An Examination of Critical Problems Associated with the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in Nigeria

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Abstract

It is hardly debateable that implementation is the bane of public policies and programmes in Nigeria. A well formulated policy or programme is useless if not properly implemented as its stated objectives will not be realized. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was introduced in Nigeria in September 1999 by the Obasanjo's administration. Ten years on, the programme is being bedeviled by a number of implementation problems. This paper examines some of the major constraints impeding the effective implementation of the UBE programme in Nigeria. The paper then suggested some strategies to facilitate the successful implementation of the programme.

Keywords: Basic, Education, Implementation, Nigeria, Policy, Programme, Universal Basic Education

1. Introduction

As in many other developing countries, implementation is the bane of public policies and programmes in Nigeria. A policy or programme that is well formulated but not properly implemented is more or less useless. With specific reference to the Nigerian education sector, policies / programmes change like the wind vane with every successive government. An example of a previous programme in the sector that suffered implementation failure was the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme which was the forerunner to the present Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. The UBE programme was introduced in 1999 seemingly as a replacement for the UPE programme which was launched in 1976 but later abandoned. But the UBE, like the UPE before it, is experiencing implementation difficulties.

According to the Education for All (EFA) Regional overview report that highlights the situation in sub-sharan countries, Nigeria is one of the countries at serious risk of not achieving the universal primary education goal. The report defines serious risk as furtherest to go and moving away from goal or progress too slow. The same goes for the adult literacy and gender parity goals. With an Education for all Development Index (EDI) of less than 0.8, Nigeria is among 16 countries in sub-Sharan Africa very far from achieving EFA goals. (The Nation Thursday, October 16, 2008). Moreover, in the Global competitiveness report for the period 2009-2010, Nigeria's primary education level was ranked 132nd out of the 133 countries that were surveyed (Daily Sun Monday, October 12, 2009).

The poor performance of many public policies and programmes in Nigeria, in terms of the achievement of their specified objectives arise primarily from implementation failure. This paper therefore examines some of the problems associated with the implementation of the UBE programme in the country with a view to making suggestions toward overcoming or coping with the identified problems.

2. Conceptual Overview and Framework

Public policy can be simply seen as the tangible manifestation of the output of government. Public policy has been defined as "whatever governments choose to do or not to do" (Dye, 1972). Anderson (1975) states that public policy is what government actually do, not what they intend to do or say they are going to do. The term public policy, according to Naidu (2005), refers to policies made and implemented by government with a view to achieve certain goals- public policies are thus concerned with government's behaviour. In the same vein, Cochran and Malone (1999) define public policy as the study of government decisions and actions designed to deal with a matter of public concern. Public policy therefore refers to the course of action selected and pursued by government with a view to accomplishing specified objective(s).

A policy is different from a programme. While a policy is a statement of action and intentions, a programme is the means designed to achieve the action and intentions. A programme is the set of strategies or activities meant to attain the intended objectives of particular policy. Policy implementation, according to Henry (2006), "is the execution and delivery of public policies by organizations or arrangements among organizations". Pressman and Wildasky (1979) see it as the process of translating policy mandates into actions; prescriptions into results; and

goals into reality. In the words of van Horn and van meter "implementation focuses on the processes and activities involved in the application, effectuation and administering of a policy". In specific terms, "it is the actions taken to carry out, accomplish and fulfill the intents, objectives and expected outcomes of public policies" (Horn and Meter, 1975). Disparity between targeted policy / programme objectives and outputs / achievements is known as implementation gap.

The conceptual model for policy implementation formulated by Horn and Meter (1975) guides the contextual discussion in this paper. The model identified six variables that are interrelated in influencing the policy implementation process and to that extent in determining the success or failure of policies; as these variables provide actual linkage between policy intentions and performance. These variables are:-

❖ Policy standards and objectives**:** If the standards and objectives of a policy are well stated in clear and measurable terms, implementers would be able to know what is expected of them and the extent of discretion open to them. Policies which have acceptable objective usually elicit positive responses from the implementers as well as the public. The reverse is the case when the objectives of a policy are not acceptable to the implementers and populace.

❖ Policy resources**:** This refers to resources such as fund, facilities, authority which are essential to the policy implementation process. Inadequacy of policy resources is often responsible for policy failure in many developing countries.

❖ Inter-governmental communications and enforcement: This variable is influential in policy delivery. Well channeled communication enhances effectiveness and efficiency in policy management as it eliminates policy ambiguities. Enforcement helps to achieve compliance among policy implementers through sanctions, incentives, moral-suasion, persuasion or direct intimidation if the need arises.

❖ Characteristics of implementing agencies: The nature of implementing agencies is equally crucial in policy implementation. The organizational viability, quality of the human resource in these agencies, their knowledge, power, and understanding of what the policy is all about would to a large extent affect policy delivery.

❖ Economic, social and political conditions: The economic, social and political conditions of the society in which a policy is situated could either alter policy intentions or blur them. As such, policy environment is an important factor in policy implementation particularly in developing countries with unstable and uncertain policy environment.

❖ The disposition of policy implementers: The attitude or behaviour of implementers could have a negative or positive effect on policy delivery. If they are negatively disposed to a policy then there will be a lack of commitment to the implementation of the policy in question.

3. Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria: An overview:

The Federal Government launched the UBE in September 1999 for the purpose of achieving compulsory, free and universal basic education. It was also Nigeria's response to the achievement of Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UBE programme, as a policy reform measure, is aimed at rectifying distortions in basic education delivery in the country as well as catering for basic education in the formal and non formal sectors.

The UBE is aimed at enabling all children in the Nigerian society to participate in the free 9 years of schooling from primary one to junior secondary school (JSS) three classes. The UBE is thus intended to be universal and compulsory. According to Obayan (2000), these terms imply that appropriate types of opportunities will be provided for the basic education of every Nigerian child of school going age. It is worthy to note that Nigeria is one of the 164 countries that signed the 2000 Dakar framework of Action to ensure Education for All (EFA) by year 2015.

The main thrust of the UBE programme is to lay the foundation for life long learning through the inculcation of appropriate learning, self-awareness, citizenship and life skills. Specifically the objectives of the programme include:-

i) Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.

ii) The provision of free, compulsory, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age group.

iii) Reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from the formal school system

iv) Catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complimentary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.

v) Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, manipulative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying the foundation for life long learning (Nigeria, 2000).

There are three major components of the UBE. These are:-

a) Formal basic education encompassing the first nine years of schooling (primary and Junior Secondary Education)

b) Nomadic education for school age children of pastoral nomads and migrant fishermen.

c) Literacy and non-formal education for out-of-school youths and illiterate adults (Nigeria, 2000).

The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) was created by an Act of the National Assembly in 2004 and vested with the responsibility for overall co-ordination of the UBE programme nation-wide. The national commission is expected to work in close collaboration with relevant Federal agencies and the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEBs) established by each of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory as well as the Local Government Education Authorities (LEGAs) in each of the 774 Local Government Areas of the Nigerian Federation.

The implementation guidelines state that the existing capacities in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), institutions of learning, and the civil society shall be fully mobilized for developing and executing the activities of the UBEC and the relevant state and local government agencies (Nigeria, 2000).

4. Implementation Problems of the UBE Programme

Factors that may lead to the failure of the UBE programme in Nigeria shall be examined within the framework of the conceptual model of implementation propounded by Horn and Meter (1975): Policy standards and objectives; policy resources; inter-governmental communications and enforcement, characteristics of implementing agencies; economic, social and political conditions; and disposition of policy implementers.

4.1 Policy Standards and Objectives

A general policy problem in Nigeria is that of inadequate and poor data which poses planning difficulties and invariably implementation challenges. Unreliable data makes it difficult to make adequate projections in terms of expected enrolment, required teachers, infrastructural needs and equipment. Accurate and reliable data are needed for evidence based planning and budgeting for basic education. But such data rarely exist. A diagnostic report (UNESCO institute of statistics, 2005) had pointed out the lack of accurate school based statistics in Nigeria.

Also instructive is the fact that many states are lagging behind in articulating and submitting their action plans to UBEC. An action plan, which is one of the conditions that the UBEC requires each state government to fulfill prior to accessing available UBE intervention funds (UBE-IF), is a list of projects (infrastructure, instructional materials and professional development) proposed for implementation to achieve the objectives of the UBE programme for a given period. An action plan further gives information on the resources (human, financial etc) and procedures to be employed in achieving the stated objectives, and help to track implementation progress and ensure orderliness and accountability. Failure of many states to meet up with the condition of coming up with an action plan as when due impede the effective implementation of the UBE programme.

It is pertinent to mention that though the UBE programme was introduced in 1999, it was only in year 2008 (about 9 years later) that a new UBE curriculum was unveiled to further support government readiness in fully pursuing and accomplishing the objectives of the UBE programme.

Moreover, it was reported that a major crisis of confidence is brewing among states over the modalities for implementing the proposed 9-year basic education by the federal government as it involves the disarticulation of junior secondary schools from senior secondary schools. No sooner had the disarticulation begun, and then confusion erupted about the philosophy and context of the policy (The Nation Friday, February 27, 2009).

4.2 Policy Resources

Inadequacy of policy resources tends to undermine the successful implementation of the UBE programme. An official documentary (2009) entitled *Capacity for Universal Basic Education in Nigeria* which was sponsored by the united kingdom department for international development and the Federal Government of Nigeria puts the number of unqualified teachers in the nation's primary school system at over 50 per cent. This documentary also revealed overcrowding and shortage of classrooms, sanitation facilities and teaching equipments as other problems militating against effective teaching and learning in the schools. Teachers remain a significant factor in the quality and standard of education at all levels. But the basic education level in the country is plagued by acute shortage of professionally qualified teachers. Results of the personnel audit conducted by UBEC showed that basic education requires 966 308 teachers ideally but only 627 550 teachers are currently in service. Of that number, only 368 613

teachers (about 55.2%) are professionally qualified leaving a short fall of 597 695 from the ideal requirement (Vanguard Thursday February 12, 2009).

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.

Empirical research (Ajayi, 2007; Uko Aviomoh, Okoh and Omatseye, 2007; and Edho, 2009) corroborated that the UBE is under funded. For instance, Nigeria is said to need N51.8 billion for basic education annually but provision for UBEC in 2009 was only N39. 7 billion indicating a shortfall of 23.4% (This day 30 October, 2009). Unesco-Nigeria 10 year strategic plan projected a funding gap of respectively 30%, 28% and 30% in 2010, 2015 and 2020 (Gwang – Chol chang, 2007). However, poor management of available resources and corruption also contributes to the problem of weak financial capacity in the Nigerian education sector- the sector is said to be characterized by weak planning and budgeting, poor financial management and procurements practices (World Bank, 2008).

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.

4.3 Inter-governmental Communications and Enforcement

Various government agencies at the three levels of governance in Nigeria –federal, state and local government are involved in the implementation of the UBE programme. These include the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) at the federal level, the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEBs) in the 36 states as well as the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) in the 774 local government areas of the country. It has been observed that the many agencies / parastatals involved in the UBE implementation have brought fragmentation and conflict of roles / responsibilities (Nigeria, 2008).

The large number of government agencies participating in the implementation of the UBE programme nation-wide is bound to create co-ordination and communication problems. The UBEC has been rather ineffective in terms of co-ordination and ensuring compliance of implementing agencies to UBE guidelines. An example is the refusal of

states to meet conditions that would allow them draw counter part funds provided by the federal government for the UBE programme. Many states have not even accessed the funds up to 2006/2007 matching grant. The UBE intervention fund is meant for the provision of additional classrooms, teaching and learning materials as well as the training and retraining of teachers (compass Wednesday, February 3, 2010).

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.

4.4 The Characteristics of Implementing Agencies

Public policy or programme implementation is a function of government bureaucracies. The effectiveness of policy / programme implementation is largely determined by the efficiency and competence of governmental implementing agencies. Nigeria cannot be said to possess the required executive capacity to effectively implement the UBE programme on a national scale, as there is dearth of high quality personnel in the implementing agencies especially at the state and local government levels. In evaluating the UBE, Santcross.,Hinchliffe.,Williams.,& Onibon (2009) reports that the Nigerian education sector suffer from weak capacity at the institutional, organizational and individual level. They observed that a weak institutional framework with multiple agencies with overlapping roles and responsibilities remains unreformed. They further stated that the quality of individual managers, education officials and teachers is generally agreed to be poor, with many un- or under-qualified for their roles with the result that basic education services are of low quality and learning outcomes unsatisfactory.

The implementing agencies also suffer from lack of executive will. With the possible exception of federal unity schools, most primary and junior secondary schools in many parts of Nigeria are not being effectively monitored and supervised by the appropriate agencies in order to maintain uniform national minimum standards.

4.5 The Economic, Social and Political Conditions

Policy environment is a critical factor in policy implementation. Crude oil which accounts for over 90% of total exports and yields about 85% of government's revenue is unstable in the international market. Dwindling economic fortune occasioned by the global economic meltdown and poor management of the economy is likely to worsen the problem of under funding of the programme. With children under 15 years of age accounting for about 45% of the country's population; the burden on education and other sectors has become overwhelming (Unicef-Nigeria, 2010).

Hidden cost of education is also negatively affecting the achievement of the UBE objectives: hidden costs refer to the associated costs of sending children to school such as uniforms, textbooks, note books, pencils, biros and even Parent Teacher Association (PTA) levies. Margaret Ya'u, programme manager for the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA- is an international Non-governmental organization that monitors progress in the path to the attainment of EFA in 2015) said that despite declarations that the UBE is meant to be free and compulsory, many children are not in school because of hidden costs. According to her "we've been going around communities and discovered that just N50 or even less can prevent a family from sending a child to school (the Nation Thursday, October, 16, 2008).

Given that about 70% of Nigerians are living below the poverty line, defined as living on less than US $ 1 per day (Human Development Report, 2009) it should not come as a surprise that no matter how little the costs associated with education may be, there will be parents who can not afford it, and such can keep pupils out of school. Due to economic hardship, many children of school age are subjected to menial jobs like hawking or truck pushing to augment family income. Some state governments even make payment of tax by parents as a condition for enrolling pupils in schools. The federal government released statistics recently showing continuing drop in school enrolments. The figures showed that 17 million children were out of school (Nigeria, 2010). The reason for declining school enrolments is not far fetched – more than a decade after the introduction of UBE, basic education still remains more of an expensive undertaking than the free social service declared by government. The compulsory component of the UBE programme largely depends on the extent to which it is made truly free.

The UNESCO- EFA Global Monitoring Report (2009) reports that Nigeria has more primary age children out of school than any other country in the world and trend projections to 2015 suggest a gross primary enrolment rate of

around 105% and a net enrolment rate of just over 70%. Lack of political will or commitment at all levels of government is also manifesting in the implementation of the UBE programme. But effective political leadership, commitment and firm resolve are essential for the programme to succeed. The UNESCO- EFA Global Monitoring Report (2009) cites Nigeria as one of the countries struggling with the impact of poor governance on the education sector. Poor governance, according to this report, is significantly slowing progress towards EFA and undermining the quality of basic education services.

