

IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION POLICY IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was introduced in 1999 by the Federal Government of Nigeria as a reform programme aimed at providing greater access to basic education throughout Nigeria. It seeks to provide free, compulsory and continuous 9-year formal education comprising 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education. The UBE aims at eradicating illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as well as stimulates national development, Political consciousness and national integration. UBE is a metamorphosis of Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme which failed as a result of poor planning and implementation. Thus, the UBE policy became Nigeria's response to the international call for the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2015. It has since its inception recorded significant achievements, though the success cannot be said to have achieved the Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) as envisaged. The challenges faced in the implementation of the UBE policy include poor funding, corruption, poor motivation of teachers, inadequate facilities, unwieldy class size and faulty statistical projections among others. Findings from the study showed that there existed significant relationship between funding, teacher's motivation, availability of facilities and implementation of the UBE policy. The conclusion was that the implementation of the policy in the state falls short of expectation and was thus recommended that more funds should be appropriated for the programme, Teachers salary structure (TSS) be well implemented along with other incentives, corruption be scaled down, more qualified teachers be employed as well as provision of more facilities.

Introduction

The provision of education is a fundamental human right that every citizen is entitled to. The level of observation and the provision of this right are dependent on the activities of four key players: the state, the child, the parents and the teachers. The one that really concerns us in this work is the state which is saddled with the responsibility of implementing policies that will enhance the wellbeing of the citizens including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy.

Education constitutes the core of human development index. It opens up opportunities for both individual and group empowerment. It is an essential tool for transformation of any society and the most important singular key that opens vista of opportunities to sustainable development of any nation. This agrees with the Nigerian Millennium Development Goal Report of 2005 which stated that human capacity development is anchored on education which is central to the attainment of the Nigeria's vision 20:20:20 (FRN, 2005).

According to Babalola and Atinmo (2009), one of the strategies of achieving education for all by the year 20:20 and beyond is the implementation of policy on Universal Basic Education (UBE) which will open up the education space and enhance the maximization of individual potentials and promotes a knowledge driven society. The education that propels a nation's development and the ability to acquire and utilize knowledge and skills effectively can be achieved from the grassroots through effective implementation of Universal Basic Education

(UBE) policy. In other words, effective implementation of UBE policy will promote a knowledge based economy because majority of the citizens will have access to educational opportunities.

Background of the study

Education is an indispensable tool which is a process of systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge and acquisition of skills, potentials and abilities which will enable an individual to contribute effectively to the growth and development of his society. It involves an all-round development of an individual physically, socially, morally, intellectually and mentally. Education is the tool for the achievement of a nation's development and aspiration.

Since the achievement of independence in 1960, Nigeria has been aiming at the provision of qualitative education for her citizens. It was this concern that led to the establishment of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in 1976 by the Obasanjo's regime. The UPE programme was trailed by failure occasioned by poor funding, inadequate qualified teachers, dilapidated infrastructure, and lack of teaching aids among others. The failure of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme necessitated the revision of the UPE policy. Consequently, in 1999, another programme was instituted by the same person that introduced the UPE in 1976 to replace the UPE. This one is called the Universal Basic Education (UBE) designed to last for the first 9 years of schooling instead of the first 6 years of schooling as envisaged in the defunct UPE programme. The additional 3 years is to take care of the first 3 years of secondary education.

The antecedents to the UBE are both international and local Nigerian issues. These include the declaration of the World Conference on Education and Development in Jontien, Thailand in 1990 for urgent realization of Education for All (EFA) and the convention in Dakar, Senegal in 1999 on the same subject. Also, the review of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in the mid – 1990s and the rise in development aspirations occasioned by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) made the new education scheme imperative for Nigeria to use to work for better educational and living conditions for her citizens. The importance attached to the programme resulted in the setting up of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and promulgation of a federal law UBE Act of 2004 by the National Assembly.

Isyaku (2002) states that the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is conceptualized to cover the first 9 years of formal education, that is , 6 years of primary education, 3 years of junior secondary education and in addition cater for the equivalent levels in adult literacy and hard-to-reach groups through non-formal education programmes. This is what is called the nine-year basic education.

