



ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS AND SYSTEMIC REFORM OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

There is strong evidence that administrative effectiveness could act as a springboard for success of education system. This paper examined the issues of administrative effectiveness and systematic reform of universal Basic Education as a panacea for national transformation and development. The paper further discussed the concept of teaching, administrative effectiveness, UBE and its success, strategies for the provision of enabling environment for UBE specific objectives of UBE. Hence, necessary recommendations were made.

Keyword: Administrative effectiveness, systemic reform and national transformation.

Introduction

The universal basic Education (UBE) scheme, aims at providing free and compulsory education for Nigerians at the primary school up to the junior secondary level. The introduction of the UBE scheme is a fulfillment of the long plea by several great educationalist and progressive Nigerians over the long neglected obligation of the government towards the citizens.

Although the UBE scheme can be rightly described as a “late comer” to Nigerian Education system, the idea is not completely new to Nigerians. The origin of this idea can be traced to 1955 and credited to the late Obafemi Awolowu’s Action Group Government in the then western Region of Nigeria. The introduction of the universal free education that time was seen as a revolution in Nigeria education system. The

national council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNNC) Government also tried to implement the idea of universal free primary education in eastern Nigeria in 1957 but fail owing to lack of adequate preparations and logistics. It is only Northern Nigeria that did not attempt to introduce the programme before they exist of the colonialist in Nigeria but did not fail to give thought to it (Njama Abang 2005), he add that much welcomed introduction of universal basic education (UBE)) in Nigeria is to be rather late because many nations of the world have adopted the scheme over fifty years ago as a legal obligation. This assertion is trace, particularly when we realize the article 26 of the universal declaration of Human right (UDHR) which was adopted by the United Nation’s General Assembly in December, 1948 had since been ratified by Nigeria. The Article guarantees every citizen the right to education which

should be free at elementary and primary levels.

Education as a life – molding and national at transformation

Education aims at producing children who are honest, respectful, skilled, cooperative and obedient. Ajala and Popoola (2000) asserted that education is the process of bringing up children who have respectful, skilled, cooperative and obedient. Ajala and Popoola (2000) asserted that education is the process of bringing up children who have respect for our ancestors, the elders and adhere strictly to the societal norms to succeed in carrying out. This sacred dual function of life-moulding and nation building, teaching should be used. A professional teacher or an educator cannot however afford to make any serious mistake as it is often said that “the medical doctor buries his mistakes, the engineer dies with his own mistake, but the society suffers from the mistakes of an educator” (Brophy and Everton, 2006).

The concept of teaching

Teaching is an art as well as a science. Clark in Ikediugwu (2013) defined teaching as the guidance of pupils through planned activities so that the pupils may acquire the richest learning possible from their experience. She also view teaching as the integration between a teacher and student under the teacher’s responsibility in order to bring about the expected change in the students behaviours.

Teaching according to Sarasin (1999) is an attempt to help people acquire some skills, attitude, knowledge, ideas of appreciation.

For Ikediugwu (2005) teaching is a process of imparting knowledge into someone and the knowledge being imparted must be felt by person. To me teaching is an act of slating knowledge into an individual which make him/her to be positive in mind, action behavior and general outlook and enable him contribution to his development and the society at large. Hence teaching is a noble profession. Webster (1999) view noble as:

- Exalted in character or quality
- Excellent in behavior
- Worthy
- Characterized by or indicative of true magnanimity
- Precious and pure,

Therefore, teaching cannot function without a teacher, the teacher.

The concept of teacher

The concept of a teacher is a relative term according to Nwanekezi and Ifionu (2010). This is because anybody that teaches generally is referred to as a teacher but ideally, a teacher is a trained person professionally who helps the learner to acquire necessary knowledge, skills and attitude through a variety of procedures. In accord to the above view Sheidu (2013) add that these activities are carried out by the teacher to mold the life and mind of the learner, assist them to develop ideas, gain and gather information, cultivate culturally acceptable habit with a view of producing well balanced personality that can fit in the society. Teachers are the most important

human species the skillfully develop, and nurture the potentials of production citizen for meaningful creation of wealth, pleasure and survival. Similarly Osakwe and Okoye (1998) and Oyekan (2000) defined the teacher as the manager of facilitator of teaching and learning process. They are the husband of any educational system.

