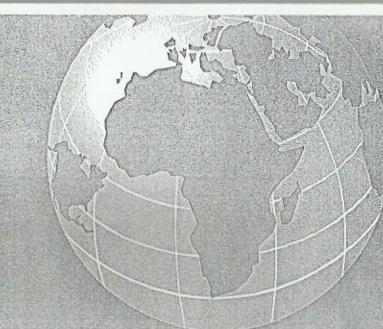
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Universal Basic Education And Equal Educational Opportunity In Lagos State: Myths And Realities

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Abstract

This paper sets to examine the nexus between Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Equal Educational Opportunity (EEO). The thrust of this paper also examines the Nigerian education system with a view to identify the status of equality of educational Opportunity in Nigeria. It further provides the evaluation of UBE as a tool for effecting Equal Educational Opportunity.

Keywords: Universal Basic Education, Equality, Educational Opportunity.

Introduction

President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania once said Africa has not really given much thought to the problem of education (Nyerere, 1967). In his own view, the problem of education in Africa is multidimensional. It ranges from lack of clear-cut of sociological and philosophical politicization of education as well as borrower attitude in education programme that is foreign to the country.

Recently, the identified problem with education worldwide is the inequality in education. In 1993 at India New Delhi International Collaborators in education thematized the forum as Declaration of the E-9 Countries (Federal Government Report, 2001). Nigeria as a member of the E-9 countries, that is, a country with the higher number of illiterates. Thus, it becomes the focus of Nigeria education to establish a type of educational programme which will fit to eradicate illiteracy with the aim of giving education equally to all and sundry. In view of this, Oladokun (2002) further explains that on 30 September, 1999, Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was launched to establish an education for all programme in Nigeria and to give equal opportunity in education to all Nigerians especially the children of the school-going ages and adults alike.

Since 1999, several attempts have been taken by Nigerian government and stakeholders in education to eradicate illiteracy and to give citizens equal opportunity to education. Sociologically and philosophically fundamental questions we need to ask are: Is education equal in Nigeria? Is UBE capable of providing equal educational opportunity (EEO) in Nigeria? What is UBE and what is EEO?

Universal Basic Education

The UBE vision intends to promote a learner and society centred philosophy with a curriculum that strives to emphasize the ability of literacy and numeracy to that of skills acquisition in the primary school as well as Junior Secondary School. Hence, UBE vision intends to produce children who are not limited in content to 'knowing' but also 'doing'. In view of this, the UBE curriculum emphasizes the followings:

- teach lo cal and crafts (primary and junior secondary)
- teaching of creative skills

- 3. teach fundamental human rights and respect for others rights:
- 4. teach citizenship education as well as the ideals of democracy
- 5. to teach sport for healthy physical and mental development
- 6. to teach vocational skills (in junior secondary)
- . 7. teach information technology and scientific knowledge;
 - to teach essential life skills required for daily needs e.g. health and sexually education, HIV/AIDS education, aesthetics and environmental education.
 - teach cultural values, ethics, morality, discipline and peaceful existence.

An ambitious education programme to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national development, political consciousness and national development political consciousness and national integration (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2001).

Education on the first page of National Policy on Education (2004) stresses that education "is an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. It is not strange; therefore, that UBE programme is conceived by the Nigerian government as an instrument for affecting the goal set in the education policy. This interpretation has its own conceptual implication, that universal education is conceived as an educational programme to eradicate illiteracy and poverty as well as to stimulate and accelerate national development and this is to be achieved through Universal Basic Education. This interpretation is regarded as capable of building in those who benefit from it the ability to work up their own formula for raising them above poverty and ignorance so as to contribute to the society at large. This interpretation is informed by the government agitation to imbibe international instruction for all collaborators especially E-9 countries, in which Nigeria is one, to eradicate illiteracy.

