



THE IMPACT OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME (UBE) ON THE ENROLMENT AND RETENTION OF THE GIRL-CHILD IN PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KUDAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KADUNA STATE.

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ABSTRACT

This research studied the impact of UBE Programme towards the promotion of basic education in Nigeria, focusing on Kudan Local Government Area in Kaduna state with particular reference to the Girl-Child in terms of enrollment and retention. Data was generated from Primary and Secondary sources. Primary sources includes Questionnaires constructed and self-administered among 120 respondents made up of 40 teachers and 80 parents of girl-children in 6 Primary and 4 Junior secondary schools in Kudan LGA, Oral Interview and Focused Group Discussion using cluster and purposive sampling. Secondary data includes school records from principals of the Junior Secondary Schools and the information unit of the Local Government Area used to generate data on enrolment and retention rate of boys/girls in Primary and Junior Secondary schools over the years understudy. The data was quantitatively analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2.0 of 2010, to obtain frequency, percentage and cumulative percentage to responses to the questions presented in the questionnaire. The results revealed that the UBE Programme has not improved enrolment and retention rate of girls in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools in Kudan Local Government from 2005-09, especially in the secondary schools with an enrolment and retention ratio of 72.27% Boys and 27.73% Girls in 2005 to 73.27% Boys and 26.73% Girls in 2009 for Primary schools. For secondary schools, data obtained from school records shows an enrolment and retention ratio of 88.1% Boys and 11.9% Girls in 2005 and 73.5% Boys and 26.5% Girls in 2009. On the question of factors responsible for low enrolment and retention of girls in schools in this Local Government, (50%) of the respondents indicated early marriage, (30%) poverty, and (20%) said ignorance concerning female education were major reasons for the low retention rate of girls in schools in the Local Government Area. Based on the data generated and presented, the research concluded that the Universal Basic Education Programme (UBE), has not impacted on Girls education in Kudan Local Government Area in terms of enrollment and retention during the period under study (2005-2009) based on the data generated and presented.

INTRODUCTION

One of the essential functions of government is the provision of certain services and values which cater for the welfare of her citizens. In the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria [Section 18: (1)], such services includes investment in public water and power supplies, construction of good road networks, provision of qualitative and affordable health care delivery system, investment in agriculture and the provision of an effective and functional system of Education at all levels through which the citizens can acquire knowledge and skills which can bring about sustainable human and technological development and a permanent change in the behavior of the individuals in the society and thus lead to national development.

As it is popularly said 'Ignorance has only one cure Education', which all humans need to develop and sustain their natural intelligence. Formal or Western Education is also very important as it helps the individual become more productive and able to face new and emerging

challenges. Education is also the starting point of women's advancement as it promotes the realization of their full potentials (Okafor, 1971).

Education is the basic tool that should be given to women in order to fulfill their role as full members of the society (United Nations, 1995). Education constitutes the major instrument for sustainable human development which every other activity revolves. It is because of this that development experts posit that no society can rise beyond its Educational level. Nations which have recorded tremendous feats in the world, heavily relied on the instrumentality of Education, hence, Education can be rightly said to be the key to national development. When the individuals in a country are properly educated, that society would develop because Education plays a vital role in the modern world as it enables an individual acquire the skills necessary to compete and contribute to issues of national importance, be it in politics, science, technology, etc (Okafor, 1971).

Through Education, women can break the circle of their oppression and exploitation. Women require basic education in order to recognize their potentials and develop their abilities to contribute to the socio-economic and political life of their countries and be aware of their minimum legal rights (Pant, 2004). Educating the Girl-Child empowers her to be able to contribute to national development which occurs when the mental and physical component of the child is developed. (Methu, 1992).

Experts in education theories agree that education improves health and productivity and that the poorest gain the most. When schools open their doors wider to girls and women as they do to boys and men, the benefits multiply, (Schuber, 1982).

