UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) IN NIGERIA PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS IN LEARNING BASIC SCIENCE IN THE UPPER BASIC: A CASE STUDY OF KAJURU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE.

DR. (MRS.) CHRISTINE AGBOWURO
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

MRS. HAYATU SANSALLAH JOSEPH
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF JOS FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
PMB 2084
MOBILE PHONE NO 08077042931
E-mail: kehindeagbowuro@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT
The study investigated the problems and prospects in the learning of basic science in the upper basic under the umbrella of the Universal Basic Education programme. The purpose of the study was to assess the UBE programme in Nigeria. Six research questions guided the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted. The target population was 20,000 students and 150 teachers. A random selection gave a sample of 200 students and 15 teachers. Two set of questionnaires were employed. The simple percentage was adopted for data analysis. The results revealed that the teaching and learning of basic science in upper basic in Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State has some problems such as lack of enough qualified and competent teachers, high enrolment of students with lack of adequate facilities. Recommendations were in line with findings.

INTRODUCTION
The universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is a nine year basic educational programme, which was launched and executed by the government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance, poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national development, political consciousness and national integration. Former president Olusegun Obasanjo flagged off the UBE programme on the 30th of September 1999 in Sokoto, Sokoto State. The UBE programme is Nigeria is a strategy for the achievement of Education for all (EFA) and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The implementation process of the programme has been since 1999 but progress was hampered by lack of an enabling law to execute certain aspects of the programme. What a big relief it was when the president signed the UBE Bill into law on the 26th of May 2004 following its passage by the National Assembly. The UBE Act 2004 makes provision for basic education comprising of Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) Primary and Junior Secondary Education. The financing of Basic Education is the responsibility of the states and the Local Government. However, the Federal Government has decided to intervene in the provision of basic education with 2% of its consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF). For states to fully benefit from this fund, criteria were established which states are to comply.
The Act also provides the establishment of the Universal Basic education Commission (UBEC) to co-ordinate the implementation of the programme at state and Local Government levels through the state Basic education Board (SUBEB) of each state and the Local Government education Authority (LGEA). The UBEC was formally established on the 7th of October 2004.

Education is the bedrock of every nation. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a scheme aiming at providing free, quality, functional and compulsory education to all Nigerian children covering the primary and the Junior secondary school (JSS1-3). The first batch of the programme (lower basic) was enrolled in 2000/2001 academic session and the upper basic in 2006/2007. The Universal Basic education is an educational programme to replace the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme.

The universal basic education scheme is broader than the universal primary education programme. It is a scheme which intends to provide functional, free and quality education irrespective of sex, race, religion and location, to all primary schools and junior secondary schools. The scheme also stresses out the education of girls, nomads, migrants, refugees and the disable (FME, 2000).

The concept of basic education has been viewed as a necessity to individuals, society, country and the world at large. This is because without education, no nation develops economically, socially, politically and technologically. Education therefore is a key to development. Thus the importance of basic education to the well-being of mankind is obvious it is a development index. Madugu (2000) postulates that basic education is a prerequisite for the success of democracy and a fundamental ingredient for the development of human potential.

**Vision Statement**
To be a world class educational intervention and a regulatory agency for the promotion of uniform, qualitative and functional basic education in Nigeria.

**Mission statement**

To operate as an intermediary, coordinating and monitoring agency to progressively improve the capacity of states, Local Government Agencies and communities in the provision of unfettered access to high qualitative basic education in Nigeria.

In order to make sure that the UBE implementation is a success, and the objectives attained, eight important policy areas were identified for special attention. These areas included quality and sanitization, instructional materials, funding, curriculum, monitoring and evaluation. These again strengthen Nigerians’ confidence towards successful implementation.

Unfortunately, the approach is faulty and if care is not taken, it is likely to be a failure like the UPE of 1970s. Proper planning was not done before launching it. With the experience of UPE, it was expected that systematic planning would have been done before the take-off of the UBE programme. Analysis or diagnosis of state of schools should have taken place for guiding the implementation. There was need to know the position of the basic enablers such as infrastructural facilities, manpower, enrolment, fund, curricular and instructional materials. Shuaibu (2000) confirmed the poor approach. According to him, the enablers of a successful UBE programme were not in place, and were unlikely to be in place when the UBE came on board. He identified the most critical enablers to include the teachers, classrooms, furniture and instructional materials and laboratories. He believed that the absence of these enablers could have a crippling effect on the UBE programme. Bassey (2006) also expressed the same concern. Consequently, they raised some sensitive questions regarding the state or preparedness of the government, particularly on the availability of manpower, infrastructural facilities, funds, laboratories, libraries and
instructional materials. They believed that without these on ground, UBE programme implementation would be a failure.

**Scope**

Initiatives for early childhood care and education. This encompasses six-year primary education and Three-year Junior Secondary Education.