Eradication of illiteracy itself is the first of the goals of the Global Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The United Nations (2000) states the two targets goals thus:

Target 1: Haïve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day. Target 2: Halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Also, the International collaborators equally agreed to "achieve universal primary education" with a view to "ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling" (Akintayo and Oghenekohwo, 2006; United Nations, 2000).

Nigerian government as a partner in the various covenants entered at different summits had to adhere to the directive via UBE.

Table 1: International Conferences Held on Education for All Agenda

S/N	DATE	HOST	TOWN	THEME
1.	March 1990	Thailand	Jomtien	Declaration and Framework for Action on Basic Education for All
2.	1992	Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou	Pan African Declaration on the Education of Girls and Women
3.	1993	India	New Delhi	Declaration of the E -9 Countries
4.	1995	Jordan	Amman	Amman-Reaffirmation; Calling for forceful
5.	1998	S/Africa	Durban	Statement of Commitment to the Promotion of Education for All,
6	Dec. 1999	S/Africa	Johannesburg	EFA: A framework for Action in Sub Saharan Africa
7.	1999	Argentina	Buenos Aires	One Decade of Education for all: The Challenges Ahead
8.	1999	USA	N/York City	World Summit on Childrens Education
9.	Feb. 2, 2000	Brazil	Recife	Re-Affirmation: Education for All.
10.	April 2000	Senegal	Dakar	World Education Forum: Post-Jomtien Deliberation.

Source: UBEAnnual Report 2001

To accede the international call and to use education to accelerate national development, Nigerian government conceives universal education as defined above. The interpretation has implication for process, that is, it gives the meaning of which universal education is a process through which illiteracy and poverty are eradicated nation wide so as to achieve national development.

Universal Basic Education (UBE) as Nigeria's Response To Global Education for ALL (EFA)

Nigerian government step at entrenching UBE programme in the country with wider coverage than the earlier educational policy like Universal Primary Education (UPE) which has been largely caused by the status of Nigeria as a signatory to the declarations of the Jomtien World Conference on Education for ALL.

The UBE objectives, based on the Jomtien and Dakar Declarations are to ensure the following:

- full mobilization of all classes in Nigeria society in a favour of comprehensive and quality early childhood care education.
- full access of children and adolescents to primary and junior secondary schooling, eliminating all forms of social, economic, political, gender, cultural and all other obstacles in the process.
- Enhancement of quality education with due emphasis on curriculum enrichment.
- Teacher improvement and promotion of life long learning skills.
- Raising functional literacy to the level needed to empower the adults for full participation in nation-building.
- Enriching and streamlining the nation's non-formal education endeavours to improve the socio-economic relevance and productivity of the beneficiaries of complementary education opportunities.

There are the mainstream of the objectives of Nigerian UBE. Not only that, Nigeria basic education as a universal phenomenon derives from the Jomtien Declaration and framework of Action on Education for all in 1990 (Lacey, 1976). According to Okediran (2003) and Obanya (2003) within

this declaration, the universality of Nigeria basic education becomes relevant to the global expression as basic education is not simply a package, but more of a process, not a question of number of years of schooling but more of a question of consolidatory literary and numeric, the acquisition of socially appropriate life skills, and especially the skill of learning how to learn. The education includes informal, non-formal and formal education all fully integrated and not just schooling but educating. In this sense, education is regarded as an instrument to sustain the beneficiary will posses after education for better living and development.

Obayan, (2003) highlights the UBE global EFA scope thus:

- programmes initiatives for early childhood care and education
- special programme for nomadic populations
- education programmes for the acquisition of functional literacy, numeric and life skills, especially for adults (persons aged 15 and above).
- non-formal skills and apprenticeship training for adolescents and youth who have not had the benefit of formal education
- out-of-school, non-formal programmes for up-dating the knowledge and skills of persons who left school before acquiring the basic skills needed for life-long learning.

