

## Prospects and Challenges of the UBE Administration in Rivers State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Due to the failure of several Education systems in Nigeria over the years since independence, the Universal Basic Education was established in response to the Millennium Development Goals. Education can be described as the process through which children, or even adults are helped to cultivate and grow their abilities, attitudes, values and other forms of behavioural attributes that represent positive value in changing the individual to contribute to the well-being of the individual and the society. Basic education is defined as the foundational educational level given to children of 0-15 years. This may also by implication be seen and perceived as the most fundamental base-line education on which all other educational advancement depend. Basic education in this context is the foundation on which all the entire educational building that anyone can ever have depends.

**Keywords:** Education, Implementation, Programme, UBE.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is seen as the key to success; hence it is given huge attention by the society, politicians and other stakeholders to promote societal norms, national philosophy, and vision. It can be described as the holistic process that characterize human learning, through which knowledge is imparted from one generation to another, faculties trained and skills developed.

Secondary schools not only occupy a strategic place in the educational system in Nigeria, it is also the link between the primary and the higher levels of education such as Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Universities. Education is segregated into different levels ranging from primary to secondary and tertiary education. All the levels are vital to human learning and academic prowess but very significant is the impact of secondary school education as it serves as the link between primary and tertiary education. Asikhai (2010) opined that education at secondary school level is supposed to be the bedrock and the foundation towards higher knowledge in tertiary institutions. It is an investment as well as an instrument that can be used to achieve a more rapid economic, social, political, technological, scientific and cultural development in a country. It is rather unfortunate that the secondary schools today are not measuring up to the standards expected of them.

Ogbonnanya (2010) views educational policy as the specific goals arrived at that must be pursued through educational policies. It can refer to a proposal, an on-going programme, or the goals of a programme, or major decisions. Educational policy concerns the formulation of a decision, its implementation and evaluation. Policies are written or unwritten statements that guide present and future thinking, initiatives, actions and decisions of managers. They are written when there are documents somewhere for reference purposes and are unwritten when they are made in form of

pronouncements i.e. policy statements by people in power or position of authority. Policies are guides that usually provide the latitude of operations of managers. It makes managers understand the extent to which they can go in the process of decision making (Noun, 2011).

Basic education according to Amadioha (2016) is defined as the foundational educational level. This may also by implication be seen and perceived as the most fundamental education that is given to people. For Nwana (2002) basic education is seen as the base-line education on which all other educational advancement depend. The basic education in this context is like the foundation of a building on which all other loads for the building come. This same foundational education from inference determines the stability of the entire educational building that anyone can ever have. Therefore, basic education is to a large extent what determines the success or failure of all other stages of education that may come on it. Hence, it becomes imperative to make this educational level functional to produce results worthy of the effort inputted by the implementers in Nigeria. Basic education in Nigeria has its roots in the original educational system put together for Nigeria by the British starting from when Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman and Mr. and Mrs. Degraft of the Wesleyan Methodist Church arrived in Nigeria precisely in Badagry and established a school, particularly a private home school (Amadioha, 2018). This basic educational process has spanned from 1842 to this present day such that it has graduated from the (3Rs), Reading, Writing and Arithmetic to the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme that was on the front burner as at the time between 1955 for the Western region of Nigeria under the leadership of Pa Obafemi Awolowo, 1957 for the Eastern region under the leadership of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe to the general UPE that resurfaced in 1976 under the leadership of General Olusegun Obasanjo and then to the present day UBE (Universal Basic Education), (Amadioha, 2016; Jeremiah & Alamina, 2017).

Nigerian government has made attempts towards revitalizing the nation's educational system, following the attainment of political independence in 1960. A remarkable attempt in this regard was the National Curriculum Conference which was attended by a cross-section of eminent Nigerians in 1969. The conference witnessed expressions of general dissatisfaction of participants with the then existing system of education. It was criticized as being too theoretical and irrelevant to Nigeria's national and local peculiarities. A seminar of experts followed in 1973 where it was agreed upon that an independent and sovereign Nigeria needed a policy to guide its educational system. The outcome of the 1973 seminar was a draft document which eventually became Nigeria's National Policy on Education, 1977 (revised, 1981, 1998, 2004 and 2013). Ojo (2006:102) observed that there had been various attempts at universalizing education in various parts of the country even before the Federal Government's Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1976. Such attempts according to Ojo included the defunct Western region's free primary education of 1955, and the defunct Eastern region's free primary education of 1957. Moreover, the Unity Party of Nigeria's (UPN) free education at all levels of 1979 was a regional education policy aimed at giving adequate attention to the education of the people within the UPN controlled states of Nigeria (Ojo, 2006:103).

