



Implementation of universal basic education programme and educational development in Rivers State, 2007-2017

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Abstract

This study investigated the Implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme and educational development in Rivers State, 2007-2017. The objectives of the study are to determine if the implementation of the teachers training component of UBE improve the quantity and quality of teachers in Rivers State; to find out if the implementation of the infrastructure scheme of the UBE programme has improved the quality of education in Rivers State; to ascertain if the UBE programme enhanced the availability of teaching materials in primary schools for the implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers State. System theory was used as the theoretical framework of analysis to explain the dependability of the educational administration on other parts of the system in the state. Secondary data was used for the study and content analysis as a tool for data analysis. The finding revealed that there are adequate infrastructural facilities in UBE schools in Rivers State and lack of training incentives for teachers in UBE schools in the state amongst others. Based on the findings, the following recommendation was made that there should be introduction of new incentives in addition to prompt and adequate remuneration to motivate UBE teachers to boost optimum performance leading to production of high quality students and also reduce their propensity to charge students for enrolment and other fees.

Keywords: implementation, school, system theory, teacher, universal basic education

Introduction

The desire for extreme reduction of illiteracy is the major interest of every society in the world. This is because education is one of the vital indices used in the measurement and categorization of a nation as developed, developing or underdeveloped. Education has been acknowledged as a potent force for the development of every society. Ashipu (2001) ^[7] sees education as an instrument, which enables an individual to improve and develop the right attitudes, abilities and competences necessary for effective adult life.

Education has been viewed as the instrument "par excellence for National development (FRN 2004). Education is a lifelong process that is acquired through informal, formal and non-formal means in every country. However, more prominence has been given to education that is gotten through formal settings like schools than other means.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights considers education as the most effective tool for personal empowerment as such it accorded education the status of a human right. (1948). Consequently, Article 26 section of this United Nation (UN) document states that everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available (Claude, 2005) ^[9].

However, the issue of providing universal education continued to be a challenge in many countries. Nigeria's educational system has witnessed a series of amendment in policies and programmes. In fact many of the changes in educational policies of Nigeria are as a result of poor planning and implementation among other things.

Okafor (1988) observed that no developing nation would develop fast enough without placing *its* ultimate priority on education. According to him, even developed Nations will begin to develop backwards as soon as educational priority is swept under the carpet. This explains the reason why the developed countries of the world guard their educational *affairs* jealously.

It is in recognition of the importance of education in general and the basic education in particular that the Federal government under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo introduced the current Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme on 30th September 1999 at Sokoto with the aim of improving not only the educational system in the country, but also to put in place the instrument for the achievement of the five main educational objectives enshrined in the National Policy on Education to achieve the education for all (EFA) goals.

The federal government of Nigeria therefore provided some strategic guidelines to ensure the realization of these objectives. Among them are countering of the factors which serve as an impediment to the realization of similar programme in the past like the universal primary education and the provision of punishment to parents who refused to comply with the provision of the programme. The implementation guidelines for the UBE programme (FRN, 1999) also stipulates that the UBE programme is intended to be universal, free, and compulsory. This implies that government shall create suitable opportunities and the enabling environment for every Nigerian child of schooling age to acquire the basic education while parents shall have the obligations to ensure that children in their care take advantage of the opportunities. The fact that UBE shall be compulsory also implies that sanctions will be imposed on persons, groups of

persons or institutions who prevent children and youths from availing themselves of the programme.

It is therefore imperative for all states government in Nigeria to comply with the provision of the UBE programme. Damar (2003) considered the concept of implementation and its implication as one of the general principles that affects all levels of educational programmes. Hence, the extent of implementation in this project means the level of provisions or availability of the indicators or strategies required for the success of UBE. The presence of these indicators influences the quality of education provided. Thus, Ohuche and Ali (1989) ^[21] state that the issue in the implementation of universal free education is the quality of education provided and not in terms of the traditional standards of passing exams but in terms of relevance, fitness and appropriateness, education structures, curricular, teachers and teaching methods including logistics.

The key areas of implementation of the UBE programme, which constitute the indicators in this project include; quality and quantity of teaching personnel, physical facilities and equipment, supervision and monitoring, teaching materials, and funding. Eya (2005) ^[15] reported that the extent of primary school teacher's awareness and involvement in the educational management and planning, particularly the UBE was still very low. *Since* UBE covers both the primary and junior secondary school levels including adult literacy, it is likely that the educational level and school location vis-à-vis implementation strategies may be different, which may influence the success of the programme.

