



Universal Basic Education Policy and the Quality of Primary Education in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Nigeria

Olaniyan Taiwo Abimbola¹, Canice Erunke² & Shuaibu Umar Abdul³

^{1, 2 & 3}Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's E-mail: olaniyant21@gmail.com

Abstract

There is huge budgetary expenditure of the government over the years to primary education in the FCT, yet, it remained in shamble. Consequently, the implication of the declining quality of primary education has far reached impact on a nation's moral, civic, cultural and economic sustainability. This study examines Impact of the mandates of Universal Basic Education Policy on the quality of primary education in the Federal Capital Territory. The study was built within the framework of system theory. It employed the use of qualitative and quantitative research methods drawing data from primary and secondary sources. Questionnaire was used and accompanied with well-structured interviews. Secondary sources of data reviewed existing literature from journals, online articles, and research projects. It argued that the mandates of Universal Basic Education policy have not enhanced the quality of primary education in the Federal Capital Territory. This is because most vital education facilities and support resources such as toilets, cupboards, and health materials e.g first aid box, water containers, and recreational materials eg. Swings and facilities for storing are grossly inadequate in FCT UBE schools. Other resources that were found to be inadequate are library facilities and textbooks. However, the study also revealed that the implementation of UBE in FCT has not been successful in giving access to free basic education to school age children with respect to free tuition in basic education; School feeding programme; Sensitization and mobilization of members of the public towards UBE programmes and; training and retraining of teachers. The study recommended that the government through the Universal Basic Education Commission should intensify effort in the area of establishment for an effective institutional framework for monitoring learning and teaching. This will drastically curtail the incidences of child-hawking during school hours and high drop-out rate in primary education. By so doing, the mandates of the UBE would be achieved and sustained.

Keywords: UBEC, Policy, Quality, Primary and Education.

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Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Right in article 13 (1) of the convention stated that “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality”. It also added in Article 13(2) that primary education must be universal, ensure that basic learning needs of all children are satisfied and take into account the culture, needs and opportunities of the community. The above stated policies and conventions have serious implication for the financing and management of educational programmes and provision of funds for the realization of the objectives of basic education (Fabuni, 2012).

Against this background, all over the world, primary education has been regarded as the most important as well as the most patronized by people. This perhaps may be due to the fact that it is the foundation of the whole educational pursuit, which is expected to provide literacy and enlightenment to the citizens. The importance of primary education can therefore be seen in the sense that all beneficiaries of the other levels of education by necessity have to pass through this level. What this means is that primary education defined as the education given in an institution for children aged 6-11 years plus constitute the bedrock upon which the entire education system is built. Indeed, the success and failure of the entire education systems are determined by it and it is at the heart of the concept of basic education which is also defined as universalization of access of education (Okebukola, 2017).

Nigeria has a federal system of government with 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. Within the states, there are 744 local governments in total. Education is administered by the federal, state, and local governments. The Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for overall policy formation and ensuring quality control, but is primarily involved with tertiary education. School education is largely the responsibility of the state (secondary) and local (elementary) governments (WENR,2017). Nigeria’s education system encompasses three different sectors: basic education (nine years), post-basic/senior secondary education (three years), and tertiary education (four to six years, depending on the program of study).

Recognizing the importance of primary education, all government in Nigeria both past and present, have placed premium on it by making primary education the center piece of their educational polices since the Colonia period; therefore, both colonial and independent



government in Nigeria have instituted one form of educational reform or the other. This indicates that there is a link between the past and present in the educational development of Nigeria. That is the country's historical antecedents who have impact on how educational policies are formulated and implemented. Starting with the colonial period, Nigeria, having been colonized by Britain, adopted the British form of education, which consists of primary, secondary, sixth form as well as higher education (Uduma, 2020).

In the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the situation of primary school education is not different from other parts of the Country. Primary and secondary schools in Abuja FCT are plagued with challenges which include a shortage of professional teachers, especially science teachers, inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of effective supervision, and large classes. The UBE Act 2004 further provides that for any State or the FCT to qualify for the Federal Government block grant pursuant to Sub Section 1 (1) above, the State or the FCT shall contribute counterpart fund of not less than 50% of the total cost of projects as its commitment to the execution of the project. Additionally, the administration and disbursement of funds shall be through the State or FCTUBEB, as the case may be (UBEC, 2004:9).