To Webster (1999), a teacher as one who teachers, specifically one whose occupation is to teacher others. Usually the name “teacher” is used to refer to someone has undergone a formal teacher training programme. He/she has a specialized knowledge of certain discipline his teaching subject and knowledge of the acceptable ways of teaching that subject (Obi 2004).

Administrative effectiveness

For Universal Basic Education (UBE) to be effective, several issues is to be address to improve the system such as:

- Data collection and analysis
- Planning, monitoring, evaluation, training, retraining and motivation
- Infrastructural facilitates,
- Enriched curricula
- Textbooks and instructional materials
- Improved funding
- Management of the entire process

The government having gone this far has shown some sense of commitment to the programme. She begins by sense of commitment to the programme. She started

by implementing the first two stages of her proposal, that is the primary and the junior secondary school level, starting with primary one, increasing steadily (yearly), till it get the junior secondary school level.

UBE capacity building

It is quite easy for teachers to make themselves available to the trained and retrained during workshops for the purpose of implementing National policy on education. Unfortunately, one may observe that soon after training had been concluded, the knowledge, skills, techniques and methods acquire are abandoned. That is why Kida, a Zonal inspector of education in Biu LGA, reported that he had to go and some number of schools to assess contribution of DFID towards process of learning. (Julius, 2005). From the above report one can claim that he had been monitoring and supervising progress of learning, enrolment, retention and completion rate. These are very important indices to achievement/success. Fortunately, ministries of education all over the country recognize the role of supervision. So it would be a blessing to train new supervisors and retrain long standing ones on the role of modern supervision and monitoring. This would ensure full and continuous implementation of skills, methods, techniques and knowledge acquired by all categories of teachers. It is also very important that master trainers be trained to continue in the period of teachers in terms of core subjects’ contents, production and utilization of instructional resources, and techniques of less delivery. Reasons for this category of trainers could be traced to the fact that all teachers are not competent.

According to Nwosu in Agbo (2015) noted that capacity building is a process by which individuals, groups, institutions, organizations and society enhance their abilities to identify and meet developmental challenges in a sustainable manner. To me capacity building means the acquisition of functional knowledge, skills and competencies through relevant educational programmes to enable individual gain employment or be self-employed to face developmental challenges both at the community and national levels.

Strategies for system reform of UBE and its success

Universal Basic education intends to provide education for all and should be the concern of all. Educational programmes in Nigeria have always been implemented with immediate effect without recourse to proper planning and pilot testing (Ndem, 2005). The following should be considered for systemic reform for UBE success.

Provision of legal backing to UBE for adequate financing

The minister of education in one of the national dailies punch reported that the bill giving the legal backing to UBE has been sent to the national assembly and is being debated upon. This is about nine months after the launching and takes off of the programme. This implies that the UBE was launch and it took off without a legal backing. The implication of this is uncertainly is the funding of the programme particularly in this era of democracy. UBE by all ramifications is cost intensive and should be speedily provide with a legal back through an enabling decree to enhance its

proper funding, mostly at the early stage. A programme that is well started, is half way completed.

Recruitment of trained teachers

Most trained teachers are left unemployed for a very long time. They linger in the labour market until they get aspirated into other venture like? By the time the employer of teachers advertise for recruitment of teachers only few would be left in the labour market for employment.

- Improved condition of the teaching profession:

Much has been said over the years about the condition of service without the back up of political sincerity and will to practice what had been said so far. If the present government is sincere with its intention to revamp the education industry through the UBE, the following condition of service should be provided for teachers as right and not a mere privilege provision of an enhanced salary scale for teachers. Teachers in the universities enjoy university salary scale (USS), those in the college of education and polytechnics enjoy harmonized salary structure tagged (HATISS) as a means of boosting academic excellence. The gesture should continue down the ladder through the provision of special teachers' salary structure for primary and secondary school teachers.

