

## Strategies for Enhancing Community Participation for Effective Implementation of the Ube Programme in Junior Basic Education in Ondo State, Nigeria

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**Key words:** Universal Basic Education (UBE), community participation, strategy, School Based Management Committee (SBMCs), sustainable

**Abstract:** The study ascertained the Strategies for Enhancing Community Participation in the Effective Implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme for sustainable development in Ondo state, Nigeria. Three research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The research design adopted for the study was the descriptive survey design. The researchers made use of 20% of the targeted population, making up a sample size of 248 subjects. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that the level of community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state is low. There are some factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme. The study further revealed that some strategies that could be adopted to enhance community participation for effective implementation of the UBE programme for sustainable development include: encouraging the operation of the school based management committee in the UBE schools, organization of community's sensitization workshops and seminars and involving community leaders in mobilizing other members of the community. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that the government and the State Universal Education Board (SUBEB) should encourage the operation of the school based management committee in order to enhance community participation in the UBE programme schools and that there should be organization of community's sensitization workshops and seminars, so as to create an enabling environment for community participation for the effective implementation of the UBE programme for sustainable development.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is believed that the universal basic education programme was introduced to make every Nigerian child to acquire basic education irrespective of tribe, religion and social status of parents or guardian. The UBE programme was launched on 30th September, 1999 in Sokoto by the former president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. This was to overcome the poor state of the educational systems in Nigeria which was a fall-out of the crumbled free Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1955 in the Western Region, the UPE of 1956 in the Eastern Region and the nationwide UPE of 1976, respectively. The establishment of the programme is in compliance with the Declaration of the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) which was made in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and which clearly stated that every person, child or youth shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic needs<sup>[1]</sup>. Therefore, the aims of the universal basic education programme is to provide access to basic skills and learning needed for building solid foundation in the entire citizenry of the country.

The Universal Basics Education (UBE) is an educational reform programme of the Nigerian government that provides free, compulsory and continuous 9 years education at two levels: 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education for all school-aged children. It also includes pre-primary and non-formal education programme, respectively<sup>[2]</sup>. The UBE, according to Obayan is the type of education in quality and contents that is given in the first level of education free for citizens of a country for sustainable development. Nwobi<sup>[3]</sup> explained that as the UBE programme is intended to be universal, free and compulsory, it implies that appropriate type of opportunities will be provided for every Nigerian child of school age. In the National Policy on Education, it is noted that an education programme that will be universal and free is very essential in laying a good foundation for the development which our founding fathers envisaged. Therefore, it is a fact that government intention towards the UBE is to make it available and attainable for all Nigerian children of school age.

According to the Universal Basic Education Commission<sup>[2]</sup>, the ultimate goal of the Universal Basic Education Programme is to eradicate illiteracy within the shortest possible time. Specifically, the objectives of the Universal Basic Education Programme according to UBEC<sup>[2]</sup> include developing in the entire citizenry strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion, reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system and ensuring the acquisition of appropriate skills needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria<sup>[1]</sup>, achieving the goals of UBE is the responsibility of all stakeholders in education which include: Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) of each state, the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA), members of the local communities and school administrators (head teachers), among others. This prompted Nigerian government to pass the UBE Act in the year 2004 to provide a legal backing which is referred to as implementation blue print. The blue print on the UBE implementation specifically recognizes the roles and responsibilities of the local communities.

The Nigerian government strongly believes that this programme will raise the literacy and numeracy levels of the citizens hence the concerted efforts made through public enlightenment campaign, establishment of School Based Management Committee (SBMCs), social mobilization, supply of textbooks, data collection and analysis and curriculum enrichment, among others.

