

Strategies for Enhancing Community Participation for Effective Implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in Nigeria

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Abstract: The study ascertained the strategies for enhancing community participation for effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Ondo State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The research design adopted for the study was descriptive survey. The researchers made use of 20% of the target population, making up a sample size of 248 subjects. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that the level of community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo State is below expectation. Also, it was revealed that there are some factors militating against community participation in the UBE programme. The study further revealed that some strategies that could be adopted to enhance community participation for effective implementation of the UBE programme include: encouraging the operation of the school based management committee in the UBE schools organization of communities' sensitization workshops and seminars and involving community leaders in mobilizing other members of the community among others. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that government and the State Universal Education Board (SUBEB) should encourage the operation of the school based management committee in the schools and there should be organization of communities' sensitization workshops and seminars so as to create an enabling environment for community participation for the effective implementation of the UBE programme.

Key words: Universal basic education, community participation, strategy, School Based Management Committee (SBMCs), workshops, (SUBEB)

INTRODUCTION

The aims of making every Nigerian child have access to basic education without hindrance resulted into the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was launched on 30th September 1999 in Sokoto by the former president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. This was to overcome the poor state of the educational systems in Nigeria which were a fall-out of the crumbled free Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1955 in the Western

Region, the UPE of 1956 in the Eastern Region and the nationwide Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1976, respectively. It is in compliance with the declaration of the World Conference on Education For All (WCEFA) which was made in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and which clearly stated that every person-child or youth shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic needs (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Therefore, the aims of the universal basic education programme is to provide children with access to basic skills and learning needed for building solid foundation in the entire citizenry in the country.

Universal Basic Education (UBE) is an educational reform programme of the Nigerian government that provides free, compulsory and continuously 9 years education at two levels: 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education for all school-aged children, it also includes pre-primary and non-formal education programme, respectively (Anonymous, 2004). UBE, according to Obanya (2000) is the type of education in quality and contents that is given in the first level of education free for citizens of a country. Nwobi (2008) explained that as the UBE programme is intended to be universal, free and compulsory, it implies that appropriate type of opportunities will be provided for every Nigerian child of school age. Therefore, it is a fact that government intention towards the UBE is to make it available and attainable for all Nigerian populace of school age.

According to Anonymous (2004), the ultimate goal of the universal basic education programme is to eradicate illiteracy within the shortest possible time. Specifically, the objectives of the universal basic education programme include:

Developing in the entire citizenry strong consciousness for 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 drop-out from the formal school system, ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning (Anonymous, 2004).

According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (Anonymous, 1999) achieving these goals is the responsibility of all stakeholders in education which include, Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) of each state, the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA), members of the local communities and school administrators (head teachers) among others. This prompted Nigerian government to pass the UBE Act in the year 2004 to provide a legal backing which is referred to as implementation blue print. The blue print on the UBE implementation specifically recognizes the roles and responsibilities of the local communities as to:

Initiate and execute specific projects and activities within the framework of the scheme in their localities, provide logistic support and enabling environment for the execution of the scheme in their localities, provide relevant human and material resources for the successful implementation of the scheme, ensure safety and maintenance of scheme infrastructures and UBE implementation resources and materials in their localities, organize and ensure the support and effective participation of the entire community in the scheme (Anonymous, 2012)

The Nigerian government seems to strongly believe that the UBE programme is a veritable tool for laying a solid foundation for sustainable and equitable development. Consequently, the government is highly committed to the successful implementation of the UBE programme. Hence, several efforts have been made by the Federal government of Nigeria through the public enlightenment campaign, establishment of School Based Management Committee (SBMCs), social mobilization, supply of textbooks, data collection and analysis and curriculum enrichment among others, (Anonymous, 2004). In Ondo State, the government has shown serious commitment to the effective implementation of UBE programme. For example, the state government has organized several training and retraining programmes for school administrators (Head teachers) and teachers. Despite all efforts of the government towards the success of the UBE programme, research evidence still shows the inadequacy of educational facilities and teachers in schools across the country (Adeogun, 2001). Also, despite the fact that the policy document recognizes the roles of the local communities in achieving the programme objectives, it seems that all is not well with the programme. The reason being that, since, the introduction of the UBE programme more than a decade, there is still several problems bedeviling the programme. According to Adeyemi (2007) the problems include: inadequate funding, lack of adequate number of teachers (staff personnel) poor supervision and poor state of infrastructural facilities among others. Thus, it behoves a collaborative effort of all stakeholders in the education sector including community members if the desired effective implementation of the UBE programme is to be achieved (Asiyai, 2012). Therefore, there is need to explore certain strategies such as encouraging the operation of the School Based Management Committees (SBMC) and community advocacy for enhancing community participation for effective implementation of the UBE programme.

