

Teacher Preparation and Availability for Achieving Basic Education in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examined teacher preparation and availability for achieving basic education in Ondo State, Nigeria. As a descriptive survey, the study population comprised all the 1154 primary and 281 junior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Out of this population, a sample of 578 primary schools and 141 junior secondary schools was taken and selected through the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used to collect data for the study was an inventory while the data collected were analyzed using percentages. The findings revealed that the level of teacher preparation for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Ondo State, Nigeria was low. It was also found that teachers were not adequately available for the Universal Basic Education programme. The number of teachers in post did not match the teacher quota in the schools. On the basis of the findings, it was concluded that the Ondo State, Nigeria has not been fully prepared for the Universal Basic Education programme. Teacher preparation has not been fully embarked upon in the State. Considering the findings, it was recommended that the State Government should recruit more teachers into the primary and junior secondary schools in the State to enable the pupils achieve permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively. Teachers should also be allowed to attend seminars and in-service training to enable them to acquire more skills and competence in their job performance.

Key words: Teacher % Preparation % Availability % Achieving % Basic % Education

INTRODUCTION

The idea of universal education in Nigeria was first mooted in 1955 when the Universal Primary Education Scheme was inaugurated by the Government of Western Nigeria. The Eastern Nigerian Government launched its own universal primary education in 1957. In Northern Nigeria, education was provided free by government in a bid to make the children attend school [1]. Thus, at its onset, the universal primary education scheme had been undertaken by regional governments. There was no Federal Government intervention until 1976 when the universal primary education (UPE) was launched to cover the whole country. Since then, education delivery at the primary school level has been provided free throughout the country; but how effective the programme has been is subject to criticism. Notwithstanding, the advent of the civilian administration in May 1999 witnessed the introduction of the universal basic education (UBE) which was launched on 30th September 1999.

The universal basic education programme is a response to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Right which stipulated the right of every citizen to basic education. As a follow-up to this declaration, Section 19 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution stipulated that government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal educational

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opportunities at all levels in line with the national policy on education [2]. The Constitution also provides that government shall eradicate illiteracy and shall as at when practicable provide free secondary education and free university education [3]. The policy might perhaps have been made in view of the increasing withdrawal of pupils from schools to learn trades thereby leading to considerable dropout of pupils from schools [4].

Thus, a critical look at the education industry in Nigeria would reveal that educational output does not justify the input incurred [5]. A fall in the standard of education has also been reported [6; 7]. Many factors might perhaps been responsible for the fall in standard. Among the reasons was the absence of library facilities in many schools [8]. In this regard, [8] reported that the Nigerian Library Association is worried by the omission of libraries in the original plan for the UBE classrooms.

Since its inception in 1999, available infrastructural facilities, teaching and learning materials as well as qualified teachers are perhaps grossly inadequate in schools [9]. [9] for instance, reported that out of the 21 million children of primary school age in 1996, only 14.1million were enrolled in school. The completion rate was 64.1% while the rate of transition to the junior secondary school was 39.8%. According to him, the situation in the junior secondary school was not better. He reported that out of the total population of 7.2 million children of 12 to 14 years old in Nigeria, only 2.4 million pupils were enrolled in schools. This was manifested at the sight of so many children of school age roaming the streets in many Nigerian cities during school hours.

Free education has been an on-going phenomenon in Ondo State, Nigeria. The objectives of the universal basic education include among other things, the provision of universal access to basic education, provision of a conducive learning environment, eradication of illiteracy as well as the ability to communicate effectively. The objectives also include laying of sound basis for scientific reflective thinking; development of sound attitudes; giving every child the opportunity of developing manipulative skills that would enable him or her to function effectively in the society [10-12].

In achieving these objectives, [10] reported that the Universal Basic Education is meant for every Nigerian child of school age and it is to make education free and compulsory for the first nine years of schooling from primary one to junior secondary school (JSS) class three, that is, 6 years in the primary schools and 3 years in the junior secondary schools. Since the UBE Scheme includes the junior secondary school, the National Policy on Education stipulated the objectives of junior secondary schools to include effective thinking, communication skills, making of relevant judgment, making the pupil a useful members of one's family, understanding basic facts about health and sanitation, understanding and appreciating one's role as a useful member of the country.