The promulgation of the UBE Act of 2004 has altered the contour and structure of Nigerian education system from 6-3-3-4 to 9-3-4. That is from 6 years in primary school, 3 years in junior secondary school, 3 years in senior secondary school and 4 years in tertiary institutions to 9 uninterrupted years of primary and junior secondary education code-named Universal Basic Education (UBE) and then 3 years of senior secondary education before 4 years of tertiary education. According to Nwagwu (2002), as part of strategies for effective implementation of the 9-3-4 system of education, Nigeria adopted the Public- private Partnership (PPP) arrangement to encourage private participation and active involvement in the country's huge investment in education.

The policy thrust of the UBE was intended to address the shortcomings of the Universal Primary Education (UPE). Studies carried out by scholars such as Ikelegbe (2006), Obinaju (2006) Nwagwu (2002), Udo and Bassey in Akuma (2011) asserted that UPE failed as a result of poor planning, others blame it on poor funding, poor infrastructure/facilities, corruption, poor motivation of teachers among others.

Most of such studies were conducted on Universal Primary Education (UPE). Besides, most of such studies were carried out using other states of the federation apart from Akwa Ibom State. Also, other studies did not use the same variables this researcher is using. This has therefore created a gap. Hence, there is the need to conduct this study titled 'Implementation of Universal Basic Education policy in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria' to fill the gap.

Statement of the problem

Government is always faced with the problem of effective implementation of policies to achieve her pre-determined goals. The success or otherwise of government policies depends on effective implementation. Implementation is the transformation of a policy idea into reality. It is to be noted that no matter how well formulated or beautifully labeled a policy is, if it is not implemented it cannot solve any social problem.

Every public policy aims at solving a social problem (Ekanem, 2003). A social problem is a problem that affects a large number of people at a time. Government formulates policies to solve social problems. Thus, the formulation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy was intended to address the problem of illiteracy among the citizens by opening up educational space and increase accessibility of students to a free and compulsory education. However, as it is with the implementation of other government policies, the implementation of the UBE policy elicited both intended and unintended consequences similar to what led to the failure of its predecessor – the Universal Primary Education (UPE). Apart from the UPE, there was the free education programmes in the five south-western states controlled by the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) between 1979 and 1983 (Ikelegbe, 2006). Also, certain States controlled by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the aborted Third Republic also embarked on free education programmes.

However, it is to be noted that the Universal Primary Education (UPE) was not well planned and was not properly funded. There was also the problem of lack of teachers as well as poor quality of teachers that was not even addressed by the introduction of a crash programme to train teachers for the UPE programme. There was also the problem of lack of facilities and teaching aids. Other free education programmes such as the ones provided by the UPN and SDP led-government were limited to few states. This researcher wonders if the introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE) to cover the whole country will provide solution to the above named problems.

The question then is: Will "Implementation of Universal Basic Education policy address the problem of illiteracy by enhancing access to basic education in the country?"

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to determine how the implementation of Universal Basic Education policy can enhance access to free and compulsory education in the first 9 years of formal education. Specifically, the study focused at the following objectives:

1. To determine how funding influences the implementation of UBE policy.

2. To determine how motivation of teachers influences the implementation of UBE policy
3. To examine how availability of facilities influence the implementation of UBE policy.

Research questions

The following research questions would be answered:

1. How does funding influence implementation of UBE policy?
2. How does teacher's motivation influence the implementation of UBE policy?
3. How does availability of facilities influence the implementation of UBE policy?

Research hypotheses

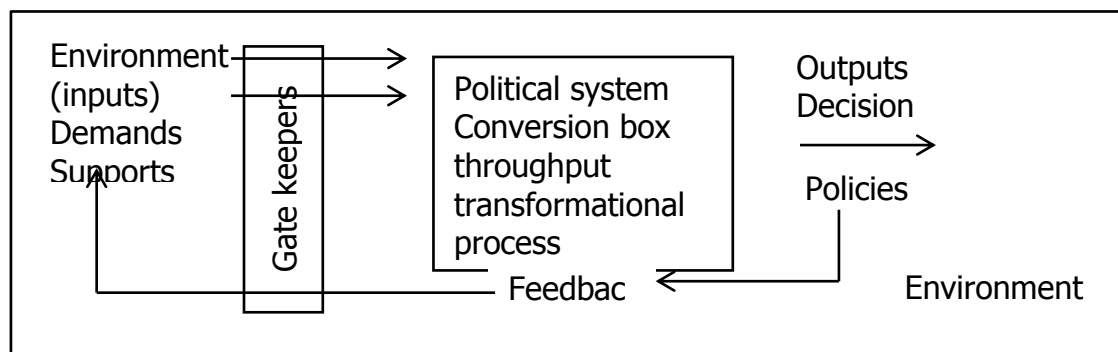
Based on the research questions raised, the following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between funding and implementation of UBE policy.
2. There is no significant relationship between teacher's motivation and implementation of UBE policy.
3. There is no significant relationship between availability of facilities and implementation of UBE policy.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study was the systems theory. According to Dahl (1991) any collection of elements that interacts in some way with one another can be considered a system. David Easton in his work believes that, while the political system receives inputs from the environment in the form of demands and supports, it also produces outputs.