In Ondo state, all the stakeholders in education have shown above-average degree of interest in the effective implementation of the free universal education programme. However despite the fact that the policy document recognizes the roles of the local communities in achieving the programme objectives, it seems that all is not well with the programme especially as related to roles of the communities' participation. No wonder, Asiayi<sup>[4]</sup> reported that community participation in the management of the UBE programme for sustainable development is low. The reason being that since the introduction of the UBE programme more than a decade, there is still several problems bedeviling the programme. Fabiyi observed that the level of community involvement in the provision of infrastructural facilities to schools was quite low. Such problems include: inadequate funding, lack of adequate number of teachers (staff personnel) poor supervision and poor state of infrastructural facilities, among others. Adesina<sup>[5]</sup> submitted that government earlier pronouncement of absolute total free education contributed to low community participation in the administration of school programmes for sustainability. Adeyemi<sup>[6]</sup> reported that lack of adequate communities' enlightenment and poor socio economic factor contributed to low community involvement in the implementation of the UBE programme for sustainable development. Thus, it behooves a collaborative effort of all stakeholders in the education sector including community members, if the desired effective implementation of the UBE programme is to be achieved<sup>[4]</sup>. No wonder, Graham<sup>[7]</sup> reported that there is need to decentralize school management to the communities by forming a formidable committee at the school level. Encouraging this committee will go a long

way in creating enabling environment for active community participation in the school programmes for sustainable education<sup>[8]</sup>. Therefore, there is need to explore certain strategies for enhancing community participation for effective implementation of the UBE programme.

The general purpose of this study was to determine the strategies for enhancing community participation for effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Ondo state. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Determine the extent to which the local communities participate in the provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities for the UBE programme
- Identify factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme
- Determine strategies for enhancing community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme

**Research questions:** The following research questions guided this study:

- To what extent do the local communities participate in the provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities for the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state?
- What are the factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state?
- What are the strategies for enhancing community participation in UBE in Ondo state?

**Hypothesis:** The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- $H_{01}$ : there is no significant difference between the mean responses of head teachers and members of SBMCs with regards to the factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state
- $H_{02}$ : there is no significant difference between the mean responses of head teachers and members of SBMCs with regards to the strategies for enhancing community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Nworgu<sup>[9]</sup> described descriptive survey as a design which

aim is to collect data and then describe in a systematic manner, the characteristic features or fact about a given population. The researchers adopted this design because it enabled them to explore certain strategies for enhancing community participation for effective implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state.

The study was carried out in Okitipupa Education zone of Ondo state. Okitipupa education zone is made up of three local government areas namely; Okitipupa local government, Ilaje local government and Ese-Odo local Government Areas with its zonal head office located at Okitipupa, Ondo South senatorial district of Ondo state. Okitipupa education zone is located in the coastal area of Ondo state with total number of 138 primary schools.

The population of this study was 1,238 which comprised 138 head teachers and 1,100 School Based Management Committee (SBMC) members of the 138 public primary schools in the zone. (Statistics and Research Unit of Ondo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB))<sup>[10]</sup>.

The sample size of the study was 248 which made up of 69 head teachers and 179 SBMC members in the area. The sample size was selected using multi-stage sampling technique. Sixty nine public primary schools were randomly sampled from the 138 public primary schools in the zone. These were 26 schools from Okitipupa Local Government Area, 23 from Ilaje local government and 20 from Ese-Odo local government area respectively. The rationale for selecting this sample size is in line with Olorunsola<sup>[11]</sup> who asserted that, since multi-stage sampling technique is conducted in phases and provided the population is divided into clusters, 20% sample size will do and the results obtained can be generalizable to the entire population of the study.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled, Questionnaire on Strategies for Enhancing Community Participation in the Universal Basic Education Programme (QSECPUBE). It consisted of two sections, Section one and Section two. Section one was designed to collect demographic data of the respondents. Section two consisted of 18 items built on three clusters (A-C) in line with the three specific purposes. Each cluster consists of six items. The items in clusters A were structured along the four point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Little Extent (VLE) and weighted 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point, respectively while items in clusters B and C were structured on Strongly Agree (SA = 4) points, Agree (A = 3) points, Disagree, (D = 2) points and Strongly Disagree, (SD = 1) point.

The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, two in educational administration and

Planning and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the faculty of education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. These experts face validated the instrument in terms of clarity of language, appropriateness and adequacy of the items in measuring what they are supposed to measure. The comments and corrections made independently by the experts helped the researcher to modify and produce the final instrument.