- Regular payment of salaries and other fringe benefits to teachers
- Regular promotion of teachers. This is a development incentive that is

capable of enhancing professionalism

Institution of an enhanced welfare package for teachers

This includes:

- (1) Security benefits: This according Obot (1991) includes free medical service to teachers and members of their immediate family. Retirement benefit and pension.
- (2) Recreational benefits: This takes the form of annual leave allowances and housing, car, furniture loans etc.
- (3) Increase in the working years of trained teachers to 45 working years before retirement if the teacher is in health

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- Professional improvement of teacher

- The spring board for professionalism of teaching is teacher education. The quality of teacher training institution vis-à-vis the quality of trained teachers are strong and observable factors

- Strategies for the provision of enabling environment for UBE

The following profession has been so denigrated that made good teachers have left the profession. Efforts must be made by

government to reverse the trend where they fail in their task of developing the mental, moral and physical powers of the leaders of tomorrow, then the society is Doome (Anthony, 2005).

According to Adeyeye (2000), the standard of teaching in some of our schools is generally nothing to write/home about most teachers in Nigeria have very negative attitude towards teaching. The nation president of NUT, chief Ugwu write.

Let it be emphasized many of our teachers are not doing effective teaching. Whoever does not have job satisfaction in teaching should leave rather than leaving the students untaught. This resulting the examination malpractices. Many good teachers have left for this purpose.

Onwikol (1986) supported the view that good teaching is totally absent from the thinking of most teachers in Nigeria. Most teachers in Nigeria only expect teaching to give them no obligation wage, good self-image and good status but they see no obligation on their part toward teaching. Teaching as a profession should be given prestige in schools through provision of enabling environment that would create the aptitude for and the interest in teaching.

(a) Selection and training of teaching of teachers as a strategy

The selection and training of teachers must be revisited such that the best are selected and the best possible training giving to them. The best brains seek positions in cooperation. No person can teach what he or she does not known. No matter how laudable a programme may be or

the funding, it will fail if the personnel is untrained. Fafunwa in Anthony (2005) opined.

If the African teacher is to cope adequately with the monumental task that lies ahead of him, he has to be well trained for the job. He must be willing to share new information and skills with fellow teachers, seek more knowledge and willing to experiment and unafraid of failure. The new teacher envisioned must have flexibility built into his total profession and academic make up, and should be helped through regular in-service training to keep abreast of new techniques, skills and research in his field.

There is therefore, the need to give sound training of teachers at pre-service and in-service levels to handle the UBE programme. Adeyeye (2000) argues that it is not the amount that is spent on education that really matter, but what matters mostly is the approach. Those sent on course should be highly motivated to attract people to the UBE programme. If we must forge ahead as a nation, provision of enabling environment in our education system is necessary for training of UBE teachers.

b. Strategies of teacher remuneration

The salary of teacher must be such to attract best brain. It must be paid in time and when due. It must be such that teachers should be able to resist the temptation of participating in low cost activities in school. The executive secretary national commission for college of Education (NCCE) observed that nobody wants to go into teaching because of poor remuneration and declining status of the teachers in the society. Government should look into the issue of remuneration.

Teachers should be treated like other professionals. If the UBE programme would be success, there is no reason why the teacher service scale (TSS) should not be approved. In a large study concluded by Nwaokolo (1993) observed that the most single factor responsible for the status of teachers is finance.

c. Strategy of books, equipment and facilities provision

The scarcity and high cost of books are the direct causes of certain setback in our educational system. Teachers cannot teach well when they have no books to prepare their function. A well quipped function library would serve as enabling environment for UBE teachers to function effective for every educational institution, whether primary or post primary. According to Ekpiwre (2000), teacher in the country works under stress. He is not adequately supplied with necessary working materials such as instructional materials, laboratory, and well equipped library facilities. The conducive and enabling environment necessary for maximization of productivity does not just exist. Ekpiwre further state added that teachers should be motivated for productivity through the provision of adequate qualitative and up-to-date instructional material, as well as with functional library and laboratory facilities. Ojerinde in Maduabum (2000), maintained that the school should possess standard classroom, laboratories, workshops and needed equipment which in turn would serve as a good training ground, in term of disciplined environment. The teacher's need should be well catered for. If not, he loses touch with the material he is teaching

because he lack training facilities and he is relegated to the background in the planning of the curriculum. In fact, the teacher's working environment needs a total overhaul if UBE programme would succeed. Onuechere (1996)) stated that UBE programme should avoid ECOWAS classroom labouring a minimum of 150 pupils instead of the normal capacity of between 40-45, not a single desk or chair in any of the classroom for the pupils. In most cases all the pupils sat on the bare floor wrote on their laps, in the classroom that had no ceiling. The above conditions does not give room for proper/effective teaching and learning environments needed for UBE teachers. There is need to provide classroom, eliminate over-crowding classes provide environment conducive for learning, provide laboratories; blackboards and even toilet facilities.