Notwithstanding the laudable objectives of universal basic education, [13] reported that one of the several limitations to the implementation of the programme was the long absence of an enabling law since 1999 when the programme was launched. He argued that the effect of this long delay is the refusal of the government to employ teachers for the programme. He however reported that the first part of the bill is about the right of the child to education and the government has the responsibility of providing education for the child. The second part is about the Universal Basic Education Commission. The third part is about the law for the States and the local governments. He then argued that what was being done now was to embark on enrolment campaign, the construction of additional classrooms and the provision of instructional materials as well as teachers' development.

On this note, [14] reported that the universal basic education is on course while the sincerity of the Federal Government in the programme is not in doubt. He exclaimed that since African children must continue to demand education as a right, it must be provided free for them. In this respect, the purpose of the study was to examine the position of teachers' preparation and availability in achieving the universal basic education in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study was also to make projections on pupils' enrolment and teacher requirements for the effective implementation of the programme..

Statement of the problem:

Despite all the agreements entered into by Nigeria concerning eradicating illiteracy, the literacy rate in Nigeria is still very low [10]. There seems to be widespread disparities in the quality and access to education across the country. Since its launching in 1999, common observations in the schools' system have shown that many Nigerians were skeptical about

the realities of the universal basic education programme. The feelings of the people was that the programme is perhaps a repetition of the previous Universal Primary Education programme inaugurated in 1976 which was marred by inadequate planning, insufficient infrastructure and inadequate qualified teachers [9]. As key inputs into the educational system, teachers are a force to reckon with in the school system. But it seems that not many teachers are available for the programme. As such, the need to determine of the level of teacher preparation and availability for achieving basic education in Ondo State, Nigeria was the problem which this study intended to examine. In addressing this problem, the following research questions were raised:

Research questions:

1. What is the level of teacher preparation for the Universal Basic Education programme in Ondo State, Nigeria?
2. Are teachers adequately available for the universal basic education programme in the State?
3. What is the level of teacher training for the Universal Basic Education in the State?
4. What is the enrolment growth rate and teacher-pupil ratio in primary and junior secondary schools in the State?
5. What is the projection of students' enrolment and teacher requirements for the universal basic education for the period 2007 and 2015 in the State?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was designed as a descriptive survey. A survey is a study involving a planned collection of data over a large area for the purpose of making description [15]. In this regard, the study population comprised all the 1,154 primary and 281 junior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Out of this population, a sample of 578 primary schools and 141 junior secondary schools was taken and selected through the stratified random sampling technique. The headteachers of the primary schools and principals of the junior secondary schools were the respondents of the study.

The training of teachers for primary and junior secondary schools, Nigeria was determined through data obtained from two sources. These were sources within Ondo State and sources from neighbouring higher institutions having Ondo State as a catchment area in the admission of students. Although some teachers might have come from higher institutions in other parts of the country and overseas, the two mentioned sources constituted the major sources for the training of teachers for Ondo State primary and junior secondary schools. Thus, the 2 higher institutions within Ondo State, supplying teachers into schools namely Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo and the National Teachers Institute training teachers for the schools were purposively selected for the study. Out of the 15 neighbouring higher institutions training teachers for Ondo State schools, 8 institutions were selected through the stratified random sampling technique.

The instrument used to collect data for the study was an inventory, which consisted of three sections. Section A requested information about the name of each school, its location, pupils' enrolment and number of classes from year 2002 to 2006. Section B requested for data on teacher quota, teacher availability by subject and number of teachers in post while section C elicited information on teacher preparation and teacher training. The content validity of the instrument was determined by experts in Test and Measurement who matched all the items of the inventory with the research questions to ascertain whether the instrument actually measured what it was supposed to measure. The data collected were analyzed using percentages.

RESULTS

Question 1: What is the level of teacher preparation for the universal basic education in Ondo State, Nigeria?