Universal Basic Education Law was domesticated in Rivers State Law. No. 4, 2005. However is not yet evident in literature the extent of implementation of UBE Programming in Rivers state has enhanced educational development in the state. The study therefore, is aim at evaluating the implementation of the UBE programme and it contributions to educational development in Rivers State, Nigeria. The aim is to find out if the implementation of the infrastructure scheme of the UBE programme has improved the quality of education in Rivers State; ascertain if the UBE programme enhanced the availability of teaching materials in primary schools in Rivers State; determine if the implementation of the teachers training component of UBE improve the quantity and quality of teachers in Rivers State; and establish if government provided satisfactory funding for the implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers state.

Theoretical Framework

System Theory – David Easton (1965) ^[11]

This study adopts the system theory; David Easton the proponent of system theory accepted a system as the only means of analysis. He believes all systems have the same qualities, made of different parts, but they depends on each other to work well a change in one part affects other parts of the system. Systems are self-contained and distinct from their environment; however most systems are subjects to external influence.

David Easton in his analysis defined political system theory as the system of interactions in any society through which binding and authoritative decisions are made and implemented. This model has four parts, they are; input, conversion process, output and feedback, inputs consists of demands, supports and apathy enacting from members of the society. Demands are actions people want government to either undertake or rejects; they are expectations on how values should be allocated. It could be

demands on good road, good drinking water, electivity etc supports are loyalty, solidarity, identification with the political system such as taxpaying participation in policies. Demands are put together, thereafter sent to the political system as inputs.

The next phase is the conversion process, at this stage, inputs are deliberated upon and converted into policies, programmes, decisions of government, afterwards sent out as output. The “output” on the hand connotes government’s decisions and actions taken concerning the inputs. It may be award of contracts for road construction in a community, provision of pipe borne water, electricity etc.

Feedback is the last stage, it is a mechanism that transmits information from members of the society (environment) whether negative or positive reactions then takes it back to the system as new inputs. This action is a continuous process.

This theory is important to this work because it explains Rivers State government as a system and all systems have the same qualities, made up different parts, they are self-contained but depend on other parts of the system to work. The system at work in Rivers State is made up of the ministry of education, finance, environment, youth, executive, judiciary and others. A change in finance or executive will ultimately affect the implementation process of the programme in the state. The key areas of implementing the educational programme in the state are; the availability of teaching materials, adequate man-power supply, conducive teaching and learning environment, availability of funds, infrastructural facilities etc. All these must provided for by the executive for the effective implementation of the educational programme in the state. However, there is the dependability of the educational sector on the entire system; a change in the other parts of the system will affect the extent of the availability of teaching materials and other key indicator in the implementation process of the UBE programme in Rivers State. So, the system is suppose cooperation with other parts to perform optimally for the overall system to work, UBE is supposed to implement its objectives for the overall development of the whole system in Rivers State.

Conceptual Clarification

The Universal Basic Education (UBE)

Universal Basic Education is the transmission of fundamental knowledge to all facets of the Nigerian society from generation to generation (Eddy and Akpan, 2009) ^[12]. It is a policy measure initiated by the federal government of Nigeria as its on framework for meeting goal 2 of the millennium development goals. It has three main components - universal, basic and education. Universal connotes a programme that is meant for all facets of the society – the rich and poor, the physically fit and physically challenged, the brilliant and dull, the regular students and the dropouts including every other individual that is ready to acquire knowledge.

The term basic connotes that which is fundamental or essential indicating that basic education is the starting point in the acquisition of knowledge and that it is for all citizens. It is that type of education that can help an individual function effectively in the society (Adewole, 2000) ^[3]. Enoch and Okpede (2000) ^[14] described it as the form of education, which is essential for life. They also saw UBE as the form of education, which must equip an individual with the necessary skills to survive in his environment. It should be a practical and functional education.

One of the major reasons why the UBE programme is commendable is its desire to equip children with knowledge. This is in consonance with what the Federal Government of Nigeria (1981) described as the need to lay a sound foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, character and moral training, development of sound attitude and above all, develop in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment.

The concept of universal basic as conceived by Dadare (2001) as a base level education that is designed to satisfy at least the minimum learning needs of people". He points out that this kind of Education is the foundation for sustainable life-long learning. It provides literacy and numerical skills.