In spite of a number of scholarly investigations and writings on primary education across the globe yet, not much has been done on Universal Basic Education Policy and the quality of primary education in FCT, Abuja. This no doubt constitutes a problematique which this study aimed at querying so much so that the uproar in the literature can be addressed. There is huge budgetary expenditure of the government over the years to primary education in the FCT, yet, it remained in shamble. Consequently, the implication of the declining quality of primary education has far reached impact on a nation's moral, civic, cultural, and economic sustainability. After 20 years of existence of UBEC programme, young children are still roaming about on the streets begging and hawking during school hours in FCT. The teacher of UBE also appear dissatisfied with their remuneration and condition of service in addition to poor or inadequate provision of teaching and learning facilities like libraries and laboratory equipment, books among others.

On the aggregate about 10.1 million children who are supposed to be in basic education were not in school. This basically means that almost one third of those who are supposed to be in school are not. This ugly scenario seems to defeat the main objectives of the UBE programme; which is



to ensure literacy, numeracy and civic responsibilities. The situation of course gives rise to a populace of uneducated and dependent citizens without awareness of their civic responsibilities. This has also given rise to street children who ordinarily should be in school. There is free movement of eligible UBE pupils from a part of the country to another, especially as a result of heightened rural-urban migration. The worst hit is apparently the FCT, which is invariably attracting the highest influx of eligible pupils from than all the 36 states of Nigeria. The implication of this large influx of eligible pupils into the FCT has serious negative implication on the capability of the FCTUBEB to provide adequate funds for the achievement of the laudable goals of the UBE policy. Therefore, the mandates of Universal Basic Education Commission towards quality primary education in the FCT and the ways which Universal Basic Education Commission has enhanced the qualities of primary education in the Federal Capital Territory are the specific objectives examined.

Literature Review

Stephen, Glenda & Jan (2016) examined the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program and sought to understand the degree of shared understanding among bureaucrats regarding the policy intent and the level of alignment articulated in the policy related to access to basic education in Nigeria. Theory of organization bureaucracy was used. Bureaucrats in two geo-political zones and the Federal Capital Territory were interviewed to assess this shared understanding and its effect on the outcomes for UBE. The attainment of the UBE access goal was limited due to bureaucratic implementation issues. The study recommended an approach that may help operationalize improvement in access to basic education in Nigeria at the system level of implementation. The study is weak to the extent that it fails to provide explanation for the impact of the mandates of Universal Basic Education Policy on quality primary education in the FCT.

Ogunode (2018) investigated the challenges facing the planning of Basic Education in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. The study used the descriptive method. The instrument used was questionnaire. Result collected and analyzed in the study showed that: 100% of the respondent agreed that there are challenges facing the planning of basic Education in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria and the challenges facing the planning of basic education in FCT includes; inadequate funding of planning,



inadequate planning tools, inadequate educational planners, poor capacity of educational planners, political influences, political instability and lack of reliable data/information. Based on this finding, the study recommended that the government should increase the funding of education and specifically the funding of educational planning in the country. The weakness of the study is that it did not fully investigate the impact of the mandates of Universal Basic Education Policy on quality primary education in the FCT. Also, the study fails to adopt a theory in justifying its argument. Above all, the study relied only on the questionnaire source of the primary method.

Oladimeji&Ogunyebi(2019) assessed the extent to which the UBE programme has been implemented in South West, Nigeria. Three instruments were developed and used to obtain the data for this study. They are: Teachers assessment of implementation of UBE questionnaire (TAIUBEPQ), Questionnaire for Managers of UBE programme (QMUBEP) and Students questionnaire on perception of level of success of UBE programme (SQPLSUBE). The statistics used in the analysis included mean ratings and percentage. The findings revealed that the proportion of qualified teachers engaged in Southwest zone was not in accordance and lower than what is provided for in the UBE implementation guideline and the level of teachers' motivation, retraining and retention have been partial and not in conformity with its implementation guidelines among others. The study recommended provision of more quantity and quality teachers and government should make provision and prepare for training of qualified teachers. In addition, companies and well to do individuals should be encouraged to contribute to the development of UBE. Regular seminars/conferences should be organized for teachers, personnel and other stakeholders to update their knowledge and enlighten them on usefulness of facilities provided and their adequate implementation in each of the schools in the geo-political zone. However, the impacts of the mandates of Universal Basic Education Policy on quality primary education in the FCT were not discussed.

