

Intergovernmental Relations in the Implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme in North-East States of Nigeria

Silas Onuche Joel, PhD
Department of Public Administration
University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID)
Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

Abstract

Effective Intergovernmental relations are a sine qua non for successful implementation of schemes, policies and projects in federal systems of government. However, in Nigeria, the conduct of Intergovernmental Relations (IGRs) and its ultimate benefit in policy implementation for the government and the citizenry has not been given priority. This paper assesses the practice of intergovernmental relations by both State and Federal government through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in the implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme in the North-East States of Nigeria. The study adopted survey method and used both primary and secondary data. In the case of primary data, eighty (80) questionnaires were administered to respondents made up of senior workers of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in four (4) States among the north east states obtained through simple random sampling. In the aspect of secondary data, available official records on number of teachers trained, access to the UBE Intervention Fund viz-a-viz the implementation of the UBE Scheme by the selected states were obtained and analyzed. The data obtained were analyzed with the use of frequency distribution tables, simple percentages and histogram while one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to correlate the responses of the respondents on the contributions to joint staff training programme by UBEC and SUBEBs. The findings reveal that joint staff training by UBEC and SUBEB significantly affects the implementation of UBE scheme. It further revealed that poor institutional co-ordination, delay in the payment of counterpart fund and non harmonization of monitoring bodies are intergovernmental relations factors that affect the implementation of UBE scheme. The study concludes that joint staff training by UBEC and SUBEB has significantly enhanced the success in the implementation of UBE scheme in the north east states. It was suggested among others that joint staff training programme of UBEC and SUBEBs should be intensified and improved upon through the effort of state governments in paying counterpart fund promptly as well as legislating for civil society to play more active roles in the implementation of UBE scheme.

Keywords: *Intergovernmental Relations, Implementation, Education and UBE Scheme.*

Background to the Study

Education is a very important instrument for measuring the socio-economic and political development of a nation. The need to ensure equitable educational opportunities, especially in developing countries has been highlighted since the Jomtien Conference on Education For All (EFA) in 1990. This international commitment to education stems from an understanding that education holds the key to individual and national development. This is to be realized through the improvement of the productive capacity of individuals, change of traditional attitudes, beliefs and practices that are inimical to human and national progress and its enthronement of democratic values among citizens. Thus, the Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004, Revised) states that the government recognizes education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. It is also fundamental to note that education is a right in itself that every member of the human family is entitled to because of its potential benefits.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme was introduced in Nigeria in 1999 and the enabling Act was enacted in 2004. The scheme is to serve as a catalyst to the entire Nigerian education system, but most specifically the basic education sub-sector. The UBE Act 2004 makes Primary and Junior Secondary Education free and compulsory for all children within the target population and also guarantees regular funding from the Federal Government for the scheme. The Act also provides for the establishment of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to co-ordinate the implementation of the scheme at the national level and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) to implement UBE at the state level.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has witnessed several intergovernmental conflicts that raised questions concerning the co-operation of intergovernmental institutions and processes of the implementation of policies and programmes (Joel, 2014:23). Actual intergovernmental relations networks, partnering, collaborations and joint efforts are still narrow and shallow as there is still no realization that such efforts, irrespective of boundaries, yield more ultimate benefits to the government and the citizenry in realizing policy objectives. The management of intergovernmental relations is poor in orientation and practice as it is not goal oriented, programmed and integrated (Ikelegbe 2004:171). This trend poses a great challenge to successful implementation of the UBE scheme.

Available researches on UBE in Nigeria (Kazeem, 2006; Tarfa, Owan, Lawan, Samuelson & Ijabadi 2006; Nakpodia, 2011) to mention but a few, have focused primarily on factors that are militating against the success of the scheme but this paper examines the practice of intergovernmental relations by the Federal and State governments through the relevant bodies and institutions in the implementation of UBE Scheme in the North-East states of Nigeria.

Objectives of the Paper

The objectives of this paper are to:

- i. Examine intergovernmental relations factors that affect the implementation of UBE scheme;
- ii. Assess the contributions to joint staff training programmes by UBEC and SUBEBs in the implementation of UBE Scheme; and
- iii. Identify the factors that affect access to the FGN- UBE intervention fund by the state governments.

Hypothesis

This paper is guided by the following hypothesis:

H₀: Joint staff training programmes by UBEC and SUBEBs does not affect the implementation of UBE Scheme.