Also, Federal Government of Nigeria (2001) highlights the EFA goals, tagged Dakar Framework as reflected in the mainstream of the UBE policy thus:

- expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- ensuring that 2015 all children, especially, in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to a complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through e-quitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

- achieving a 50% improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education.
- eliminating gender disparities in primary education by 2015 and achieving gender equality, access and achievement in basic education of good qualities;
- improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of art, so that recognizable and measurable outcomes achieved by all especially in essential life skills.

The Nigeria response to global educational policy is a giant stride at putting in place in the country, the global vision of education. However, it is obvious that Equal Educational Opportunity (EEO) is still elusive and far from the citizens because of the inequality that the policy itself is perpetrating. For instance, many children, despite governments legislation of the compulsory status of UBE, are still seen loitering around during school hours either begging for alms or hawking. These children could not benefit from the UBE programme because of the status of their parents and also because the state does not support the policy with welfare package.

UBE policy has been spelt out in the National Policy on Education of 2004. It is defined as follow: a variety of forms depending on needs and possibilities will be provided for all citizens. This statement indicates that UBE is all-inclusive and of wider scope. But then, the description is not clearly spelt out, because the criteria of need and possibility are ambigyous and are capable enough to spell doom for proper implementation of the programme. In other words, if an educational programme is to be provided based on need and possibilities, then it is suggestive that, it may not be provided when there are constraints to put them in place, whereas basic education must be provided barring all constraints because it is a life necessity. The constraint will eventually cause gross inequality, which is against the goal of UBE.

Equality, a Word that Connotes Relationship

Equality describes a relationship between two things. That is, something is equal to the other. A discussion of equality of educational opportunity is also interested in relationships between groups/individuals and see whether their educational opportunity is equal. Also, because equality of educational opportunity examines a relationship, we shall examine a

definition that will clearly indicate such relationship and that which will facilitate thinking about what must be equal to what. For instance,

- A and B have equality of education opportunity. This expression which is in the form of a sentence, exhibits the fact that equality is a dyadic relationship (As an analysis, this expression is equivalent in meaning to 2
- 2) A and B have same amount of opportunity for an education.

In terms of the concept or conception distinction used by John Rawis, the analysis he offered outlines the concept of equality of educational opportunity and also specified in addition what constitutes education and having an opportunity would be to offer a conception of equality of educational opportunity. Rawis explain the concept thus:

It seems naturally to think of the concept of Justice as from the various conceptions of justice and as being-specified by the role which... different conceptions have in common. Those who held different conceptions of Justice can then, still argue that institutions are just when no arbitrary distinctions motions are made, between persons in the assigning of basic rights and duties and when the rule determine a proper balance between competing claims to the advantages of social life, men can agree to this description of just institutions since the notions of an arbitrary distinction and of a proper balance, which are included in the concept of justice, are left open for each to interprete according to the principle of justice that he accepts. These principles single out which similarities and differences among persons are relevant in determining rights and duties and they specify which division of advan tages is appropriate.

An analysis of the views of John Rawls above is a pointer to the fact that an application of the concept, equality of educational opportunity requires value judgmen ts; in addition to require an endorsement of the concept as a guide to life. The point that additional value judgments are required enables one to explain why there is so much agreement.

An important factor worthy of mention at this point in time is that the whole argument of e ducational opportunity also depends in part upon ones judgement of what constitutes an education. If one judges only academic (formal education) to be the only proper education, as contrasted to an

education in hunting or fishing then there is a problem of distinction or alternatively, if one makes the value judgement that mastery of hunting, fishing does not constitute an education, whereas academic mastery does constitute an education, then there will be a problem of what constitute equal educational opportunity for those who found themselves pursuing formal education and informal education.

Sociologically, the culture of a group may encourage hunting, fishing and so on, while another may lay emphasis on the compulsory school life where days are spent in an attempt to develop oneself academically. Granted this typical condition, we can see that the issue of whether or not people have equal educational opportunity will depend in part on the value judgement of what constitutes an education.