Thirty three copies of the questionnaire were trial tested on 10 head teachers and 23 SBMC members from public primary schools in Ekiti state which is outside the area of this study but share similar characteristics with the subjects of this study. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency was reliability coefficient of 0.84 for the instrument. This value indicated that the instrument was reliable.

A total of 248 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents by the researchers and two research assistants. The researchers briefed the research assistants on both how to administer and how to retrieve the instruments from the respondents, so as to ensure maximum return. All the 248 copies of the questionnaire were filled and returned.

The data collected were analyzed using Mean scores and Standard Deviation (SD) in answering the research questions and t-test to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of probability. Real limits of number was used in interpreting the results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Research Question One:** To what extent do the local communities participate in the provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities for the UBE implementation in Ondo state? The data for answering the research question are presented on Table 1.

From Table 1, the mean scores for items 8 and 10 exceeded 2.50 the benches mark. This indicated that community members participate in provision of furniture

to schools and in provision of teaching and learning materials. Items 7,9,11 and 12 show little community participation in such areas like provision of classroom blocks to schools, assisting in the maintenance of school facilities, renovating dilapidated buildings and in the construction of access roads to schools . From the overall mean of (X2.56; SD.08), it means that the respondents are of the view that communities participate to a little extent in the provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities in Ondo state.

### Research question two:

- What are the factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state?

The data for answering the above research question are presented on Table 2. From Table 2, the head teachers and SBMC members in Ondo state agreed that some of the factors affecting community participation in the UBE programme include: sudden launching of total free education by the government without adequate preparation, some community members do not have steady source of income to enable them participate in the implementation of UBE programme and communities have not been adequately sensitized on their roles in the UBE implementation. This opinion is shown in the cluster means 2.86 (for head teachers) and 2.88 (for SBMC members) 3.81,3.00 and 3.34 to items 19, 20 and 21, respectively which are above the 2.50 bench mark. On the other hand, they disagreed that embezzlement of fund by some school heads discourage community participation in the UBE programme (Head Teachers = 2.31 SD = 0.75, SBMC = 2.41 SD = 1.03) that some school heads do not maintain cordial relationship with community members and that school programmes do not reflect the belief and values of the host communities (Head Teachers = 2.24 SD = 1.12, SBMC = 2.20 SD = 1.12). This is indicated in the overall mean (X = 2.77;

Table 1: Mean responses of the Respondents on the extent do the communities participate in the provision and maintenance of facilities for UBE implementation (N = 248)

Items	Head teachers		BMC members			Overall	
	1	2	1	2	3	1	2
Communities participate in provision of classroom blocks in schools	2.42	0.68	2.30	1.44	2.42	0.68	LE
They are involved in provision of furniture to schools	3.44	0.37	3.40	0.68	3.44	0.37	HE
Communities are assisting in the maintenance of school facilities	2.25	1.16	2.48	0.77	2.25	1.16	LE
They are involved in provision of teaching and learning materials in schools	2.72	0.98	2.80	0.61	2.72	0.98	HE
They participate in renovating dilapidated buildings	2.30	1.37	2.11	1.36	2.30	1.37	VLE
Community members participate in the construction of access roads to schools	1.60	1.24	1.90	1.45	1.60	1.24	VLE
Cluster mean	2.46	1.02	2.50	1.05	2.56	0.08	HE

Table 2: Mean responses of the respondents on factors militating against community participation in the UBE programme (N = 248)

Items	$\bar{X}$	Head teacher	SBMC members			Overall	
			1	2	3	1	2
Sudden launching of total free education by the government without adequate preparation	3.81	0.50	3.72	0.32	3.82	0.60	A
Some community members have no steady source of income to enable them play their roles in the UBE programme	3.00	0.98	3.20	0.61	3.00	0.98	A
Communities have not been adequately sensitized on their roles in the UBE implementation	3.34	0.92	3.30	0.48	3.34	0.92	A
Embezzlement of school fund by some school heads discourage community participation in the UBE programme	2.31	0.75	2.41	1.03	2.31	0.75	D
Some school heads do not maintain cordial relationship with community members	2.49	0.98	2.48	1.04	2.49	0.98	D
School programmes do not reflect the belief and values of the host communities	2.24	1.12	2.20	1.12	2.24	1.12	D
Cluster mean	2.86	0.88	2.88	0.77	2.77	0.78	A