In determining the level of teacher preparation for the universal basic education in Ondo State, Nigeria, data on how teachers have prepared themselves for the programme were collected from the headteachers and principals of the sampled schools using the inventory. The findings are presented in tables 1.1 and 1.2.

Table 1.1: Level of Teacher Preparation in Primary Schools for the UBE

Inventory Items	N	High	%	Moderate	%	Low	%
Preparation for effective teaching	578	58	10.0	186	32.2	334	57.8
Preparation in developing themselves by attending seminars and workshops	578	51	8.8	212	36.7	315	54.5
Preparation in terms of staff development through in-service training	578	72	12.5	180	31.1	326	56.4
Preparation in prompt writing of lesson notes	578	120	20.8	268	46.4	190	32.8
Preparation in terms of the mastery of the subject matter	578	137	23.7	168	29.1	273	47.2
Preparation in carrying pupils along while teaching	578	114	19.7	214	37.0	250	43.3
Average	578	92	15.9	205	35.5	281	48.6

Table 1.2: Level of Teacher Preparation in Junior Secondary Schools for the UBE

Inventory Items	N	High	%	Moderate	%	Low	%
Preparation for effective teaching	141	32	22.7	45	31.9	64	45.4
Preparation in developing themselves by attending seminars and workshops	141	33	23.4	43	30.5	65	46.1
Preparation in terms of staff development through in-service training	141	23	16.3	51	36.2	67	47.5
Preparation in prompt writing of lesson note	141	27	19.1	50	35.5	64	45.4
Preparation in terms of the mastery of the subject matter	141	40	28.4	44	31.2	57	40.4
Preparation in carrying pupils along while teaching	141	36	25.5	39	27.7	66	46.8
Average	141	32	22.7	48	34.0	61	43.3

Table 2.1: Number of Teachers Available in Primary Schools for the UBE

Years	No. of Classes	Enrolment in sampled schools	Teacher Quota @ 1 ¹ / ₂ teachers per class.	No. of teachers in post	Shortfall	Percentage Shortfall
2002	11096	332.890	16644	10.738	5906	35.5%
2003	11547	346.406	17321	11.547	5774	33.3%
2004	12130	364.147	18185	12.138	6047	33.3%
2005	12663	379.892	18995	12.663	6332	33.3%
2006	13137	394.118	19706	12,713	6993	35.5%

Table 2.2: Number of Teachers Available in Junior Secondary Schools for the UBE

Years	No. of Classes	Enrolment in sampled schools	Teacher Quota @ 1 ¹ / ₂ teachers per class.	No. of teachers in post	Shortfall	Percentage Shortfall
2002	4461	133.842	6692	4212	2480	37.1%
2003	4576	137.306	6864	4323	2541	37.0%
2004	4786	143.608	7179	4568	2611	36.4%
2005	4950	148.491	7425	4895	2530	34.1%
2006	5171	155.130	7757	4945	2812	36.3%

As indicated in tables 1.1 and 1.2, the level of teacher preparation in both the primary and junior secondary schools in the State was low. The response rate was almost the same. The overall low level rating of the respondents shows that teachers were not well prepared for the universal primary education in the State.

Question 2: Are teachers adequately available for the universal primary education in Ondo State, Nigeria?

In determining the availability of teachers for the universal basic education in the State, data on the teacher quota for each of the sampled schools and the number of teachers in post in the schools were collected through the inventory. Teacher quota is the required number of teachers approved by government for each school in Ondo State Nigeria and it was computed on the basis of approved norm of 1¹/₂ teachers per class of 30 pupils [16]. The findings are presented in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.