In the views of Okundaye, (2004)^[22] education is nothing but the whole life of the community from the particular point of teaching him to live the life, He says three concepts are important: nurture, personality and growth. He compares the work of the educator to that of the gardener which involves principally creation of the best enabling environment for the right kind of development and since the organism achieves growth, what it needs is the right environment to grow unhindered. To the child, he says the growth requirements or concerns are mental, spiritual and bodily help from the educator. As such she says UBE should develop the learners through external adjustment and development of internal harmony.

This implies that basic education is the education given to youths to prepare them to live in their societies and to be able to contribute or perform specific functions in the society. i.e creating external and internally suitable environment for the learners to develop their potentials to the maximum and to use them to perform specific functions for the society. To the federal ministry of education (2000), UBE is to serve four objectives in Nigeria:

1. To develop the entire Nigerian citizen with a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
2. To provide free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age.
3. To reduced drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system.
4. To cater for the young persons and other out of school children or adolescents through appropriate form of complementary approaches to the universal basic education

According to Oladosu (2001), basic education is fundamental education on which every other thing follows or depends, political, social and economic. This means that UBE is the foundational education upon which individual and national development and progress depends. It is what must be learnt before further learning can take place. This foundational education in Nigeria is provided for 9 years (i.e from primary school to junior secondary school 3) and it is free and compulsory.

Nigerian basic education is universal because it is intended to cater for all. This implies that it is to cater for the excluded population of the normal, education system and all who by geographical location gender, economic conditions, physiological condition, religious or cultural conditions have been excluded from the normal education system or could have been denied access to education. That is why there is provision for adult literacy, nomadic/migrant education, women education

and other forms of non-formal education in UBE. Like Agbi (2001)^[4] says; "for Education to bring national development, it has to be both qualitative and accessible to the populace". He concludes that UBE in Nigeria is meant to universalize access to basic education.

Universal basic education in the words of Ajaye (2002)^[5] is not a static term that is related to years of schooling or limited to formal schooling; it is a process to be determined by every nation according to its evolutionary development needs. In Nigeria, it is not only academic but skills acquisition inclined as well. Thus the involvement of artisans in the teaching of UBE pupils is essential for the success of UBE programme. In recognition of the fact that every Nigerian child must have equal and adequate educational opportunities is the justification for the government's determination to provide for the implementation of the UBE scheme. The implementation guidelines for the UBE programme (FRN 1999) also stipulates that the UBE programme is intended to be universal, free, and compulsory. This implies that government shall create suitable opportunities and the enabling environment for every Nigerian child of schooling age to acquire the basic education while parents shall have the obligations to ensure that children in their care take advantage of the opportunities. The fact that UBE shall be compulsory also implies that sanctions will be imposed on persons, groups of persons or institutions who prevent children and youths from availing themselves of the programme.

The Rivers State Universal Basic Education Law. No. 4, 2005

Pursuant to Section 12 of the Compulsory Fee Universal Basic Education Act 2004, the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board is established (referred to as the Board). It provides for (a) every child of primary and Junior Secondary school age in Rivers State is provided free compulsory Universal Basic Education

(b) Sub-section (1) does not apply to private Schools.

(c) The compulsory free Universal Basic Education is for a period of 9 years and comprises:

1. 6 year primary education
2. 3 year junior secondary school education

The staffs of the primary section are different from the staffs of the junior secondary, there is a principal in-charge of the junior secondary and a head teacher in charge of the primary school. The act states that every parent or guidance must ensure that their ward, child or children attends and finish both primary and junior secondary school, any parent or guardian who contravenes it is liable to conviction to a fine of N5000.00 or imprisonment for a term of one month, on subsequent conviction to a fine of N10, 000.00 and/or imprisonment for a term of 2 months. UBE Board or Local Education Authority shall make provision for the mentally and physically challenged pupil and make sure that the number of students in a class does not exceed 30.

PART 11- in accordance to the UBE act the Rivers State Universal Basic Board was established. The board is supervised by the state ministry of education; the board has a chairman, board members, representatives of both the Nigerian Union Teachers; Parents Teachers Association; and Agency for Adult and Non- formal Education, and a secretary to the board. The board is responsible for the management of the both schools, the recruitment, appointment and discipline of the teaching and non-teaching staffs and so many other functions.

