



## Universal basic education programme and sustainability of democratic ideal: matters arising

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### Abstract

When the goal of UBE, “Education for All” (EFA) which is in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was envisaged from the conception of the scheme, little did anyone know that fourteen years after, the policy would not make a significant achievement in competing with systems in other developed nations of the world. Recent reports show that it would take Nigeria more than 70 years before all children will have access to primary education. This paper is a call on needed paradigm shift in UBE for global competitiveness. The paper x-rays the matters arising in the scheme to include the quota policy, placing of ceiling on the number of pupils to be registered in a state among others. The paper also highlighted some envisaged problems of the implementation of the programme to include policy standard and objectives, policy resources, inter-governmental communication and enforcement, the characteristics of implementing agencies and the economic, social and political conditions and as well the disposition of policy implementers. The paper called for paradigm shift in the area of human, financial, infrastructural resources as well as quality assurance and social mobilization. Finally, some important recommendations were proffered, among others was that there should be a nationwide UBE awareness and enrollment campaign similar to that of the national immunization programme, general election dates, national census, etc. and in order to access the UBE intervention fund made available yearly, states should endeavor 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.

**Keywords:** universal basic education, sustainability, democratic ideals

### Introduction

Education is a process of acquiring skills, obtaining relevant knowledge and aptitudes in order to survive in this technological world. It is the process whereby individuals are provided with the means, tools and knowledge for understanding their society and its structures. Education, needless to say, is a priority sector in every well-meaning society. Thus, Burch (2006) [6] referred to it as a major force in economic, intellectual, social and cultural empowerment. Its value in bringing about character and attitudinal change ranks as important as its ability to reshape human potentials for desired development.

In realization of the important role which education plays as an agent of national development and globalization, there has been agitation for more functional, qualitative and quantitative education all over the world. This agitation and concern for quantity and quality education is reflected in the inauguration of Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1995 and Dakar in 2000. This was followed by a meeting called by the 56th General Assembly of the United Nations to discuss the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In pursuance of this, Nigeria’s educational system has witnessed a catalogue of changes in policies and programmes. In fact, many of the changes in educational policies in Nigeria have been described as the product of confusion (Ayeni, 2000) [5]. There is therefore, a high level of uncertainties, which is beclouding meaningful planning in Nigeria’s educational system. This can be very dangerous particularly as the future of Nigeria and Nigerians will be determined by the level of education her nationals have acquired.

With the introduction of Universal Basic Education, it is believed that development of Nigeria will be accelerated because of inherent values in education. Attesting to this, Preece (2006) [27], submitted that education is a proven contributor to reducing poverty. 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 (Ejere, 2011) [7]. The Universal Basic Education Commission in its annual report in 2005 listed the objectives to include: ensuring unfettered access to 9 years of formal basic education; 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, as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

For the achievement of the above-mentioned objectives, and indeed the vision and mission of the Scheme, an Act tagged UBE Act was enacted on the 26th May, 2004. This Act made provision for compulsory, free, Universal Basic Education and other related matters. Following the enactment of the Act, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) was established. The Act provides three sources of funding for the implementation of the UBE, which are;

1. Federal Government Grant of 2% of its consolidated revenue fund; funds or contributions in the form of federal guaranteed credits and local or international donor grants.
2. The state government can only benefit from the Federal Government block grant meant for the implementation of the UBE if it can contribute at least 50% of the total cost of the project. This is to ensure the state's commitment towards the project.
3. The Local Government is to contribute its quota of 2% too to the implementation of the scheme.

### **The Concept of Universal Education (UBE)**

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a global concept; it is the fundamental aspect of education meant for children and adults in need of education everywhere. The word universal may simply mean "covering all or a whole collectively or distributively without limit or exception". In this regard, it could mean something that is general and therefore meant for everybody, everywhere. In other words, anything that is universal has no restriction as to time, place and person. On the other hand, the word "basic" is derived from the word "base" which means the bottom, the lowest part of which an object is mounted, or to which it is fixed, and on which it stands (Nwafor, 2007) <sup>[19]</sup>.

