Application of the Principles of Social Demand Approach (SDA) in the Implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) In Nigeria:
A Sociological Analysis

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Abstract – The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launch in 1999 to replace the failed Universal Primary Education (UPE) of the 1970s. The focus of UBE is to take education to the doorsteps of all Nigerians. Inspired by the relative tag on Nigeria as a country where nothing work, the study was carried out with much reliance on secondary sources of data and observation pivoted by Robert Merton's version of the functional theory. We assert that although the ideals of UBE are lofty, it could fail as the previous UPE programme. To stem the tide, we suggests the application of the principles of Social Demand Approach (SDA) which exposes the essential conditions that must be met before a high level of success of UBE can be guaranteed. We recommend accurate demographic data, proper funding, stiff penalty against destructive elements and assurance of quality among others. We conclude that educational problems are artificial and in man lies the solution.

Keywords: Basic education, social demand approach, functional, non functional, dysfunctional, funding

I. INTRODUCTION

Although the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasizes the right to education, real international concern for Basic Education did not begin until early 1960s. There were no fixed numbers of year nor curriculum to determine the provisions of Basic Education then. As aptly noted by Ibia (2008), it was based on the socio-political, economic and technological stages of development of each nation state.

Basic Education was mooted as a global concern at the world conference on Education for ALL (EFA) held in Jomtian – Thailand in 1990. The conference saw Basic Education as entailing the following: an enlarged view of education to integrate formal development of human potentials; an affair that is not confined to orthodox education agencies but which requires the joint and well articulated input of other socio-economic development sectors; an affair that is a lot more than government business, but that of governments, non-governmental organizations and the entire civil society working from a common understanding for a common purpose; learning-to-learn as the most valuable end result of education; and a strong emphasis on learning, meaning success in acquisition of a basic skill of literacy and numeracy in addition to essential life skills (Ibia, 2008; Obanya, 2000).

EFA is a global commitment to provide quality education for all children, youths and adults. Ten (10) years after the world declaration of EFA, many countries were seen to be far from reaching the ultimate goals set. Consequently, in April 2000, more than 1,100 participants from 164 countries gathered in Daker, Senegal for world Education Forum to affirm their commitments to achieving EFA by the year 2015 (Gbenu, 2012).

The desire to achieve EFA goals also led world leaders to hold a United Nation's Millennium Summit at the General Assembly on the future of their respective countries and citizens in September 2000. At the end of that summit, heartwarming decisions, now known as the Millennium Declaration were taken by the world leaders. The Millennium Declaration later gave birth to what is universally and formally known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Since the year 2000, the MDGs have become the international yardsticks for measuring and monitoring developments especially in developing countries. MDG 2 which is specifically concern with universal basic education contains six key education goals aimed at meeting the learning needs of all children, youths and adults.

As aptly noted by Global Monitoring Report (2008), First goal of the MDG 2 deals specially with expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Second goal focuses on ensuring that children, particularly girl-child in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to, and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality. Third goal aims at ensuring that the learning needs of all young children and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and self-skills programmes. Fourth goal is targeted at achieving a five percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by the year 2015, especially for women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults. Fifth goal seeks to eliminate gender disparity in education by the year 2015 and to ensure girl-child's full access to basic education of good quality. Improving all aspect of the quality of education and ensuring excellence in all so that recognized and measurable learning outcome are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life is the target of the sixth goal.

The Global Monitoring Report is the world's respected publication on progress that countries are making towards the realization of the EFA goals, providing the latest data available together with in-depth analysis. It includes an EFA Development Index which measures the extent to which countries are meeting the EFA goals in primary education, adult literacy, gender parity and quality. As aptly noted by UNESCO (2008), despite notable efforts by countries to ensure that everybody has the right to education, the following challenges persists: more than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls have no access to primary schooling; more than 960 million adults, two-thirds of whom are women are illiterate and functional literacy is a significant problem in both industrialized and developing countries; more than on-third of the world's adults have no access to printed knowledge, new skills and technologies that could improve the quality of their lives and help them shape and adapt to social and cultural changes; and more than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programme; millions more satisfy the attendance requirements but do not acquire essential knowledge and skills (p.6).

In Nigeria, Education for All (EFA) takes the form of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme launched by the Federal Government of Nigeria in Sokoto on 30th September, 1999 with Professor Obanya as National Coordinator to replace the almost forgotten Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme of the 1970s. The idea behind the UPE scheme was lofty but the realization of the dream, a mirage. The glaring instrumentality to the colossal failure of the UPE scheme was the inability and unpreparedness of government established to manage and cope with the latent consequences of the scheme.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) has taken the stage to pivot sustainable advancement of educational system in Nigeria. Unlike the failed UPE scheme, UBE programme now extends to Junior Secondary Three (JSS 3) under Nigeria's 9-3-4 educational structure as provided for in the *National policy on education* (F.G.N., 2004). According to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FGN, 1999), the goals of the UBE programme are to provide equal and adequate educational opportunities to basic education, engender a conducive learning environment and the total eradicatioin of illiteracy in Nigeria as soon as possible.

As correctly noted by Badejo (2004) and Ibia (2008), UBE programme is saddled with the following challenges: developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion; the provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age; the drastic reduction of the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality, and efficiency); catering for the learning needs of young person who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education; and ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral civic

values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

These indicate that primarily, the UBE programme intends to be universal, free and compulsory. The universal status suggests inclusiveness, special attention to special groups and encouragement for the provision of facilities for early childhood care and socialization. The free aspect implies governments' investment; while the compulsory aspect indicates the need to apply force (physical, persuasive, mental, or punitive).

The *implementation Guidelines for UBE* (FGN, 2000) recommends that more appropriate approaches (which is the focus of this paper) be developed for improving the state of the followings: public enlightenment and social mobilization for full community involvement; data collection and analysis; planning, monitoring and evaluation; recruitment, training, retraining and motivation of teachers; infrastructural facilities; enriched curricula; textbooks and instructional materials; improved funding; and management of the entire process (p.4).

By implication, UBE programme intends to consider various forms of inherent disparities, fight undue data falsity, ensure quality, mainstream teachers' professionalism and improve their pay packages. It is the contention of this paper that attempts at attaining all the above are however bound to raise new issues that are capable of derailing the virtue of the UBE programme.

Sociologically speaking, the UBE programme is a sub-system of the total social system (society) which is set up to enhance the survival of the educational system of Nigeria. Taleott Parsens' taxonomic device of functional prerequisites with the acronym A.G.I.L. 12 (Parsons, 1957) therefore become famous here. As explained by Hess, Markson and Stein (1992) and Haralambos, Martins and Heald (2004), each system is faced with the challenges of meeting the requirements for survival which are identified as the functional prerequisites of A.G.I.L where: "A" stands for adaptation and should be met by the economic institution; "G" stands for goal attainment which is usually met by the polity; "I" stands for integration and "L" for latent pattern maintenance which are met by the persuasive institutions of religion, morality, education and law.

Merton (1968) while observing the functional prerequisites however noted that the bodies created to meet identified needs do not always remain functional. In which case, they may be functional, non-functional and dysfunctional (Ritzer, 1991). Ritzer (2000) argues further that even in the wake of performing the desired role and recording the manifest (intended) functions, it may also record some latent (unintended) functions. These unintended functions breed unintended consequences that run the risk of becoming dysfunctional to the system and thus infringe on its survival strategies.

The UBE programme is a creation of the Nigerian government for the purpose of providing education for all over time. However, as the programme strives to achieve its set goals, certain intentions posses some latency. Against this background, this paper advocates the adoption of the principles

of the Social Demand Approach (SDA) as a strategy for providing Education for All (EFA) which is the objective of the UBE programme in Nigeria.

II. The concept of Social Demand Approach (SDA)

Social Demand Approach (SDA) is a method in educational planning which sees education as public social service; a necessity and inalienable right of all citizens who desire it. (Campbell, 2002; Fabunmi, 2007 and Olaniyonu, Adekoya & Gbenu, 2008). It is a consumption view of education suitable when education is considered as an obligation and not as a privilege. According to Fabumi (2007), the Dutch adopted the SDA in planning her educational system when government stated that:

> If a sufficiently qualified citizen stands at the door of any type of school, he must be admitted, and it is the responsibility of the appropriate government authorizes to anticipate his request so that school capacity will be adequate to accommodate him.

As aptly noted by Longe (2003) and Olaniyonu, et al (2008), adoption of the SDA in any successful educational programme requires that accurate demographic information be made available. Such information must include the total number of pupils to be provided with education, the number of teachers to be trained and re-retrained, classroom facilities and laboratory equipments needed. As a measure of ensuring an accurate projection of pupil population, the SDA requires the use of population growth rate formula and time series analysis to study past population trends and extrapolate this to the future. This becomes necessary so that estimated population of pupils can be determined at present and facilities made available.

According to Gbadamosi (2005) and Olaniyanu et al (2008), adoption of SDA has a lot of advantages which is in line with the goal of UBE namely; increasing the level of literacy, enhancing equality of educational opportunities, reducing the level of social tension because politicians use education as political gimmick to win votes while the masses see it as a means of social ladder; less complex in adoption and that it facilitates the process of income re-distribution.

III. Inherent problems in the implementation of UBE

As the UBE programme strives to achieve its set goal, certain intensions possess some latency. The first problem is the socio-psychological and developmental realities of the Nigerian society that may inhibit the success level of the programme. For example, the communication difficulties as evident in languages, communication and instruction situations capable of militating against the programme. Additionally, there is the psychological challenge of determining the school-going age since age varies from one family and cultural setting to another. This variation is a factor to the problem of imbalance in the enrolment rates in the various geo-political zones of Nigeria. This imbalance is also seen in the gender disparity. These frustrate the enlightenment and mobilization process (Joel, 2001).