There had been various attempts at universalizing education in various parts of the country even before the Federal Government's Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1976. Such attempts the defunct Western region's free primary education of 1955, and the defunct Eastern region's free primary education of 1957. Moreover, the Unity Party of Nigeria's (UPN) free education at all levels of 1979 was a regional education policy aimed at giving adequate attention to the education of the people within the UPN controlled states of Nigeria, the 6-3-3-4 system of Education and lastly the Universal Basic Education. The Concept of Basic Education in Nigeria was the desire of the nations of the world to reduce illiteracy, combat ignorance and encourage access to education even to the grassroots necessitated Education for All (EFA) as stated above in the Jomtien Declaration which was a treaty launched and signed in Jomtien Thailand in March 1990.

## **Mission of the UBE**

The Universal Basic Education's mission is to serve as a prime energizer of national movement for actualization of the nation's UBE's vision, working in concert with all stakeholders. This will mobilize the nation's creative energies to ensure that Education for all becomes the responsibilities of all (UBEC 2004 Annual Report). The Universal Basic Education Commission in its annual report in 2004 listed the objectives of the Universal Basic Education to include:

- i. Ensuring unfettered access to 9 years of formal basic education
- ii. the 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, through improved relevance, quality and efficiency and ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills.
- iii. Inculcation of the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

## **Characteristics of the New Universal Basic Education**

The UBE programme features according to Fowowe, Akinkuotu & Shittu (2009) are:

1. Free and formal basic education.
2. Compulsory, smooth 9 years of primary and junior secondary education.
3. Emphasizes curriculum diversification and relevance.
4. Core basic subjects like English Studies, Mathematics, Cultural & Creative Arts, Physical and Health Education, Language (Hausa, Igbo & Yoruba) Religious Studies & Info Tech./Computer Studies.
5. Optional Subjects like Arabic, Agricultural Science and Home Economics.
6. Introduction of French from basic 4 as a core subject.
7. Merger of Basic science and Basic technology.
8. Inclusion of Business Studies from JSS 1.
9. Separation of Basic Science & Basic Technology from JSS 1.
10. Introduction of contemporary issues from National Economic empowerment.
11. Peace Studies & entrepreneurial skills contents.
12. Education of special needs children etc

## **The Prospects of UBE in Nigeria**

### **1. MDGs Achievement**

The millennium development goals are goals which every developing countries should strive to achieve as it brings about a more fulfilled and prosperous nation. The main objective of MDGs is to eradicate poverty and hunger which is the bane of many developing nations especially Nigeria. Universal basic education helps to ensure that the MDGs are attained by giving the educational foundation to which solutions to overcome social, political and economic problems are analyzed in an environment of learning and its recipients puts to good use the knowledge acquired to ensure a more productive nation. When individuals are empowered poverty gives way to a more comfortable life.

### **2. Reduction in Child labour**

Universal basic education helps to reduce child labour in the sense that it provides free and compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. When children are in school, the need for the unnecessary exploitation of a child would not arise as the child's educational right is effectively exercised.

Child labour as it is a menace in most developing countries as been brought under control as the universal basic education as seen to the fact that children who are to be in school are in school because it is compulsory and free.

### **3. Reduction of Gender Inequality**

Universal basic education has helped to reduce the issue of gender inequality towards educational attainment by giving opportunities to a female child to have that basic education that would help her contribute her quota to the country's development.

The female child can hold any position in the society be it politically or otherwise due to the universal basic education which has helped to produce more educated women.

### **4. Employment Opportunities**

The universal basic education has helped to provide jobs as schools are in need of teachers to teach in the primary and secondary schools and this help to reduce the unemployment rate and also contribute to economic development of the nation.

### **5. Reduction of Poverty**

Universal basic education reduces the rate of poverty by producing competent and creative individuals who engage in one form of job or the other to improve their standard of living.

By being resourceful entrepreneurs they create jobs that improve the economic development of the nation and also the rate of crime due to lack of employment would be reduced as more individuals would be engaged in something productive which the Universal basic education makes sure of.

### **6. Crime Reduction**

Universal basic education helps in the reduction of crime as it inculcates in individuals the moral values, beliefs, attitudes and principles that would help the individual become resourceful to himself and the society. An educated individual would find more ways to be engaged in something productive and not engage in crime.

