number of schools in the country.

It also aimed to provide all school-age children free education in order to bridge the education gap and reduce the rising levels of illiteracy in the Country. This six year reform programme was launched with much prospect, yet it failed to achieve its goal of eradicating illiteracy because of inadequate planning and lack of implementing mechanism, as warranted by the preceding National policy on Education (Bolaji, 2014; Salihu&Jamil, 2015;Chikwe, 2018).

For example, Ado, Akinbobola and Inyang (2010) observed that some of the primary objectives of the revised 1981 National Policy on Education are more likely to be achieved at the Junior secondary level than the end of the six-year primary school level. Hence, the collapse of the 1976 UPE scheme was an evidence of deficiency in the programme. The new thinking was therefore a compulsory basic education programme including the Junior secondary education segment.

Over the years, there has been global agitation for more functional, qualitative and quantitative education all over the world. According to Opoh, Okou and Ikang (2015), this agitation and concern for quantity and quality education is reflected in the inauguration of Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1995 and Dakar in 2000. This was followed by a meeting called by the 56th General Assembly of the United Nations to discuss the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). After the Jomtien declaration and framework of action on "Education for All" (EFA), Governments of every member nation are striving towards achieving the aim of assuring that basic education is being provided to all citizens. Oladele (2018) observed that most of the nations interested in achieving this aim strive through their national governments and international agencies which reflect in design and formulation of new and innovative national education policies and programmes.

The implementation however started in July, 2005 with the appropriation of the UBE fund to the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and subsequent disbursement to states after the Act establishing it as a law was rectified in 2004. The UBE programme is intended to be universally free and compulsory. The compulsory free universal basic education is a new education culture in Nigeria which is in line with contemporary development in the world. It is a laudable initiative geared towards globalizing "education for all" beginning at the foundation levels (Nwogu & Esobhawan, 2014). These terms imply that appropriate types of opportunities will be provided for the basic education of every Nigerian child. The term "basic" relates to the base, take-off point, fundamental and essential. In other words, basic education is a life-long form of education involving learning to learn, mass literacy and adult education. The UBE is a nine (9) year basic education programme which aims at providing free and compulsory education for primary and Junior secondary school levels. It therefore shows that basic education is the starting point in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. As such, it is assumed that an adequate provision of basic education in Nigeria will serve to further develop human and capital resources in the country (Alikor, 2014).

According to Federal Government white paper on the implementation guideline on UBE issued by FME 2002:2, UBE is also expected to provide basic education which is expected to be terminal. Such education (UBE) is not meant for school age children alone it is also designed to take care of the educational needs of young peoples and adults who have not had the opportunity to receive adequate schooling. Thus, the UBE programme includes nomadic education, education of migrant fisherman, school drop outs, out of school children and adult education.

The specific objectives of the UBE programme as spelt out in the implementation guidelines is to develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for Education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion, provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age, reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from the formal school system., catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or the other, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complimentary approaches to the provision and promotion of Basic education, ensuring the acquisition of the

appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills, as well as the ethical, moral and civic value.

In line with the above, the implementation guideline made provision for a commission which runs the affairs of the UBE – by setting up minimum standards of primary, junior secondary and adult literacy throughout Nigeria. The mandate of the commission is to set in pace through content and delivery, a functional set of approaches geared towards effective implementation of the programme, which include public enlightenment and social mobilization for full community involvement; data collection and analysis; planning, monitoring and, evaluation; teachers recruitment, education, training, retraining, motivation; infrastructural facilities; enriched curriculum; text books and instructional materials, improve funding and; management of the entire process. It is also expected that stiff penalties should be imposed on persons, societies or institutions that prevent children, adolescents and youths from benefiting from UBE programme.