Table 2.3: Distribution of Schools by Subject in Primary Schools

No. of Teachers	No. of Schools				
	English	Mathematics.	Integrated Science.	Introductory Technology	Social Studies
# 2	271	280	302	578	132
3-4	124	162	146	-	119
5-6	110	120	130	-	115
7-8	61	16	-	-	110
> 8	12	-	-	-	102
Total	578	578	578	578	578

Table 2.4: Distribution of Schools by Subject in Junior Secondary Schools

No. of Teachers	No. of Schools				
	English	Mathematics.	Integrated Science.	Introductory Technology	Social Studies
# 2	124	130	127	131	51
3-4	12	11	14	10	42
5-6	5	-	-	-	40
7-8	-	-	-	-	5
> 8	-	-	-	-	3
Total	141	141	141	141	141

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show that teachers were not adequately available for the Universal Basic Education programme in the State. The number of teachers in post was not equal to the teacher quota in each of the years. This shows that there were shortages of teachers in many schools in each of the years. On subject basis, the shortages in the number of teachers were more pronounced. These are shown in tables 2.3 and 2.4.

In table 2.3, most of the schools had two or less than two teachers in all the subjects in the primary schools. Introductory Technology was worst staffed in the primary schools compared to other subjects. This was followed by Integrated Science and Mathematics where 302 and 280 schools respectively had 2 or less than two teachers. The bulk of the teachers were in Social Studies. Table 2.4 also shows that Introductory Technology was worst staffed in the junior secondary schools as 131 of the schools had 2 or less than two teachers. The bulk of the teachers were in Social Studies.

Question 3: What is the level of teacher training for the universal basic education in the State?

In determining the level of teacher training for the schools, data were obtained from two sources. The first were sources within the State while the second were sources from neighbouring higher institutions having Ondo State as a catchment area in the admission of students. Data on the number of teachers trained in the higher institutions within the State and those trained in neighbouring universities between 2002 and 2006 were collected and compared for each of the years. The findings are presented in tables 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3. 1 shows that the number of teachers trained in higher institutions within the State for the primary schools was in greater proportion in each of the years than those trained in neighbouring higher institutions. Contrary to these findings, table 3.2 shows that the number of teachers trained in neighbouring higher institutions for the junior secondary schools was in greater proportion in each of the years than those trained in higher institutions within the State. Comparing the shortfall in the number of teachers in post in primary and junior secondary schools in the State indicated in tables 2.1 and 2.2 with the number of teachers trained in the higher institutions shown in tables 3.1 and 3.2, the findings suggest that many of the teachers trained in the higher institutions were not employed into the schools.

Table 3.1: Number of Teachers Trained for Primary Schools

	N	Total number of teachers trained	Number of teachers trained from higher institutions within the State	%	Number of teachers trained from neighbouring higher institutions	%
2002	10	15745	9496	60.3	6249	39.7
2003	10	16673	9868	59.2	6805	40.8
2004	10	18436	10350	56.1	8086	43.9
2005	10	18840	10642	56.5	8198	43.5
2006	10	19353	10963	56.6	8390	43.4

Table 3.2: Number of Teachers Trained for Junior Secondary Schools

	N	Total number of teachers trained	Number of teachers trained from higher institutions within the State	%	Number of teachers trained from neighbouring higher institutions	%
2002	10	6478	2658	41.0	3820	59.0
2003	10	6957	2741	39.4	4216	60.6
2004	10	7346	2965	40.4	4381	59.6
2005	10	8479	3445	40.6	5034	59.4
2006	10	8765	3479	39.7	5286	60.3

Table 4.1: Enrolment Growth rate in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools in Ondo State

Years	Primary Schools Classes 1-6		Junior Secondary Schools Classes 1-3	
	Enrolment in sampled schools	Growth Rate in %	Enrolment in sampled schools	Growth Rate in %
2002	332.890	-	133.842	-
2003	346.406	4.1	137.306	2.6
2004	364.147	5.1	143.608	4.6
2005	379.892	4.3	148.491	3.4
2006	394.118	3.7	155,130	4.5
Average Growth Rate		4.3%	Enrolment in sampled schools	3.8%

Question 4: What are the enrolment growth rate and teacher-pupil ratios in primary and junior secondary schools in the State?