Table 3: Mean responses of the respondents on strategies for community participation in the UBE programme (N = 248)

Items	Head teachers		SBMC members		Overall		Rmk
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
School based management committee should be encouraged for mobilizing host communities in the UBE implementation	3.68	0.68	4.00	0.32	3.69	0.68	SA
There should be communities' sensitization seminars to create enabling environment for community participation in the UBE programme	3.00	0.98	3.20	0.61	3.01	0.98	A
Community members should be involved in the decision making process of the school	3.34	0.93	3.30	0.48	3.32	0.93	A
There should be cordial relationship between the schools and the communities for progressive participation in the UBE programme	3.38	1.14	3.42	.86	3.38	1.14	A
School programmes should be made to promote the beliefs and values of the host communities as this will boost their participation in the scheme	3.26	1.06	2.93	1.00	3.27	1.06	A
Efforts should be made to attract the support of alumni associations and community based organizations, so as to stimulate participation in the UBE programme	3.72	0.55	3.06	0.18	3.73	0.55	A
Cluster mean	3.40	0.88	3.32	0.58	3.42	0.89	A

SD = 0.78) which suggest that the respondents, generally agree that some of the listed factors are factors that militate against community participation in the implementation of the UBE in Ondo state.

### Research question three:

- What are the strategies for enhancing active community participation in UBE implementation in Ondo state?

The data for answering the above research question are presented on Table 3. Data on Table 3 show the mean ratings of the respondents with regards to strategies for enhancing active community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state. The respondents in their responses rated the items provided in this cluster as strategies for enhancing community participation, according to the cluster mean (Head Teachers = 3.40; SD = 0.88, SBMC = 3.32; SD = 0.58). The mean responses indicated that the respondents agree with

most of the items in the cluster as strategies for enhancing community participation in the implementation of UBE programme. This is buttressed by the overall mean of ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.42; SD = 0.89) which indicates that the respondents share the view that some of the strategies suggested if adopted will enhance community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo.

**Hypothesis one:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of head teachers and members of SBMCs with regards to the level of community participation in the provision and maintenance of UBE infrastructural facilities in Ondo state. Table 4 shows the summary of the t-test analysis.

From Table 4, the calculated t-value at 246° of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is 1.13. Since, the calculated value of  $t = 1.13$  is significant at 1.96; the value is not significant at 0.05. This is because  $1.96 > 0.05$  ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis is not rejected, hence, there is no significant difference between

Table 4: Independent t-test Analysis of Head Teachers' and SBMC members mean responses on the extent of community participation in the provision and maintenance of UBE infrastructural facilities in Ondo state (N = 248)

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	Sig.	Remark
Head teachers	69	2.44	1.02	246	1.13	1.96	NS
SBMC members	179	2.50	1.05				

Table 5: Independent t-test analysis of head teacher's and SBMC members mean responses on factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme for sustainable development (N = 248)

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	Sig.	Remark
Head teachers	69	2.86	0.88	246	0.18	0.55	NS
SBMC members	179	2.88	0.77				

Table 6: Independent t-test analysis of head teacher's and SBMC members responses on strategies for enhancing community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme(n = 248)

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	Sig.	Remark
Head teachers	69	3.40	0.88	246	0.41	0.88	NS
SBMC members	179	3.32	0.58				

the mean ratings of head teachers and SBMC members with regards to the extent of community participation in the provision and maintenance of UBE infrastructural facilities in Ondo state.

**Hypothesis two:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of head teachers and members of SBMCs with regards to the factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state. Table 5 shows the summary of the t-test analysis. From Table 5, the calculated t-value at 246° of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is 0.18. Since, the calculated value of  $t = 0.18$  is significant at 0.55; the value is not significant at 0.05. This is because  $0.55 > 0.05$  ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis is not rejected; hence, there is no significant difference between the mean responses of head teachers and SBMC members with regards to the factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state.