### **7. Help to Parents**

The universal basic education has helped parents reduce the financial burden as basic education is basically free and as such their wards can receive a sound and quality education.

### **8. Better Healthcare**

Universal basic education helps the child by providing food to them at no cost and a well fed child runs no risk of falling ill and the universal basic education initiative has helped to see that the child feeding and health is properly taken care of.

### **9. Motivation for Students**

Universal basic education has made learning fun, interesting and free and with its other benefits of free feeding and health care which makes it attractive for children to want to attend school and not been seen roaming the streets thereby reducing the rate of school dropout in the society.

### **10. Political Development of Society**

Basic education makes all aware about rights and duties of all, which are their responsibilities and duties so that they can develop their civic sense. Through different lesson of political leaders and stories of education leaders they develop ideal leadership quality so that in the future citizens can lead the state as a society. All these begin by their being given opportunities to serve as class monitor

or class captain as they are called and at other times during group learning opportunities are given for the selection of group leaders. These and more help these young people develop their innate potentials for leadership.

### **11. Economic Development of Society**

Basic education develops skills in an individual and makes him a productive citizen. Through basic education everyone learns how to earn money using handcrafts and as per the qualification, he gets a job or labour and on the whole with the help of more education more or less everyone gets professional work and earns money so due to increasing literacy per capita income will increase. Because of education people migrate to parts of a country or to other countries and their earning helps to develop the society in a larger sense. Thus, even basic education affects the economic development of society as it ought to.

### **12. Social Control**

Basic education makes all aware about customs and duties, the same way as it makes all aware about the rules and regulations as we find the rules in Nigerian constitution. People know how to preserve their lives via basic education. It make us also familiar with crimes. Thus, basic education provides a guideline and it controls all society on how each person conducts his/her daily life.

### **Challenges of UBE**

In spite of the laudable attempts made by Nigerian government to enable citizens acquire basic education, the problems of access, equity, quality, disparity, gender biases, inadequate facilities, insufficient funds and so forth confronted the education. However the Federal government felt that the free education should even be extended to the end of Junior Secondary Schooling (that is, it should not end at the end of primary school). This is because of the aforementioned advantages of mass enlightenment, and greater socio-economic and political abilities that the beneficiaries would be able to have. Moreover, the beneficiaries would have more knowledge and skills for personal development and societal development.

This UBE education process was reinforced with the call for Education for all which began in 1988 after a world assessment result for primary education across the world showed that countries of the world were lacking behind in giving their people basic education needed for survival and life sustenance, therefore, the declaration of Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien Thailand, a Declaration and Framework for Action on Education for All in 1990. The above was consented to by Nigeria as one of the nations that was interested in giving her citizens education but from then on, the best of it has not be obtained because of some issues, challenges and trends in the polity, economy and the overall leadership of the Nigerian nation.

**Lack of Proper Monitoring and Supervision:** Lack of proper monitoring and supervision of the (UBE) programme has been identified as one of the problems of the UBE programme. According to the National Policy on Education (2009) government shall establish efficient inspectorate services at federal, state and local government levels for monitoring and maintaining set standards at all levels of education below the tertiary level. Federal, state ministries and local government education authorities in collaboration will carry out inspectorate supervision and inspection of all the educational institution under their jurisdiction.

### **Shortage of funds**

From the Table 1, it is evident that the Federal Government has not spent up to 15% of its total budget on education in the last 10 years of uninterrupted democracy. The highest allocation so

far was in 2008, when it allocated 13%. This pattern of allocation, as mentioned above, which is below the UNESCO' s threshold that is 26% of the total budget, is certainly affecting the implementation of government policy on education and in particular the Universal Basic Education since its inception. This position has been well captured by Dike (2001). Igbuzor (2006), observed that the government is in the habit of allocating less money to the education sector and consequently, limits the successful implementation of the programme. .

**Table 1 Federal government allocation to education sector (1999-2009) Years**

	<b>Allocation (billion)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1999	23.047	11.20
2000	44.225	8.30
2001	39.885	7.00
2002	100.200	5.09
2003	64.760	11.83
2004	72.220	7.80
2005	92.590	8.30
2006	166.600	8.70
2007	137.480	6.07
2008	210.000	13.00
2009	183.360	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.13 trillion</b>	

Olanrewaju and Folorunso (2009)

### **Corruption**

It is also, instructive to note that the phenomenon of corruption is of great concern to the success of the UBE in Nigeria.