The main goal of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme is to make basic education, which is composed of nine years of schooling at different levels, accessible and availably for free for the benefit of every Nigerian child. Its objectives is to promote the presence of objective thinking, relevant judgment, improvement of communication skills, increasing productivity within the family and the society, and understanding the role of the individual in relation to the pursuit of national progress and development (Salihu & Jamil, 2015). However, it has been over a decade since the Nigerian government's reform of basic education occurred. According to Amuchie, Asotibe and Audu(2013), the UBE programme has enormous implications for various spheres of the nation, from budgetary expenditure to other developmental programmes. Hence, it must fully justify the opportunity cost that goes with its implementation.

Nonetheless, the researcher has observed that the modest performance of basic education in Nigeria in terms of access, retention, completion and achievement for the past decade is cause for concern. According to Bolaji (2014), the World Bank appraisal of the basic education reforms in Nigeria has somewhat reached an overall unsatisfactory outcome. By implication, while the intentions and goals of the UBE policy are commendable, the implementation strategies seem to have been inadequate. For instance, the UBE scheme was planned to bring about positive change in the educational system through quality, functional, and free education, but as observed by Oladele (2018) this dream has met bottlenecks, barriers through high enrollment with inadequate classroom spaces, lack of laboratories, dilapidated infrastructure, employment of unqualified teachers, lack of fund and these have among others hindered the good implementation of the programme.

Drop out in school is a major problem in Nigeria education system. UBE was designed to address the social problems of drop outs in secondary schools, but dropout rates in schools are still high as 42% in some States (Mordi 2016). For instance, according to a study of rate of drop out in secondary schools in Anambra state between 2013-2018 academic years, up to 1578 students dropped out of secondary school in both public and privates schools (Amaonye & Anaeke 2020).

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2012) report also showed that between 2000 and 2010, 40% of the children in Junior secondary schools in Nigeria dropped out before graduation. In the same vein, the Federal Government's released

statistics recently showed continuing drop in school enrolment particularly at the basic education level. The figures showed that 17 million children were not enrolled at the primary and junior secondary schools in 2009 (Suleiman, 2012). These statistics placed Nigeria as one of the countries with the highest secondary school dropout rates (UNESCO, 2012). The UBE policy programme of 1999 was designed to tackle the problem of dropouts in secondary schools in the country (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2000).

In Anambra State; the rate of school dropout appears to be on the increase; learning needs of students are not being cared for; no appropriate level of literacy and numeracy to build ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning (Nwigbor & Obilor,2019). It was found out that many children of school age are still roaming the streets during school hours. In some school, infrastructural facilities seems to be grossly inadequate as pupils are charged some fees to provide essentials such as chalk, dusters and others. It was based on this backdrop that the researcher deemed it worthy to embark on this study, Assessment of implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra state.

Problem of the study

In Anamba state it was observed that the basic schools seems to be bedeviled with overcrowded classrooms, poor funding of the school activities, inadequate infrastructural materials, poor funding supervision and monitoring of school programme among others. All these are challenges for the effective implementation of UBE programme in the state. Consequently after 10 yrears of existence of UBE programme, young children are still roaming about on the streets begging and hawking during school hours, school dropout cases appear to remain intractable. The teacher of UBE also appear dissatisfied with their remuneration and condition of service in addition to poor or inadequate provision of teaching and learning facilities like libraries and laboratory equipment, books among others. The problem of this study therefore is that there is scanty empirical evidence to the effort being made in implementing the UBE programme in Anambra state. It is against this background that this research is out to assess the implementation of UBE programme in Anambra state.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to assess the implementation of Universal Basic education Programme in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1. ascertained the adequacy of physical facilities for implementing Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State
- 2. assessed the qualification of teachers used in implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State
- 3. find out the contributions of the Universal Basic Education Programme in giving access to free basic education to school age children
- 4. find out the challenges in implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State

Research Ouestion

The following questions guided this study

- 1. How adequate are the physical facilities for implementing Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State?
- 2. How qualified are teachers used in implementing Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State?
- 3. What are the contributions of the Universal Basic Education Programme in giving access to free basic education to school going age children?

What are the challenges in implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme in 4. Anambra State?

Method

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. According to Nworgu (2015), survey research is the systematic collection of data from a group as a representative sample of the population. The study was carried out in all the public secondary schools in Anambra State. Nigeria. The population of this study consists of all the principals and teachers in the public secondary schools in Anambra State which is 5894. This consists of the 262 principals and 5632 teachers in the six Education zones of the state. Random sampling technique was used to sample two(2) zones Awka & Onitsha, the sample size for the study was 220 respondents. This comprised of 20 principals and 200 teachers selected through purposive sampling technique. A researcher developed instrument titled: Universal Basic Education Questionnaire(UBEQ) was used for data collection. The UBEP has two sections; A and B, section A was demographic while section B has three clusters. The clusters have a checklist on adequacy of physical facilities used in implementing the programme, a proforma on teacher's qualification, and two questionnaires.

Result

Research Question One: What is the adequacy of physical facilities for implementing Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State?

Table 1: Checklist showing the status of basic input facilities for implementing Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State

S/N	Item describtion	Minimum	%	Decision
		Standard	Available	
1	Class rooms	1:25	94	Adequate
2	Record material eg. Child folder containing biodata	1 per class	96	Adequate
3	Toilets	2 per class	7	Inadequate
4	Cup boards	I per class	28	Inadequate
5	Health materials eg. First Aid box	1 per class	16	Inadequate
6	Water containers	1 per class	48	Inadequate
7	Office accommodation	1 per school	72	Adequate
8	Play ground	1 per school	97	Adequate
9	Recreational materials eg. Swings	1 per 20 children	2	Inadequate
10	Facilities for storing	1 per class	49	Inadequate
11	Library facilities/benches and stools	1 per 5 children	61	Inadequate
12	tables and chairs	1 per class	87	Adequate
13	Child sized chairs	1 per child	97	Adequate
14	Textbooks	1 per 4 children	43	Inadequate
15	General course staff room	1 per 5 children	98	Adequate

With regard to research question one. Table 1 shows the status of basic input facilities for implementing Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State as against the minimum standard. The data obtained through the use of checklist showed that most facility status are available but inadequate. **Research Question Two:** How qualified are teachers used in implementing Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State?

Table 2: Checklist showing the adequacy of human resources for implementing Universal Basic

Education Programme in Anambra State

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Education	NCE	B.ED	B.SC	M.ED	Total	%	% Not	Teacher/Student
Zone						Qualified	quannea	Ratio
Awka	51	34	10	8	94	99	1	1:46
Onitsha	67	28	5	17	126	98	2	1:58

Total	118	62	15	28	220	98	2	1:52

Table 2 shows the available human resources used in implementing Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State. This indicated that the percentage of qualified teachers in the school is 98 while the teacher student ratio is 1:52

Research Question Three: What are the contributions of the Universal Basic Education Programme's in giving access to free basic education to school age children?

Table 3: The mean ratings and standard deviation on the contributions of the Universal Basic Education Programme's in giving access to free basic education to school age children

S/N	Item describtion	X	SD	DEC ISIO N
1	Government providing basic facilities for teaching and learning	2.65	.88	A
2	There is free tuition in higher basic education	2.01	1.14	R
3	Parents are encouraged to enroll their children	2.92	.97	A
4	School Base Management Committee (SBMC) participate in running the school	2.64	1.00	A
5	School feeding programme is implemented in all schools	1.82	1.15	R
6	Sensitization and mobilization of members of the public towards UBE programmes	2.43	1.01	R
7	Provision of equal opportunities among children of school going age	2.65	1.13	A
8	Training and retraining of teachers	2.25	.97	R
	Cluster mean	2.42	1.03	R

Table 3 indicates responses on how often Universal Basic Education Programme's contribute in giving access to free basic education to school going age children. The result shows the item by item Mean Scores (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) of Principals and teachers. On the whole, the cluster mean score is 2.42while the SD is 1.03.

Research Question Four: What are the challenges in implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State?

 Table 4: Mean ratings and standard deviations on the challenges in implementing the

Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State

S/N	Item describtion	X	SD	DECISION
1	Poor teaching method adopted by teachers	2.96	1.04	A
2	Inadequate qualified teachers	2.88	.99	A
3	Lack of instructional materials	3.12	.96	A
4	Over populated class size	3.31	.95	A
5	Poor funding	3.34	.94	A
6	Poor remuneration of teachers	3.27	.93	A
7	Low teacher motivation as a result poor working condition	3.11	.98	A
8	Poor supervision on the part of relevant Government agencies	2.87	.96	A
9	Poor statistical data on UBE programmes in upper basic schools	3.00	.91	A
10	Low participation of Private sector in funding of UBE	3.02	1.09	A
	Cluster mean	3.09	0.98	A

Table 4 indicates responses on the challenges of implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme's in Anambra State. The result shows the item by item Mean Scores (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) of Principals and teachers. On the whole, the cluster mean score is 3.09 while the SD is 0.98.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in line with the research questions that guided the study. Specifically, the study was discussed according to the following sub-headings:

- Adequacy of physical facilities for implementing Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State
- Qualification of teachers used in implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State
- Contributions of the Universal Basic Education Programme's in giving access to free basic education to school going age children
- Challenges in implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State

Adequacy of physical facilities for implementing Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State

Findings indicated that basic facilities as class rooms, record material, office accommodation, playground, tables and chairs are available and adequate at the schools. Other facilities found to be adequate for implementing the UBE programme in the state are child sized chairs and general course staff room. These input resources are vital to address students' needs and supports implementation of the programme.

These findings seem to validate those of Nakpodia (2011) that government contributed adequate finance towards effective implementation of UBE programme when an empirical study on the integrative funding of universal basic education (UBE) and effective implementation in Central Senatorial District of Delta State was carried out.

Undesirably, the findings of this present study also showed that most vital education facilities and support resources such as toilets, cupboards, health materials e.g first aid box, water containers, recreational materials eg. swings and facilities for storing are grossly inadequate in Anambra UBE schools. Other resources that were found to be inadequate are library facilities and textbooks. This is similar to the findings of (Offor,2012) that most facilities were unavailable and available ones were inadequate in a study aimed at ascertaining the availability and adequacy of educational facilities which are needed in schools to cope with the new enrolment. This finding also echoes those of (Suleiman,2012) which revealed that infrastructural and instructional facilities were inadequate for the implementation of UBE in Nigeria. In the above context, the Universal Basic Education as introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria and described as a laudable development project by scholars and policy evaluators, appears to be leaving many issues unresolved which are likely to bedevil the programme just as the UPE scheme was. Hence, the modest performance of basic education in Nigeria in terms of access, retention, completion and achievement is in jeopardy and a cause to concern for all stakeholders.

Qualification of teachers used in implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State

Findings of this study indicated that up to 98 percent of the teachers used in implementing the UBE programme in Anambra state are qualified. These indicate that on average, the UBE board in Anambra state maintains NCE as a minimum qualification for teaching in the programme. This is a welcome development because from the findings of Nwogu and Esobhawan (2014), teacher quality and quantity facilitates the implementation of the UBE programme in Nigeria by ensuring a better delivery of instruction, use of varied teaching methodologies and pedagogy, better classroom management, reduction in teachers' workload and adequate teacher-student ratio. The findings of this study is also in disagreement with those made by

Doggoh (2014) that the quality of teachers in UBE programme was low in an attempt to assess the enforcement of the "free and compulsory" UBE Act 2004 and impact of the UBE programme in the development of educational consciousness among the citizens.

The findings of this study also indicates that the teacher student ratio is 1:52. This is far away from the stipulated 1:40 in the National Policy on Education. With respect to ratio of teacher to student it could be inferred that though there are qualified teachers in the schools, they are not adequate to implement the UBE programmes. The findings also echoes those made by Akinbobola and Inyang (2010), that there are qualified human resources for the implementation of upper basic of the UBE programme in Bayelsa State of Nigeria but they are inadequate in all the three basic subjects when the researchers investigated the status of human resource in Bayelsa State of Nigeria and its implications for the implementation of upper basic of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme.

