

## **The Extent of Transformation in The Universal Basic Education (Ube) Programme of Cross River State Junior Secondary Schools in Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the extent of transformation that has taken place in the Cross River State junior secondary education programme since the inception of the Universal Basic Education Scheme in Nigeria in 1999. The focus is on the adequacy of the human resources and infrastructural facilities and equipment. Of the two research questions used, one centered on the adequacy of teachers, while the other was on the adequacy of infrastructural facilities and equipment. Respondents on the 20 item researchers made questionnaire comprised of 30m principles and 300 teachers drawn from the three education zones of the state. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The results reveal that the much taulted transformation programme in the education sector has not been significantly felt in the junior secondary education programme of Cross River State. This conclusion is drawn from the preponderant opinion of both principals and teachers that the quantity of teachers was still inadequate due to lack of sufficient teachers in Basic Science, Mathematics and Vocational subjects. The study also revealed inadequacy in facilities and equipment like classroom space and furnishing, library and volume of books, laboratory, studios and intro-tech workshop. There were also the lack of power supply, games and sporting facilities and potable water supply in schools.*

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### **I. Introduction**

At political independence in 1960, Nigeria inherited a system of education that was largely literary in nature. Most educated Nigerians were those who read arts, humanities and the social sciences. As a result, Nigeria depended heavily on foreign expertise for her technical man-power needs. This accounted for why her industrial, health and mining sectors were dominated by expatriates which resulted in heavy capital flight up the present moment.

The indigenization decree of 1970 aimed at reducing the foreign dominance trend on the economy and to give Nigerians a sense of belonging and participation in the economy. Consequent upon the decree, many foreign companies were nationalized, Nigerians were given opportunity to own shares in those companies and the incorporation of indigenous companies was vigorously pursued by the government through the creation of the required enabling environment. Hence the establishment of the Corporate Affairs Commission and the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry charged with the responsibility of accelerating the pace of commerce and industrialization in the country.

Government soon realized that the development of the economic sector was contingent on the development of the education sector. Basic skills required for service in industries depended on basic knowledge and skills acquired through education. To this end the Federal Republic of Nigeria declared a Universal Free Primary education in 1976. This was aimed at providing Nigerians with the basic skills needed for political participation and economic development. The introduction of introductory technology into the junior secondary education curriculum in the 1980s was to equip school leavers with the rudimentary skills needed for participation in the industries and self-employment. Shortly after the introduction of the technology programme into the junior secondary schools, it became clear that government was not actually ready for the programme in schools. This was so because despite the building of workshops, importation of the needed equipment and their distribution to schools, there was grossly inadequate supply of the needed man-power to schools for the implementation of the programme. There is no gainsaying the fact that the programme flopped.

It is based on the above scenario that the researchers want to undertake a study on the extent of transformation in the junior secondary education programme advocated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria in her Basic Education programme. Basic education according to the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 1999) is the type of education given at the fundamental level of education. The programme was launched by the then president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1999. The concept of basic education, however, changes and varies from time to time and from country to country. The six years primary education was considered basic education for Nigeria when the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme was launched for Nigeria in 1976 (Ugweke, 2011). The concept of Basic education in Nigeria at present is the first nine years

of schooling from primary to three years of junior secondary school. This is also applicable in Japan and Russia (Nwagwu, 2001). The concept of basic education in Nigeria is education that makes one a functional member of his society and equips the beneficiary with the aptitude and skills necessary for life-long learning. The skills include the rudiments of literacy, numeracy and communication (Mgbodile, 2000 & Enyi, 2004).

The Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria (2000) stated the goals of basic education to be the universalization of access to basic education, providing a conducive learning environment and eradication of illiteracy in Nigeria within the shortest possible time.

The UBE aims at achieving the following specific objectives:

- developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
- provision of free compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age;
- reducing the incidence of pupils leaving school early from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency;
- catering, through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the promotion of basic education, for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling (FRN, 2008).
- ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civil values needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long education;

The above objectives of UBE are laudable and capable of enhancing literacy, quality of education and socio-economic development in Nigeria if well managed and implemented. It could be recalled that there had been similar laudable education programmes in the past which were unsuccessful. These included the universal primary education programme, the Introductory Technology Programme in the junior secondary schools in the 1980s and the National Language Policy (Ogbonnaya, 2003, & Ogbiji 2007). Scholars and evaluators have attributed the failure of those educational programmes to a number of factors. The factors include inadequate preparation, inadequate statistical, human and material resources, incompetent management strategies and lack of effective monitoring, supervision and the will on the part of government to make the programmes succeed (Ogbiji, 2007, Onwuene, 2001). It is for the above reasons that Mgbodile (2000), Uwazurike, (2001) and Enyi (2004) observed that adequate and lofty policy formulation has not been an issue in Nigeria but their effective implementation and management. Management in the view of Ogbiji (2012), Fafunwa (2001), Peretomode (1999) is a social process that involves sequences of activities, such as adequate planning, organizing, controlling and coordination of human and material resources to achieve set objectives.