**Hypothesis three:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of head teachers and members of SBMCs with regards to the strategies for enhancing community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state. Table 6 shows the summary of the t-test analysis.

From Table 6, the calculated t-value at 246° of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is 0.41. Since, the calculated  $t = 0.41$  is significant at 0.88; the value is not significant at 0.05. This is because  $0.88 > 0.05$  ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis is not rejected; hence there is no significant difference between the mean responses of head teachers and SBMC members with regards to the strategies for enhancing community participation for effective implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state.

The results from research question 1 revealed that community members do not participate in the provision of classroom blocks to schools and that they do not

participate. This finding is consistent with the findings of Asiayi<sup>[4]</sup> who reported that community participation in the management of the UBE programme for sustainable development is low that they only participate in such areas as donation of lands to schools, raising funds and attending PTA meetings. This finding is also in agreement with Fabiyi who observed that the level of community involvement in the provision of infrastructural facilities to schools was quite low. Therefore, the communities do not participate actively in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state. The null hypothesis one was not rejected as formulated. The non-rejection of this hypothesis indicates that the head teachers and the SBMC members agree that the extent to which the community members participate in the provision and maintenance of UBE infrastructural facilities is very low in Ondo state.

The findings from research question 2 revealed that factors militating against community participation include: sudden launching of total free education by the government without adequate preparation, some community members having no steady source of income to enable them participate in the UBE programme and local communities having not been adequately sensitized on their roles in the UBE programme. This finding is in consonance with Adesina<sup>[5]</sup> who submitted that government earlier pronouncement of absolute total free education contributed to low community participation in the administration of school programmes for sustainability. The result is also in line with Adeyemi<sup>[6]</sup> who reported that lack of adequate communitie's enlightenment and poor socio economic factor contributed to low community involvement in the implementation of the UBE programme for sustainable development. The null hypothesis two was not rejected as formulated. The non-rejection of this hypothesis indicates that the head teachers and the SBMC members agree that there are some factors militating against community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Ondo state.

The findings from research question 3 revealed that strategies for enhancing community participation in the UBE programme include: school based management committee being encouraged for the mobilization of the local communities in the implementation of the UBE programme, organizing communities' sensitization seminars and workshops to create enabling environment for community participation in the UBE programme, encouraging cordial relationship between the schools and the communities, schools programmes being made to promote the beliefs and values of the host communities and efforts being made to attract the support of alumni associations and community based organizations, so as to stimulate participation in the UBE programme. This finding is in line with Graham<sup>[7]</sup> who reported that there is need to decentralize school management to the communities' by forming a formidable committee at the school level. This finding also agreed with Adebayo and Adelabu<sup>[8]</sup> who reported that encouraging this committee will go a long way in creating enabling environment for active community participation in the school programmes for sustainable education. The third null hypothesis was not rejected as postulated. The non-rejection of this hypothesis indicates that the head teachers and SBMC members share the same view that the strategies outlined in the instrument will stimulate community participation in the implementation of the UBE programme.

### CONCLUSION

The Nigerian government has taken a laudable step by launching the UBE programme but all is not well with the implementation due to the low involvement of the host communities in addressing various challenges to the scheme. However, based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: The federal government and their agencies such as UBEC, SUBEB should enforce the establishment of the school based management committees in all primary schools for the mobilization of the host communities in the implementation of the UBE programme for sustainability. There should be periodic communities' sensitization workshops and seminars to make the host communities to be aware of their roles in the sustenance of the scheme and create enabling environment for community

participation in the UBE programme for sustainable development. School heads should maintain cordial relationship with the community leaders, so as to stimulate community participation in the UBE programme for sustainability. School programmes should be made to promote the beliefs and values of the host communities in order to boost their participation in the UBE programme and efforts should be made to attract the support of alumni associations and community-based organizations in order to stimulate community participation in the UBE programme.

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