A political system is that system of interactions in any society through which binding or authoritative allocations are made and implemented in the form of policies and decisions. The outputs flow back into the environment through a feedback mechanism giving rise to fresh demands.



Source: Gauba, O.P. (2003). An introduction to Political Theory.

Demands or inputs are the raw materials from which finished products (decision) are manufactured. Supports are the energy in the forms of actions or orientations enabling the Political system to convert the demands into authoritative decisions and policies (Obi, Nwachukwu and Obiora, 2008).

In this case, the conversion box/Throughput/Transformational process is the school while the students are inputs or raw materials, which are being processed or transformed into outputs such as the school leavers/graduates. Educational institutions are the only industry in

which raw materials are human beings that are processed or transformed into outputs in the form of graduates readily useable by the society as finished products. There is the feedback which showcases the feelings, perception or reaction of the people towards the products or outputs being churned out of the system. How is the quality of the products or outputs from the system? Is the quality low or high, poor or rich? This is what the feedback attempts to do. The functions of the gate keepers are to screen, checkmate and filter what goes into the system. According to Olaniyi(2001), the inflow of inputs into the Political System is regulated by the gatekeepers such as interest groups and political parties which collectively bias the system in favour of certain demands and against others.

Scope of the study

The scope of this study covers implementation of UBE policy in government owned schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study is also delimited to variables such as funding, teacher's motivation and availability of facilities.

Limitation of the study

The researcher acknowledge that the analysis of the UBE policy in this work covers only government owned schools in Akwa Ibom State and would render some of the generalizations invalid.

Swot Analysis of Implementation of the Ube Policy in Akwa Ibom State

SWOT is an acronym for strength, weakness, opportunity and threat. It is a tool that identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a policy or programme. The analysis is a renowned tool for evaluating the level of achievement of a set of organizational/institutional goals. It provides the situation analysis of a policy in which the internal strengths, weaknesses are examined, and the opportunities and threats of the systems are assessed with a view to modifying the policy for good.

SWOT is a basic model that assesses what a policy can and cannot do, as well as its potential opportunities and threats. The method of SWOT analysis is to take the information from the environment, analyzes it and separates it into internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats). Once this is completed, SWOT analysis determines what may assist the organization in accomplishing its objectives, and what obstacles must be overcome or minimized in order to achieve desired results.

The strength(s) and weaknesses (w) of an organization are considered the internal factors within the organization over which the manager has some measure of control whereas opportunities (o) and threat (T) are considered the external factors over which the manager may have no control.

Swot Analysis of Implementation of the UBE Policy in Akwa Ibom

Helpful	Harmful
Strengths	Weaknesses
(i) Eradication of illiteracy	(i) Corruption
(ii) Availability of financial resources	(ii) Lack of adequate qualified teachers
(iii) Communication/Advertisement	(iii) Inadequate infrastructural facilities
(iv) Availability of teachers	(iv) Over-bloating admission
(v) Expansion of infrastructural	(v) Unwieldy class size

facilities (vi) Creates employment	(vi) Massive promotion of students
Opportunities (i) Enlightenment (ii) Social mobility (iii) Poverty reduction (iv) Social peace and harmony (v) Improved health and living condition (vi) Liberalization of admission	Threats (i) Competition between public and private schools (ii) Status symbols (iii) Family cohesiveness (iv) Lack of parental awareness (v) Reduces number of local artisans (vi) Poverty

Strengths

Eradication of illiteracy

The implementation of the UBE policy helps to reduce the level of illiteracy in the state because more and more children now have access to basic education which ultimately makes them capable of reading and writing. This appears to be one of the strongest points of the UBE policy.

Availability of financial resources

Monies are usually appropriated and made available for the implementation of the UBE programme. Such funds usually trickle down to different class of people such as the teachers, traders, artisans, drivers, contractors, tailors, etc which have multiplier effects in the society and thus help to stabilize the economy and enhance the wellbeing of the people.