The rationale for the introduction of UBE in Nigeria is primarily based on the fact that illiteracy rate is still high, accounting for over 40 percent of the population. The illiterate adults and youths lack basic skills and contribute very little to national development. Nigeria, being a signatory to the international conventions such as the 1990 Jomtien declaration on Education for all by the year 2000, the E – 9 Nations committed to total eradication of illiteracy, the AU Decade of Education in Africa (1997 – 2006) and the Durban statement of commitment to education (1998), cannot ignore the introduction of the UBE programme for her citizens (Ogbonnaya, 2001 & Ogbiji, 2007). The UBE guidelines (1999) and the National Policy on Education (2008) are very clear on the implementation strategies to be adopted to ensure its success. Some of the strategies to be adopted are the following

**Access:** Access to education will be ensured by the rehabilitation of existing school structure, building of new classrooms and establishment of new schools where necessary. Others are decreasing pupil / teacher ratio to 25:1 in the pre-primary, 35:1 at the UBE programme and 40:1 at the senior secondary school programme; designing special programme for reaching girls, street boys and children of nomads and migrant fishermen.

**Free, Universal and Compulsory:** This will be ensured by the Federal Government giving matching grants to states for UBE programme, Federal Government giving special grants for state initiative on educational imbalance, special education, school feeding, making provision for all the vulnerable groups to have access to education and prosecuting parents and guardians who prevent their children from registering in schools.

**Quality and Relevance:** These would be ensured by emphasis on literacy and numeracy, manipulative and communicative skills, the inculcation of life skills as well as moral and civic values. Minimum standard is all areas of emphasis in to be established and used for evaluation of outcomes.

### **Statement of the Problem**

From the launching of the UBE programme in 1999 to the present (2014), the programme is in its second decade of operation. A critical examination of the programme at the junior secondary school level still appears as if the objectives and the strategies put in place are not fully implemented and objectives are not being realized. Hence this study seeks to provide answer to the questions: to what extent has the Federal Government

education transformation programme been affected in the provision of human and materials resources in the Cross River State junior secondary education programme?

**Research Questions:**

1. How adequate are the human resources for the transformation of junior secondary education programme in Cross River State?
2. What is the adequacy of available infrastructural facilities and equipment for the transformation of the junior secondary education programme in Cross River State?

**II. Research Methodology**

The research adopted descriptive survey design. This is so because the study involved a description of the status of the human, infrastructural facilities and equipment in the Cross River State junior secondary schools to determine the extent of their adequacy in bringing about the desired transformation at that level of education. Cross River State has a total of 235 public secondary schools in her three education zones with 115, 903 students. The schools have a total of 6585 serving teachers. All the principals and teachers of public secondary schools constitute the study population. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting twenty principals and one hundred teachers from each zone, thus giving a total sample size of three hundred and sixty respondents.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Transformation Techniques in Cross River State Junior Secondary Education Questionnaire”. The instrument was constructed by the researchers in a modified likert form and scored in a 4 point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). It is made up of two sections. Section “A” is on the personal data of respondents, while section ‘B’ which contains 20 items in two clusters is meant to provide answers to the two research questions used for the study.

Validation of the instrument was done by two experts, one in Educational management and the other in Measurement and Evaluation, of Cross River University of Technology, Calabar. Their suggestions were noted and effected. To ensure the internal consistency of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted using five principals and twenty teachers of public secondary schools in Itu Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Cronbach Alpha was used in calculating the internal reliability of the two clusters. The calculation yielded a reliability index of 0.78. The result was considered appropriate as it indicated that the items in the two clusters were homogenous and adequate. Data collection was done using direct delivery technique by the researchers. This method ensured complete return of the instrument from the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used in analyzing the data collected and provide answers to two research questions.