The board is been financed through : money appropriated by the house of assembly, money appropriated by the local government legislative council, contribution from the state of not less than 50% of the cost of project; pursuant to section 11 (2) of the UBE Acts, any money or property paid or provided to the board by the way of grants, fees, subsidies, donations, gifts, charges, rent, interest and other income derived from the investment of the Boards funds; money borrowed under this law as derived from financial accommodation extended to the board under this law; and monies lawfully received by or made available to the board, also in-charge of the grants from Federal, State and other Donor Agencies.

PART 111- Pursuant to the Universal Basic Education Act 2004, a Local Government Education Authority is established for each Local Government Area of the State. The Authority is subject to the board, the Authority consist of the Local Government Chairman, supervisory councilor for education, a secretary, one representative of the Nigerian Union of Teachers in the Local Government Area, one representative of the Parents/Teachers Association in the Local Government Area, one representative of Principals of Junior Secondary Schools of committee of primary school heads of Nigeria, of private school owners Association all in the Local Government Area. Its functions are the running of pre-primary, primary and junior secondary school in its area of authority, appoints promote and discipline staff, pay salaries, under take capital projects and many other functions. The Authority established and maintain a fund where funds where pay into from the Compulsory Free Universal Basic Education Commission, funds were disbursed to run the pre-primary, primary and junior secondary schools in the Local Government Area.

Policy Implementation

A given policy goes through different stages from its inception to its realization. The process of policy making involves the following: policy initiation (the conception of the idea), policy formulation (development of effective courses of action for addressing an issue) and policy implementation (action to be taken in order to put a law into effect to solve a problem). Policy implementation therefore is critical in the process as it not only solves the problem encountered but acts to stabilize or sustain the goal to be actualized.

Policy implementation involves conversion of goals and objectives of policy into tangible achievement by means of various programme. (Egonmwan, 2002). Sharma, Sadana and Kaur (2013, p.647) sees policy implementation as the process by which government puts policies into effect. At this stage, all actors must abide faithfully to the programme guidelines, regulations in conformity to the rules guiding the course of action. Maduabum (2008), posits that policy implementation involves the act identifying policy plans, programmes, projects and activities; a clear meaning of the prominent roles of implementing organizations or agencies; details of strategies and required linkages and co-ordinating mechanism; as well as resources (human, financial, material, technological, information) acquirement and use. Implementation can be viewed as the end product of the interactions between setting goals and the actions directed towards achieving the end goal, (Pressman & Wildavsky, 2013)^[23].

Maduabum (2008), posits that for any governmental programme to be effectively implemented, it would demand an input that is resonate and capable in relation to the right schedule of activities, adequate funding, constructive budgeting, effective monitoring of how to tackle decisions making problems as well as cost and benefit analysis.

Policy implementation in its simplest form is policy implementation; it is the stage where governmental programmes are felt. It is complicated and the hardest stage in the entire policy making process. It is not an easy task especially as it involves the proper management of the available resources, people, knowledge and materials to achieve a given goal. It is the process of putting of the law into effect whereby all the stakeholders, actors, sectors, ways, and techniques combine together to make policies effective with a view to acheving the end goals (Stewart *et al.*, 2008). It is at this stage that the people who are supposed to benefit from the policies really assess the programme through the output of the programme.

Simon (2010)^[25] sees implementation as the application of governmental policies by administrative machineries for the purpose of achieving a given goals. A policy can be successful or a total failure it all depends on the nature, the implementers or the pattern in which the policy is organized. Any governmental programme that is well articulated with the proper framework but ineffectively implemented is a waste of time and scare resources, implementation is the most crucial aspect of any programme. The effect of any governmental programme depends extensively on the effectiveness of the public and civil service. Fundamentally, implementation in decision making process is turning governmental programme into action and presumptions into result from diverse projects and programme. Okoli and Onah (2003).

Rivers State Universal Basic Education Programme and Educational Development in Rivers State.

Infrastructure constitutes a part in the implementation of the UBE programe. According to Denga (1999) the problems of all educational programmes in general includes: funding; poor planning; lack of infrastructural facilities; irregular payment of teachers' salaries; problems of supervision and monitoring etc. So far in the schools in Rivers State, there are adequate furniture, convenience facilities, adequate classroom block, there are libraries but no modern sick bays for the effective implementation of UBE programme in Rivers state school system.

The findings is in line with the findings of Firstplus construction Ltd on infrastructure (2014) revealed that the schools they visited in Rivers State were clean and conducive for learning they had libraries, playground facilities, toilets, equipped libraries, laboratories and standard classrooms a situation that has encourage the teachers in effective delivering of their services in the schools.