It is also necessary to clarify the idea of "having an opportunity". Let us assume that academic educational goals, inherent ability and environmental differences are such that people with different value orientations can understandably still come with different equality-ofopportunity judgements when looking at the same situation. In addition, some had less educational opportunity because their background was not academically stimulating may be because his/her parents scoffed at their academic ideas, or because of poverty to train them. An interesting feature is that the two positions assumed above have difficulties seeing the rationality of the other position. The first assumption has failed to take account of some obvious basic facts while the second thinks one has introduced some irrelevancies. It is possible that believers of each assumption will have trouble seeing how the other think the way he/she did, Our interrogation of the situation is that the controversy is often not about a matter of fact nor about a concept, but rather about the value judgments that we make in applying the concept "to have an opportunity".

Clarification of the Concept of Equality

It is evident that the concept of equality is difficult to give a definite definition. Rather many have applied the concept to describe a given sociological and educational position or the other. What is evident is that the term or concept of equality has become questionable under an unequal condition. Equality becomes meaningful when there is the assurance of equal treatment.

In view of this Solarin (1989) maintains thus:

Those who adhere to the principle of equality are often accused of being committed to some empirical generalization about the nature of reality. If they were, they would be in a highly vulnerable position for taken as an empirical generalization, the statement that all men are equal is either vacuous or patently false. It is vacuous because the term "equal" like the term "same" is a term used for comparing people or things, and people or things can only be compared in some respects. Therefore, the respect in which people are being compared is not explicit, the statement is vacuous.

The above assertion contends that equality in educational opportunity does not mean same or similar method of teaching or dissemination of knowledge to the learners. It does not also mean uniform educational quality. To ask that all students pursue the same course or to insist that everyone be exposed to the same or similar method of teaching or dissemination of knowledge to the learners. It does not also mean uniform educational quality. To ask that all students pursue the same course or to insist that everyone be exposed to the same or identical differences. However, he argued that equality of educational opportunity does not mean that students will be left on their own to exercise their capacities. It is hoped that each student should "be able to pursue educational programme that will meet his interest, and needs.

Barrow (1978) in his own contribution to this analysis raised the question of what it me and to say that one believes in equality. He asked what is equality? He wondered whether any reasons can be produced for valuing it. He introduced a moral view into his own analysis when he explained that what is meant by the claim that all men ought to be equal is that all men ought to be treated equally or regarded as equally important and having an equal claim to consideration of their interest which Karl Marx refers to as classless society.

He further contented that the principle of equality or the claim that all men should be treated equally is identical to the principle of impartiality or the claim that all people should be treated impartially. To be partial is not to treat all people in the same way that would rather be indiscriminate. An impartial person is one who discriminates only with good reasons.

Equality understood this way makes the concept limited to practical value. It tells us the manner in which we should proceed if we wish to treat people equally, but it does not tell us what equal treatment in any specific instance would actually involve. It tells us that we must only differentiate between people when there are good reasons for so doing but it does not tell us what reasons are good for discrimination and it does not even tell us how to set about judging whether a reason is good or not.

Nonetheless, he argued that the principle of equality has at least two stand points.

- (i) The demand that people shall only be treated differently if good reasons can be given for so doing puts the onus on those who wish to treat various people differently to produce a good argument for so doing. The principle embodies a presumption in favour of treating people in the same way that can only be set aside for good reason.
- (ii) It involves the assumption that all people have to be considered as of equal importance, or that the claims of all people have to be taken equally serious.

Benn and Peters (1989), discusses equality and excellence in education, and how his discussion bears on the justification and the distribution of educational benefits. He is highly critical of egalitarian claims and puts forward arguments in favour of excellence in education, his contention is, look for justification for inequalities and that in the absence of justification of an unequal distribution of certain benefits; the benefits should be equally distributed.