Educating women is the single most important step government can take to improve the health and economic potentials of their citizens. Data has shown that literacy and numeracy knowledge among women are associated with improved farming methods as well, (Tadesse, 1979).

According to Akpan (2009), Education is too important to be trifled with in Nigeria. He argued that Nigeria has remained underdeveloped because our people are not correctly and sufficiently educated, and that we are poor because our public Education policy is just not right not because our Education is cheap or that government is too poor to ensure functional Education in Nigeria. Education policies are not new in Nigeria. The Federal government of Nigeria has over the years shown commitment to the development of the Educational standard of the nation through the formulation and implementation of policies that seek to promote and sustain high Educational standards. Nigeria's National Policy on Education (1981) indicates that education is the greatest investment that the nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political and social life. Some of the policies on Education in Nigeria includes: Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1976, the Education For All (EFA) 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand of which Nigeria was a signatory and of which she pledged to uphold, and of recent the Universal Basic Education Programme (UBE) launched in 1999 by the Obasanjo's Administration which became operational from 2005.

One of the objectives of the UBE programme is promoting the Education of the girl child and the provision of free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age. Female Education in Nigerian touches a fundamental issue of gender disparity which is both

ancient and global. Today in the world, we do see the global agitation for female Education. This is to ensure equal rights to Education for the females which they ought to share as far as possible with their male counterparts.

According to a popular adage, “*when you educate a woman, you educate a whole nation*”. This is so because the woman is the mother of the nation and her education is very vital because of the impact it would have on those around her. Also, the women folk are said to constitute half of every nation's productive population and so the need to empower them educationally to enable them effectively contribute to the socio-economic and political development of their countries. Many of the identified factors militating against the Girl-child education in Nigeria are mostly socio-cultural. These include: early marriage, discrimination of the Girl-child by the parents, stereotyping the female child etc. other issues are social and economic like ignorance, poverty etc which hinder the female child from getting the desired western Education necessary to develop and live a good life. With the objectives of the UBE which aims at ensuring that every Nigerian child of school-going age gets the education needed for national development, political consciousness and national integration, it is believed that the Girl-child education would be better enhanced under the UBE programme, (ESA, 2008).

The UBE is Nigeria government's attempt to revamp the falling standard of Education in Nigeria by pursuing mass literacy while eradicating illiteracy, ignorance, poverty etc and also promote the education of the Girl-child.

In spite of the educational policies formulated by the Nigerian Government over the years, school enrolment remains low and in Northern Nigeria much lower than other parts of the country, (Egunjobi, 2005). Enrolment ratio in Kaduna state is 76% for boys and 62% for girls and Kudan Local Government Area has a gross enrolment ratio below 70%, the other local government being Kaduna south, (KSE, 2005).

This research aims at investigating the impact of the Universal Basic Education Programme (UBE) on Girl-child education in terms of enrollment and retention in some selected primary and junior secondary schools in Kudan Local Government Area, Kaduna State from 2005-2009.

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

Instruments for data collection

The research design is a survey method. Data for this research includes both primary and Secondary sources. Primary Sources involved the use of self constructed and administered questionnaires, Oral Interview and Focused Group Discussion. The questionnaire, Oral Interview and Focused Group Discussion was used to generate data on the question of factors responsible for the low enrolment and retention of girls in primary and junior secondary schools in Kudan Local government area. The questionnaire was pilot tested among colleagues in the Department of Political Science to ascertain the time it will take to administer each and was validated by my supervisors. Secondary data includes school registers obtained from the Principals of the Junior Secondary Schools in the Local Government and available records on girls' enrolment and retention in primary and junior secondary schools in Kudan Local Government Area during the years understudy obtained from the Local Government secretariat.

