

## FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE: MANAGING THE GAP IN THE AVAILABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND ADEQUACY OF CLASSROOM MATERIALS FOR THE IMPLEMENTED UBE SCHEME IN RIVERS STATE IN 2019.

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### **Abstract**

*The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was inaugurated to upgrade and improve the education of the Nigerian child and adult who may have dropped out of school for one reason or the other. The primary classroom environment is among others one of the most relevant indices for the effective implementation of the UBE. The classroom which is where the child spends most of his time in school like as at home, should represent the exact feature that could permit teaching and learning. The primary education policy in practice therefore obligatorily stipulates regular supply of classroom materials for the success of the UBE programme. This paper therefore examines primary education policy in practice and the implemented UBE scheme with respect to the availability, accessibility and adequacy of supplied classroom materials which are what the realisation of the implementation depends and the policy enforces.*

*Key Words: policy, practice, availability, accessibility and adequacy, classroom materials, implementation.*

### **Introduction**

The child in the primary school would be easily influenced by the instructional material stimulated classroom environment of his school. The content of the classroom should inform the child of the necessary habits and knowledge to store. The Child's peers could also be a major source of influence in his social interaction. Furrer, Skinner, Pitzer, (2014) are of the view that the classroom teacher whose primary function is to interact meaningfully with children could perform poorly if the classroom environment does not have the necessary media materials, organization and management skills to facilitate teaching and learning.

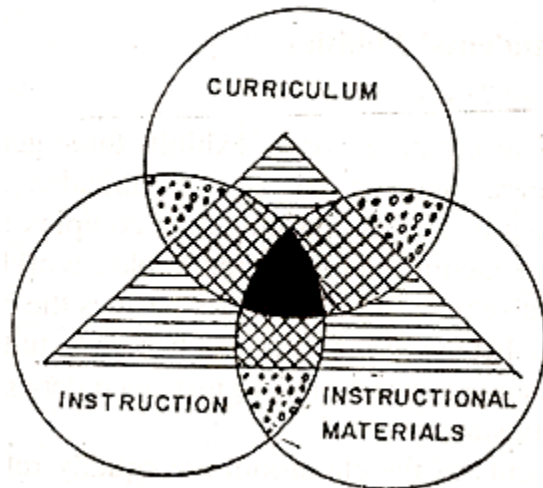
The primary classroom is therefore a spatial facility provided for formal teaching and learning. There are specified features and dimensions for a child education classroom. Every primary classroom should at least be 25 by 25 feet. The classroom should have seats for pupils, furniture for the teacher a black board or white marker board, a magnetic board, chalk, markers, nature corner, book shelve, instructional media like didactic materials, Television, Video, working corner and must be well ventilated. A computer,

for storage and updating of class records is also an outstanding requirement.

Evans, (2014) is of the opinion that, there is in fact no limit to the features a child can encounter from the classroom environment; an activity based curriculum meant for use within the classroom with relevant materials would motivate the child, his teacher and the entire teaching-learning process in a more proactive manner. The classroom environment must not be empty rather it should have variety of adequate concrete materials at the teacher/child's disposal for more practical teaching and learning. Every teaching and learning taking place within the classroom must be done appropriately with suitable learning materials. Though the classroom environment could sometimes be unsuitable when void of materials or filled with poorly evaluated materials not suitable for meaningful teaching and learning, the focus of providers of primary school education should be to build a lasting and dependable conducive classroom environment where children could be taught to learn and grow up into emotionally and socially adjustable adults through

cumulative learning patterns assisted by adequate instructional materials. The use of instructional materials in the classroom ensures the conduciveness of the teaching-

learning environment. Nwafor (2003) specifies a hypothetical diagram illustrating the determinants of a beneficial primary classroom learning environment.



**Figure 1: Diagram Showing Relationship of the Determinants of the primary Classroom Learning Environment.** (Adapted from Nwafor, (2003) in Nwideduh, (2003:37) Ed.)