### **Implementation**

Implementation is another problem of the UBE programme. Even where, the allocated fund is not enough, the little that is made available is usually embezzled by corrupt Nigerian officials working in SUBEB offices across the country. Another major challenge to successful implementation of the UBE Scheme is lack of proper planning on the part of the government (UNESCO/Nigeria, 2000). One of the factors responsible for the improper planning is faulty census exercises. Almost, all the census exercises carried out so far in Nigeria, either before independence or after, have been marred with massive irregularities (Oni, 2008). The national population census exercise has always raised political hysteria leading to hyper inflation of census figures, which makes it impossible to know the exact figures for school age population. What this means is that the national population census that is supposed to provide reliable data for planning and implementation has always been politicized with its attendant wrong figures (Dare *et al.*, 2008). The consequence of the foregoing is that just like the present census figures, the previous census data were also full of imperfection and lapses that they could not be of good use in planning. This shortcoming is particularly visible in 2006 census, when the enumerators were reported to be found filling and thumb printing the forms themselves, when they realized that they might not be able to cover their areas before the end of the exercise (The Nigerian Tribune, 2006). The resultant unreliable statistics has led to poor projections. Since, the available data do not allow for proper projections, there is no way that the facilities on ground will be adequate for the number of children in school. This poor projection is a factor that has affected the universality of primary education in Nigeria. This problem has been reflected in the

provision of structures such as classrooms, laboratories and even quality teachers since 1976, when UPE Scheme was introduced (Oni, 2008) and indeed the situation is the same with the present UBE Scheme.

This inadequacy in terms of population data has also affected the provision of instructional materials such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, audio-visual materials, etc. which in themselves constitute another major challenge to successful implementation of the UBE programme. Many of the schools do not have these materials and where available, they are in adequate and outdated (UNESCO/Nigeria, 2000; Oni, 2008; Dare *et al.*, 2008).

Another failure of the UBE Scheme is the drop-out rate in primary schools considering the aims and objectives of the scheme, which is education for all school age children. The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted in 2003 revealed that only 60.1 % of all the children of primary school age were attending primary school at the time of the Survey. In particular, boys had a higher Net Attendance Rate (NAR) of 63% as against that of the female, which was 56%. Similar discrepancy is also, noticeable in the children's attendance rate in school of the urban areas and the rural areas. In the urban areas, the NAR was 69.5% while, in the rural areas, it was 55.0%. In order to show the drop-out rate, it was revealed by Ogunjimi *et al.* (2009) that out of the 42.1 million children below 14 years of age, only 25.8 million representing 61.2% of the total population was in school. At the secondary school level, only 30% of the population that should be in school is in school in Nigeria. Primary school net enrolment/attendance between 2000 and 2008 was 63%. The drop-out rate for the girl-child is 44%, while that of the boys in secondary school is 39.3% (Olanrewaju and Folorunso, 2009).

The dropout rate depicts the level of access to education by the Nigerian children, which by implication betrays the universalisation of education in Nigeria. Many reasons have been adduced for inadequate access to education, which includes costs of schooling (cost of books, equipment, uniform, and tuition and examination fees), illness, poverty and economic benefits of education. This then explains why in general terms, any time tuition and all other fees are abolished; there is increase in enrolment in schools. This is not peculiar to Nigeria as Igbuzor (2006) observed that enrolment rate fell by 5% in Malawi, 2 years after fees were introduced into the school system in 1980. Similarly, in Tanzania, enrolment surged by as much as 1.5 million children when fees were abolished in primary schools in January 2002.

One other reason that could be the cause of drop out is that many children do not start education i.e., schooling at the right age of 6 years. For instance, only 36.6% of all the 6-years old were attending primary schools at the time of the Demography and Health Survey in 2003. The implication of this is that the remaining 63.4% is outside of the school system. At 15 years, which is the official graduation age from secondary school, 10.8% of all children were still in primary school. It was also, found that 8% of the population was still in secondary school

Since, the UBE Scheme is expected to solve the problem of drop-outs in the system, it is unfortunate that the Scheme is yet to achieve this objective. This scenario has been well captured by Obasola (2008) when she observed that:

Nine years after the Universal Basic Education was first introduced and 4 years after it was signed into law, children of school age still roam the streets, hawking one type of goods or the other. . . from Kano to Ibadan and Lagos to Enugu, children are still seen at motor parks, along the expressways, especially where there is traffic snarl, hawking goods and dashing in between cars, trying to make as much profit as possible

This situation as described above poses a serious challenge to successful implementation of Universal Basic Education programme. That is, even when adequate fund is made available to fund needed infrastructure and to purchase the

necessary instructional materials and to train quality teachers for the scheme, the problem of getting the children to teach would continue to be in Nigeria due to the attitude of some Nigerian parents who would normally subject their children or wards to child labour.