Answering this question, data on the enrolment figures in primary and junior secondary schools from 2002 to 2006 were collected through the inventory. In calculating the enrolment growth rate in the schools, the increase in school's enrolment in a given year is divided by the previous years' enrolment and multiplied by 100 as in the following formula [17]:

$$E_n = \frac{E_t - E_{t-1}}{E_{t-1}} \times 100$$

Where: E_n = Enrolment growth rate; E_t = Enrolment in year t (present year) and E_{t-1} = Enrolment in year t-1 (previous year). Using this formula, the enrolment growth rate in primary and junior secondary schools in the State between 2002 and 2006 is shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 shows that the average growth rate in primary schools was 4.3% while that of junior secondary schools was 3.8%. A graphical representation of the enrolment growth rate is indicated in Figure 1.

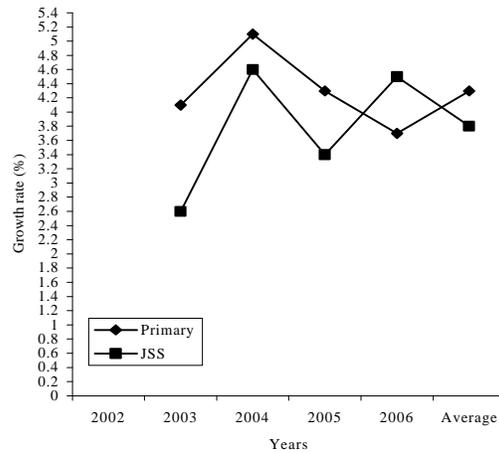


Fig. 1: Graph showing Enrolment Growth Rate in the Schools

Table 4.2: Teacher-pupil Ratio in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools

Years	Primary Schools			Junior Secondary Schools		
	Total number of pupils in the schools	Number of teachers in post	Teacher-pupil ratio	Total number of pupils in the schools	Number of teachers in post	Teacher-pupil ratio
2002	332.890	10.738	1:31	133.842	4212	1:32
2003	346.406	11.547	1:30	137.306	4323	1:32
2004	364.147	12.138	1:30	143.608	4568	1:31
2005	379.892	12.663	1:30	148.491	4895	1:30
2006	394.118	12.713	1:31	155.130	4945	1:31
	Average pupil –teacher ratio		1:30	Average pupil-teacher ratio		1:31

In computing the teacher-pupil ratio in the schools, data on the enrolment of pupils in primary and junior secondary schools were collected through the inventory. Data on the number of teachers in post in the schools were also collected. The teacher-pupil ratio is the ratio of the number of pupils to a teacher in a school. It is computed by dividing the total number of students in a school by the total number of teachers in the schools [17]

$$TPR = \frac{TNP}{TNT}$$

Where TPR = Teacher –pupil ratio; TNP = Total number of pupils; TNT = Total number of teachers. Table 4.2 shows the teacher- pupil ratios in primary and junior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria for the period, 2002 and 2006.

Table 4.2 shows that the teacher-pupil ratio varied from year to year in the primary and junior secondary schools in the State. The average teacher-pupil ratio in primary schools was 1:30 while that for junior secondary schools was 1:31.

Question 5: What is the projection of pupils’ enrolment and teacher requirements for the Universal Basic Education in Ekiti State, Nigeria for the period 2007 to 2015?

Table 5: Projected Enrolment and Number of Teachers in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria

Years	Primary Schools		Junior Secondary Schools	
	Projected enrolment at 4.3% Annual Growth Rate	Projected number of teachers required at 1:30 teacher- pupil ratio	Projected enrolment at 3.8% Annual Growth Rate	Projected number of teachers required at 1:32 teacher- pupil ratio
2007	411.065	13.702	161.025	5194
2008	428.741	14.291	167.144	5392
2009	447.177	14.906	173.495	5597
2010	466.406	15.547	180.088	5809
2011	486.461	16.215	186.931	6030
2012	507.379	16.913	194.034	6259
2013	529.196	17.640	201.407	6497
2014	551.951	18.398	209.060	6744
2015	575.685	19.190	217.004	7000

In making a projection of pupils' enrolment, data on the enrolment of pupils in primary and junior secondary schools in the State were collected through the inventory. The projection of enrolment was made using the following formula [17]:

$$PE = (Et-1) \times (AEGR) + (Et-1)$$

Where: PE =projection of enrolment; Et – 1 = Enrolment in year t-1 (previous year) while.
AEGR = Average Enrolment Growth Rate.