Literature Review

Conceptual Issues

Intergovernmental Relations

Wright (1995) defines intergovernmental relations as comprising all the permutations and combinations of relations among the units of government in a federal system. He observes that intergovernmental relations include the activities and attitudes of persons occupying position in all the units of government under consideration-federal, state, local, political, administrative, judicial, legislative or executive branches of government. Intergovernmental relations can take place across vertical and horizontal lines. The federal-state and state-state relations belong to the category of intergovernmental relations that have been described as vertical and horizontal respectively. Vertical relations take place when the central government interacts with the states or localities or when the states interact with localities. Horizontal relations take place when governments at the same level in the political structure interact, for example inter-state or inter-localities interaction (Roberts 1999).

The concept of Intergovernmental relations describes the series of activities or interactions that take place between and among the different levels of government within a state. It is subject to changes and encompasses the combination and permutation of relationship among tiers of government. For years in Nigeria, the pattern of intergovernmental relations has remained essentially the same; namely the co-ordinate (or separated) authority, inclusive authority and overlapping authority. This came about because of the changes in the form of government (military or civilian), number and powers of the constituent units of the federation (regions or states and local governments) and the fiscal fortunes of the nation (the incidence of oil boom). Again, since independence, Nigerian federation has changed from a two-tier arrangement of four regions and a central government unit in 1960 to a total of 811 government units in 1999 consisting of one central government, 36 states and 774 local governments. Therefore, the concern of policy analyst is the extent to which constitutional provisions will enhance meaningful intergovernmental relations in policy implementation within the framework of federalism (Roberts 1999 cited in Benjamin, 2004).

The Universal Basic Education (UBE)

Basic education is fundamental to human and national development as it is the foundation upon which other levels of education is built as a necessity. It is axiomatic that no nation ever developed technologically, economically and socially without first investing its resources in basic education. The UBE is a continuous nine-year education scheme that seeks to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty with the general goal of stimulating and accelerating national development, political consciousness and national integration (FGN-UBE Guideline,1999). In this regard, the guidelines for operating the UBE scheme recognizes that its implementation should be a collaborative one involving the three tiers of government, civil society organizations, communities, private partners and international donor agencies. It is basically a funding arrangement, which obliges federal government to provide financial and technical assistance to states in support of their responsibility to deliver basic education.

Methodology

The study area is the North-East states of Nigeria which comprises of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States. The area is located in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria with a summed up population of 18.9 million inhabitants based on the 2006 national census report. Both primary and secondary data were used. The secondary sources include: available official records, books, seminar papers, magazines and internet materials. This was complemented with information obtained from administration of questionnaire (primary data). Reports from monitoring and evaluation unit of UBEC formed a chunk of official available records used. The target population in the selected states amounted to 139 senior officers out of which 79 representing 56.8% were sampled for the study. Multi-stage random sampling technique was used in this study. Four (4) out of six (6) of the North-East states were randomly selected. They were: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Gombe State. Questionnaires were distributed to 20 selected senior officers in each of the selected states. Eighty (80) questionnaires were distributed but 79 were retrieved. The table below depicts the population and sample size of the study.

Table 1.1: Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaire in the Selected States

Selected States	No of Senior Officers in SUBEBs	No of Questionnaire Distributed	No of Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage of Target Population
Adamawa	31	20	20	64.5
Bauchi	40	20	20	50
Borno	36	20	20	55.6
Gombe	32	20	19	59.4
Total	139	80	79	56.8%

Source: Field Survey 2013

The data obtained were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables, simple percentages, charts, histogram while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as an inferential statistical tool was used to test responses on the effect of joint staff training in the implementation of UBE scheme.

Results and Findings

When questions on joint programmes of staff training involving SUBEB and UBEC and its effect were asked; the respondent's opinion on the effect of joint staff training is reflected thus:

Table 1.2: Respondents Opinion on Joint Staff Training in UBE Scheme

State	Responses		
	Yes	No	No Idea (NI)
Adamawa	4	15	1
Bauchi	2	17	1
Borno	2	16	2
Gombe	3	15	1

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The ANOVA Table 1.3 below was constructed based on the responses reflected in table 1.2 above in order to test significant difference in the joint staff training by SUBEB and UBEC. The essence is to ascertain the effect of their joint staff training programme on the implementation of the UBE scheme.

Table 1.3: ANOVA test of Hypothesis on Joint Staff Training

Source of variation	Sum of Square	Degree of Freedom	Means Sq	F - ratio	P
Between groups	508.67	2	254.34		
Within groups	11.41	9	1.27	200.3	>0.05
Total	520.08	11			

Table value 4.26

Calculated value 200.3

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Ho. Joint staff training programmes by UBEC and SUBEBs does not affect the implementation of UBE Scheme.

The calculated P value (200.3) is greater than the Table value (4.26). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and concludes that joint staff training programmes by UBEC and SUBEBs significantly affects the implementation of UBE Scheme. The significant positive impact is inferred from the fact that the P value (200.3) is far greater than the Table value i.e 4.26.