Izuka, Uche&Chukwuemeka (2022) undertook an assessment of the implementation of Universal Basic Education Programme in Anambra State. Survey research design was used for carrying out the study. Four (4) research questions were used. The instrument for data collection is a Universal Basic Education Questionnaire (UBEQ). Percentage, Mean score and standard



deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study were that: Most facilitates for implementing the UBE program are available but inadequate; Quality teachers are used in implementing the UBE programme in the state but the teacher student ratio is grossly inadequate; Universal Basic Education Programme's has not done much in giving access to free basic education to school children in the state and there are inherent challenges in effective implementation of the UBE programme in the state (Nkwede, 2011).

Based on these findings, the study argued that there is still need for improvement in the programme delivery to meet the demands of quality basic education in the state. Hence, in conclusion the major educational implication of the findings of the study is that the objectives of the UBE programme are still far-fetched with the current state of art and government efforts in the state. Among others, it was recommended that government should make effort to equip schools with basic educational service and facilities like laboratories, libraries etc. The impact of the mandates of Universal Basic Education Policy on quality primary education in the FCT is what has not been duly explored in the literature.

Theoretical Framework

The system theory was formulated by Easton in 1965. According to this theory, there is an existence of different parts which perform different functions in such a way that each part interacts and is interdependent on the other parts. The educational system has similar characteristics with other systems. For any object to be considered a system it must possess a level of integrity with a knowable structure or logically arranged parts, such parts or element must interrelate in a certain law-governed manner to fulfill a purpose or produce an ordered outcome, a result which is far more than the mere sum total of the independent elements; all this, in the contest of an environment of which it is a subordinate component. An important element in the systems approach is the emphasis on input-output analysis.

This theory is relevant to this study due to the fact that the universal basic education programme is built on some objectives in which its successful implementation is highly dependent on the role of policy makers, political executives and target beneficiaries. These objectives include; provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age, reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from the formal school system, ensuring the



acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for lifelong living, among others. An input for this study is all measures put in place for the implementation of UBE Programme such as administrative structure, funds, and qualitative personnel and effective collaboration with the external environment. The extent of the interdependence and interrelatedness of these inputs have negative and positive consequences to the effect of the UBE programme on primary education in FCT. A system according to the founding fathers is any whole which functions as a result of interrelations of its parts. Therefore, in relating to this programme, if the target groups are sidelined in all stages, the programme may likely be a failure. Another important aspect of the theory which is relevant to the programme is input; the quality of input sacrificed to the programme determined the output which is the impact of the policy.

Methodology

The study is based on survey research design, employing the measure of descriptive survey method. The target population is comprised of educational planners working in the ministry, department, schools and agency of education that deals with education planning in the FCT including Parents Teachers Association (PTA). Therefore, the population consists of the educational planning officers in the three selected area councils of FCT, Abuja, Nigeria; AMAC, Gwagwalada and Kuje, staff of the FCTUBEC Head Quarter, FCT Primary Education Board, Federal Ministry of Education, teaching/non-teaching staff of public primary schools and Parents Teachers Association (PTA) in AMAC, Gwagwalada and Kuje area councils. Hence the population of the study is 2,683.

The population size of the study (2,683) is deemed to be large; and the researcher opted to make use of the sample rather than make use of the entire population. The statistical tool of Rakesh statistical was used to determine the sample size in arriving at 400. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the schools and teachers. The purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of respondents for interviews. This technique was chosen because it enabled the researcher to purposely choose respondents at their locations.



The study made use of both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The instruments that were used in collecting data for this study are oral interview, questionnaire and secondary sources. A five-point rating scale was adopted is shown as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = (5 points) Agree (A) = (4 points), Disagree (D) = (3 points) and Strongly Disagree (AD) = (2 point) = Undecided (U) = (1 point) to determine the Universal Basic Education Policy and the quality of primary education in the Federal Capital Territory while the in-depth type of interview was chosen. Data analysis in this study involved quantitative and qualitative analysis. Data from copies of questionnaire retrieved were analyzed quantitatively using simple percentages and frequencies. Data from in-depth interview and secondary materials were analyzed qualitatively using the contextual strand of content analysis, which involves analysis of communication in objective manner in order to measure variables.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire administered, three hundred and eighty-nine (389) were retrieved and found to be correctly filled and were therefore used for analysis. This figure represents 97.25% of the total number of questionnaire administered. Therefore, the presentation and analysis were done based on the 389 retrieved copies of questionnaire. Interviews were equally held with members of the above-mentioned organizations and were assigned code in order to be shielded from any form of identification. Twelve (12) interviewees were purposively selected from the above mentioned organizations. The selection was based on certain predetermined characteristics such as age, experience and rank.