Like in many developing countries, policies / programmes in Nigeria usually emanate from the political system rather than from the demands of the citizens (environment) (Egonmwan, 2002). As Eminue (2005) explained, any policy or programme that the targeted beneficiaries has not participated in its formulation and execution does not guarantee sustainability. He asserts that since the target groups are hardly involved at either the policy design or at the implementation stage, they become more or less on lookers rather than participants in such programme. He submits that programme sustainability become problematic with such uncommitted or disinterested targets. But Education for All is said to be the responsibility of all. Hence Azuka Menkiti, who is the programme Advisor for Action Aid International Nigeria (an international development Non-governmental organization), charged that government has not done enough to sensitize people about the UBE programme and law. According to her, we have made a law guiding us and people don't even know about it (The Nation Thursday, October 16, 2008).

4.6 The Disposition of Policy Implementers

The attitude or behaviour of policy/programme implementers tends to affect its performance. Many implementers seem to lack commitment to the achievement of the goals of the UBE programme. Sam Egwu, the former minister of Education, identified lack of commitment to educational calling as one of the factors militating against education in the country (Daily Sun Tuesday, December 29, 2008). The outcome of non-challant attitude on the part of implementers is poor implementation and low performance. Teachers are expected to play pivotal role in the implementation of the UBE programme, yet sufficient attention is not being paid to their motivation. Several studies (Ajayi, 2007; Omokhodion, 2008; and Edho, 2009) have shown that teachers in Nigeria are poorly motivated. For instance, enhanced teacher salary is one aspect of motivation that is being ignored. In fact, teachers had to embark on a one month strike action before government accepted 27.5% pay rise for professional teachers across the 36 states and the FCT. Even now, this pay rise is yet to be fully implemented nation-wide.

5. 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.

5.1 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. To this end, the open and distance

Learning (ODL) mode of education delivery at the tertiary level should be fully explored and harnessed for the in-service professional training of teachers. 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. 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.

5.2 Financial Resources

(a) UBE has to benefit from sustainable funding. Since all the three tiers of government have concurrent responsibilities for education provision in the country, financial resources for executing the UBE programme should

be adequately provided for in their annual budgetary allocations. Government at all levels should improve the funding of education by legislating the adoption of minimum allocation of at least 30% to education, and approved funds should be released to implementing agencies as at when the due without delays.

(b) 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.

(c) 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.

(d) 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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. Moreover, nomadic, Qur,'anic(Almajiri) and adult literacy programmes should be fully integrated into the UBE programme.

5.6 Data

Without accurate and reliable data, no meaningful planning can be done and it will be difficult to avoid policy breakdown at the implementation stage. As such, all UBE operators (governmental and non-governmental) should commit themselves to the collection of timely, accurate and reliable data. At the school level, head teachers or principals and their teaching staff should ensure that basic records are kept and maintained at all times. The adoption and use of functional Education Management Information System (EMIS) at all levels of governance is a necessary measure for education authorities in Nigeria.

6. Conclusion

The implementation stage of the policy process provides the linkage between policy intention and performance. Hence policy performance is essentially dependent on the effectiveness of policy implementation. A number of constraints to the effective implementation of the UBE programme in Nigeria were highlighted in this paper. In order to facilitate the achievement of UBE objectives, some strategies for the successful implementation of the programme were advanced. An ambitious programme of this nature requires rigorous planning, extensive resource mobilization, and above all, prudent use of available resources. It is important to also emphasis the need for participatory approach in UBE implementation. Being inclusive in conception, the programme requires massive participation of the Nigerian populace if it is to succeed. As such, everybody should be involved and carried along in the implementation process.

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- ₦ = Nigerian Naira (NGN)
- $ = United States Dollar(USD)
- USD 1= ₦148(Exchange Rate 31 March,2010)
- % = Percentage
- UNDP-United Nations Development Programme
- UNESCO-United Nations Educational,Scientific & Cultural Organisation
- UNICEF-United Nations Children Funds
- USAID-United States Agency for International Development