The study again reports that teaching materials are available for the effective implementation of UBE programme in Rivers State. The findings revealed that electronic teaching aids like computers and audio-video sets are available in most UBE schools in Rivers state. The school libraries are also equipped with modern books to cater for the needs of pupil in various subjects.

This finding is in line with the view that adequate provision and maintenance of teaching material are required for a successful

Implementation of UBE programme in Nigeria (Abdulkareem, (2001) ^[1] supporting this view, Anih (1987) ^[6] see teaching materials as providing experiences which will develop understanding and enhance thinking among others.

Another major determinants of a quality educational sector is the quality and quantity of teachers. Indeed, the education of teachers is a critical part of the learning process. A well-trained teacher is expected to possess adequate and effective teaching and learning skills

The study again reports that head teachers and teachers were of the opinion that some of the thirteen thousand teachers recruited in 2012 in UBE schools opted out due to poor condition of service and lack of training incentive for the teachers in UBE schools thereby leading to shortage of manpower which has adversely affected the quality and quantity of teachers in UBE schools. The study also revealed that inadequate computer teachers and lack of special needs teachers in UBE schools exert negative toll on the implementation of the programme in Rivers State.

The above findings is in line with some of the findings of the study of Ibrahim (2004) ^[18] that most teachers of agricultural science in secondary schools could not teach some topic in soil and animal science effectively which reveals their level of in-ability to teach and poor quality. The findings of this study is also in agreement with that Gbarmarya (2012) whose finding showed the in-ability in most teachers to carry out their responsibility with diligences, lack of qualified teachers in primary schools in the study area, failure of teachers in playing great role in curriculum planning and lack of assessment or evaluation skills affect the achievement of most education objective in school.

For there to be adequate implementation of the UBE programme in Rivers state, adequate funding must be guaranteed, the study reports that funds are not enough for the effective implementation of UBE programme in Rivers State schools. Although the State Government released the UBE counterpart funds of the years 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 which gave them access to the Federal Government Intervention funds, these funds were used to construct construct23 model schools of 14 classrooms in the Local Government (Dayo Adesulu). The study revealed that both the government's fund allocated for the effective implementation of UBE programme is not adequate, allowances and other entitlement of UBE teachers are not adequately paid in schools, head teachers' over-head allowance are not adequately paid to a high extent. These clearly imply that adequacy of fund for effective implementations of UBE programme in UBE schools have not been met.

The report is in agreement with that of Ade-Ajayi (2003) ^[2] on a similar study on challenges of effective schools management in Nigeria, that the funding of the educational system by the government in recent times has not been effective in the sense that the share of the government expenditure going to the education sector has been on the declining state, resulting in poor performance of the sector. This is also evident in the report of Brand Berry (2008) ^[8] who stated that stakeholders have been lamenting over the poor quality of education in Nigeria with a slim allocation every year in the nation's budget, adequate funding of educational system is a major barrier in the achievement of the desired result of the system.

Conclusion

Based on its findings, the study concludes that the implementation of UBE programme in Rivers State has not been consistent with the UBE act (2004). Instead, it has been effectively implemented in the areas of provision of physical infrastructure like classrooms, furniture and convenience facilities among others. It has also enhanced the provision of teaching materials like chalks, chalkboards and other, but neglected the provision of resources electricity and materials for teaching practical subjects that would ensure effective teaching and learning.

Although, the implementation of UBE programme in Rivers state has led to the recruitment of 13 thousand teachers by the Rivers state government and availability of teachers with minimum qualification of NCE, this has neither ensured adequate training incentives for teacher nor the recruitment of computer teachers in the UBE schools.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made which if carried out will improve the quality of education in Rivers state. Among which are;

1. There should be introduction of new incentives in addition to prompt and adequate remuneration to motivate UBE teachers to boost optimum performance leading to production of high quality students and also reduce their propensity to charge students for enrolment and other fees.
2. It is also necessary to introduce special allowances for teachers of special subjects like sciences and languages, and Nigerian language teachers' allowances; these will attract and sustain qualify teachers in the areas or fields and ensure effective implementation of the programme
3. For UBE to achieve the desired results in Rivers state, the managers of the programme should ensure that those who are supposed to implement it actually know what to do and also ensure strict compliance to the provision of the UBE Act, (2004) and the implementation guidelines in terms of funding, teachers training and provision of teaching aids and relevant teachers in sciences and special fields like computer science.

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