Table 1: Respondents' responses on the mandates of Universal Basic Education Commission towards quality primary education in the FCT

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Reduction in Child labour	180	164	21	19	5	389
	(46%)	(42%)	(6%)	(5%)	(1%)	(100%)
To improve quality of education	201	175	8	5	-	389
	(52%)	(45%)	(2%)	(1%)	(0%)	(100%)
Ensuring that school-age children are in school	249	132	04	04	-	389
	(64%)	(34%)	(1%)	(1%)	(0%)	(100%)
To make education accessible and affordable for the citizens	187	178	9	03	12	389
	(48%)	(46%)	(2%)	(1%)	(3%)	(100%)
To develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education	180	172	17	15	5	389
	(46%)	(44%)	(5%)	(4%)	(1%)	(100%)

Source: Field Data, November 2023.

On the mandates of Universal Basic Education Commission towards quality primary education in the FCT, 180 (46%) and 164 (42%) strongly agree and agree that reduction in child labour is the mandate of Universal Basic Education Commission towards quality primary education in the FCT, 21 (6%) and 19 (5%) disagree and strongly disagree with the position, while 5 (1%) was undecided. On the second row, respondents were asked whether improvement in quality of education is a mandate of Universal Basic Education Commission towards quality primary education in the FCT, 201 (52%) and 175 (45%) strongly agree and agree, 8 (2%) and 5 (1%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively. 249 (64%) and 132 (34%) strongly agree and agree that ensuring that school-age children are in school is the mandate of Universal Basic Education



Commission towards quality primary education in the FCT, 4 (1%) and 4 (1%) strongly disagree and disagree. On the fourth row, 187 (48%) and 178 (46%) were of the opinion that to make education accessible and affordable for the citizens of Nigeria of school age is a mandate of Universal Basic Education Commission towards quality primary education in the FCT, 9 (2%) and 3 respondents (1%) strongly disagree and disagree while 12 respondents accounting for 3% were undecided.

180 (46%) and 172 (44%) strongly agree and agree that to develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education is the mandate of Universal Basic Education Commission towards quality primary education in the FCT, 17 (5%) and 15(4%) disagree and strongly disagree, only 5 respondents representing (1%) could not ascertain whether making education accessible and affordable for the citizens of Nigeria of school age is a mandate of Universal Basic Education Commission towards quality primary education in the FCT. During interview section, participants shared their understanding or knowledge on what function the UBE was created to meet. They described the focus of the programme on students of school age, strategies through which the programme was to carry out its objectives, and the program's benefits to the nation. Respondent 1 described the program in his words:

The program was designed to broaden the scope and number of people, which are of school age to have access to school. With regards to drop outs, the UBE was designed to reduce drop outs by providing access to schools through free education, provision of education materials in primary to secondary schools (November, 2023).

Respondent 2 in describing the focal aim of the UBE program traced its origin, and how the program was supposed to be a foundation for future benefits. He described: The UBE was designed to meet the key ideals of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). It was supposed to help on job creation and wealth generation. It ensures the acquisition of functional education for laying the foundation for technical, vocational and entrepreneurship in dropouts. This perception was also put forward by Respondent 3 who stated that UBE curriculum which includes technical, moral and civic education was to help children to grow up as good citizens thereby reducing dropouts and building the quality of human resources in the nation. Respondent 4 concisely summarizes the description of the UBE function in the following words:



It provides for compulsory, free, universal basic education for all children of primary and junior secondary school age in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It also stipulates penalties for parents who fail to comply with its provisions (November, 2023).

Respondent 5 described the programme as an avenue to educate and equip children. In his words:

The function of the UBE is to provide ready access to education for eligible students by providing free education. By this, the policy planner experts would encourage more students to schools, equip them better for the future and ultimately reduce dropouts (November, 2023).

Respondent 9 also described the functions of the UBE as a programme set to provide ready and easily affordable access to education for all students by providing free education. Respondent 6 stated that the UBE is a programme that is to give access to education to every child in the country. The programme apart from being free and should bolster the child with skills that could help him in the future (November, 2023). Participants described the UBE as a programme geared towards educating and equipping children through free access to quality education, thereby empowering them for future pursuits.