Benn and Peters in a joint opinion claimed that the word equality is used in one of its senses when we make comparisons. They both argued that we can compare things only because they have some quality or attribute in common. However, in social and political theory, equality is more often prescriptive than descriptive. In this sense, to say that "All men are equal" would imply not that they possess some attribute or attributes in the same degree, but that they ought to be treated alike. But it is hardly likely that anyone would want to see all men treated alike in every respect. Both authors argued further that there are clearly some differences proper grounds for differences in treatment. Equal (in the descriptive-comparative sense) ought to be treated alike in the respect in which they are equal, but there may be other respects in which they differ or are unequal which justify difference in treatment.

Table 2: Enrollment Ratios Males and Females

	1998	1999	2000	2004
Enrollments		2333	2000	2001
Male	9,232	20.000	10 717	
Female		20,058	10,745	10,932
Total	6,812	7,848	8,413	8,452
	16,045	17,907	19,158	19,385
Gross Enrollmen	t Ratio (1)		1	20/000
Male			1000	100 -
Female			105.3	100.5
Total			85.2	82.6
	B 11 121		95.4	91.8
Gross Enrollment	: Ratio (2)			
Male			101.5	99.9
emale				
fotal	90.0		79.8	77.3
	80.8		90.7	88.9

Source: World Bank 2004

Table 3: Secondary School enrollments, 1999-2002 and Gross Enrollment Ratios Males and Females (Percent)

700	1999	2000	2001	10000
JSS Enrollments		1000	12001	2002
Male ·	1,144	1,265	14	
Female	916		1,432	1,519
Tota I	2000	1,012	1,148	1,193
Gross Enrollment	Datio (1)	2,277	2,580	2,712
Malè				
Female	30	33	33	
Tota#	20	27	27	
SSS Enrolments	27	39	30	-
Male			100	1
The state of the s	904	997	1,116	1.
Fema le	756	829		1,188
Total	1,660	The second second	905	965
		1,826	2,021	2,153
Gross Enrollment P	Ratio (2)			The state of
Male				
emale	26	29	29	
Total .	23	24 -	25	
. O.C.	25	26	27	

Source: World Bank 2004

Primary School enrollments, 1998-2001 and Gross The table two and three is, however, showing considerable effort of education for all (EFA) stressing the equal opportunity of education among male and females in Nigeria of which Lagos State is of no exception.

Equality of Educational Opportunity in Lagos State UBE:

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria government has been searching for a programme of education that will implement equal educational opportunity and each attempt has always been a good policy in bad dir or a bad programme in a good direction. For instance, UBE may fail woefully though it is a good programme but in bad direction because it fails to track down what it was meant to catch up with, that is, to fill education disparity between the Northern and the Southern part of Nigeria. The gap is still wide sometimes in 1996 the number of candidate that took JAMB form in Adamawa State for instance, was 29 while more than 12,000 took the same form in Ogun State.

Again, the girl child abuse is predominant in the Northern part. There is also the disparity in the number of those that eventually move through ranks of education. Many people dropped on the way, many became half-baked and many cannot even show what divided the education they went through gave them.

The UBE, it is very unfortunate that Nigeria does not learn from the mistake of the past. The government only uses the programme to pay obeisance to international call. The government has failed woefully to consider why UPE failed or why the need for another one. Since the equality the UBE is meant to perpetrate becomes elusive one will not be wrong to see UBE as a myth. While we do not deny that some children wilt benefit from UBE at the same time we cannot deny that many children of the poor who are in the large number will not benefit from it especially in Lagos State, One of them is that the economic status of their parents will force them out of the school prematurely or will prevent them from benefiting from entering it at all. Two many of these children have become house girls/boys, street hawkers and labourer among others this is glaring in Lagos State. However, the reality of Universal basic Education in Lagos State also calls for State Government Capital expenditures.