d. Strategy for effective sanctions

There is need to give more teeth to sanctions to effectively deter would be parents that would fail to comply with the guidelines of the UBE programme. According to Obanya (2000)) UBE programme is universal, free and compulsory, pointing out that opportunities would be provide for the basic education of every Nigeria child of school-going age, and that sanctions would be imposed on parents, persons, societies or institutions that prevent children, adolescents and youths from benefiting from UBE.

e. Specific objectives of UBE

Effective administration of universal education must always be in line with the

under-listed objectives for proper operations of the programme.

- Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness of education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- The provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age
- Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system through improvement relevance quality and efficiency.
- Countering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numerical manipulative, communication and civic values needed for laying solicit foundation for lifelong learning.

Effective teaching in the schools, for UBE to succeed, the government must sum up the politicalwill to do the following provision of proper pre-service training for teacher. The UBE programme needs to be provided with good teachers of sound academic records. Good candidates should be selected for teacher education programme. The criteria for admission of candidates into the teaching profession should be equally high as those of law and medicine etc. this is because it

take a very good teacher to train students who can enroll into law, medicine and other sciences (Ndem, 2005).

2. Provision of in-service and on-the job training through

(a) Regular and mandatory participation in conferences, workshops and seminars.

(b) provision of relevant professional reading materials such as journals, textbooks and magazines, bulletins and newspapers, etc to help change and improve on the teacher skills, update knowledge and change attitude (Achunine, 1997).

(C) promotion of teachers in secondary and primary schools to grade level 12 and above should be dependent on academic excellence through publication as it done in the tertiary institutions. More so, the Bachelors degree should be made the minimum qualification for registration as a teacher.

(d) Update of infrastructure facilities in schools.

The universal basic education, which is free and compulsory, is going to witness an increase in the number of pupils in school. This should be matched with the provision of more school buildings, libraries, laboratories and seats to create a conducive learning environment.

- Provision and utilization of instructional materials

To further stimulate and promote teaching and learning activities in the UBE, the government should muster enough political will to provide instructional materials such as teaching aids and text

book to enhance learning activities. At the initial stage of the programme, one may witness large classes, which will require the teacher to use instructional aid to facilitate teaching.

Record keeping and utilization of available data

For meaningful academic and educational advancement to be recorded there must be proper record keeping. This will help in decision making, budgeting and financing of the UBE programme.

Public enlightenment community mobilization:

This will ensure that the entire community is involved in the implementation of the programme, it will help reduce the poor attitude people usually hold about government programmes.

Planning, monitoring and evaluation of the programme:

No doubt the UBE is not undergoing and plot testing, the saving grace may as well be the UPE experience. Be this as it may, the programme should be regularly monitored and evaluated. This will help modify the knotty areas of its guidelines for the operation as the programme progresses. Regular appraisal should be carried out between the manager of the programme and the teachers who implement the programme.

The UBE curriculum

The UBE curriculum should be reviewed with a view of enriching it content. We are in an era noted for meteoric raise in

acquisition of knowledge, hence the need for enrich and expand the curriculum of the programme.

Conclusion

Since universal basic education is the stepping stone to other level of education, it is believed to be an important agent of national transformation because of its foundation stage, strategies for systemic reform and provision for enabling environment for the success of UBE is necessary so as to achieve its aims, because the development of nation can only be measured by the level of education and type, also the quality of manpower it produces for the society. Therefore proper attention should be given to foundation education that is the universal basic Education in all angles of the programme.

Recommendation

Based on the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should allocate adequate funds to UBE programme
2. Qualified manpower should be recruited into the system for the success of the programme
3. Regular workshop, seminar, conference etc should be organized for the teacher to update their knowledge
4. Proper and good enabling environment should be provided for effective and smooth running/function of the UBE programme.

5. Sensitization workshop should be organized to educate the masses on the relevance of UBE programme.

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