Based on the objectives of the UBE mentioned above Jaiyeoba (2017) agreed that the child should have a continuous, uninterrupted stretch of education for nine years from primary school to the 3rd year of the junior secondary school. Apart from this, the UBE scheme plans cater for the adults who have been out of school before they acquired the basic skills needed for lifelong learning inform of non-formal programmes. So, the UBE programme is planned in such a way that it shall provide non-formal skill and training for youths who have not had the opportunity of accessing formal education.



Table 2: Respondents' opinion on the ways Universal Basic Education Commission has enhanced primary education in the Federal Capital Territory

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Providing basic facilities for teaching and learning	91 (23%)	110 (28%)	84 (22%)	89 (23%)	15 (4%)	389 (100%)
School feeding programme is implemented in all schools	93 (24%)	85 (22%)	91 (23%)	95 (24%)	25 (7%)	389 (100%)
Sensitization and mobilization of members of the public	109 (28%)	122 (31%)	84 (22%)	63 (16%)	11 (3%)	389 (100%)
Provision of equal opportunities among children of school age	117 (30%)	108 (28%)	79 (20%)	63 (16%)	22 (6%)	389 (100%)
Training and retraining of Teachers	99 (25%)	102 (26%)	92 (24%)	82 (21%)	14 (4%)	389 (100%)

Source: Field Data, November 2023.

Asked what ways Universal Basic Education Commission enhanced primary education in the Federal Capital Territory, 91 respondents (23%) and 110 respondents representing (28%) strongly agree and agree that providing basic facilities for teaching and learning, 84 (22%) and 89 (23%) have contrary opinion while 15 respondents (4%) were undecided. The above analysis clearly shows that provision of basic facilities for teaching and learning are the ways Universal Basic Education Commission enhanced primary education in the Federal Capital Territory.

On the other hand, 93 respondents representing (24%) and 85 (22%) strongly agree and agree that school feeding programme implemented in all schools are the ways Universal Basic



Education Commission enhanced primary education in the Federal Capital Territory, 95 (24%) and 91 (23%) strongly disagree and disagree respectively, 25 respondents (7%) were undecided. In separate responses, 109 (28%) and 122 (31%) ticked sensitization and mobilization of members of the public towards UBE programmes as the ways Universal Basic Education Commission enhanced primary education in the Federal Capital Territory, 63 (16%) and 84 (22%) strongly disagree and disagree with the assertion, while 11 respondents (3%) could not ascertained the variable.

117 respondents (30%) and 108 (28%) strongly agree and agree that provision of equal opportunities among children of school going age are the ways Universal Basic Education Commission enhanced primary education in the Federal Capital Territory, 63 (16%) and 79 (20%) strongly disagree and disagreed with the position while 26 respondents representing (6%) were undecided. 99 (25%) and 102 (26%) strongly agree and agreed that training and retraining of teachers are the ways Universal Basic Education Commission enhanced primary education in the Federal Capital Territory, 82 (21%) and 92 (24%) strongly disagree and disagree respectively, while 14 respondents (4%) were undecided. During the interview section, participants evaluated the impact of dropouts on their respective schools. Respondent 5 stated that the UBE had no impact in his school. In his own words, he stated “As earlier mentioned, for private schools, dropouts don’t exist.” Respondent 11 stated that as there was no implementation in her school, there was no impact as well. Respondent 7 gave further explanations to why there was no impact: Although we don’t acknowledge dropouts in private schools, generally the UBE has not really reduced dropouts. Dropouts was not only basically a function of finance (and by finance I mean provision of structures where schools could be accessed on a free platform), but was also supposed to address the ability to tap into the children’s aptitude or talent. It was observed under former reforms that children might not be able to cope with senior secondary education. This was supposed to be done through an upgraded curriculum structure which was supposed to be applied in all schools. This was not implemented in my school. We currently are still using the old curriculum.



According to Mufiahu&Hazri (2015), the purpose of UBE is to make educations accessible and available for free for the benefit of every Nigerian child; while the objective of the programme is to attain objective thinking, relevant judgment, improved communication skills, increasing productivity within the family and society, and understanding the role of the individual in relation to the pursuit of national progress and development.

The implementation of the UBE focused on enhancing capacity through provision of textbooks for students, erection of school buildings and training of teachers. Books were provided to further aid the learning process of students although the books sent to the school did not meet the need of the school and also did not go round. Buildings were erected to cater for the increased number of students expected with the program implementation and teachers were retrained to enhance effective knowledge delivery (Respondent 10 – November, 2023).

Respondent 12 exposed that despite the implementation of the UBE, our school still lacks qualified teachers, if the appropriate teaching aids are not available in the school or if the library is not well equipped (as is the case here), it will affect the school system to handle reduced dropouts, because all these above are the instruments which UBE is going to use to facilitate learning in the schools, thereby reducing the incidence of dropouts in the society. The UBE did very little to improve these schools capacity to deal with dropouts. There was also no form of monitoring or supervision from the external UBEC body all this while - whether it be physical, infrastructural, visits, curriculum and teaching methods supervision etc. with all these, lacking, whatever numerical gains are observed based on the tuition free access would be eroded in no time (November, 2023).

However, Okoroma (2017) noticed with displeasure the inconsistencies between educational policies and implementation efforts in Nigeria and worried that policy somersaults in education have impeded educational development in Nigeria and consequently hampered the nation's growth.



Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in line with the research questions that guided the study. Specifically, the findings of the study are hereby discussed in the light of the two propositions postulated for the study.

- i. Proposition One, which states that one of the mandates of Universal Basic Education Commission Policy is to improve quality of education in primary and junior secondary school, was upheld. The study finds that the main goal of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme is to make basic education, which is composed of nine years of schooling at different levels, accessible and available for free for the benefit of every Nigerian child. This finding aligns with the position of Bello, Othman & Shariffuddin (2017) that Universal education is an ambitious educational programmes aimed at eradicating ignorance and illiteracy as well as promoting and sustaining national consciousness and sustainability.
- ii. Proposition Two states that the Universal Basic Education Commission has not enhanced the quality of primary education in the Federal Capital Territory. This proposition was also confirmed by the study. Undesirably, the findings of this present study also showed that most vital education facilities and support resources such as toilets, cupboards, health materials e.g first aid box, water containers, recreational materials eg. swings and facilities for storing are grossly inadequate in FCT UBE schools. Other resources that were found to be inadequate are library facilities and textbooks. This finding re-affirms the composite positions of Offor (2012) that most facilities were unavailable and available ones were inadequate in a study aimed at



ascertaining the availability and adequacy of educational facilities which are needed in schools to cope with the new enrolment.

Conclusion

The Universal Basic Education programme is an expression of the strong desire of government to reinforce participatory democracy by raising the level of awareness and general education of the entire citizenry. UBE principally centered on the realization of access to qualitative basic and compulsory education as a foundation stone for the sustainable socio-economic development of the country and the continent at large. Yet, access to basic education for Nigerian children of school age is still a problem. Consequently, the implication of the declining quality of education at all levels has far reached impact on a nation's moral, civic, cultural, and economic sustainability. The importance of primary education can therefore be seen in the sense that all beneficiaries of the other levels of education by necessity have to pass through this level.

From the forgoing, it can be seen that the drop-out rate depicts the level of access to education by the Nigerian children, which by implication betrays the universal policy of education in Nigeria. Many reasons have been put up for inadequate access to education, which among others includes cost of schooling (cost of books, equipment, and uniform, tuition, and examination fees), illness, poverty, and economic benefits of education. This therefore explains why in general terms, anytime tuition and all other fees are abolished; there is increase in enrolment rate in schools. The basic conclusion therefore is that the policy programme of the UBE in the FCT was not well designed and the administrative capability of the implementing agency to deliver was suspect.

The UBE programme is without doubt an educational initiative in Nigeria, aimed at providing equal educational opportunities for all. For the success of the scheme, necessary legal backing has been provided which forms the bedrock for the implementation of the policy. Therefore, the achievement of the mandates of the UBE programme will be dependent on effective management and adequate funding as well as maintaining a consistent-policy by government. Equally, parents, teachers, pupils and other stakeholders should collaborate in ensuring that the objectives of the UBE scheme are achieved, after all, "education for all is the responsibility of all".



Recommendations

- i. The government through the Universal Basic Education Commission should intensify effort in the area of establishment for an effective institutional framework for monitoring learning and teaching. This will drastically curtail the incidences of child-hawking during schools hours and high drop-out rate in primary education. By so doing, the mandates of the UBE would be achieved and sustained.
- ii. Educational Planners should be provided with necessary equipment tools and materials that are essential for effective operation. For instance, computers and other gadgets should be provided in the various schools. Training and retraining programs should be constantly organized for educational planning in ministry and agencies of government in Abuja.

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