The illustration in simple language states that in an encouraging learning environment, adherence to the content of the curriculum in the planning of instruction and preparation of instructional materials is paramount. These components as explained by Nwafor exert separate influences on the learning environment.

The levels 1 to 5 noted below connote accordingly that:

○ **Level 1:** Learning environments could be observed independently.

● **Level 2:** There could be relationships between two environmental determinants without conflict with classroom activities.

● **Level 3:** There could be interaction between each environmental determinant with classroom practices independent of other two determinants.

● **Level 4:** There could be interaction between two environmental determinants exclusive of other determinants in the environment.

● **Level 5:** There could be interaction of all three environmental determinants.

△ **The classroom:** Finally, the classroom space proper, which is represented by a triangle, is referred to as a macro section of the entire learning environment (p38).

When children do not grow up as expected it should be blamed on the learning environment within which they grew, not specifically the parents, teachers' or the neighbourhood. This is because the school offers an environment which teaches the child to gain and maintain the sense of identity and self-worth through social responsibilities. Thereafter, whatever is the child's environment; it should be such that will make him

optimistic about the future. The foundation of the child should be advantageous primary school teaching-learning environment with series of challenges for him and his teacher. Variety of instructional materials makes this happen within a classroom environment Fraser (2012).

For the primary school teacher it is challenging to use and apply new instructional methods and materials, or to access the school library, laboratory and classroom equipment. These challenges would foster and increase their positive progress in the school programme. This is because, the school classrooms and extended learning environment, as Agabi (2003) and Melnick, Cook-Harvey, Darling-Hammond, (2017) observes constitutes all instructional materials required to facilitate the teaching learning process. These include, for example, the natural setting of the school, existence and access to classroom space and equipment, and lots more.

Nwideduh and Nwideduh (2003) recall that before the introduction of UBE to Nigeria in 1999 and its implementation in 2000 primary schools' classroom environments had offered learners minimal teaching-learning materials with which teachers carried out their routine work. Teaching and learning materials in the schools were either in short supply, damaged, out of use or were not available at all. Most State primary schools classrooms lacked seats and seating arrangement for convenience in writing and learning. The provisions of the Free and Compulsory Universal Primary Education (UPE) as stated in section 18, subsection, 3A of the 1999 constitution, did not seem to include the supply of textbooks, exercise books and writing materials like pencils, pens, and black boards for children and teachers use which were required for use within the classroom. However, from 2016 to 2019, these materials have been in steady supply. To some extent, the policy is not politicised in Rivers State.

Teachers therefore were before the introduction of UBE not conversant with a rich

variety of instructional materials which constitute the classroom learning environment of a school, or component activities for effective teaching-learning management. Without a rich classroom environment, the basic objective of any primary school will be defeated since the child spends ample formal time in the classroom when in school. At the emergence of the UBE, the government saw the improvement of the instructional environment of primary schools as essential to the working purpose of teachers in primary schools. The school environment improved in terms of teaching and learning in anticipation of the implementation of the UBE scheme (Edeghere (2001).

The introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) was expected to improve primary schools' educational technology and influence primary school teachers' teaching ability within the classroom. The primary school, which suffered severe setbacks during the UPE programme of the 1990s, was improved via the consolidated fund allocated by UBE. To some measurable extent, the UBE was welcomed in order to effect changes in this respect. Government policy awoke the consciousness that primary school education does not only provide a reliable platform on which other levels of education rest, but also determines the failure and success of the entire education system. This truism was by it not to be enacted except the primary school teachers were equipped and provided with adequate instructional materials for effective teaching in the classroom (Maduewesi 2005).

The State primary school classrooms therefore were expected to be structured to meet the demands of the UBE scheme objectives. The UBE monitoring team is hence facilitating proper implementation of the UBE scheme. The Nigerian government is in fact, showing more interest in provision of Universal Basic Education for citizens at the lower levels of society which is becoming Universal Basic Education conscious and active. Priorities are thus directed towards giving State primary schools environment a face-lift and to

ensure that there is regular supply of teaching aids; thus; boosting the image, attitude and morale of primary school teachers in the classroom.