**III. Results and Interpretation of Findings**

**Research question 1**

How adequate are the human resources for the transformation of junior secondary education programme in Cross River State?

**Table 1:** Statistical analysis of the perception of principals and teachers on the adequacy of human resources for the transformation of junior secondary education in Cross River State.

S/N	Adequacy of human resources	Principals n=60		Teachers n =300			
		X	SD	Remk.	X	SD	Remk
1	There are not enough qualified teachers for the Junior Secondary (J.S.) Programme	3.27	0.63	A	3.25	0.09	A
2	BASIC Science teachers are inadequate	3.29	0.57	A	3.21	0.73	A
3	Mathematics teachers are in short supply	3.60	0.63	A	3.64	0.49	A
4	Many vocation teachers in introductory technology and business studies lack the qualification to teach them.	3.28	0.58	A	3.11	0.63	A
5	Introductory technology and home economics are not taught in some schools due to lack of teachers	2.33	0.84	D	2.44	0.96	D
6	In some schools communities and PTA have had to employ teachers to teach core subjects.	3.29	0.58	A	3.10	0.62	A
7	Some vocational subject teachers concentrate on theories and ignore the practical aspects	3.30	0.54	A	3.21	0.70	A
8	Some units in the subjects are ignored due to the inadequacies of teachers.	2.29	0.89	A	2.91	0.95	A
9	There is high turn-over of teacher due to poor conditions of service	2.35	0.94	D	2.45	1.06	D
10	Many adequately qualified teachers are not committed to their duties	2.32	0.49	D	1.38	0.58	d

From table 1 above it can be observed that items 1,2,3,4,6,7 and 8 are rated by principals as 3.27, 3.29, 3.60, 3.28, 3.29, 3.30, and 2.97 with their corresponding standard deviation of 0.63, 0.57, 0.53, 0.58, 0.58, 0.54 and 0.89. teachers also rated items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 as 3.25, 3.21, 3.64, 3.11, 3.10, 3.21 and 2.91 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.09, 0.73, 0.49, 0.63, 0.62, 0.07 and 0.95. Each of the above listed items had a mean score above 2.50. The scores show that respondents are of the view that there are not enough, qualified teachers for basic science and mathematics, vocational subjects in the junior secondary education programme as a whole. They are unanimous in the view that some teachers are employed by communities or PTA, that some teachers concentrate on theories and ignored due to the teache incompetence. All the respondents rejected (D) the view that some core subjects were not taught in some schools, that there was high teacher turn over and that qualified teachers were not committed to their jobs.

S/N	Items	Principals n= 60		Teachers n = 300			
		X	SD	Remk.	X	SD	Remk
11	There are adequate classrooms and facilities that enhance effective teaching and learning	1.85	0.58	D	2.21	0.51	D
12	School libraries have adequate accommodation and reading materials for student	1.42	0.48	D	2.35	0.78	D
13	School laboratories adequate equipment for teaching and learning	3.58	0.78	A	3.15	0.58	A
14	Some schools do not have introductory technology workshop	3.07	0.47	A	2.67	0.84	A
15	In some schools the workshop have not installed due to lack of qualified personnel	3.58	0.78	A	3.15	0.58	A
16	Some schools lack Home Economic Laboratory	3.96	0.63	A	3.46	0.73	A
17	Many schools lack access to potable water, toilet and electricity for decent livelihood	3.12	0.78	A	3.41	0.44	A
18	Many workshop tools cannot be put to use due to absence of power supply	3.28	0.65	A	3.54	0.82	A
19	Games and sporting facilities are lack in many schools	3.22	0.54	A	3.25	0.71	A
20	There is adequate funding for maintenance of school facilities and equipment.	2.23	0.46	A	2.37	0.58	d

Looking at table 2 above, one can observe that items 11, 12, 13, and 20 are rated 2.14, 1.42, 2.00 and 2.37 with standard deviation of 1.04, 0.48, 0.98 and 0.58 respectively. The ratings are below 2.50 for both principals and teacher which indicate rejection for positively worded items. In effect, items 11,12, 13 and 20 are denying the adequacy of classroom facilities, libraries and reading materials, laboratories and funding for the junior secondary education system in Cross River State. In the same vein items 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 which are negatively worded have rating of 3.07, 3.58, 3.58, 3.96, 3.12, 3.28 and 3.22 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.47, 0.78, 0.63, 0.65 and 0.54 by principals and teachers on the said items. The items indicate that some schools do not have introduction technology workshop, the intro-tech equipment have not been installed in some schools due to lack of expertise and some schools lack Home Economic Laboratory. Others are saying that many schools lack access to potable water, toilet and electricity, with damaging consequence on the quality of life and learning in the schools. Many other schools lack games and sporting facilities, the benefits of which they are denied off.

