

# **SOME NOTABLE ISSUES AND MAJOR IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF THE UBE PROGRAMMES IN ANAMBRA STATE**

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## **Abstract**

Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria has both National and International Antecedents. The genesis of UBE could be traced to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948), which embodies the right to compulsory and free basic education. Every member state of the United Nations of which Nigeria is among is a signatory to the declaration. This programme has a broad aim of laying solid foundation for life-long learning through the inculcation of appropriate learning-to-learn self-awareness, citizenship and the skills for every Nigerian child of school age. This paper tends to assess the notable issues and major implementation challenges of UBE programme in Anambra State, and also recommends solutions for proper implementation and sustenance of this laudable programme.

## **Introduction**

This Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is an ambitious educational programme launched and executed by the government and the people of Nigeria in order to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national developmental consciousness and national integration. It is known fact that, education is a pivotal to any meaningful development. All nations which have recorded tremendous feat in the world relied heavily on the instrumentality of education, in fact, ignorance has one and only cure and that is education. Education generally intended to bring permanent change in the behaviour of an individual and to achieve this, it has to be for relatively long period and it should be a continuous process in order to prevent a relapse into illiteracy.

Some scholars have defined UBE as "a programme with a broad aim of laying the foundation for life-long learning through the inculcation of appropriate learning-to-learn self-awareness citizenship and life skills for every Nigeria child of school age" (Omoniyi and Olugbuyi, 2002).

Also, according to Andeniran (1999), the scheme of Universal Basic Education covers the following:

- 1) Six years primary education.
- 2) Three junior secondary school education.
- 3) Non-formal education.

Universal Basic Education programme is universal, free and compulsory. This means that opportunities will be provided for the basic education of every Nigerian child of school age; that parents must ensure that their children avails themselves of such opportunity and that sanctions will be imposed on persons that prevent children adolescents and youths from benefiting from Universal Basic Education (UBE).

This programme (UBE) has objective, which include;

1. to provide free, Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school-going age within at least the first nine years of schooling (primary and JSS);
2. to reduce drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system;
3. to cater for the learning needs of young persons whose schooling got interrupted;
4. to ensure the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, innumeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills and also the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning; and
5. to develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its effective promotion.

## **The Notable Issues of Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State**

Compare with the Universal Basic Education of 1970s. Universal Basic Education (UBE) is "Education For All" which is seen as "the responsibility of all" while Universal Primary Education (UPE) was seen as a purely government affairs aimed at bringing education to the door step of all. The issues of Universal Basic Education (UBE) are more focused. These issues include: philosophical issue, socio-cultural issue, financial issue, managerial issue, political issue, curricular issue, and teacher issue.

### ***Socio-Cultural Issue***

This tended to have a debilitating affect on the educational growth in Anambra State, they are: The phenomenal increase in population, the deadly influence of growing drug abuse, cultism and crime, environmental degradation, corruption and economic management, the declining resources needed in the school, and the pressure to modernize society. These have all had a negative impact on the quality and quantity of education provided over the past two decades. The dwindling of financial resources, for example, has reduced the any aspirations for greater equity in access to education, which had been the dream of Universal Primary Education (UPE). The situation at present does not appear better. The social problems are clearly on the increase among youths. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programmed is expected to effectively address some of these problems.

### ***Financial Issues***

This is also one of the notable issues of Universal Basic Education (UBE). In view of the priority which the government of Anambra State place on Universal Basic Education (UBE) as the vehicle for genuine state development, considerable financial resources will be mobilized for it execution. Government effort needs support or re-enforcement with contribution from others sources like the private sectors, the civil society, NGOs and donor agencies.

### ***Managerial Issues***

The responsibility for implementing the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programmed is not centralized. It has been effectively decentralized. All tiers of governments are participating. In addition, the communities, parents, and teachers, the private sector, NGOs, public-spirited individuals and organizations are not left out. All are equally involved.

### ***Philosophical Issues***

This is among the notable issues of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Anambra State because one of the aims of National Policy on Education is to develop an individual who is able to realize his potential and contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the nation or state were he/she belongs. The policy, by this, sees education as the vehicle for achieving personal development and worth, social stability and advancement, and global integration and relevance. Basic education has distinctive initial features whose objectives is not only provide all the basic knowledge but also to inculcate the rights attitudes, values and skills needed by everyone in order to realize his potential as an individual and be able to play an active part in the advancement of his/her community or state. Thus, the philosophy of basic education is, aptly put, utilitarian and is predicted on the desire to produce an individual with sound mind and hotly who is capable of affecting his/her society in a meaningful and beneficial way.

### ***Curriculum Issues***

In Anambra State, Universal Basic Education (UBE) has an underlying philosophy of utility or functionality, the most challenging issue is what the programmes stands to offer in terms of the uniqueness and applicability of its curricula! content. To this end, the existing curricular would be improved upon and enriched seriously in four important aspects as follows:

- laying the foundation for life-long learning;
- the inculcation of appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy;
- developing an aptitude for practical work; and
- the acquisition of socially desirable life skills (FNG, 2000).

These have implications for what should be taught in schools, the way and manner to teach it, and the organization to be put in place for it. Implied here that (he already existing curricular will be drastically reviewed in the light of the above.

### ***Teacher/Personnel Issues***

The teacher factor is the centre of personnel and pedagogical issues affecting the implementation of the UBE programme. All organs of professional development are to be mobilized develop all categories of teachers who are oriented in career improvement, possessing lots of practical skills and readily amendable to continuing education programmes. The focus here is on:

- b) Teacher preparation (both professional and academic);
- c) Teacher with appropriate qualification, training, attitudes, motivation, aptitudes and competence;
- d) Instructional tools;
- e) The general teaching-learning environment;
- f) The methods and product (cognitive, skills, altitudes) of teaching.

### ***The Political Issues***

In the political issues education is often used as instrument to achieve national aims. It is also meant,

formed and expected to reduce (he imbalances in educational opportunities and attainments across regions, communities, age groups and sexes, and thereby eliminate illiteracy, promote national awareness and forge a social-political agenda for the nation.

There is no clear-cut programmes on the interface between parents and the school to facilitate childcare and basic education.

### **Major Implementation Challenges of Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State**

The following are considered as the major implementation challenges of Universal Basic Education (UBE).

#### ***Funding***

Education requires a lot of funding. The intent as declared in the policy is the UBE should be free. There has been inadequate funding of education from central government sources and this financial burden on government often forces, parents to get involved in funding this basic level of education.

#### ***Irregular Payment of Teachers' Salaries***

It is well known that, the teachers' morale drops with tardiness in payment of salaries. This means that, the teachers are being owed for these salaries for instance, during the regime of Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju teachers are being owed for like nine months which is not fair. In fact, teachers' need to be re-enforced for their job by so doing it will encourage, motivating them the more.

#### ***Lack of Political Will***

The political will to conceive, plan and religiously implement a national educational programme in a systematic manner has been lacking all the while. Why? Because those in position of authority have no value for the programme, policies and programmes were not usually pursued vigorously, nor successfully executed.

#### ***Absence of Reliable Data***

This affects planning a great deal. When data are faulty, forecasts and projections are always overtaken by events. This usually gives rise to numerous 'unforeseen' and 'unpredictable' circumstances in governments, conduct of its affairs.

#### ***Poor Inputs***

As a result of unreliable data, leading to wrong projections, there has been poor quantity and quality of inputs. Such includes inadequate teacher supply (unqualified teachers), poor upgrading facilities for personnel, poor infrastructure (classrooms laboratories), inadequate materials (textbooks, leaching instruments), and negative impact on access, retention efficiency and equality.

#### ***Political Instability***

This can be noticed in the institution of governance, in policy and in the composition and competence of the actors. The Nigerian society today desires political stability more than anything else likewise in Anambra State. It is hoped that, the new democratic political dispensation, when consolidated, will usher in a regime of stability, systematic planning and administration of government functions.

#### ***Lack of Supervision***

Supervision or monitoring of UBE programmes is lacking. Some teachers may branch off into quick money-generating activities such as farming petty-trading, etc during the school hours. This unprofessional behaviour creates discipline problems, as children remain unsupervised.

#### ***Poor Planning***

There is a dearth of statistics on children's enrolment, number of teachers, their qualification and demographic characteristics, statistics on building and other learning facilities.

#### **Recommendations**

The following suggestions are made to embody the new education culture in consonance with the current issues and major implementation challenges of UBE programme highlighted above:

1. We need to realize that basic education goes beyond literacy and numeracy. It embraces all kinds

of basic knowledge and skills necessary for an individual to live a useful and contend life. We must therefore, encourage children to develop a scientific outlook and rudimentary understanding of the natural and social environment.

2. We need improve our curricula to include social and democratic values, academic skills and psychomotor competencies, which constitute our national needs.
3. Universal Basic Education Programme should be decentralized for proper implementation and close monitoring for a better result.
4. Guidance services must be emphasized to deal with current behavioural problems.
5. Educational experts should sensitize the government to become more aware of their services and contributions through regular publications of research findings in their areas of specialization.
6. The new education culture must adequately stress a partnership between the government and other development agencies in order to tackle education funding and skill development.

### **Conclusion**

As at the time, the UBE was launched in 1999, the nation's literacy rate was estimated to be 25%. Many children of school age were outside (he four walls of classroom. Educational statistics of 1996 showed that of the 21 million children of school age, only 14.1 million were enrolled in school. Also, there were substantial shortcoming and personnel capacities for the delivery of a sound basic education for all citizens. Available infrastructural facilities, teaching and learning materials as well as qualified teachers were inadequate. There were also widespread disparities both is quality of and access to basic education across the nation. There is no gainsaying the fact that, the democratic government inherited an educational system that could not meet the needs of the people.

It is also expected to reduce drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system. This can be achieved through improved reliance, polity and efficiency; and the through providing free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age.

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