Generally in Nigeria the number of classrooms has been fluctuating from one outstanding figure to the other. Though reasons for the fluctuation is not stated but could be predicted as caused by

dilapidation, lack of materials and untrained manpower. As at 1999 in Rivers State when the UBE was inaugurated classrooms stood at 2,842, a figure which increased to 3,385 in 2001 and dropped by 2003 to 3,073. In 2004 when UBE was first implemented, there was an outstanding increase to 5,261.

**Table 1. Showing Number of Primary School Classrooms by State in Nigeria-1999-2005**

		1999	2000	2001	*2002	*2003	2004	2005
		TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL
S/N	STATE	CLASSRMS	CLASSRMS	CLASSRMS	CLASSRMS	CLASSRMS	CLASSRMS	CLASSRMS
1	ABIA	2,901	2,760	2,609	2,704	2,791	7,760	7,760
2	ADAMAWA	518	543	625	588	550	4,520	4,520
3	AIBOM	2,775	2,896	3,222	3,066	2,913	10,746	10,746
4	ANAMBRA	3,631	7,308	3,664	4,364	4,246	8,855	8,855
5	BAUCHI	1,063	1,110	1,277	1,203	1,126	4,564	4,564
6	BAYELSA	748	828	987	890	820	2,475	2,475
7	BENUE	1,784	1,623	1,716	1,739	1,776	9,790	9,790
8	BORNO	650	691	735	708	661	3,678	3,678
9	C/ RIVER	2,069	2,223	2,004	2,031	2,088	7,165	7,165
10	DELTA	5,779	6,100	7,126	6,660	6,182	10,661	10,661
11	EDONYI	87	136	276	196	138	6,063	6,063
12	EDO	4,253	7,506	8,984	7,193	5,979	5,268	5,268
13	EKITI	946	992	1,230	1,132	1,024	5,305	5,305
14	ENUGU	4,313	4,080	4,229	4,260	4,231	5,496	5,496
15	GOMBE	1,099	1,217	1,603	1,423	1,245	2,442	2,442
16	IMO	2,261	2,299	2,297	2,285	2,279	10,049	10,049
17	JIGAWA	361	388	423	402	383	3,643	3,643
18	KADUNA	1,637	1,760	2,102	1,939	1,778	10,067	10,067
19	KANO	2,642	3,110	3,265	3,050	2,902	9,609	9,609
20	KATSINA	1,100	1,149	1,338	1,256	1,169	5,456	5,456
21	KEBBI	3,904	3,963	5,291	4,822	4,236	3,031	3,031
22	KOGI	2,119	1,950	2,416	2,330	2,140	8,164	8,164
23	KWARA	2,933	2,694	2,921	2,925	2,920	7,922	7,922
24	LAGOS	14,810	15,122	15,334	15,158	15,018	22,940	22,940
25	NASARAWA	1,428	1,645	2,059	1,830	1,629	4,347	4,347
26	NIGER	3,462	3,702	3,907	3,754	3,630	5,658	5,658
27	OGLUN	8,434	10,014	8,060	8,556	9,193	10,892	10,892
28	ONDO	3,876	4,425	4,836	4,500	4,240	9,059	9,059
29	OSUN	4,476	4,749	5,137	4,909	4,704	9,836	9,836
30	OYO	6,766	8,793	13,653	10,985	8,785	14,060	14,060
31	PLATEAU	2,742	2,945	3,183	3,031	2,899	6,618	6,618
* 32	RIVERS	2,842	3,263	3,385	3,199	3,073	5,261	5,261
33	SOKOTO	855	866	1,076	1,000	916	3,514	3,514
34	TARABA	466	523	611	560	516	3,468	3,468
35	YOBE	705	624	621	644	785	1,871	1,871
36	ZAMFARA	458	514	574	533	499	1,794	1,794
37	ABUJA	1,044	966	972	996	1,006	2,047	2,047
	<b>NIGERIA</b>	<b>102,943</b>	<b>116,101</b>	<b>124,229</b>	<b>116,827</b>	<b>111,257</b>	<b>254,319</b>	<b>254,319</b>

EXTRAPOLATION ON YEARS 2002 AND 2003

(Adopted from Federal Ministry of Education 2007:11, 'Statistics of Education in Nigeria: 1999-2005')

This increase was experienced and maintained in all the States in Nigeria including the Federal Capital City, Abuja. With respect to the status of classroom space available in Nigerian State owned primary schools, it should be necessary to review also if the enrolment of pupils to the schools is convenient for use of the available

classrooms and if the pupil-teacher ratio is manageable. The entire UBE implementation would be affected if the classrooms are not adequate for the expected increase in the enrolment of pupils to State schools which will subsequently also affect available trained manpower and the supply of instructional



materials and school facilities. Well in Rivers state, from 2005 to 2019, enrolment of pupils has improved and the classroom space to accommodate them has also increased.

Below, figure 1 to 5 is a few of the views of what Rivers state primary school environment housing the classrooms and the model classrooms looks like in 2019.

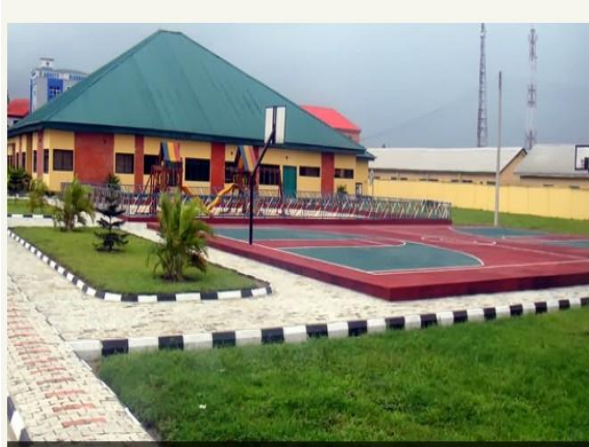


Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3



Fig.4



Fig.5

### **Hazards of a deprived primary school classroom**

A classroom environment could be said to be unsuitable if it poses a threat to the teaching process and impedes the condition in learning. The experience of encountering an unsuitable primary classroom environment could be traced from the womb to the school environment. Ukpong (2004) is of the view that the first environment of the child which is the mothers' womb could affect the child's learning if any form of irregularity occurs within the mother's health, diet, emotional status and even her age. That could cause a syndrome which could lead to lifetime damage to the unborn child. This biological misplacement could lay poor academic foundation for the child before school age.

An unpleasant interaction from the womb and home could influence the child's peer relationship, interaction with the teachers', adjustment and adaptation to school activities and the acceptance of his inter-changing environment. This is so because, when the home environment loses its warmth, comfort and encouragement, it also loses its status as a home and becomes a den in which the child is exposed to quarrelling, fighting, shock and fear. The child begins to grow up lacking proper concentration and direction in studying when school begins. The individual is a composition of the activities of his regular environment. Children with such developmental patterns miss the orientation to love, appreciate being loved and also miss out enjoying their basic occupation, which is play. (Igho 1989) and (Charles, Ikoh, Iyamba, Charles, 2005).

The home environment in most cases could be congested. Peters (1980) is of the opinion that the home of a large percentage of the population are so crowded that the child is not provided with a rich and varied enough environment for the required early development. This early home development, which could simply be established by an interactive experience with educative toys, could frustrate the child's interest in early learning within the éclairs of a formal classroom.

At school, the primary one classroom becomes the Childs' first learning environment. In the school environment, the child is as vital as the education given to him. The Federal Republic of Nigeria, (FRN 2014) in her education policy recognizes and emphasizes that primary education is the success or failure of secondary and tertiary levels of education. The child is the foundation to the growth and maintenance process of humanity. Whatsoever happens to the child and education he receives would affect the entire larger environment and educational system, particularly the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme, which is presently in use in the primary schools. A quick glance into most of our State Primary Schools classroom environment would reveal scanty representation of instructional materials or complete absence of learning materials for both staff and pupils. It is pertinent to note that most schools even lack the ordinary chalk and blackboards, which are the basic materials to emphasize the teaching and learning process within the classroom. The child, whose learning improves through the satisfaction of his curiosity while trying to discover, sits and writes on the floor as his table. Curriculum planners like Esu, Enuokoha, and Umoren (2004) depict this as an unsuitable classroom environment too difficult for the implementation of a well-designed curriculum such as that introduced by the UBE scheme. This is because the child's learning pattern is established by discovery of what is taught verbally, theoretically, physically and practically. The child also easily accumulates knowledge by imitation of general behavioural characteristics in his immediate daily environment, thus he takes into cognizance the teacher's interactive engagements with the instructional materials in class. It is most unfortunate that a good number of children in Nigeria of school age are out of the classroom or school environment at official hours on the streets hawking and engaging in one form of morally depraved (decadent) behaviour or another, while very few have an educationally flourishing academic experience in well-established private schools (Eke 1991). It

becomes an issue of uttermost concern that even with the implementation of the UBE, with the emphasis on free and compulsory basic education, such number of dropouts among children of school age problems are still being addressed. To some extent, this could be blamed on the unsuitable and uninteresting classroom environment, non-persistence in the running of State primary schools due to teachers' reluctance to work as a result of non-payment of salaries or inadequacy of instructional materials thus leading to poorly implemented schemes like the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in most primary schools (Nwagbara 2003).

The first stage of primary education which begins and lasts from the age five, six to eleven, is basically concerned with child's discovery ability and attitude towards the challenges of the world around him. Peters (1980) and Esu, Eukoha and Umoren (2004) identify this stage as the stage for "... concept formation and the development of the categorical apparatus." This is explained as the sequence by which children ask questions. For example: Aunty what is this? Why did it happen? Who caused it? As children are exposed to learning difficulties within an unsuitable classroom environment, they could only receive mostly,

unsuitable response to their questions. Peters in addition warns that children's emotional and social development would be stagnated and deprived if adequate and correct answers are not given in response to their questions in a learning situation in either the classroom or elsewhere. Early learning as Peters asserts, is as decisive as psychologist maintain that a strong case could be made for removing children as early as possible for part of the day from impoverished classroom environment.

Brophy, J. E. (2017) however blames the harsh reality in State primary schools classroom environment on the fact that, classes are well over forty and most school premises are cramped without adequate space for children to initiate play. The teacher as Agabi adds could barely manage the physical and psychological environment as to create an atmosphere that is conducive for learning. However, State primary school classroom environment has deteriorated below helping today's children advance intellectually and socially in a world of science and technology. These features are clearly shown in the pictures below. The state of primary school classrooms and environment in most areas in Nigeria is very offensive.



**Figure6: Children sitting on stones during a setting Learning Session in a primary school in Nigeria. on the wall.**



**Figure7: A primary school classroom in Nigeria without furniture or posters on the wall.**





**Figure8: classroom is still under the shade of a tree in most schools in Nigeria**

The record of Tanner (1961) cited by Gannage (1971) is still quite applicable that, 'children today grow bigger than they were twenty-years ago... they are maturing faster, a child of five now is in all physical and probably a good many psychological respects equivalent to a child of six of thirty years ago' (p 81). He therefore requires a well-equipped classroom environment challenging enough to suit the rapidity of his growth and world. Gutek (2010) revealed that during the 20th century, a growing

number of people adopted different ideas about the way that children should be taught. At the school in Redway, California, the physical environment differs dramatically from more traditional ideas of how a classroom should look. In situations where the child has to sit on the ground, in the classroom, let the instructional delivery pattern demand so like in the picture below, not because the seats are not available.



**Figure 9: Counterculture Elementary School Classroom, Redway, California.**  
(Adopted from Gutek Gerald 2010, History of Education.)



Progressively, early maturity in children in each educational instance requires a suitable and well equipped primary classroom environment, not an enslavement of good teachers and eager pupils without adequate teaching and learning materials to motivate them either to teach or learn. Certain hazards are notable in the experience of unsuitable classroom environment, like, obstruction of teacher and pupil abilities, maladjustment and negative attitude from teacher and pupils, mistrust towards anti-social behaviour in interactions (Nwagbara 2003).

Ryan and Cooper (1984) identify the last hazard as the production of an aggressively groomed child and a grossly dissatisfied teacher. Ngwu (2005) fears that if the child's classroom environment is not rich enough with respect to instructional materials, that environment "will

breed school drop outs because learning would be frustrating and the implementation of the UBE scheme will be defeated and our youths will no longer be instruments for nation building" (p 295).

UBE intends to accomplish the spirit of nation building by getting all children of school going age off the streets. Whatever the fears and chances for better scheme implementation could be, it is expedient to emphasize that the business of teaching and the experience of learning cannot flourish outside a suitable classroom environment. As much as the UBE scheme has renovated most primary schools classrooms the issue of overcrowded and dilapidated classrooms still exists due to the inadequacy of the number of classrooms provided and poor maintenance of infrastructure.



**Figure 10: An Overcrowded Classroom setting ceiling in a primary school in Nigeria.**

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**Figure11: Picture of a classroom showing the structure without ceiling-sheets in Kano.**

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### **Methodology**

**One research question guided the study with a population of 107 state primary schools and a sample size of 50.**

**Research Question: To what extent are classroom materials available, accessible and**

**adequate for the implementation of the UBE scheme?**

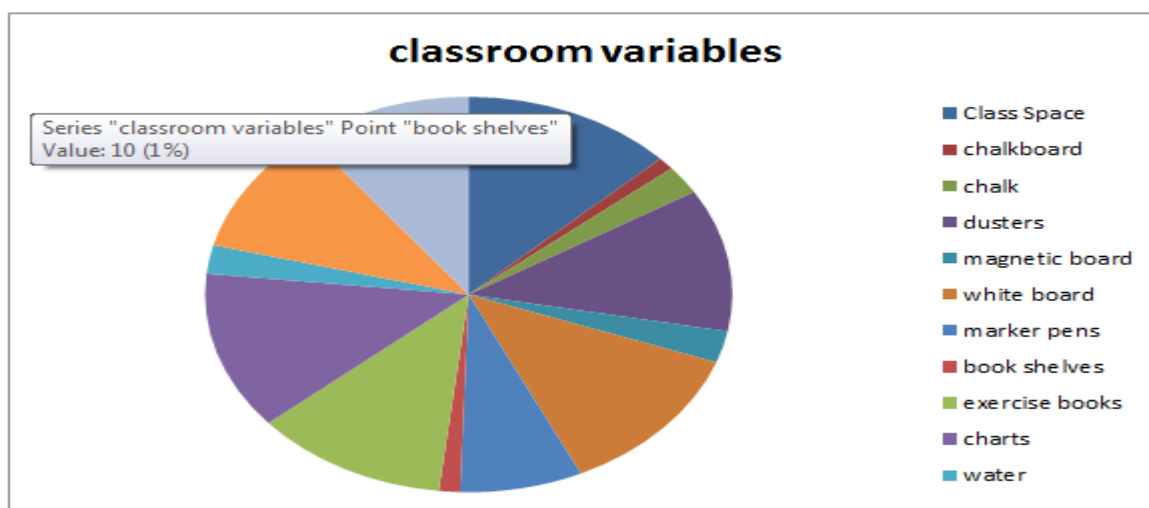
To analyse this research question a simple percentage was used. Findings were presented in table 1. The table showed frequency of 50 schools

with available, accessible and adequate classroom materials and the percentage of schools in which these materials were available, accessible and adequate. Results of findings were shown in histogram.

**Table 2: Showing Percentages of schools with Available, Accessible and Adequate Classroom materials.**

Classroom variables	Available	Not available	Accessible	Not accessible	Adequate	Not Adequate
Class space	100.0	0	90	10	70	30
Chalkboard	50	0	45	5	35	15
Chalk	8	92	0	100.0	2	98
Chalk	4	46	0	50	1	49
Chalk	18	82	0	100.0	0	100.0
Chalk	9	41	0	50	0	50
Dusters	90	10	94	6	94	6
Dusters	45	5	47	3	47	3
Magnetic board	20	80	18	82	16	84
Magnetic board	10	40	9	41	8	42
White Marker board	96	4	96	4	88	12
White Marker board	48	2	48	2	44	6
Marker pens	58	42	60	40	50	50
Marker pens	29	21	30	20	25	25
Bookshelves	10	90	0	100.0	0	100
Bookshelves	5	45	0	50	0	50
Exercise books	92	8	88	12	86	14
Exercise books	46	4	44	6	43	7
Charts	100.0	0	100.0	0	60	40
Charts	50	0	50	0	30	20
Water	18	82	4	96	4	96
Water	9	41	2	48	2	48
Adequate ventilation	82	16	88	12	80	20
Adequate ventilation	41	9	44	6	40	10
Equipped first aid kit	80	20	10	90	80	20
Equipped first aid kit	40	10	5	45	40	10

N = 50 Schools. Source: Field work. Key: Percentages ■ Frequency ■



**Figure 7: Pie chart percentage of schools with available, not available, accessible, not accessible, adequate, not adequate classroom materials in State primary schools.**

### Discussion of findings

Results of the analysis in the table above showed a high percentage in available classroom space, dusters, white marker board, exercise books, charts, classroom ventilation and first aid kit. Chalkboard, chalk, magnetic boards, bookshelves and water have very low available percentage. There was however 58 percentage of marker pens. This however showed that classroom materials in Rivers State primary schools are available.

In terms of accessible classroom materials, classroom space was 90% accessible in all 50 schools but there was 0% accessible chalkboard, chalk, bookshelves and a very low percentage of magnetic boards, water and first aid kit. Dusters, white marker board, Exercise books, ventilation has a high accessible percentage. This however showed that classroom materials in Rivers State primary schools are accessible.

Classroom space was adequate in 35 schools, while 1 school alone had chalk board, with chalk not adequate in 50 schools. Dusters, white marker boards, exercise books, ventilation and first aid have high available percentage while, magnetic boards, bookshelves water are grossly not adequate. The percentages for disagreement were higher than 50 except for marker pens. This however showed that classroom materials in Rivers State primary schools were adequate.

### Conclusions

With respect to the product evaluation reports the following conclusions were made:

The availability, accessibility and adequacy of classroom space does not ensure accessibility and adequacy of classroom materials for effective implementation of the UBE. The education of the child is a very demanding and sensitive experience; it should be handled with ultimate care and concern directly from the classroom. Though most classroom materials are accessible in Rivers state primary schools, policy practice is still fully required for primary school to function

fully. As seen in pictures in the study, most schools in most rural and urban areas in the country are yet to experience adequate implementation of education policy for convenient usage of classroom equipment. The idea of federalisation implies uniform education policy practice in all states and basic education for all children.

### Recommendations

1. The education policy of Nigeria is beautiful, let the authorities cease from politicising education and implement the policy.
2. The education of the Nigerian child in the primary classroom should be exclusively the responsibility of the government not private sectors.
3. Adequacy of classroom space does not ensure effective usage. Classrooms therefore should be well represented with materials required for meaningful teaching and learning.
4. Children should be encouraged to produce their own materials to keep in class in addition to what would be provided. This would interest them a lot and emphasize the use of the concept of constructivism.

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