#### **IV. Discussion of Findings**

The study sought to find out the adequacy of human resources, infrastructure and equipment at the junior secondary education in Cross River State that can transform the education from what had been in the past. Research question one was concerned about the adequacy of human resources (teachers) that is capable of transforming that level of education in Cross River State. The findings reveal that both principal and teachers share the same perception that there are still inadequate personnel in the teaching of Basic Science, Mathematics, Introductory Technology and Home Economics. The study also reveals that some teachers handling core subjects were not qualified in those areas, that some teachers teach more of theories and ignore the practical due to their deficiency.

The findings in Research question one are indicating that the much taunted transformation programme at the junior secondary education level is more of a myth than reality. This goes to buttress what Mgbodile (2000), Onwueme (2001), Uwasurike (2001), Ogbonnaya (2003), Eyin (2004) and Ogbiji (2007) had earlier said that policy implementation, not formulation, has been the bane of Nigeria’s education programme. Those same factors that caused the failure of the universal primary education of 1976, the introductory technology programme in the 1980s and the National language policy appear to be prevalent in the current UBE programme. While government had the intention of transforming the junior secondary education from its non functional status in the past, a lot still needs to be done in terms of human resources adequacy.

Research question two sought to find out the state of adequacy of infrastructural facilities and equipment for the transformation of the junior secondary education programme. From the data analyzed, there is a congruence of opinion by both principals and teachers that infrastructural facilities and equipment are still very inadequate to achieve the desired objectives. The inadequacies include poor classroom facilities, poor library facilities and furnishing, poor laboratory and workshops facilities. Many schools have no workshop, no power supply, no potable water supply, no games and sporting facilities and inadequate funding for maintenance of facilities and equipment.

The findings imply that adequacy of infrastructural facilities and equipment that can bring about a remarkable transformation in the junior secondary education from what obtained in the past is still far-fetched. This is worrisome in the sense that the current observed inadequacies were the banes of the past education programmes that failed. The findings of Ogbonnaya, and Ajagbonwu (1997), Ezeocha (1997), Enyi (2004) and Ogbiji (2007) showed that these recurrent factors were those that caused the failure of the 1976 UPE programme in Nigeria. They found out from separate researches that the UPE programme failed due to inadequacy of teachers, funding and infrastructural facilities and equipment as well as poor supervision and lack of will on the part of government to make the programme succeed.

## **V. Conclusion**

Consequent upon the findings of this study the following conclusions were drawn. There was inadequacy of human resources (teachers) in quantity and quality in the junior secondary education programme in Cross River State of Nigeria. There was also inadequacy in the available infrastructural facilities and equipment among public junior secondary schools in Cross River State. These inadequacies in human and infrastructural facilities are truncating the desired transformation in the education programme of the state. The objective of the education transformation programme is to produce junior secondary school leavers who possess functional literacy and vocational skills that can make them self-employed on leaving school. This will stem the tide of unemployment and the production of unemployable school leavers. If no proactive measures are urgently taken to checkmate these inadequacies, the nine-year Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme of government may not achieve the set objectives earlier enunciated in this research.

## **VI. Recommendations**

Arising from the findings of this study, it is pertinent to recommend as follows:-

- 1) Government should ensure that adequate number quality of teachers are employed for the junior secondary education programme in the state, especially in the core subjects and in subjects like Basic Science, Mathematics and vocational subjects.
- 2) Government should also ensure that there is adequate teaching – learning facilities and equipment, such as adequate classrooms and furnishing library and furnishing laboratory, workshops and furnishing for effective instructional delivery and learning in the junior secondary schools across the state.
- 3) There is urgent need for potable water, power supply and sporting facilities to be provided in all public secondary schools in Cross River State to enhance the quality of life and learning.
- 4) Adequate funding by way of imprest should be provided to all heads of secondary schools in the state for the maintenance of infrastructural facilities, equipment and offices.
- 5) Government should form an effective partnership in the management of secondary schools between government, Parent Teachers Association and the host community.
- 6) Government should ensure effective supervisory services, monitoring and evaluation to provide prompt and regular feedback to government on the happenings within the school system for necessary action.

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