### **Lack of Adequate Physical Facilities and Instructional Materials**

In addition, many primary and junior secondary schools across the country lack adequate physical facilities and instructional materials which are considered essential tools in the teaching and learning process. Infrastructures in public schools around the country remain in shambles. An investigation conducted by Ikoya & Onoyase (2008) revealed that inadequate infrastructure in schools is impeding effective UBE implementation. School infrastructure and maintenance Review carried out in 2009 by the Education Sector Support programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) showed that the condition of the Basic Education Infrastructure Stock in the country is still very poor. According to this review, the condition of the school infrastructure in the 3 states (Kano, Jigawa and Kaduna) visited is very poor and the impression gained is that across board approximately 75% of the infrastructure is in very poor condition (ESSPIN, 2009). In the UBE guidelines, every primary or junior secondary school in Nigeria is expected to have one general science laboratory, one ventilated improved toilet for a maximum of 4 pupils or students per toilet, and, one teacher to handle only 40 pupils or students in a class (Nigeria, 2000). So far, according to Steve. A. Okecha, these criteria have not been met due to scarcity of funds. In some primary schools, the pupils that constitute a class sit on the bare floor in a classroom with no single chair or table (Okecha, 2008). It is not rare to see pupils or students sitting under trees in school premises to receive instructions from teachers because of shortage of classrooms. A study on existing national situation in the primary education sector revealed that, 12% pupils sit on the floor, 38% of classrooms have no ceilings, 87% of classrooms are overcrowded, while 77% of pupils lack text books (Adepoju and Fabiyi, 2009). Another study (Omokhodion, 2008) has indicated that shortage of equipment, infrastructure, textbooks and instructional materials are undermining the successful implementation of the UBE programme. Without the provision of adequate textbooks and instructional materials, it will be difficult to implement the school curriculum. Another major resource constraint pertains to inadequate funding. Though the federal government takes the lead in setting policy and financing basic education through transfers to states, financial responsibility for basic education is split largely between the states and local governments. Local Governments, for instance, are charged with paying the salaries and allowances of primary school teachers. Despite the shared responsibility for UBE financing by the three tiers of government, funding has remained an issue

Because corruption is of serious concern in the Nigerian society, the issues of proper utilization of funds and accountability are critical. It is obvious that not all funds allocated for the UBE programme are used for the intended purposes due to high level of corruption in key implementing agencies and wasteful spending. Dayo Olagunju, the Executive Secretary of the National Commission of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education asked a salient question as to “whether the over N90 billion we have invested in the UBE from 2004 to date (2008) is commensurate with what we have “(The Nation Thursday, October 16, 2008). In other words, he was simply alluding to the fact that the country is not getting value for the money spent on UBE. Egonmwan (2002) rightly observed that when corruption penetrates the implementation process, policy / programme becomes mutated and desired goals may not be achieved

Another case in point is the lukewarm attitude of many state governments to the Federal Teachers Scheme (FTS) that is meant to assist them with needed manpower. The FTS was initiated by the federal government as a response to the increasing demand for teachers in public schools. Despite the importance of the FTS to quality UBE delivery, numerous teachers under the scheme

have suffered untold hardship in their states of deployment particularly with regard to accommodation which the states are to provide. To make matter worst, when the teachers finish their mandatory 2 years service, most states do not absorb them into their teaching service automatically as envisaged. Yet the federal government expects states to collaborate effectively and subsequently take complete ownership of the process of providing quality basic education to the populace. Thus communication gap, lack of proper Co-ordination and ineffective enforcement tend to undermine successful UBE implementation.

### **Strategies for Effective Implementation of the UBE Programme**

For a public policy or programme to solve the social problem for which purpose it was designed, successful implementation is imperative. The following strategies could be adopted to ensure the successful implementation of the UBE programme.

#### **Human Resources**

To overcome the problem of acute shortage of qualified and trained teachers to cope with expected increase in students' number, the following measures could be taken. (a) Training of teachers in the right quantity and quality. In this respect, efforts should be intensified with regard to the two-year intensive National Certificate of Education (NCE) and Federal Government Special Teacher Certificate programmes to ensure that all untrained teachers already in the service upgrade their qualification to at least the minimum required qualification of NCE. There should be annual improvement in the percentage of professionally qualified teachers until 100% is achieved. Emphasis should also be placed on the retaining and continuous professional development of teachers through capacity building programmes such as seminars and workshops in order to continuously update their professional knowledge and skills to ensure effective actualization of the UBE objectives.

### **CONCLUSION**

The paper discussed prospects and challenges of the UBE administration in Nigeria. It also looked at the mission of UBE. It further X-rayed the characteristics of UBE. Some of the challenges and prospects of UBE were discussed including shortage of funds, corruption, and implementation of policies. Some suggestions were made including provision of infrastructure, quality control through effective monitoring of the programme as well as public enlightenment and social mobilization and implementation of the UBE.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

To mitigate the problem of lack of qualified teachers especially in rural schools, the multi-grade teaching concept should be embraced. The concept of multi-grade teaching refers to a situation where pupils of different ages, grades and abilities are taught in the same classroom simultaneously (Gabriel, 2008). This teaching approach will be particularly relevant amongst nomadic pastoralists, migrant fisher folks and farmer as these groups already suffer existing inequalities in education access. (b) Besides the teaching staff, the capacity of all personnel of UBE implementing agencies such as LGEAs; and even members of School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) need to be improved. As such, they should also benefit from training and capacity building.

- (a) In order to access the UBE intervention fund made available yearly, states should endeavour to promptly fulfill their counterpart obligations. States indicted over failure to forward their counterpart funds should be severely sanctioned to act as deterrent to other states.
- (b) International development partners (such as the World Bank, UNESCO, USAID and

UNICEF), non-governmental organizations and communities should do more to complement the efforts of the various tiers of government by not only meeting their financial commitments but also increasing their financial assistance for the development of basic education in the country.

- (c) To ensure that the society gets value for money being invested in basic education emphasis should be on concrete results and built in expenditure tracking. Strict adherence to due process, procurement procedures as well as the provisions of the Fiscal Responsibility Act (2007) will help bring about transparent and accountable financial management thereby checking corruption and improper diversion of UBE funds. The Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) was signed into law in 2007 to redirect government at all levels to imbibe a fiscal behaviour that will lead to increase transparency and accountability as well as provide prudence and sound financial management in the system. In addition, anti-corruption agencies such as the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) should monitor closely the disbursement and utilization of UBE funds at all levels of governance.

### **Infrastructure**

To enhance the learning environment, massive investment in school infrastructure improvements is needed. Every primary and junior secondary school should be provided adequate infrastructure and other physical facilities like classrooms, laboratories, libraries, computer centre, potable water, electricity, toilets and furniture. To further cope with the problem of infrastructural inadequacies it is recommended that schools should run two shifts morning (7.30am – 12.30pm) and afternoon (1pm – 6pm) sessions to enable the available infrastructure and facilities to be used by different groups of pupils / students and their teachers. Moreover, adequate instructional materials should be provided in public schools.

### **Quality Assurance**

Quality control through effective monitoring and proper evaluation should be conducted on a regular basis at the various stages of the UBE programme. More attention should be paid to school inspection, monitoring and evaluation as a quality control strategy to check the quality of the delivery of the UBE programme. Thorough and regular monitoring and supervision will reveal early whether programme targets are being met or not. Head teachers or principals who are the ones on the ground in schools should also be ready to effectively supervise their teaching staff to ensure quality delivery of the UBE curriculum.

### **Social Mobilization and Enforcement**

There is need to ensure sustained community participation and ownership of basic education. As such, public enlightenment and social mobilization should be a continuous process in UBE implementation so as to engender full participation by all sections of the Nigerian society particularly at the community level. Coupled with this, appropriate legal sanctions as prescribed by the UBE Act (2004) should be enforced on parents / guardians who refuse to send their children / wards to school. But the application of sanctions can only be realistic if the UBE is indeed free. For instance, hidden costs should be eliminated by providing uniforms, books and other learning materials to the pupils or students free of charge. To increase the level of awareness of the populace, it is also suggested that the UBE Act should be translated into the three major Nigerian languages – Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. To further promote universality and equity in access to education, more special schools should be established to cater for the physically challenged and children with special needs.

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