**Objectives**

The UBE programme has laudable and specific objectives. These according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 1999) are to:

1. Develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
2. Provide free, compulsory Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school-going age;
3. Reduce drastically, dropout rate from the formal school system through improved relevance and efficiency;
4. Cater for dropouts and out-of-school children/adolescents the provision and promotion of basic education;
5. Ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and life skills (as well as the ethical, moral and civic values) needed for laying the foundation for life-long learning;
6. Ensure unfettered access to nine years of formal basic education;
7. The provision of free, universal Basic Education (FUBE) for every Nigerian child of school going age;
8. Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system through improved, relevant, quality and efficient educational system.
9. 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 life-long learning.

**Core values**
Honesty, Accountability, Integrity, Transparency, Team work and commitment

**Benefits of Science education**

Science education promotes intellectual respect for Mother Nature. This action can inform choices with regard to how technology is used to enhance the current living conditions for humans and other living things. Science education encourages learners to reason critically so as to make decisions that are well informed. There are no shortcomings in science education, good knowledge of science principles and facts are vital for a comprehensive education (Harry, 2011). Although there has been tremendous increase in the net enrolment of learners, the question is whether this increase has translated to qualitative education (Emechebe, 2012).

The search, collaboration, reporting and communication skills provided by science education can yield a whole generation of people who are more prepared for their careers, such people can make better contributions to the society. Furthermore, learners who have an in-depth knowledge in science education are more willing to use new ideas and technologies that can enhance and strengthen the economy. Through explaining and emphasizing the reliance of living organisms on one another and also on the environment, science education promotes intellectual respect for Mother Nature, This action can inform choice with regards to how technology is used to enhance the current living conditions for both humans and other living things.

The achievement that came about due to science education have resulted in longer and healthier lives. People who understand and honor or celebrate past scientific achievement are more likely to herald future inventions and discoveries that will enhance mental and physical health, beside, a healthier general public means a highly productive society. Science education encourages learners to reason critically so as to make better decisions that are well – informed. This makes them even more enlightened
voters. The caution and responsibility provided by science education also assists people to become more responsible parents. There are no shortcomings of science education. In fact, good knowledge of science principles and facts is vital for a comprehensive education.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The Universal Basic Education Scheme was planned to bring about positive change in our educational system through quality, functional and free education, but this dream has met bottlenecks, barriers through high enrolment with inadequate classroom space, lack of laboratories, dilapidated infrastructure, employment of unqualified teachers, lack of fund, these have among others hindered the good implementation of the programme. Teachers’ appointment and development tends not to be based on supply and demand, in part due to lack of reliable data, but also because the process is prone to political interference. Professional teachers’ shortage exists in some states and/or local government areas and tend to be higher in remote rural areas. Furthermore, there is a mismatch between teacher training, specializations and appointments with primary school trained teachers often ending up as secondary school teachers. Classroom conditions also vary across states and local government area, many schools lack classrooms or the classrooms they have are dilapidated and overcrowded with inadequate furniture and no usable chalk board, making it virtually impossible for meaningful teaching and learning to occur (Humphreys & Crawfurd, 2014). Adamaechi and Romaid (as cited in Nakpodia, 2011) indicated that the short supply of professional teachers led to the employment of “market women” and “half-baked individuals”. Schools in Kajuru local government area are characterized by these.

From the approach, the success of implementation may be a mirage. The approach in the first instance contradicted or violated the known rule of systematic forward planning. The impression this has created is that the nation has not learnt any lesson from the failure of the Free, Compulsory
Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme of 1976. The major cause of the failure of the UPE scheme was improper planning. It was obvious that if analysis or diagnosis of the requirements for implementation were done, the failure of UPE would have been averted. A repeat of the UPE approach with the UBE programme has made the researchers mull over. Could effective implementation be achieved without thorough diagnosis of the state of our schools?

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This research is on the assessment of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in Nigeria, its problems and prospects in learning basic science with reference to Kajuru Local Government Area.

Specifically the study has the stated objectives:

1. Evaluate the level of implementation of the Universal basic Education Programme (UBE) as it affects the learning of basic science.
2. Highlight the prospects of teaching and learning basic science

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Does Government give enough funds for financing the UBE programme?
2. Are the funds properly channelled?
3. Are there enough qualified teachers to handle the UBE programme?
4. Do the students feel the impact of the UBE programme in the learning of basic science?
5. Are there enough facilities and instructional aids?
6. What does the Government provide?

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study will be of much benefit to parents, students, teachers, the Ministry of Education, curriculum planners and the Government.
A properly funded and well managed UBE programme will stimulate student’s interest towards learning and relief parents of the burden of financing their children education. The teacher is the central wheel of education. A properly funded UBE programme will change the attitude of the science teachers towards teaching science. They will also benefit from training programmes which will make them proficient teachers. It is hoped that the result of this study will help the Government assess the UBE programme and take appropriate action. This research work will enable curriculum planners toward restructuring the curriculum to meet the current educational challenges.