Population and Sampling

Kudan Local Government has Five (5) major towns, 55 villages and 10 wards. The research targeted Primary and Secondary Schools as well as the teachers and parents of girl-children in the selected Primary and Junior Secondary Schools in Kudan Local Government area, Kaduna State. There are 73 primary schools and 5 secondary schools in the local government. 4 out of the 10 wards in the local government were selected using multi staged sampling namely: Kudan, Doka, Kauran Wali and Hunkuyi based on their proximity to the road. 6 out of the 73 primary schools and 4 out of the 5 junior secondary schools were selected for this study using cluster sampling because of their scattered locations.

The total sampled population for this study is 139, comprising of forty (40) teachers and eighty (80) parents sampled through the questionnaire totaling (120). Oral interview was conducted with Seven (7) individuals namely: one (1) Headmaster of Hunkuyi Model Primary school, four (4) Principals of the Junior Secondary Schools in Kudan, Kauranwali, Doka and Hunkuyi, One (1) UBE Teacher in Hunkuyi Primary school, One (1) Local Government official under the Planning, Research and Statistics Department. The Focused Group Discussion involved twelve (12) individuals purposively selected based on their knowledge of the issue under study. These individuals comprise of three (3) Teachers in the primary schools in Garu, Mauta and Zabi, three (3) girls in the junior secondary school in Hunkuyi, three (3) parents of girls in the junior secondary schools in Doka, and three (3) PTA chairmen of the primary schools in Garu, Mauta and Zabi bringing the total population to 139.

The schools were approached in clusters while the parents of the girls were identified through their children and traced to their houses with the help of a research assistant who happens to be a native of the local government and a teacher in one of the junior secondary schools and sampled through the questionnaire. The questionnaire, oral interview and Focused Group Discussion was used to generate data on the factors responsible for low enrolment and retention of girls in Primary and Secondary Schools in this local Government Area, while school registers and official records obtained from the Local Government secretariat provided record of school enrolment and retention between the boy/girl-child over the years under study in the local government.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Data for this study was quantitatively analyzed using simple statistical method of Frequency, Percentage, Cumulative percentage and variables were cross tabulated and presented on tables with the aid of the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 2.0 of 2010.

Results

Table 1 shows the enrolment and retention ratio between boys and girls in primary schools from the period 1996-2004, the period before the campaigns and implementation of the UBE programme in Nigeria.

Table 1: Girl-child enrolment ratio in primary schools in Kudan Local Government Area from 1996-2004

YEAR	Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female
1996-1997	4,809	2,150	6,959	69.10476	30.89524
1997-1998	5,288	2,508	7,796	67.82966	32.17034
1998-1999	7,061	2,533	9,594	73.59808	26.40192
1999-2000	NA	NA	NA		
2000-2001	NA	NA	NA		
2001-2002	NA	NA	NA		
2002-2003	NA	NA	NA		
2003-2004	17,973	8,267	26,240	68.49466	31.50534
2004-2005	13,092	6,311	19,403	67.4741	32.5259

NA: Not Available

Source: Education and statistics office Kudan Local Government Area, 2010.

There was an enrolment increase in the year 2004 which declined again in 2005 from 8,267 to 6,311. 2005 was the period of the UBE program was formally inaugurated. Table 2 show the female retention rate in primary schools. The years 2006 - 2008 showed a steady decline in the retention rate of girl-children in primary schools in Kudan Local Government as shown in the table and a slight increase in the years 2008-09.

Table 2: Female Retention in primary schools in Kudan LGA, 2005-2009

Year	Male	Female	% Male	% Female
2005-2006	30,622	11,751	72.27	27.73
2006-2007	26,764	9,323	74.17	25.83
2007-2008	27,554	2,484	91.73	8.27
2008-2009	30,763	11,222	73.27	26.73

Source: information unit, Kudan Local Government Area, 2010.

For secondary schools, the ratio between boys and girls enrolment in schools is even lower which confirms the assumption that female enrolment in schools dwindles as they climb the academic ladder, according to Egunjobi (2005). A sample of four (4) secondary schools in four (4) different wards namely: Hunkuyi, Kudan, Doka, KauranWali show a disproportionate disparity between Boy/Girl-child enrolment in secondary schools over the years 2005-09 inspite of the UBE campaigns (Table 3).