The second problem is the moral and legal realities. For example, the issue of fraud which comes in executive petty, operational, and management or supervisory forms (Akpan, 2002). It could also be manifested in examination mismanagement where cases of leaked examination questions and wrongful assessments of examination scripts are rampant. The attitude of pupils between their homes and school; characterized by waywardness and truancy also pose a problem. Peer and parent pressures present yet another problem. For instance, cases of resistance to enriched curricula and the ambitions and future of wards forcefully determined by parents are commonplace. On the part of staff, the human factor as to meeting the challenges of collecting and analyzing data, as well as planning, monitoring and evaluating the programme adds to the problem inherent in the establishment. This questions the integrity of staff and the work culture, and makes the system operate on falsehood. Finally, the bill that established the UBE programme is characterized by some gray areas which border on funding (Akpan 2002).

Politically, we note the often friction between interest groups and the various tiers of government with regards to finances; a situation where any of the tiers of government fail to pay its counterpart funding. Also, the issuance of contracts for the provision of infrastructure presents another area of problem. This occurs when contracts are awarded to political associates without due process and supervision. Politics also permeates the area of instructional materials where sub-standard reading materials are approved for the consumption of pupils (Lasisi, 2005). This is usually driven by nepotism.

As a developing country, Nigeria is bedeviled with political instability. As a result, planning is made for the short run. This in turn accounts for a bleak future; hence, non-continuation of development programmes. Finally, there is the problem of blending the non-formal and adult literacy programmes into the mainstream of the country's educational system. As a result, there may not be enough encouragements for all citizens to opt to benefit from the UBE programme.

It is important to mention also the problem of using population growth rate and time series analysis which largely use past trend to extrapolate into the future. In particular, time series though more powerful than population growth rate believes that the past will look like the present and the future. It is a mechanistic approach holding on a fact which may not always be the case.

Economically, there is the basic problem of inadequate funding of the UBE programme in the face of competing and contending areas. In addition there is a problem of the death in the quality of teachers resulting from the down-trodden status of teachers. This is made glaring by poor motivation (Ikpe, 2005). There is also an impending vacuum to be created in families and their estates as a result of compelling wards to attend schools. This is even aggravated by the lack of absorptive capacity of the larger society as to the human products of the UBE. This occurs when pupils complete their basic education but neither access secondary education nor secure economic viability through gainful employment.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Education is a fundamental right for all people. It can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world and at the same time contribute to social, economic, political and cultural progress, tolerance and international cooperation. By virtue of this indispensable key to personal and social improvement guaranteed by sound education, it is expedient that quality education is taken to the door steps of all and sundry. Historically however, it has been observed in this paper that each education development in Nigeria has proved unsuccessful. The successive failure of such programmes is usually not because of their what of ideas but in the area of implementation. This paper therefore offers a sociological comment as to the ways of intervening and sterming the tide of failure in the case of UBE programme by applying the principles of Social Demand Approach (SDA). Recommendations put forward are such that adherence by human operators of the programme would provide the sociological solution to the problems.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The inherent problems in the UBE programme listed above could be summarized into the financial, sociological, administrative, infrastructural and human perspectives. These are otherwise presented as national attitudes of Nigerians to new policies and programmes, statistical database, death of requisite resources and manpower problem (Udofot, 2002).

Economically, there is need to ascertain the total cost of training - each beneficiary of UBE over time. This would enhance adequate planning and the pegging of needed funds. To enhance adaptation, interaction sessions with community dwellers and their leaders through seminars, workshops, interviews, and jingles (as media activities) should be embarked upon to achieve the mobilization and sensitized desired (Joel, 2001). The details of the UBE programme should be the object of focus. Also, collaboration with individuals and corporate citizens in area of funding should be encouraged in addition to a stable source of funding from the three-tie governments.

The supervision and evaluation unit of the UBE programme should be manned by professionals of high-level integrity. This would enhance value for money and in the entire process of contract execution. Some financial schemes should be created to raise the social value attached to the teaching profession (Obinaju, 2002). This will in turn raise the quality of teachers. The teaching profession would no longer be seen as a last resort to applicants seeking employment. The UBE should be free in its totality; sundry fees should not be charged. And finally, the real sectors of the economy (agriculture and manufacturing) should be developed so as to create sufficient absorptive capacity for UBE products.

There is need to improve the technological base of both administrative and teaching personnel in the area of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This would enhance stranger database for effective planning and implementation of the ideals of the programme. The use of computer readily comes to mind and such should be linked to every office of the programme and school in the country as a way of changing work culture and to enhance detection of fraud.

Culturally, there is advent need to ascertain the school-going age and the total number of pupils due to benefit from the UBE programme. This should be done to ensure sustainability in terms of the number and quality of teachers, classroom and laboratory facilities needed to guarantee effective teaching-learning process. In addition, approaches for mobilization and sensitization should be sensitive to gender and multi-cultural status of Nigeria. This will help stem the imbalances in education between gender and geo-political zones of the country.

Politically, the UBE policy should not be changed too soon; but should be allowed to run for a considerable period of time so as to build positive attitude towards it among Nigerians. Furthermore, since the UBE progarmme is aimed at the formative years of pupils, instructional materials (readers) should be de-politicised. The issue of forcing sub-standard reading materials on pupils because of political influence should be discouraged.

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