Statement of the problem: The effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme requires concerted efforts and commitment of the Government and stakeholders on one hand and participation of the host communities on the other hand in addressing various challenges encountered in the scheme. However, observations have shown that most community members do not show much concern for the programme as their participation seems very low compare to their roles in the UBE implementation blue print with regards to provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities and staff personnel. This low involvement of the host communities in the administration of the UBE programme seems to have continued to plague the state's education systems. It is on this basis, that the researchers deemed it necessary to ascertain the strategies for enhancing community participation for effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Ondo State.

The general purpose of this study was to ascertain the strategies for enhancing community participation for effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme in Ondo State. Specifically, the study sought to: Ascertain the extent to which the local communities participate in provision and maintenance of UBE infrastructural facilities, identify factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme, determine strategies for enhancing community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme.

Scope of the study: This study was delimited to Okitipupa Education zone of Ondo State. It involved the head teachers and members of the SBMCs of the 138 public primary schools in the zone. The content scope focuses on strategies for enhancing community participation for effective implementation of the universal basic education programme in the zone.

Research questions: The following research questions guided this study: To what extent do the local communities participate in the provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities for the UBE implementation in Okitipupa education zone? What are the factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Okitipupa education zone? What are the strategies for enhancing community participation in UBE implementation in Okitipupa education zone?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Nworgu (2006), descriptive survey is a type

of study which aims at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristic features or facts about a given population. Thus, the researchers sees it necessary to use this design because he used a representative sample of the entire population. The study was carried out in Okitipupa Education zone of Ondo State. Okitipupa education zone is chosen for this study because of the observed poor state of school infrastructural facilities in the zone and this informed the researcher's choice of carrying out this study there. The population of this study is 1.238 which comprise 138 head teachers and 1.100 School Based Management Committee (SBMC) members of the 138 public primary schools in the zone.

The sample size of the study is 248. The sample size was selected using multi-stage sampling technique. 69 public primary schools were sampled from the 138 public primary schools in the zone. That is, 26 schools from Okitipupa Local Government Area (LGA), 23 from Ilaje LGA and 20 from Ese-Odo LGA, respectively. The rationale for selecting this sample size is in line with Olorunsola who asserted that, since, multi-stage sampling technique is conducted in phases and provided the population is divided into clusters (units), 20% sample size will do and the results obtained can be generalizable to the entire population of the study. One instrument was used for data collection. The instrument is a structured questionnaire titled, Questionnaire on Strategies for Community Participation in the Universal Basic Education Programme (QSCPUBEP). QSCPUBEP consists of two sections, Section A and Section B. Section A is designed to collect demographic data of the respondents and section B is designed to collect data for answering the research questions. Section B consists of 18 items built on five clusters (A-c) in line with the three research questions. Each cluster consists of 6 items. The items in clusters A were structured along the modified four point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE), weighted 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point, respectively while items in cluster B and C were structured along Strongly Agree, SA = 4 points, Agree, A = 3 points, Disagree, D = 2 points and Strongly Disagree, SD = 1 point, respectively. The instrument (QSCPUBEP) was subjected to face validation by three experts, two in Educational Administration and Planning and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. These experts validated the instrument in terms of clarity of language, appropriateness and adequacy of the items in measuring what they are supposed to measure. The comments and corrections made independently by the experts helped the researchers to modify and produce the final instrument.