Communication/Advertisement

Government usually spends a lot of money in spreading information about the programme of the UBE to people through the radio, television, newspapers, pamphlets, billboards, talk show, visits to markets, motor parks, churches, schools, rural communities and other public places to sensitize the people about the UBE programme. Apart from bringing the idea of the UBE to the knowledge of the people, the money spent in advertisement has multiplier effects on the economy.

Availability of teachers

More teachers are recruited into the Basic Education Level to help implement the UBE policy. This latently creates employment to citizens.

Expansion of infrastructure/facilities

With the introduction of the UBE policy, additional infrastructure and facilities are provided by the government to take care of the influx of pupils into the school system.

Provides Job

The UBE programme provides jobs to the citizens such as carpenters, welders, tailors, traders, bricklayers, caterers and food vendors, etc.

Weaknesses**Corruption**

Large chunk of the money provided by the government for the implementation of the UBE programme usually finds its way into peoples' pockets and private bank account. This results in the wobbling performance of the programme in its implementation.

Lack of adequate qualified teachers

The over-bloated number of intake into the UBE programme does not appear to witness corresponding number of qualified teachers. The number of pupils admitted far outstrips the number of qualified teachers who teach them. Such scenario is not conducive for meaningful teaching and learning.

Inadequate infrastructural facilities

Infrastructural facilities are patently inadequate to take care of the high inflow of students into the programme thus prompting many students to take classes in sheds, open fields, tree shade and dilapidated structures with cave-in ceilings and roofs with the attendant risks involved. Most pupils have no desks, lockers, writing materials and government provides little or no teaching aids to facilitate learning by the pupils.

Over-bloating admission

Admission gates into the basic education programme are left wide open to any student that is interested in the programme. The government made it compulsory that no student whatsoever should be denied admission. This results in many students, some with questionable characters and makes to be admitted into the programme with concomitant difficulty by teachers in controlling them in the classroom and the time they come to school. This scenario seriously impairs and compromises discipline in school in the UBE era. The UBE policy failed to state the age limit of those to benefit from the programme, thus some married people are even admitted into the programme with the attendant challenge of controlling them in the school environment without incurring the wrath of community members especially in the rural areas.

Unwieldy class size

With the advent of UBE programme, more children are now enrolled into the school system. School fees and other sundry payments that used to constitute obstacles for children to access formal education have been removed such that class size becomes too large for a teacher to adequately control. For instance, many of these classes are held in long, unpartitioned halls with no visible demarcation between one class and the other.

Massive promotion of students

The UBE policy appears not to allow pupils to repeat classes. All students, despite their levels of performance in terminal examinations are promoted to next higher classes. This does not encourage serious teaching and learning because of the belief that all of them (the pupils) would be promoted to the next higher class, the level of their performances notwithstanding. Quality assurance is thus seriously called into question.

Opportunities**Enlightenment**

The policy creates an opportunity to enlighten the citizens about the necessity of acquiring a basic education that is capable of affording the citizens numeric literacy. This enlightenment creates a forum such that citizens become aware of the usefulness of the 9-3-4 basic education policy as against the 'former' 6-3-3-4 system. Enough enlightenment is created to enable the citizens make good use of the opportunity provided by the UBE programme to better their lives by acquiring at least a basic education.

Social mobility

The UBE policy enhances the movement of certain individuals from class of complete illiterates to acquire reading and writing skills. Also, people move from one social class to another. For example, some people move from lower class in the social ladder of life to middle class as a result of acquiring education as afforded the opportunity by the UBE policy. As a matter of fact, some people have today become university graduates as a result of the initial opportunity provided by the UBE policy for them to acquire basic education. They never stopped there. Some don't even stop there as they move on to acquire higher degrees or polytechnic diplomas. This helps to change their social status and mobility in the society.

Poverty reduction

Undoubtedly, the introduction of the UBE has enabled citizens acquire entrepreneurial skills that has made them run their private businesses well thus reducing the rate of poverty in the country. Besides, most artisans get job to do during the construction of classroom blocks, making school desks and lockers while other people make supplies that helps to improve their income. This helps to reduce the rate of poverty in the country.

Societal peace and harmony

Some recalcitrant children were forcefully taken off the streets by government to acquire basic education. This helps to ease the streets of bad boys and girls thus enhancing societal peace and harmony as some of these street children constituted themselves into social miscreants such as pick pockets, child hawkers, child-prostitutes, child-labourers in building sites and other places.