Table 3: Schools Enrolment in Junior Secondary schools in Kudan LGA:

Name of School	2005				2006				2007				2008				2009			
	M	F	% M	% F	M	F	% M	% F	M	F	% M	% F	M	F	% M	% F	M	F	% M	% F
GJSS Hunkuyi	131	15	89.72	10.28	188	13	93.5	6.5	214	20	91.5	8.5	265	95	73.6	26.4	246	122	66.8	33.2
GSS Kudan	603	85	87.64	12.36	270	30	90	10	798	131	85.9	14.1	589	137	81.1	18.9	492	164	75	25
Doka									93	25	78.8	21.2	137	35	79.7	20.3	183	56	76.6	23.4
Kauranwali	NA				NA															
	NA				59	6	90.8	9.2	62	7	89.9	10.1	72	12	85.7	14.3	74	16	82.2	17.8
Total Enrolment	734	100	88.1	11.9	517	49	91.3	8.7	1,167	183	86.4	13.6	1,063	279	79.2	20.8	995	358	73.5	26.5

Source: Obtained during field work from School Principals, 2010.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents on factors responsible for low Enrolment and retention rate of Girls in schools in this area

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Poverty	30	30.0	30.0	30.0
Early Marriage	50	50.0	50.0	80.0
Ignorance	20	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey Data, 2010.

In Table 4, the question on factors responsible for the low enrolment and retention rate of female children in the area of study was answered. Thirty (30.0%) of the sampled population said Poverty is responsible for low enrolment and retention rate of Female children in schools in this area, Fifty (50.0%) of the sampled population identified Early marriage while Twenty (20.0%) identified ignorance as a factor.

Informed views from the Focused Group discussion as well as interview conducted among the 12 and 6 individuals considered as critical stakeholders are summarily presented as follows:

All the respondents agreed to their willing to send their female children to school as far as the girls will maintain their Islamic beliefs and virtues and not be corrupted by Western Influence.

All the respondents accepted that early marriage for their girls is a major reason for the low retention rate of girl children in schools in this local government.

10 out of 12 respondents agreed that poverty and Ignorance are reasons why most parents would rather send the boy child and not the girl-child to school when faced with choices since the boy would later take on the responsibility of the family from the father and the Girl-Child would sooner be married out.

2 out of 10 respondents under the Focus Group Discussion mentioned unemployment also as being another reason why Girl-Child Education is not taken seriously.

The 4 Principals of the Junior Secondary Schools and Primary school Teachers interviewed in the area disclosed the following on the question of the implementation of the UBE Programme towards the promotion of the Girl-Child education in Kudan Local Government:

According to Malam Abdurahman Ango, the Principal of Government Junior secondary school Kauran Wali, Kudan, identified the problem of insufficient school facilities and graduate teachers hence the school makes do with mostly Youth Corps members assigned to the school from the Local Government a situation that is contrary to the provisions of the UBE Act which stipulates the sufficient distribution of qualified teachers to meet the expectations of the scheme.

The principal of Government Junior Secondary School Doka Kudan, Mal Kassimu Saleh equally stated that school environment was yet to improve under the UBE as can be seen from the dilapidation of most school buildings in the Local Government. According to him, most repairs in the school is either borne by the community through self-help which is not enough due to the poverty level of the indigenes or the school through monies generated from school charges (a token amount charged by schools in place of school fees with the approval of the Government to be used for minor expenses of the schools.

On the question of factors responsible for the low enrolment and retention of girls in schools in the local government, Malam Yahaya Garba Kudan, the Principal of Government Secondary School, Kudan said members of the community were yet to accept the importance of Girl child education hence the government needs to intensify its enlightenment campaigns in the area.

Musa Yusuf, of sabon Gari primary school when interviewed disclosed that in his school, learning materials are insufficiently supplied and distributed to pupils and this is not helping to achieve the objectives of the UBE in the area as some children are deprived of these materials and either buy them on their own or share with their mates.