Contributions of the Universal Basic Education Programme's in giving access to free basic education to school age children.

With respect to access in the UBE programme, findings of this study indicate that with Government providing basic facilities for teaching and learning; Parents are encouraged to enroll their children; School Base Management Committee (SBMC) participate in running the school and Provision of equal opportunities among children of school age. This is noteworthy because the main goal of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Program is to make basic education, which is mainly composed of nine years of schooling at different levels, accessible and availably free for the benefit of every Nigerian child. This makes the UBE Programme to have enormous implications for various spheres of the nation, from budgetary expenditure to other developmental programmes. Hence, it must fully justify the opportunity cost that goes with its implementation.

The above findings is however consistent with those made by Nakpodia (2011), that Parent Teachers Association (P.T.A) which is synonymous with School Base Management Committee (SBMC) contributed immensely to the UBE programme toward its effective implementation in an empirical study on the integrative funding of Universal Basic Education (UBE) and effective implementation in Central Senatorial District of Delta State. In consonant with the findings of Nwogu and Esobhawan (2014) that the implication of the implementation of the UBE scheme includes: improved academic performance and reduction in students dropout.

Findings of this study also revealed that the implementation of UBE in Anambra state has not been successful in giving access to free basic education to school age children with respect to free tuition in higher basic education; School feeding programme; Sensitization and mobilization of members of the public towards UBE programmes and; training and retraining of teachers. These are similar to findings of Ugorji, Ewuim, Agu, Ogbu, Chris and Ogu(2018) study that evaluated the effect of Universal Basic Education Programme on rural formal education in Ohaozara, Onicha and Ivo Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State. Their study revealed that UBE programme have not significantly ensured that all school-age children in Ohaozara, Onicha and Ivo Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State are in school. It was also revealed that UBE programme has significantly assisted beneficiaries to possess literacy, numeracy and basic life skills, as well as ethical moral and civic values.

Challenges in Implementing the Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State

Findings showed that the challenges of implementing the UBE programme in Anambra state were poor teaching method adopted by teachers; inadequate qualified teachers; lack of instructional materials; over populated class size; poor funding; poor remuneration of teachers and; low teacher motivation as a result of poor working condition. Others are poor supervision on the part of relevant government agencies; poor statistical data on UBE programmes in upper basic schools and; low participation of private sector in funding of UBE. These are also consistent with the findings of (Suleiman,2012) in a study to assess the implementation of UBE in Nigeria where it was found to be grossly under-funded and lack requisite teachers which hampered effective implementation. These findings are also in agreement with those made by Abutu (2015) that the constraints to the effective implementation of the UBE programme are lack of proper supervision of teaching and learning in primary schools, inadequate provision of instructional materials and infrastructural facilities to primary schools, poor funding of educational programme and poor statistical data on UBE primary schools.

Conclusions

Based on the findings it was concluded that Most facilitates for implementing the UBE program were available but inadequate, Quality teachers were used in implementing the UBE programme in the state but the teacher student ratio is high, Universal Basic Education Programme has not done much in giving access to free basic education to school age children in the state, There were inherent challenges in effective implementations of the UBE programme in the state

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made

- 1. Government should declare state of emergency on infrastructure in schools so that they are properly equipped for functional teaching and learning.
- 2. Provision of vital instructional materials should be prioritized by all stakeholders and should constitute a central feature of Government efforts for effective implementation of the UBE programme
- 3. Government efforts should be sustained in recruitment of qualified teachers and encouraging serving teachers to upgrade their qualification through in-service training to mitigate the shortage of teachers in the school
- 4. Proper funding of education and provision of school physical facilities by government as a panacea to improve enrollment and access to free basic education to children of school age should be sustained through collaboration with stakeholders which should include parents and community leaders
- 5. Governments should allocate adequate funds to the education sector, to take care of over populated class size and reduce the inappropriate teacher student ratio

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