Applying the formula and the annual enrolment growth rate of 4.3% in primary schools and 3.8% in the junior secondary schools, the projected numbers of pupils for the Universal Basic Education in the sampled schools for the period 2007-2015 are presented in table 5. The teacher-pupil ratios in the schools were determined as in tables 4.1 and 4.2. In projecting the future requirement of teachers, the following were considered namely, an annual enrolment growth rate of 4.3% in primary schools and 3.8% in the junior secondary schools; a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:30 for primary schools and 1:31 for the junior secondary schools. The number of teachers required are projected using the following formula [17]:

$$PT = \frac{PE}{TPT}$$

Where: PT= Projection of teachers; PE = projected Enrolment and TPR = Teacher-pupil ratio. Using the base year 2006 enrolment, 394,118 for primary schools and 155,130 for junior secondary schools, the teachers' requirements for the Universal Basic Education in Ondo State, Nigeria for the years 2007 and 2015 are indicated in Table 5.

As indicated in Table 5, the projected enrolment of pupils in primary schools would be 466,406 in year 2010 and 575,685 in year 2015. The projected enrolment of pupils in the junior secondary schools would be 180,088 in year 2010 and 217,004 in year 2015. The projected number of teachers in the primary schools would be 15,547 in year 2010 and 19,190 in year 2015 while the projected number of teachers in the junior secondary schools would be 5809 in year 2010 and 7000 in year 2015. As such, the State government would require additional 6477 primary school teachers and 2,055 junior secondary schools teachers by 2015. Although changes in pupils' enrolment might bring about changes in the number of teachers required, the projection has provided an insight into what teachers requirements would be by the year 2015.

DISCUSSION

In the foregoing analysis, several findings were made. One salient finding was that the level of teacher preparation in both the primary and junior secondary schools in the State was low. This finding was consistent with the findings made by previous researchers [10-12]. The findings indicating that teachers were not adequately available for the Universal Basic Education programme negated [18] findings of a steadily increasing number of physic teachers in American schools. The finding however agreed with the findings of other researchers [19]. Although the shortfall in the number of teachers in post declined from one year to another, there were shortages of teachers in many schools thereby supporting earlier findings [20-22]. This suggests that the State Government might not have employed the required number of science and technology teachers into the schools.

The finding indicating that the demand for teachers in primary and junior secondary schools in the State did not match the supply from the higher institutions was contrary to earlier findings [4; 23]. The fact that the number of teachers supplied from the institutions was greater than the number demanded was contrary to the findings made by [24] that the demand for teachers was greater than the supply in Ondo State schools. The finding indicating greater number of supply than demand further buttressed the fact that perhaps the State Government might not have employed sufficient number of teachers into the schools in preparation for the universal basic education programme.

The average growth rate of 4.3% in primary schools and 3.8% in the junior secondary schools as well as the average teacher-pupil ratio of 1:30 in primary schools and 1: 31 in the junior secondary schools agreed with the findings made by earlier researchers [1; 25]. The findings indicating that the State government would require additional 7,302 primary school teachers and 2,321 junior secondary schools teachers by 2016 supported the [26] which shows that over the next few years, there would be an annual requirement of an average of 2,200 new teachers in Victorian government schools in Australia. The findings also agreed with the findings of other researchers [9; 17] which emphasized the need for more teachers in schools.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study led the researcher to conclude that Ondo State, Nigeria has not been not been fully prepared for the universal basic education programme. Teacher preparation has not been fully embarked upon in the State. It was also concluded that teachers were not adequately available in the schools. This suggests that not much have been done in achieving the basic education in the State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it was recommended that the State Government should recruit more teachers into the primary and junior secondary schools in the State in order to enable the pupils achieve permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively. Teachers should be allowed to attend seminars and workshops to acquaint themselves of new ideas and methods of teaching for the Universal Basic Education programme. Teachers should also be sent for in-service training to enable them to acquire more skills and competence in their job performance. The State Ministry of Education should intensify more efforts in the effective supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the Universal Basic Education programme in the State

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