Table 4: Nigeria: State Government Expenditures

NORTH W	/EST	996	1997	11:	998	119	99	20	000	20	01	20	002	Avera
Sokoto		3.0]	23.9	16		Tie								
Kaduna	2.	-	5.8	7.	_	15		1		20.		13	.8	14.9
Kano	1.		7.4	8.5	_	3.6	_	9.9		110		12	.1	7.4
Katsina			19.2	12	-	6.9	_	16	.8	13.		8.9		9.1
Kebbi	3.		5.5	6.6	_	11.				9.0	_	11.	4	12.8
Zamfara	6.6		3.5	8.7		43.	5	13.		13.0		1.4		14.2
Bauchi	10	-	16.0	17.	-	CF		7.9	-			7.6		6.9
Jigawa	1.2		3.3	7.9		6.5	-	9.3	-	8.9		5.7		10.7
Average	-	1	,	7.9	-	2.4	-	2,4		3.5		7.8	_	4.1
NORTH EA	ST				4									10.0
Borno	7.2	1	6.4	36.1		F 0	-		-					
Taraba	16.	1000	.8	9.8	-	5.8	-		1				1	6.4
Yobe	15.		5.2	16.0		13.3).3		2.4	5	.7		.6
Adama wa		1	3,6	10.0	-	10.8	+		17	.2	1	8.5	_	3.9
Kwara	17.5	7.	0	7.0	+	-	+						T	
Average		1	-	7.0	+	_	+		1				1	
NORTH CEN	TRAL			-	-				1				1	4.1
Benue	34.7	17	.9	11.4	T		13	4.8	Tax					
0 1				200			12.	4.0	120	.4			22	.2
Gombe		1	10	0.8	+	-	1,9	_	1	_				
Niger	3.5	9.4		3.0	20	5.7	1,9	ie u	4.	-	6.	7	4.4	1
Nassara wa		2.4		0.10	1	0,7	-	_	10				12	.7
Kogi	17.3	1.5	15	.3			15	^	28	The second second	33			
Plateau	0.9	7.5	_	.5		-	12	.0	15.	U	28,	7	13.	8
lverage							-	-	-	-	_			
OUTH EAST								_	_		_		13.	3
bia	17.1	16.3	3		7.5	. 1	3.1	-	2.0		_			
nambra	6.6	6.5	5.	9	7 1 1		3,1	-	2.8	-		1	9.4	
bonyi	1	0.0	1.	100		1	_	-	_	-				
nugu	5.0	9.0	1	-	6.4	-		-	_	-				
10					4.2	_	6.0	+		1		1		
/erage					714		0.0	-	2.7	2	.7	3	.9	
			_		-							6	.7	

SOUTH SOUT	Н							
Akwa Ibom	16.2	22.5	7	6.8				13.3
Bayelsa	3.4	11.8		3.2	9.1	10.2	6.1	7.3
Cross Rivers	2.5	7.4		6.8				
Delta	4.5	0.1		1.5	3.4	8.1	5.6	3.9
Edo	21.6	22.7	23.5	-				
River		9.6	6.5	6.2				
Average				130				8.2

Source: The World Bank 2004

The World Bank (2004) reveals the state education capital expenditures. For Lagos State, for instance, the table reveals that in 1999 there was an increase expenditure for the Universal Basic Education which was 18.9% compared with 1996 (2.8%), 1997 (2.4%) and 1998 (13.7%).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The legislation which UBE acts affirm is a mockery of the programme. No government would legislate education in Germany before children go to school. Their parents and these children already know the benefit inherent in going to school. They know after leaving school there are jobs waiting for them to make choice.

The economy of this country wilt need revamping, the rural areas need care and jobs need be crated, opportunity need to be open for alt to benefit from and the compelling status of UBE needs to be addressed programme of education. The level of parents needs have to be addressed. Avenues for opportunity need to be created for parents too. What can anybody achieve in this country without the government readiness to redirect the country's goals towards educations?

Recommendations

There should be general improvement and seriousness in implementing the Universal Basic Education in Lagos State. In doing this, funds for the UBE should be monitored; likewise, qualified and competent teachers should be employed.

Lagos State Government should improve in the level of the awareness of the programme; thus, enough and adequate facilities should be provided towards its successful implementation.

The Lagos State Government should endeavour to support and give adequate monitoring to achieve its vision, promote UBE mission as well as

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