Education itself, as used in this context, implies the training given to a child in an institution which helps to develop him morally, physically, socially, intellectually and spiritually in keeping with his culture, societal values and norms. Universal Basic Education, therefore, should be viewed as the foundation upon which all other educational strata rest, which is offered to everyone and everywhere within a particular age or circumstance. Universal Basic Education is predicated on Article 26 of the United Nations (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states inter alia: "Everyone has the right to education", and that elementary education should be made free and compulsory. This was further strengthened by other national and international legal frameworks which stress the right of the child. This is evident in Article 28 of the 1990 United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child. Nigeria also accorded recognition to this in the 2004 Act on the Right of the Child.

The role of UNESCO in this direction cannot be ignored because it was: "As a result of UNESCO's active participation in the work of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), prominence is given to the right to basic education" (Nwogu, 2006) <sup>[20]</sup>. In addition, at the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000, the international community adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, which aims, among other things, at achieving "education for all" through universal primary education by 2015 (Nwogu, 2006) <sup>[20]</sup>. These and other instruments form the basis of Universal Basic Education in most countries of the world.

However, Basic Education has different connotations in various countries of the world. Mbanefo in Nwafor (2006) <sup>[18]</sup>, outlines the different conceptions and practices of Basic Education thus: in Zambia, it is identified with the duration of the compulsory schooling. In Jamaica, it is associated with the pre-school period; in Ethiopia, it meant a shortened period of primary schooling; in India it is associated with the education of the rural masses, and in Tanzania it meant giving appropriate knowledge and skills to both young

people and adults within the context of African socialism. In effect, basic education is the educational offering made available to individuals who have not had or may not have had the opportunity of formal schooling at the expense of the state. The idea behind basic education is to eradicate illiteracy, to make life more meaningful, and society a better place to live in (Nwafor, 2007) <sup>[19]</sup>. Basic Education means the type of education, in quality and content, that is given in the first level of education. However, there are variations in its scope and duration from country to country.

### **Universal Basic Education in Nigeria: An overview**

In Nigeria, for instance, Basic Education was equated with six years of primary schooling in the past. Currently basic education is extended to include the three years of Junior Secondary School. Universal Basic Education (UBE) is conceived to embrace formal education up to age 14 or 15, as well as adult, Nomadic and non-formal education including education of the marginalized groups within the Nigerian society, i.e, an inclusive education.

In a clear form, Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a reformed programme in Nigeria's basic education delivery (from primary 1, all through to Junior Secondary School class 3) and is to reinforce the implementation of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in order to provide greater access and ensure quality throughout the Federation as it is free and compulsory (Adomeh, Arhedo & Omoike, 2007) <sup>[2]</sup>. UBE is a scheme and process of fulfilling the aim of Education for All (EFA) as endorsed at the World Conference on Education held in Jomtien in 1990. According to the World Conference on Education, basic education is made free and available to all and sundry, thus emphasizing free access, equity, efficiency, literacy, numeracy, and lifelong skills for all.

### **The objectives of UBEP are as follows**

- a. Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- b. The provision of free, compulsory, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age group;
- c. Reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from the formal school system.
- d. 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; and
- e. 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 lifelong learning (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

### **Universal Basic Education: Matters Arising**

The Universal Basic Education as introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria has been described as a laudable development by scholars and policy evaluators, but it appears that it is leaving many issues unresolved which are likely to bedevil the programme just as the UPE scheme was. The name 'Universal Basic Education ordinarily would have suggested that every Nigerian child, without exception would have access to basic education without hindrance (Aluede, 2011) <sup>[3]</sup>. Now that a ceiling has been placed on the

enrolment figures for each state of the federation, it is obvious that limitations have been introduced. The question is, through this measure, is it possible to realize the national aspirations of building a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens? Perhaps, at this juncture, it will be necessary to address the question that has been asked by Enemu, (2000) <sup>[8]</sup> that:

1. While placing a ceiling on the number of pupils to be registered in the states, would the programme still be qualified as 'universal' or "Education for All"? The answer to this question is obvious since the policy or criteria for enrollment had defied its name that was implied.
2. Does the placement of ceiling on enrolment figures not portray the UBE scheme as yet another device for strengthening and perpetuating the principles of 'quota system in admission? This is not only impeding the implementation of UBE scheme but also against national integration as well as unity in diversity.
3. Does the fact that one comes from the so called educationally advantaged state render one also educationally advantaged and vice versa? This policy of quota system enrollment is a clear loss of essence. With these policies, UBE has really become an instrument to unjustly deny promising Nigerian children in some areas access to or right to education.
4. Will the UBE scheme not attract similar counter balancing schemes by states whose sensibilities have been injured by the measure of deprivation as it happened when the Quota Admission Policy Scheme was introduced in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria?
5. Will such states not run a counter primary education scheme or even subsidize private schools that will render UBE meaningless as was the case with the UPE in the defunct Eastern Region?

A critical analysis of these off targets of this scheme is a signal that the programme policy itself was an obiter dictum during its conception to meet the demand of the international organization. Hence, the policies of the UBE programme can be said to be statements without fact, theoretical propaganda if its current trend is not reverse.

### **Envisaged Problems of the implementation of UBE Programme**

Just one year to the target year in the achievement of UBE goals which is in line with MDGs, there are indications that the recent prophesy of Amaka, and Laju (2014) <sup>[4]</sup> that it may take more than 70 years before all children will have access to primary education in Nigeria, may come true. Factors that may lead to this failure of the UBE programme in Nigeria are examined within the framework of the conceptual model of implementation propounded by Horn and Meter (2007) <sup>[10]</sup>.

### **UBE Policy Standards and Objectives**

Nigerian government at all levels is characterized by fanciful policy formulation but with problem of implementation. To Ejere (2011) <sup>[7]</sup>, a general policy problem in Nigeria is that of inadequate and poor data which poses planning difficulties and invariably implementation challenges of projects and programmes. The source reiterated number of with respect to the UBE

programme that unreliable data makes it difficult to make adequate projections in terms of expected enrolment, required teachers, infrastructural needs and equipment. These, without reasonable doubt, are needed for evidence-based planning and budgeting for basic education. 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 most at times neglected by state governments. 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.

### **UBE Policy Resources**

Inadequacy of policy resources tends to undermine the successful implementation of the UBE programme. Many researchers such as Opoh (2011) <sup>[25]</sup> and Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2013) <sup>[16]</sup>, revealed that overcrowding and shortage of classrooms (a situation where students learn under trees), poor sanitation facilities and teaching equipment are militating against effective teaching and learning in the schools. According to Isangedighi (2007) <sup>[11]</sup>, the teacher is a significant factor in the quality and standard of education at all levels. But the basic education level in Nigeria, according to Ejere (2011) <sup>[7]</sup>, is plagued by acute shortage of professionally qualified teachers. Sadly, Oloruntoyin (2011) <sup>[22]</sup>, stressed that many of the buildings were erected in the late 1950s and early 1960s with mud blocks. Today they are not only a health hazard but also potential death traps. In fact, in many areas, classes are being held in the open during the dry season and when the raining season sets in children are crowded into the few available ramshackle buildings.

### **Inter-governmental Communications and Enforcement**

Based on the Universal Basic Education Commission Standard Action Plan, 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. However, it has been observed that many agencies/parastatals involved in the UBE implementation have brought fragmentation and conflict of roles/responsibilities (Ejere, 2011) <sup>[7]</sup>. Though the federal government takes the lead in formulating 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 a critical issue. 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. 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.

### **The Characteristics of Implementing Agencies**

Policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria are often plagued by a number of factors. Very often, laudable policies formulated by government go into thin air at the implementation stage. The effectiveness of policy

implementation is largely determined by the efficiency and competence of governmental implementing agencies. Because corruption is of serious concern in the Nigerian society, the issues of proper utilization of funds and accountability are critical. Nwafor (2006) <sup>[18]</sup>, stated 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. Today, 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.

Therefore, Nigeria cannot be said to possess the required executive capacity to effectively implement the UBE programme on a national scale, as there is lack of high quality personnel in the implementing agencies especially at the state and local government levels. In evaluating the UBE Santcross, Hinchliffe, Williams, and Onibon (2009) <sup>[28]</sup> reported that the Nigerian education sector suffers from weak capacity at the institutional, organizational and individual levels.

### **The Economic, Social and Political Conditions**

As a result of the nature of primary education and the school system in general, government gives less concern to issues of funding, provision of infrastructure and supply of qualified and experienced teachers. Given the obvious importance of teachers, problems in supporting newly qualified teachers and a lack of career development opportunities in school settings often combine to make teachers' effectiveness difficult. Policy environment is a critical factor in policy implementation. Dwindling economic fortunes worsen the problem of underfunding of the programme. Hidden cost of education is also negatively affecting the achievement of the UBE objectives. These are associated costs of sending children to school such as uniforms, textbooks, note books, pencils, biros and even. Despite declarations that the UBE is meant to be free and compulsory, many children are not in school because of hidden costs.

### **The Disposition of Policy Implementers**

The outcome of nonchalant attitude on the part of Nigerian policy implementers is grossly poor implementation and low performance. The attitude or behavior of policy implementers tend to affect its performance. Many implementers seem to lack needed commitment to the achievement of the goals of the UBE programme. Teachers are expected to play pivotal role in the implementation of the UBE programme, yet sufficient attention is not being paid to their motivation to the utter neglect of policy essence. Several studies (Omokhodion, 2008) <sup>[23]</sup>, have shown that teachers in Nigeria are poorly motivated. In fact, teachers had in recent times embarked on chains of industrial actions before government accepted 27.5% pay raise for professional teachers across the states. Even now, this pay rise is yet to be fully implemented in some states.

### **Needed paradigm shift for Effective Implementation of the UBE Programme**

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

#### **a. Human Resources**

According to Isangedighi (2007) <sup>[11]</sup>, the teacher is a decisive element of any instructional setting that decides the mood of the class. His qualification and experience determine his productivity. In most cases, Nigerian basic education teachers who are overloaded with the task of teaching the students are not even qualified to teach, (Opoh, Unimna & Ogbaji 2014) <sup>[24]</sup>.

#### **b. Financial Resources**

A major challenge facing the UBE and implementation of the curriculum at this level is funding in the midst of rising demands and cost of education. Adedeji, Okemakinde, and Sempebwa, (2008) <sup>[1]</sup> affirm that finance is one of the problem confronting the education sector owing to a drastic reduction in both the actual and proportion of government fund allocated to the education sector, despite the UNESCO's recommendation of allocation of 26% of a nation's national income to the sector. Contrary to this recommendation, Nigeria in the past five years allotted just 6.4%, 7.5%, 8.4%, 8.7% and 10.69% of her annual budgets to education in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 in that order.

Ladan (2012) <sup>[14]</sup> reported that the low level of fiscal allocation to the sector which is below the UNESCO's threshold of 26% of the total budget certainly affects the implementation of government policy on education in the country and in particular the Universal Basic Education since its inception.

#### **c. Adequate Infrastructural facilities**

To enhance conducive learning environment, massive investment in school infrastructure improvement is needed. There is need for a complete overhaul of primary education infrastructural facilities, monitoring of its leadership, teachers and use of resources for education by multi-stakeholders' forum. Every primary and Junior Secondary School according to Ejere (2011) <sup>[7]</sup>, should be provided with adequate infrastructural facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, computer centres, potable water, electricity, toilets and furniture.

#### **d. Quality Assurance**

Nigeria is a country with a culture of anything goes, characterized by utter neglect and abandonment of projects without a call to order. Quality control through effective monitoring and proper evaluation ought to 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 (Ejere, 2011) <sup>[7]</sup>.

#### **e. Social Mobilization and Enforcement**

The success of UBE plan depends on the commitment and support from stakeholders such as parents, community members, teachers, churches and donor agencies, and all levels of government. 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 engineer full participation by all sections of the Nigerian society particularly at the community level (UBEC, 2004) <sup>[29]</sup>.

### Democratic Ideal

Democratic ideals are derived from the notion of democracy. Democracy is a form of government in which power ultimately belongs to the people. Democracy is the title given to a particular form of government which is all-involving. It is the one in which the structure and policy of governance are the creation of every participant, through representation (Nnodim & Henry, 2019) <sup>[17]</sup>. As a form of government, the rule of the majority for the good of the majority prevails. In its ideal state, it is a system where no person or group of persons is exploited. It also implies absence of all distractions based on class, creed, birth, religion, among other things. Democracy consists of four key elements:

- a. A political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections;
- b. The active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life;
- c. Protection of the human rights of all citizens; and
- d. A rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens (Nnodim & Henry, 2019) <sup>[17]</sup>.

We are yet to experience all this in the Nigerian type of democracy.

Nevertheless, our attention is drawn to the fact that democracy and human rights are two different concepts and that "there must be greater specificity in the conceptualization and operationalization of democracy and human rights. Democracy contrasts with forms of government where power is either held by an individual, or a small number of individuals. However, these oppositions, inherited from Greek philosophy, are now ambiguous because contemporary governments have mixed democratic, oligarchic and monarchic elements (James, 2020) <sup>[12]</sup>. Democracy in contrast to dictatorship or tyranny, thus focusing on opportunities for the people to control their leaders and to oust them without the need for a revolution. Although, there is no consensual agreement on how to define democracy, however "legal equality", "political freedom" and "rule of law" have been identified as important characteristics and ideals of democracy.

These principles ought to reflect in all eligible citizens being equal before the law and having equal access to legislative processes (James, 2020) <sup>[12]</sup>. For instance, in a representative democracy, every vote has equal weight, no unreasonable restrictions can apply to anyone seeking to become a representative, and the freedom of its eligible citizens is secured by legitimized rights and liberties which are typically protected by the constitution. Other ideals required for the success of democracy are principles of upward control (sovereignty residing at the lowest levels of authority), political equality, and social norms by which individuals and institutions only consider acceptable acts that reflect the first two principles of upward control and political equality.

From the foregoing analysis, we can say that democratic ideals are the ingredients which bring out the beauty of democracy in terms of behavior, policy formulation and implementation, socio-political and economic structure and style. Democratic ideals, therefore, are:

- a. An electioneering process,
- b. A constitution which defines the operationalization of the entire system

- c. Power belonging to the people
- d. Desirable social norms which determine the success of the entire process
- e. Human rights
- f. Rule of law
- g. Equality
- h. Social justice
- i. Freedom
- j. Patriotism and nationalism

Among other characteristics. Democratic ideals are often cited as a reason for patriotism. For example, Woodrow Wilson argued that America needed to enter World War I in order to make the world "safe for democracy" (James, 2020) <sup>[12]</sup>. In historical texts, the phrase is often used to denote aspirations or forms of behavior, separate from a functioning democracy, which includes egalitarianism, self-government, self-determination and freedom of conscience.

### Democratic Ideals in the Nigerian School

In its sociological term, the school is the engine room of the whole educational process, where educational policies are experimented and implemented. The concepts of individualism, democratic ideals are not alien to the Nigerian educational landscape. The Nigerian government at all levels believes that education at the basic education level is intended to raise independent-thinking-learners, people who have acquired necessary basic knowledge, values, attitudes and skills in entrepreneurship and capacity to create wealth (Nworgu, 2013) <sup>[21]</sup>. The Nigerian government through the constitution and national policy on education intends to build a Nigerian society upon democratic edifice where obedience to the rule of law is not negotiable, respect for natural and human rights is sacred, equality before the law, social justice, patriotism and nationalism, freedom of conscience and participation at all level are guaranteed, and inculcate certain social norms that would help for the survival of democracy in a fragile environment (Nworgu, 2013) <sup>[21]</sup>.

However, for the social anthropologist, social ideal is not the same as social reality. This is because since independence in 1960 we have had about thirty-two years of civilian government, yet we are still unable to establish a democratic government. The focal point of education would be to encourage the spirit of social integration and togetherness in the basic education learner through the school curriculum. Unfortunately, the school curriculum at this level ought to be an integrated curriculum where school subjects are designed along themes and ideas picked from the immediate environment, which seems to be the centrality of liberal education.

The present understanding is the teaching of arts and social science subjects in Social Studies with the belief that the learner would find these school subjects easy to comprehend at the senior secondary level. A learner at this level of schooling is not to learn history or science but to acquire basic capacities which enable them to think historically or scientifically (Jim, 2014) <sup>[13]</sup>. Our education system seems to lack this foundation. Hence, we tend to emphasize certain subjects over and above other subjects in the school system. As an emerging democratic society, our concept of liberal education must go beyond the phrase "for its own sake" so that everyone is seen as an actor in the socio-political and economic 'chessboard. The worth of every learner as an

individual and a person must be basis of our survival as a nation.

Our level of religiosity and reverence given to certain class of persons is enough to question the extent and contribution of liberal education in the Nigerian state. Religion has beclouded our sense of reasoning to the extent that we find it difficult to differentiate between belief and reason, faith and culture. The consequence of this is that we have no moral justification to question the fact or reality before us because there is a better place beyond the clouds where our souls will find eternal bliss. This is also a misconception of the notion of liberal education. This is because a man whose sense of reasoning is governed by emotions may not necessarily believe in the all-sufficient God, but in a god created by circumstance (Jim, 2014) <sup>[13]</sup>. The all-sufficient God does not live in special people's homes but in the home of everyone. The concept of equality before the law guarantees equal right to all social services. For instance, a common man ought to receive the same kind of treatment with the so called rich man in the same hospital. Not until we have this in place we cannot say we have a democracy in place or strive to uphold our democratic ideals.

Another challenge is the African misconception of the learner who is sometimes regarded as a being not mature enough to think, question and raise doubts over certain issues. This misconception made Europeans to believe that African learners are not free, independent-minded to decide for themselves without consulting superiors whom they regard as "infallible" (Jim, 2014) <sup>[13]</sup>. The African worldview deprived learners from childhood to doubt, reflect, question, and observe because they are considered not old enough to think for themselves. Europeans also regard African consciousness as social consciousness rather than individual consciousness.

According to them, African learners lack personal initiative, creativity, and critical thinking because they do not accept personal responsibility for their thoughts, conduct and actions hence they see African learners as persons who operate from social consciousness. The point here is that the traditional African society seems authoritarian and learners are expected to seek for motivation, direction, advice from parents and adults even when they are old enough to take decisions. This socio-cultural situation was referred to as unwavering metaphysical commitment to superiors because it seems to be in traditional African experience not to question the activities of superiors (Jim, 2014) <sup>[13]</sup>.

According to Paul (2010) <sup>[26]</sup>, education gives the learner opportunity to discover his bearing in life. Discovering one's bearing in life implies independence; and to be independent is to be self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency is to be our brother's keeper. So, the concept of individualism ought to be for the common good of society. And this is why every learner is a potential participant in the pursuit of the good life and common good of all. In fact, the Nigerian upper basic learner is potentially gifted in his own right.

### Summary

The Nigeria educational system has been engulfed in the quagmire of policy failure signaled by confused catastrophic changes in the educational policies. This has made Nigeria educational policies like the judge's obiter dictum where policies are just made to satisfy the international community's demand at the moment of conception. Issues such as quota admission system, placement of ceiling on the

number of pupils to be registered are gross abuse of peoples' right and contradict the "education for all (EFA)" policy.

### Recommendations

From the foregoing the following recommendations were made:

1. If the power, oil and agricultural sectors deserve special attention by government, the education sector deserves more funding from government. There should be a nationwide UBE awareness and enrollment campaign similar to that of the national immunization programme, general election dates, national census, etc.
2. Since all the three tiers of government have concurrent responsibilities for education 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 25% to education, and approved funds should be released to implementing agencies as at when due without delays.
3. In order to access the UBE intervention fund made available yearly, states should endeavor 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.
4. 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.

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