When asked about the condition of service of the Teachers under the UBE programme, Binta Shehu, Khadija Lawal and Ladi Danbaba all of Model Primary School, Hunkuyi in a Focused Group Discussion disclosed that UBE teachers for now are lower paid than teachers under the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA). They said the UBE teachers are employed through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) on contract for a period of three years and distributed to Local Governments and at the expiration of the contract; they are to be absolved in the local governments where they served. The UBE teachers according to these teachers receive their remuneration which is said to be just an allowance on a quarterly basis and these tends to make life very difficult for these teachers who sometimes stay away from school for lack of transport fare.

Maryam Alhassan and Jummai Shehu parents of children enrolled in the Early Childhood Care Development Education (ECCDE) disclosed that the condition under which the little children under this unit learn is both pathetic and unhealthy. According to them, some of the classes

contain over one hundred (100) children of ages between three (3) and Five (5) years under one teacher and only one nanny and in most of the schools majority of the children sit on the floor to learn and the population is too large for the teacher and nanny to manage. She said the crowd of children makes the classrooms potential health risks to the children who may contract diseases and infections from each other as they go to school.

When asked about the role of Kudan Local Government Area towards promoting the UBE programme in the area, the Local Government public Relations officer said the Local Government has been doing a lot to see that the objectives of the UBE programme is sustained in the local government by the prompt distribution of learning materials allocated to the local government and by constantly sending supervisors to monitor what is happening in the schools.

When asked to make a choice between completing their education before getting married and getting married before completing their education, Halima Ahmadu, Hauwa Safyanu and Sakina Sule of Government junior secondary school Doka Kudan unanimously agreed that marriage before proceeding higher in education is more preferable to them because waiting to complete their education would make them too mature at home and traditionally, girls in this area are not supposed to marry beyond their teenage years because by then getting a suitor becomes very difficult. As a result of this, some of the girls who are lucky to get spouses who would agree to their continuing with their education after the marriage go back to secondary school as married women and some nursing mothers can be seen in some of the schools with their infants nearby. The researcher was told that it is a common practices in this area by girls who want to continue their secondary education to get married while still in their junior secondary school level or shortly after completing junior secondary and complete the remaining in their husbands' homes if he grant the permission. Only few of the girls want to further their education up to the university level.

SUMMARY

The factors identified from field survey as responsible for the low enrolment and retention of the girl-child in schools in Kudan Local Government are cultural, religious and Socio-economic.

Among the cultural factors identified in Kudan Local Government Area is early marriage which is commonly practiced in most parts of Northern Nigeria whereby young girls are withdrawn from school to get married.

This is attributed to Ignorance concerning the importance of the Girl-Child education on the part of parents since a Girl's role was not seen beyond the domestic front hence parents would rather have the girls married off as soon as possible. Also Girls are withdrawn from school to get married so that her bride wealth can be used to solve family problems - including paying for the Education of her brothers which is more important to the family. Many of the young girls themselves believe it is a sign of ill-luck to be unmarried while one is still in her teenage years. By the age of 13, most girls in Northern Nigeria are either betrothed or married and that is about the age they are supposed to begin secondary school, hence many of the girls would rather be on the street hawking wares to get money to buy their bridal items in preparation for marriage.

Socio-Economic Factors includes Poverty and unemployment: Some children due to the poor financial position of their family are withdrawn from schools to help in generating income for their parents by engaging in activities like street hawking, farming etc. The girls hawk wares

to generate income for their marriage wares as well when parents cannot afford the resources required to buy such.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings in this research from data collected, analyzed and presented, the researcher concluded that the Universal Basic Education Programme has not reduced the gap between the Boy/Girl-child in primary and secondary schools in this Local Government Area in terms of enrollment and retention. Verbal interviews and Focus group discussions held with critical stake holders were used to confirm these assertions.

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