The 33 copies of the questionnaire were trial tested on 10 head teachers and 23 SBMC members from public primary schools in Owo/Ose Education zone of Ondo State which is outside the area of this study. The Cronbach alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency. The overall reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. This indicates that the instrument is reliable. A total of 248 copies of the questionnaires were administered by the researchers and two research assistants. These research assistants assisted the researchers in both the administration and collection of the questionnaires as they were completed by the respondents. The researchers instructed the research assistants on both how to administer and how to retrieve the instruments from the respondents so as to ensure maximum returns. The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics. Mean scores and Standard Deviation (SD) were employed in answering the research questions. Real limit of number was used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research question one: To what extent do the local communities participate in the provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities for the UBE implementation in Okitipupa education zone?

From Table 1, the mean scores for items 8 and 10 exceeded 2.50 the critical mean score. This indicated that community members participate in provision of furniture to schools and in provision of teaching learning materials. Whereas, items 7, 9, 11 and 12 show low community participation in such areas like provision of classroom blocks to schools assisting in the maintenance of school facilities in renovating dilapidated buildings and in the construction of access roads to schools. From the cluster means 2.46 (for head teachers) and 2.50 (for SBMC members) it means that the head teachers are of the view that communities participate to a low extent in the provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities. While the SBMC members are of the view that the communities participate to a high extent in the provision and maintenance of facilities for the UBE programme in Okitipupa Education zone.

Research question two: What are the factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Okitipupa Education zone?

From Table 2, the head teachers and SBMC members in Okitipupa Education zone agreed that some of the factors affecting community participation in the UBE programme include: earlier pronouncement of total free education by the government, some community members

Table 1: Mean responses of head teachers and School Based Management Committee (SBMC) members on the extent do the communities participate in the provision and maintenance of facilities for UBE implementation (n = 248)

Items	Head teachers			SBMC members		
	X	SD	Rmk	X	SD	Rmk
Communities participate in provision of classroom blocks to schools	2.42	0.68	LE	2.30	1.44	LE
They are involved in provision of furniture to schools	3.44	0.37	HE	3.40	0.68	HE
Communities are assisting in the maintenance of school facilities	2.25	1.16	LE	2.48	0.77	LE
They are involved in provision of teaching and learning materials to schools	2.72	0.98	HE	2.80	0.61	HE
They participate in renovating dilapidated buildings	2.30	1.37	LE	2.11	1.36	LE
Community members participate in the construction of access roads to schools	1.60	1.24	VLE	1.90	1.45	VLE
Cluster mean	2.46	1.02	LE	2.50	1.05	HE

Table 2: Mean responses of head teachers and School Based Management Committee (SBMC) members on factors militating against community participation in the UBE programme (n = 248)

Items	Head teachers			SBMC members		
	X	SD	Rmk	X	SD	Rmk
Earlier pronouncement of total free education by the government	3.81	0.50	A	3.72	0.32	A
Some community members have no steady source of income to enable them play their roles in the UBE programme	3.00	0.98	A	3.20	0.61	A
Communities have not been adequately sensitized on their roles in the UBE implementation	3.34	0.92	A	3.30	0.48	A
Exploitation of income by some school authorities hinders community participation in the UBE programme	2.31	0.75	D	2.41	1.03	D
Some school authorities do not maintain cordial relationship with community members	2.49	0.98	D	2.48	1.04	D
School programmes do not reflect the belief and values of the host communities	2.24	1.12	D	2.20	1.12	D
Cluster mean	2.86	0.88	A	2.88	0.77	A

Table 3: Mean responses of head teachers and School Based Management Committee (SBMC) members on strategies for community participation in the UBE programme (n = 248)