Improved health and living condition

It is to be noted that most of these street children slept in street corners, abandoned houses, uncompleted buildings and fed very poorly. But with the coming of the UBE programme especially with the attendant feeding of the school children in some states by the federal government, this has gone a long way in improving their feeding, health and living conditions.

Liberalization of admission

The UBE policy creates opportunity for every student to acquire the basic education without any form of hindrance of admission. Access to basic education is open to all and sundry as the policy makes it an offence for any child to be denied admission by any school. This liberalizes admission into the programme.

Threats

Competition between public and private schools

Unhealthy competition arises between those who attend public schools that are direct beneficiaries of the Universal Basic Education programme and private schools. Public schools were seen as the domain of the children of the poor or lower class members of the society while private schools were seen as schools for children of the rich, the middle and upper class members of the society. Some not-well-to-do parents had to withdraw their children from private schools to public schools in order for them to also enjoy the free education provided by the government. This seriously threatens the existence of private schools coupled with the fact that some qualified private school teachers had to abandon private schools and join the public school system as a result of salary differentials and conditions of service that tilt in favour of public schools.

Status symbols

Those who attend private schools are seen as coming from comfortable and well-to-do background while those who attend public schools are seen as children of the poor – the wretched of the earth, the drawers of the waters and the hewers of the wood. It makes public primary and secondary schools, especially the junior secondary schools to be seen as dumping ground for not –do-well in the society which may not be so in reality. This now creates a status symbol between those who attend public schools and those who attend private schools.

Family cohesiveness

Family cohesiveness is threatened by the UBE policy because since no age limit is placed on those to enjoy the UBE programme; some married men and women enrol into the programme, leaving their spouses unattended to during school hours thus threatening family values and cohesiveness. Besides, some married women are said to go into amorous relationship with some teachers in the school system which threatens their marriage while the same holds true for husbands who lure after other girls in schools.

Lack of parental awareness

Most parents and guardians still feign ignorance of the UBE programme and as such their children and wards do not benefit from the programme. This threatens the lofty goals of the programme which aspires to make all citizens literate, at least to the basic education level.

Reduces number of local artisans

The high number of local artisans who enrol in the basic education programme inevitably reduces the number available to render their services to members of the public. For instance, electricians, plumbers, painters, welders, barbers, drivers (Okada), mechanics, cobblers, tailors/seamstresses, wrist watch, radio, television repairers, etc enrolled in large numbers in the UBE programme thus thinning down the number of those available to render their services to the people.

Poverty

Poverty still does not allow some families release their children and wards (most of whom are their bread winners) to attend schools in order to make UBE policy a success. Some other families claim that they cannot afford to buy uniforms, writing materials, sandals, etc to their children and wards and thus threatening the success of the programme. Some of these children actually hawk on the streets to sustain their families and their families don't find it expedient to release them to attend schools even if to benefit from the UBE programme.

The challenge of Implementing Universal Basic Education (UBE) Policy in Akwalbom State

The challenge of implementing UBE policy in Akwalbom State includes the following:

1. The UBE scheme was poorly planned before inauguration by the federal government. The UBE was launched by the same person who launched the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976, and it was therefore expected that having assessed the degree of failure of the UPE programme, a more thorough planning and evaluation would have been carried out before launching the UBE scheme in 1999. But sadly, this was not the case in planning, preparing and commencing of the UBE programme (Useni, 2008).
2. Also, it was months after the UBE had been launched that the Federal Ministry of Education attempted to tinker into shape an implementation blueprint which was presented to the National Council on Education for further advice and subsequent action. This was like administering medicine on a death patient.
3. Another challenge in the planning and implementation of the UBE programme is that the programme took off with the signing of the UBE Act in April, 2004, but the appropriation of fund to the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and subsequent disbursement to states was in July 2005 (UBEC, 2006). It is to be noted also that the new 9-year Basic Education curriculum which was approved by the National Council on Education was launched long after the UBE had started.
4. Also is the challenge of poor funding. According to Imogie (2011), funding is a central factor to an efficient and effective education. It has been found that virtually all the problems of education in Nigeria are attributable to poor or inadequate funding. For example, the problems of inadequate and/or dilapidated structures, facilities and equipment for learning and students' welfare, as well as that of staff remuneration are linked to inadequate funding. Above all, it has been observed that the following funding factors seriously militate against the implementation of the UBE policy/programme: late releases of funds, inconsistency in timing of releases of funds, amount of capital and recurrent allocations released, etc.
5. **Inadequate infrastructural facilities:** Existing infrastructure and facilities that would have aided the smooth implementation of the UBE programme in the state have been over-stretched to a deplorable and deteriorating level. In some cases, the infrastructure and facilities are either non-existing or inadequate in number and quality (Olaniyi, 2001). Also, the lack of teaching and learning equipment and materials hamper the achievement of quality education in the implementation of the UBE programme/policy.
6. Inadequate qualified teachers also pose a serious challenge to the implementation of the UBE programme. The numbers of students enrolled in the UBE programme outmatch the number of qualified teachers employed to teach. This results in a situation where the number of students in a class far exceed the government recommended ratio of 1:35 for primary school and 1:40 for secondary school (Mkpa, 2004). As argued elsewhere in this paper, this cannot allow for meaningful teaching and learning taking place.
7. One monstrous challenge that stares the UBE programme in the face is corruption. Corruption appears to be an undefeated colossus in the Nigerian education sector. It is an incubus that presses down the progress of education in the country. Like a cancerous virus,