**METHOD AND PROCEDURE**

The descriptive survey was adopted. 200 students and 15 teachers were used out of the target population. Two sets of questionnaires were used. They were the Student Questionnaire on Universal Basic Education (SQUBE) and Teachers’ Questionnaires on Universal Basic Education (TQUBE). The simple percentage was adopted to analyze the data.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** Does Government give enough funds to finance the UBE programme?

**Table 1:** Funding of the UBE programme in Kajuru Local government area of Kaduna State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses to inadequate funding</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 indicates responses from the teachers on the funding of the UBE programme in Kajuru Local Government Area. 66.6% of the teachers strongly agree that funding is inadequate. 33.4% of the respondents agree that the input of government into the UBE programme is inadequate.

**Research Question 2**: Are the funds properly channeled?

**Table 2**: Channeling of funds towards the UBE programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses to proper channeling of funds</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 bespeaks that 80% of the teachers strongly disagree that funds in respect of the UBE programme are properly channeled. 20% of the teachers disagree that funds given for the programme are properly channeled.

**Research Question 3**: Are there adequate and qualified teachers to teach on the UBE programme?

**Table 3**: Adequacy and qualification of teacher on the UBE programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 denotes that 93.3% of the teachers strongly disagree that the number of trained teachers teaching on the UBE programme are adequate. 6.7% of the teachers disagree that are adequate and qualified staff on the UBE programme.

**Research Question 4**: Do the student feel the impact of the UBE programme in the learning of basic science?

**Table 4**: Students opinion on the positive impact of the UBE programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 sought the opinion of students on the impact of the UBE programme. 93% of the students strongly disagree that the positive impact of the UBE programme is felt. 14% of the students also disagreed that there is positive impact of the UBE programme on the learning of basic science.
**Research Question 5:** Are there enough facilities and instructional aids.

**Table 4:** Availability of facilities and instructional aids for Ube programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers responses to the inadequacy of facilities and instructional aids</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 betokens the availability of facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops and instructional aids in the upper basic. 73.3% of the teachers strongly agree that there are no adequate classrooms nor laboratories or workshops. 26.7% of the teachers agree that there is inadequacy of instructional aids. Teacher relied basically on blackboard, chalk and archaic textbooks.

**Research Question 6:** What does the government provide?

**Table 6:** Government provision for the UBE programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School fees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam fees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table 6 expresses Government provision to schools in Kujuru Local Government Area in respect of the UBE programme. 100% of the teachers stated that Government provided only books in an inadequate number. Facilities such as classrooms laboratories, workshops, uniforms and food are not provided. School fees and examination fees are paid by the parents of the students.

**DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

From the major findings of this research 100% of the teachers agreed that there is high enrolment with inadequate infrastructure. According to the school records the teacher student ratio is 1:100, this shows that there is high population with inadequate classrooms. The student-teacher ratio of 10 : 1 is out of context in the school setting, indicating that this is unachievable.

Secondly, it was discovered that there are insufficient and qualified basic science teachers. The outcome of the research also indicated that one of the major problems in the teaching and learning of basic science is lack of facilities such as well equipped workshops, laboratories and laboratory equipment. Most of the schools are without laboratories and workshops for the teaching of basic science and Technology. The research also indicated that teachers’ morale is low because of lack of incentives. The findings of the research also showed that parents and guardians pay school fees and examination fees. this does not evince the implementation of the UBE programme of free education at the lower and upper basic levels.

**PROSPECTS**

1. The Universal Basic Education Commission should Coordinate the implementation of the programme.

2. The Federal and State Government should take up the responsibility of funding the UBE programme.
3. As a matter of policy, it is necessary to find out the extent of implementation in terms of manpower, infrastructural facilities, enrolment, funding, monitoring and supervision as stipulated by the UBE Act of 2004.

4. Qualified and Competent teachers should be employed to teach on the UBE programme.

5. The Ministry of Education should organize conferences, workshops and seminars for teachers towards effective teaching.

6. Teachers should be given the opportunity to go for in-service training.

7. Provide adequate infrastructure, equipment and textbooks, teaching aids and equipment towards effective teaching.

8. Chiefs and village heads should enlighten their communities about the free education. Also the chiefs should make sure that every school has School Base Management Committee (SBMC) to see to the development or progress of the schools.

9. Education officers should organize a routine supervisory check on all schools to check those teachers with laissez-faire attitude or negligence to duty.

10. There is the need for manpower audit in all basic education schools across the country.

11. Information communication technology based teaching and learning methodology should be adopted in every school in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study the problems that are associated with the teaching and learning of basic science in upper basic of the UBE programme within Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State include the following:
1. High enrolment in schools without adequate classrooms. Existing infrastructures are dilapidated.
2. Lack of enough and qualified teachers.
3. Lack of laboratories and laboratory equipment.
4. Close to non-existent workshops and libraries
5. Lack of prompt payment of teacher’s salaries and incentives.

It is obvious that a lot of things have to be addressed for a functional Universal Basic Education Programme (UBE). If the Nigerian child is to benefit the stated objectives, the Government will have to make concerted efforts towards the effective implementation of the programme.

REFERENCES: