

IMPLICATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION AND ADULT BASIC EDUCATION FOR SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study surveyed the implication of Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) for societal development. It started with an introduction and stated the goals of Universal Basic Education (UBE). Some reviews of UBE act were inferred. The concept of ABE was viewed and also some literature reviews of the ABE were done. Implication of UBE and ABE for societal development was inferred. Conclusion and recommendations were made. Recommendations included that since civil society organizations are active providers of ABE and also a source of innovation, governments at all levels should encourage ABE programmes as they do to UBE. Churches, mosques, farmer's organizations, women's organizations should as community-based organizations give much needed local social support for both UBE and ABE programmes. All stakeholders in education should recognize the importance of UBE and ABE for achieving Education for All.

Introduction

When we talk about the knowledge of society we generally refer to the Universities and not often to the production of knowledge. There can be no question that lively and innovative research in the natural and liberal sciences is the heart of any modern education systems and must be kept in good order in future. If the knowledge which is produced in research does not get to the places for which it is intended, the organism will fall ill at a certain way. According to Ray (2002) if the interchange between the circulating knowledge and the social life is not working, the circulating system will break down and sooner or later the heart will stop beating. He stated further that the arteries through which education and training flow in our society has many ramifications. A key is played both by higher education institutions,

schools and adult education centres, and by business, which makes its contribution through the dual system. For example;

- i. In the Universities teaching has always played second fiddle to research. This continues to be evident in the extremely high figures for students drop-out.
- ii. We concentrate on the universities and do not do enough for technical higher education
- iii. We devote more resources to higher education than to school education and allow teaching staff and equipment in schools to become absolute.
- iv. We concentrate our efforts on the final years of secondary education and neglect kindergartens, pre-school and primary education.
- v. In spite of the lip-service paid to the need for life-long learners, emphasis is still on encouraging schools and higher education.

So, instead of bit and bit learning offered, small by small in responses to individual needs in adult education, circumstances and inclinations, knowledge is often provided in small measures in the various stages of our education system. Continuing education institutions may be acknowledged to the high heavens, but they are the offshoots of the education system, seldom fed properly or clothed. If one thing is true in the debate about the knowledge society, then it is surely that more and more people will in future need and want to have share in knowledge. This will certainly replace the production of new knowledge.

According to Adenuga (2004) education is an instrument for effective national development, self-reliance and economic development. The Universal Basic Education and the Adult Basic Education programmes would not only assist in achieving all these, but would also provide adequate and reliable information that will assist students make informed decision about themselves. To Emeke (2004), the choice of an occupation is one of the most important decisions one makes in life. This is because everybody must work in order to meet economical and psychological needs, secondary schools students are at their peak of ideative stage. They will therefore, pursue academic and vocational issues with candor. The wrong choice of occupation may affect the physical well being of an individual and at the same time mar one's happiness for life as a result of vocational maladjustment. This is

why looking into the implication of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) and the Adult Basic Education (ABE) for the societal development is important.

Goal of Universal Basic Education

The Federal Government of Nigeria specified in the year 1999, the following objectives as the guideline for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE)

- a. Developing in the entire citizenry, a strong conscientiousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotions
- b. Provision of free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age.
- c. Reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from the formal school system.
- d. Catering for young persons, their schooling as well as other out of school children or adolescent through appropriate form of complementary approaches to the provisions of UBE.
- e. Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulate communicative and life skills as well as the ethical moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for the life-long living.

Some Reviews of the UBE Act

During the Jomtien Declaration and Framework of Action on Education for All, Basic Education was not defined in terms of years of schooling. It is not limited to formal schooling and Jegede (2000) advocated for the non-formal and informal media to work together complementarily to ensure that all categories of Nigerians have access to basic education. Obanya (2000) describes basic education as that level, type and form of learning needed to build firm roots for literacy and numeracy, to inculcate basic life skills and more importantly, to consolidate the skills of learning how to learn. On the issue or relevance of the school curriculum to the society, Ehindero (2000) and Adesina (2000) have raised doubts as it has been observed that there is a growing rate of poverty which is an indicator of problems in the system. It was therefore, suggested that it should be so structured that each individual

will be equipped to perform some six life roles e.g role as an individual, as a producer, citizen, national consumer and as a family member.

Ogbona (2001) stated that the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is important because it aimed at Universalizing education provisions so that the age, gender, location, work, style and life style will not make one lose opportunity for education. Odimegwu (2005) asserted that "education at the basic level is imperative for the progress of any nation because of its pervasive and ubiquitous link to political economic, socio-cultural and technological development." He also remarked that basic education is minimum education required by every citizen to practice democracy meaningfully.

Adeniran (1999) remarked that the Universal Basic Education Scheme in Nigeria will remove all the obstacles to lifelong education for millions of Nigerian citizens. It is equally important for it recognizes that meaningful education can take place through formal, non-formal and informal modes of learning. Adebimpe (2001) opined that for the UBE to succeed, adequate provision should be made to produce sufficient qualified teachers and make them relevant within the limit of their area of specialization, salaries need to be paid as at when due because it serves as a motivation factor towards productivity.

The Universal Basic Education Act, passed in 2004, gave legal impetus to the basic education programmes to ensure the provision of free compulsory and basic education for all Nigerians. The Act in its definition of basic education recognizes children in difficult circumstances, children of migrant and nomads as well as out-of-school youths and illiterate adults, (UBEC 2004).

What is Adult Basic Education (ABE)

According to Lauglo (2002) Adult Basic Education (ABE) refers to education which is aimed at adults who have had no schooling or very little schooling. Adults are reckoned to be persons above 14years. Outside the scope of ABE as defined above it is quite important to develop educational provision which aims to reach children and adolescents who are below that age but who have been missed by primary schools. A major issue that is distinct for that population is how far one can develop better outreach and more inclusive practices in primary schools for over age children as contrasted with separate non-formal provision.

The core constituents of ABE are literacy and practical arithmetic (numeracy), it also constitutes vocational skills for livelihood improvement which is difficult to accomplish in large-scale programmes that are established solely to teach literacy and numeracy. Similarly, it is easier to add literacy teaching to programmes which were initially set up to teach practical livelihood skills, than it is to add livelihood skills training to literacy programmes (Oxenham, Abdoul, Katahoire, Petkooa-Mwangi and Sall, 2002). Other courses such as childcare, health, nutrition are often offered in ABE. Nowadays, in many countries the teaching of basic knowledge of HIV prevention and care for AIDs victims is also included in the ABE programmes. Although it would be wrong to assume that the so-called functional skills are the only ones that learners need to learn. Religious expression and artistic expression could also be utilized by ABE programmes when put in place by professional bodies.

Some Review of the ABE Programmes

Oxenham, et al (2002) review research on ABE and improved livelihoods. He stated that literacy and numeracy are widely perceived by ABE learners as a protection against being cheated and manipulated in the market place. Attempts to quantify the gains in life-time income which would be due to participation in Adult Basic Education are yet to be made, and there is recognition that other inputs also are needed, for example, access to credit, vocational skills training for tangible short-term income benefits to occur. But for micro-entrepreneurs it is also clear that lack of literacy and weak numeracy are major hindrances to success. Sandiford, Montenegro and Somchez (1995) and Okech, Roy, Katahoire, Kakooza, Ndidde and Oxenham (2001) stated that a large number of studies shows that literate mothers are better able to protect their children's health.

Findings from Uganda (Okech, et al. 2001), Kenya (Carron, Kilemi and Gabriel, 1989), as their studies reviewed by Cummings (1995) suggest that the retention of reading skills and of skills in practical arithmetic is fairly robust, but that writing skills are more vulnerable. It is probably misplaced to invoke the risk of loss of reading skills as a reason for advocating access to libraries and support for post-literacy course. But even if skills are not lost, there would be little point in teaching them if they find no use, and literacy is best conceived as a

continuum where there is good cause to promote improvement beyond whatever level a learner reaches to begin with. This applies to school education for children as well as to adult education.

Implication of UBE and ABE for Societal Development

In some African countries the step taken for expansion of primary school education is very slow, even if stepped up considerably, would fall far short of what is required in order to reach international targets for human development. Primary school expansion would not on its own step up to reach the Education for All target of reducing illiteracy rate of the adult population to half by the year 2015. Moreover, under EFA the request for basic schooling from illiterate and semiliterate children and adults must also be taken seriously in its own right, now that the necessary role of adult education has been clearly recognized at the World Forum on Education for All in Dakar in 2000. Schools for children and basic education for adults are complementary services with potential for Synergy, rather than merely being activities that compete for scarce resources. Adult learners become more supportive of their children's education. This could be found in researches done across countries of the world.

Moreover, if education is to serve as a means of empowerment for the disadvantaged then it is essential that children and adults be reached with a type of education which helps turn subjects into citizens and which equips prospective leaders with appropriate skills and networks. A consistently reported positive impact of Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) is that it builds a greater sense of self-efficacy, confidence to act on a wider range of social arenas than before, greater readiness to formulate and express one's own view. This empowerment function makes UBE and ABE more important as foundations for the development of a broadly based civil society. The rise of such a civil society is generally held to be a precondition for a government that is held more accountable and responsive to the interest of the poor masses. Hence, UBE and ABE are means to good governance in keeping with poverty-reduction goals.

Historically, UBE and ABE have been closely connected with the growth of broadly based democracy in so many countries. One would expect that more participation forms of UBE and ABE with at least a form of teaching which treats learners with respect are likely to be

more conducive to the development of individual and group efficacy. Thus, it seems that empowerment gains are a big result from ABE using quite diverse pedagogies.

Conclusion

The planning and implementation of UBE and ABE should strive to be responsive to the learners and their views. This need not say that a strong local community orientation of the UBE and ABE curriculum should not be undertaken because the learners would sometimes see UBE and ABE mainly as a window to the larger world. The main point is that adult learners would walk away if ABE does not speak to their motives for participating, and strong motivation and special support are needed for both children and adults to persist long enough to achieve basic literacy.

Recommendations

Based on the above the following recommendations are made:

- i. Since civil society organizations are active providers of ABE and also a source of innovation, government at all levels should encourage ABE programme as they do to UBE.
- ii. Churches, Mosques, farmers' Organizations, women's organizations should as community-based organizations give much needed local social support for both UBE and ABE programmes.
- iii. All stakeholders in education should recognize the importance of UBE and ABE for achieving Education for All.
- iv. Notwithstanding what form of collaboration is established with civil society, a specialized government centre for Adult Education is needed focusing on Adult Basic Education to eradicate her illiteracy level.
- v. The Federal Government should establish strong political leadership to ABE and find good or specialized instructors/teachers for both UBE and ABE.
- vi. Main targets for ABE should be sought especially among women and out-of-school adolescents.
- vii. Both UBE and ABE programmes should be adequately funded by Federal Government.

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