it eats away the life of our educational system. According to the Late Professor Claude Ake's Centre for Advanced Social Sciences, Port-Harcourt Charter, the tendency of Nigeria to rationalize corruption might also have helped to consolidate it. Wealthy people who are known to be corrupt are regularly courted and honoured by kinsmen, communities, religious bodies, universities, social clubs and other public and private organisations. Today, radio jingles, television commercials and arrest of political opponents are the only signs that war against corruption is on. Nothing serious appears to have been done to make corruption unattractive, difficult and inconvenient. Thus, even though corruption wears dirty and unattractive garments in Nigeria, it still attracts many admirers. This explains why education managers divert public funds, facilities, equipment, text and exercise books meant for the UBE programme to their personal use or sale in bookshops, markets and other public places even when there are conspicuous inscriptions "Not for sale", you will still see such books and materials being sold in bookshops, supermarkets, markets and on roadside much to the shame of a nation! Another dimension of the corruption genre is the inflation of school enrolment by principals and head teachers of schools so as to get more imprest fund from the government to their schools. Corruption has inflicted a big dent on the effort of the government in implementing the UBE policy.

8. Poor motivation of teachers constitute a monumental challenge to the implementation of the UBE programme because a poorly motivated teacher cannot put in his/her best to the achievement of the UBE goals and objectives. Motivational variables such as in-service training, regular promotion, allowances, reasonable and prompt salary packages can positively influence teachers' attitude to work. According to Obinaju (2011), teachers always blame their lack of commitment on either insufficient or delayed pay. Teachers' reaction to these can be seen in absenteeism, lateness to work, poor class attendance, lack of proper teaching, poor or non-use of teaching aids etc.
9. The issue of unwieldy class size has posed a serious challenge to the implementation of the UBE programme in the state. The truth remains that the UBE policy has resulted in the over-bloated number of school enrolment with concomitant stretch on available facilities. According to Etuk (2006), the problem of large class size is made daunting by the fact that students are usually packaged into one long unpartitioned hall of three to four classes, and sometime more. Some of these classes are left without teachers thus prompting students to run about wildly and making noise, creating unimaginable disturbance and distraction to other students and teachers in the contiguous classes. Under such circumstance, the situation in the large class with a teacher is such that neither the students nor the teacher would hear the other. While the teacher would strain his voice, the students would be busy playing one mischief or the other with one another. Etuk (2006) goes on to mention the consequences of large class sizes to include:
 - (i) Teachers being almost perpetually engaged in the struggle to maintain discipline in the class and this leads to loss of quality time (i.e actual teaching time).
 - (ii) Reduction in teacher-learner contact for supervision and identification of learning difficulties in the learners. The students thus carry their learning to next lesson or class without opportunity for guidance and possible remediation.
 - (iii) Leads to display of negative attitudes towards learning and schooling on the part of the students – truancy, absenteeism, etc.

- (iv) Leads to high level of school dropout.
- (v) Leads to inappropriate assessment and feedback systems. Teachers cannot conduct the expected number of continuous assessment and submit or use valid and reliable data for promotion, guidance and counselling.
- (vi) Leads to unethical performance like examination malpractice because of anxiety, feeling of inadequacy; unpreparedness and desperation make up fraudulently for the deficiencies of the learners.
- (vii) Teachers do not attend classes regularly and they seldom spend time to prepare their lessons and contemplate innovations since they know the conditions for implementation are not germane.
- (viii) Leads to disappointment and loss of faith in the public school system on the part of the society.
- (ix) Leads to proliferation of private schools and exploitation of the public by their proprietors through exorbitant fees and outrageous sundry charges.

All these make private school systems attractive while casting aspiration and derision on public schools.

10. Also, is the challenge of standard assessment and evaluation of students' performance by teachers in the face of uncontrollably high number of pupils in classes. Some teachers, especially the lazy ones do not actually mark and appropriately grade students' performances in class test and examinations. Rather, they haphazardly allot marks to students. This does not encourage hard work by the brilliant students who feel short changed because their grades do not reflect their performances. This kills the spirit of healthy competition among students.
11. There is also the challenge posed by admission of sub-standard students as inputs into the education system. Education systems is not a magical process nor are teachers magicians that can, by the snap of a finger turns a poor quality input (students intake) into a good one. The quality of inputs from primary schools usually determines the quality of outputs produced from the system. Where the quality of inputs is pitifully poor then the transformational process becomes helpless.
12. Poor inspection and supervision also pose as a challenge to the effective implementation of the UBE programme. Inspection and supervision of schools are not diligently carried out by officials assigned to carry out such functions. Diligent inspection and supervision by officials will keep the teachers on their toes and provide feedback to the government with a view to making necessary adjustments and reviews on the system and on the curriculum.
13. Faulty statistics projection is one challenge that ravages the Nigerian education system. National population censuses have always been politicized hence it is difficult to extrapolate accurate and valid school-age population figure from published population census data. Also, there is much imperfection and lapses in published educational statistics (Enaibe and Imonivwerha, 2008). All these constitute wrong and faulty data that give room to impractical policies based on faulty guesses. There is therefore, the need for accurate data on school-age population, school enrolment, teachers, classroom, equipment, etc to be collected for effective implementation of the UBE.

Finally, another challenge is: How free is the lower basic education? Many head teachers extort money from pupils in the name of development levy, handwork levy, examination levy, etc. Most pupils cannot afford these levies and decide to drop out of school despite the fact that UBE is said to be free and compulsory. The question then is: How will this be implemented? Who will go from house to house to ensure that parents send their school-age children to school? This is no doubt, a very difficult task. Most governments have tried this and fail.

Findings of the study

The major findings of the study are summarized as follows:

1. There is a significant relationship between funding and implementation of UBE policy.
2. There is a significant relationship between teacher's motivation and implementation of UBE policy.
3. There is a significant relationship between availability of facilities and implementation of UBE policy.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the findings is done under the following sub-heading that has relevance to the hypotheses formulated in the study.

Funding and Implementation of UBE Policy

Scholars such as Farnade (2002);Enaibe and Imonivwerha (2008); Eminue (2005); Ikelegbe (1996); Okoro (2005); Egonmwan (2002) and Tom (2015) have all agreed that funding is one of the major impediments to the implementation of public policies in Nigeria, including the UBE policy. Funding is the ladder we use to climb to the height of any policy implementation. This explains why most laudable educational policies and programmes in this country that are wonderfully planned, beautifully labelled always suffer from what Ekang (2005) sarcastically called "Implementomiasis". In other words most education policies and programmes in Nigeria always suffer a miscarriage at the implementation stage mostly as a result of poor funding and corruption. As Ikelegbe (2006) puts it, the manifestation of inadequate facilities was seen in "improvised classrooms and temporary sites, such as those who were under sheds and open fields, sharing of classrooms, large classroom – student ratios, sharing of furniture by students and the carrying of chairs and desks for school by students. In the word of Adefunke (2008) most education policies and programmes die as a result of "inadequate funding or mismanagement of funds by the individuals who, these programmes are trusted to"

According to Eniabe and Imonivwerha (2008), funding determines to a very large extent the quality of education provided to the students. In their views, funds are needed in the provision of classrooms, desks, books, stationaries, equipment, laboratories, workshops, payment of staff salaries, etc. Funding is the determining factor in the implementation of UBE policy as it is a tool to empower, plan and execute projects, provide equipment/materials, build and renovate infrastructure, improve conditions of service for staff (Farnade, 2002). No policy can really see the light of the day without availability of funds.

Teacher's motivation and implementation of UBE policy

Since it is the teachers that are directly involved in the implementation of the UBE policy, it therefore stands to reason that their motivation is a necessary tonic in the success of the UBE scheme. The easiest way of doing this is to help the teachers satisfy their needs at least to a reasonable extent while working towards the implementation of the UBE policy. This is where the concept of motivation comes in and must be encouraged if the objectives of the UBE policy are to be achieved.

Motivation on its own has been given a prominent position among factors directly relating to effective performance of teachers/employees by many personnel experts such as Aderounmu and Ehiemetator (1998), Cole (2005), Njoku (2007), Nwachukwu (2007) among others. Motivation of teachers through enhanced payment package, timely and regular payment of salaries, promotion, good working environment, and regular staff training, among others can boost staff morale and instigate them to work towards achieving the intended goals of the UBE policy. Poor or inadequate motivation of teachers' impacts negatively on the implementation of the UBE policy.

Availability of facilities and implementation of UBE policy

Inadequate or poor infrastructural facilities such as classrooms, desk, books, stationeries, equipment, laboratories, workshops, teaching aids, can impede the implementation of the UBE policy and in the long run hasten the demise of the policy. For instance, lack of teaching aids can make learning uninteresting to the pupils and may lead to school dropout by the pupils thus defeating the purpose of the UBE policy.

Lack of classrooms and desks have forced many pupils to take lessons under tree shades, shed and sometime sitting on bare ground. This is rampant in many public primary schools across the state ostensibly fuelled by the inflow of intakes occasioned by the UBE policy. According to Okujagu (2013), the dearth of infrastructure and facilities has necessitated a situation where teaching and learning go on in conditions that can be described as deplorable. As he puts it "at all levels of education one sees dilapidated buildings with cave-in or blown off roof tops, inadequate toilet facilities, broken furniture, louvers/windows and damaged floors. These conditions have resulted in students over-crowding available classrooms or learning under trees". Poor infrastructures and facilities make teaching and learning distasteful and may culminate in lethargy or Golden Fleece for the teachers and dropout for the students.

Policy Implications and Conclusion

The above chronicle of challenges and constraints associated with UBE policy in Akwa Ibom State has serious policy implications.

The achievement of the objectives of the UBE depends on its effective implementations. However, the government's rush to jumpstart programmes without careful and systematic planning has resulted in the failure of many laudable programmes, including the UBE policy/programme.

The Nigerian educational system that is supposed to take up the actualization of the UBE policy is in crisis as many primary schools suffer from poor conditions of learning, poor building facilities, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teachers supply, population explosion, etc, quality control through monitoring, supervision and evaluation has collapsed because necessary conditions for effective functioning of the inspectorate division have been neglected.

To cope with the expected demand of a free compulsory and universal basic education in the lower and upper basic levels, government must downplay on the Nigerian factor such as corruption, misappropriation of funds, etc and make adequate provision in terms of teacher quality/quantity, fund, facilities/equipment/materials etc.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been proffered to curb the challenges of implementing UBE policy in Akwa Ibom State:

1. Provision of adequate funds which will be used to build new classrooms, train and employ more teachers, provide teaching aids and equipment thus enlarging the coast of admission space to accommodate more teachers and learners.
2. The Teacher Salary Scale (TSS) must be religiously implemented to motivate the teachers to put in their best in teaching the pupils/students in addition to generous fringe benefit and regular staff promotion.
3. Massive provision of infrastructure and facilities in both lower and upper basic education level such as provision of instructional materials, teaching aids, sport facilities, science equipment, spacious classrooms, libraries, laboratories, workshop, text and exercise books, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) centres with necessary facilities such as computers, generators, printers etc to aid the implementation of UBE policy.
4. Tracking of resources to ensure proper, adequate and accountable utilization as appropriated for by tightening the loose end of corruption will facilitate the implementation of the UBE policy. This will ensure that resources (financial and materials) are not mischannelled or misappropriated but used for the purpose they were meant for, namely, the implementation of the UBE policy/programme.
5. Review of the school curriculum to place emphasis on entrepreneurship education so that those who cannot continue beyond the basic education level can become useful to themselves and the society by becoming entrepreneurs.
6. Employment of more qualified teachers to take care of the ever swelling intake of students prompted by the UBE policy that emphasizes free and compulsory education for the first 9 years of formal education. All forms of hidden charges by school heads should be outlawed by the government.
7. Efforts should be made to observe the approved class size of 1:35 for primary schools and 1:40 for secondary schools.
8. Government should update existing database on education to avoid faulty statistics.
9. The government and all Nigerian citizens should come out of the derogatory Nigerian factor syndrome and work with diligence, honesty and accountability.

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