Items	Head teachers			SBMC members		
	X	SD	Rmk	X	SD	Rmk
School based management committee should be encouraged for mobilizing host communities in the UBE implementation	3.68	0.68	A	4.00	0.32	SA
There should be communities' sensitization seminars to create enabling environment for community participation in the UBE programme	3.00	0.98	A	3.20	0.61	A
Community members should be involved in the decision making process of the school	3.34	0.93	A	3.30	0.48	A
There should be cordial relationship the schools and the communities for progressive participation in the UBE programme	3.38	1.14	A	3.42	0.86	A
School programmes should be made to promote the beliefs and values of the host communities as this will boost their participation in the scheme	3.26	1.06	A	2.93	1.00	A
Efforts should be made to attract the support of alumni associations and community based organizations so as to stimulate participation in the UBE programme	3.72	0.55	A	3.06	0.18	A
Gross mean	3.40	0.88	A	3.32	0.58	A

do not have steady source of income to enable them participate in the implementation of UBE programme and communities have not been adequately sensitized on their roles in the UBE implementation. This opinion is shown in their mean ratings of 3.81, 3.00 and 3.34 to items 19, 20 and 21, respectively which are above 2.50 critical level of acceptance. On the other hand, they disagreed that exploitation of income by some school authorities hinders community participation in the UBE programme, that some school authorities do not maintain cordial relationship with community members and that school programmes do not reflect the belief and values of the host communities. The cluster means are 2.86 (for head teachers) and 2.88 (for SBMC members) which suggest that the respondents generally agree that the listed factors are some of the factors that militate against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Okitipupa Education zone.

Research question three: What are the strategies for enhancing active community participation in UBE implementation in Okitipupa Education zone?

Data on Table 3 shows the mean ratings of head teachers and SBMC members with regards to strategies for enhancing active community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Okitipupa Education zone. The mean responses indicate an overwhelming agreement between the head teachers and the SBMC members with items in the cluster as strategies for enhancing community participation in the implementation of UBE programme. The cluster means are 3.40 (for Head teachers) and 3.32 (SBMC members) which indicate that the respondents share the view that some of the strategies suggested, if adopted will enhance community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme.

The findings revealed that community members do not participate in the provision of class room blocks to schools and that they do not participate in the construction of access roads to schools. This finding is consistent with the findings of Asiayi (2012) who reported that community participation in the management of the UBE programme is low, that they only participate in such areas as donation of lands to schools, raising funds and attending PTA meetings. This finding is also in agreement with Adepoju and Fabiyi (2007) who observed that the level of community involvement in the provision of infrastructural facilities to schools was quite low. The findings also, revealed that factors militating against community participation include: earlier pronouncement of total free education by the government, some community members having no steady source of income to enable them participate in the UBE programme and host communities having not been adequately sensitized on their roles in the UBE programme. This finding is in consonance with Adesina who submitted that government earlier pronouncement of absolute total free education contributed to low community participation in the administration of school programmes. The result is also in line with Adeyemi (2007) who reported that lack of adequate communities' enlightenment and poor socio economic factor contributed to low community involvement in the implementation of the UBE programme.

The findings revealed that strategies for enhancing community participation in the UBE programme include: school based management committee being encouraged for the mobilization of the host communities in the implementation of the UBE programme organizing communities' sensitization seminars and workshops to create enabling environment for community participation in the UBE programme, encouraging cordial relationship between the school and the communities, school

programmes being made to promote the beliefs and values of the host communities and efforts being made to attract the support of alumni associations and community based organizations so as to stimulate participation in the UBE programme. This finding is in line with Graham who reported that there is need to decentralize school management to the communities by forming a formidable committee at the school level. This finding also agreed with Adebayo and Adelabu who reported that encouraging this committee will go in long way in creating enabling environment for active community participation in the school programmes.

CONCLUSION

The Nigerian government has taken a laudable step by launching the UBE programme but as is observable all is not well with the implementation due to the low involvement of the host communities in addressing various challenges to the scheme. However, based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: Government and the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) should encourage the operation of the school based management committee in the schools for the mobilization of the host communities in the implementation of the UBE programme. There should be communities' sensitization workshops and seminars as these will make the host communities to be aware of their roles in sustenance of the scheme and in return create enabling environment for community participation in the UBE programme. School heads should maintain cordial relationship with the community leaders as this will stimulate community participation in the UBE programme. School programmes should be made to promote the beliefs and values of the host communities as this will boost their participation in the UBE programme and efforts should be made to attract the support of alumni associations and community based organizations so as to stimulate community participation in the UBE programme.

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