Access to FGN-UBE Intervention Fund

Data from available official records reveals the level of FGN-UBE intervention fund accessed by the states as:

Table 1.4: Matching Grants Accessed by the Selected North-East States

States	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Adamawa	832,432,432.00	713,356,756.00	860,500,201.00	1.6 Billion	106,224,242.26
Bauchi	105,200,201.00	298,300,081.00	534,302,648.38	-	-
Borno	288,344,324.00	432,200,112.00	-	-	-
Gombe	206,301,442.00	1,264,729,728.00	832,432,432.00	-	-

Source: Department of Quality Assurance, UBEC (October, 2011)

Table 1.4 shows matching grants released from the FG -UBEC Intervention Fund to states that were able to pay their counterpart funds between 2006 –2010. Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Gombe were able to access the fund up to 2010, 2008, 2007 and 2008 respectively. The figures are (in N Million) except in 2009 when Adamawa accessed up to over one billion naira. Adamawa State was able to access the Fund up to 2010, Bauchi and Gombe accessed up to 2008 and Borno accessed the facility up to 2007 as at (October, 2011) when the data were obtained. It could be deduced that most of those states were not prompt in accessing the intervention fund.

When the questions on factors that affect access to FGN-UBE intervention fund by the states were posed, the answers of the respondents reflect on factors as:

- i. Lack of political will on part of state government
- ii. SUBEB Leadership
- iii. Rigidity of UBEC conditionality

The responses are presented in the following table:

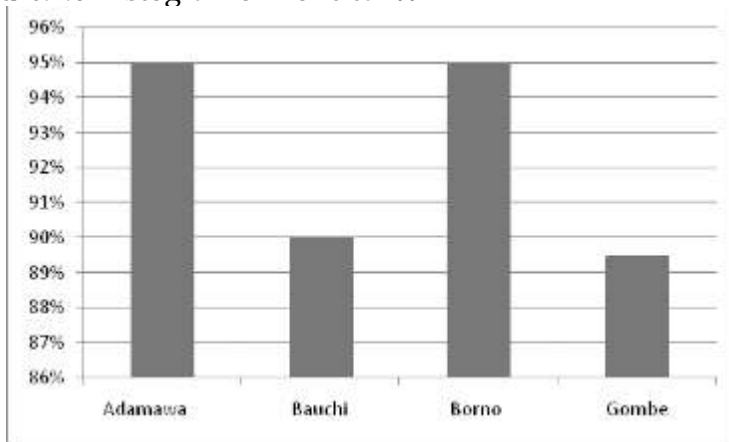
Table 1.5: Factors that affect access to the FGN - UBE Fund

Factors	States			
	Adamawa	Bauchi	Borno	Gombe
Political Will	19 (95%)	18 (90%)	17 (95%)	17 (89.5%)
SUBEB Leadership	19 (90%)	16 (80%)	17 (85%)	18 (95%)
Rigidity of UBE Conditionality	-	10 (50%)	19 (60%)	13 (68%)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

- i. Political will: Most of the respondents mentioned political will of the state government as a factor that facilitate access to FGN – UBE Fund and the result is depicted through the following histogram.

Figure:1.6 Histogram on Political Will

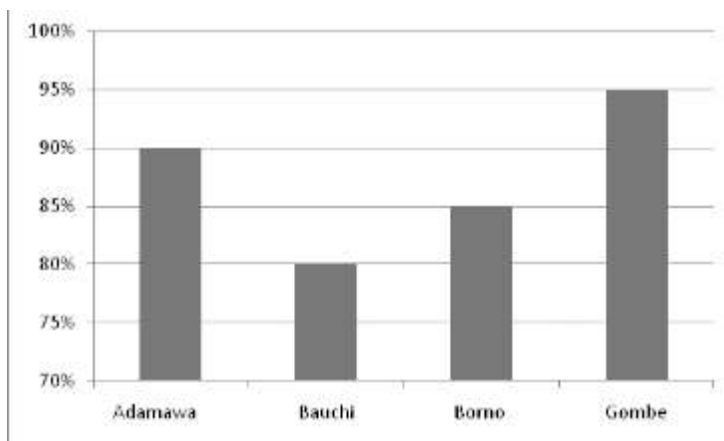


Source: Field Survey, 2013

In Bauchi, Borno and Gombe which accessed the Fund up to the year 2008, 2007 and 2008 respectively (see Table 1.4) 18(90%), 19(95%), 17(89.5%) of the respondents respectively directly linked accessed UBE Intervention Fund to the political will of the state government. Similarly, in Adamawa state which accessed the fund up to 2010 (as at October 2011) the respondents i.e. 19(95%) attributed the feat to the determination of the state government. This is because; the state government must release her counterpart fund to the UBEC before the matching grants are released.

- ii. **SUBEB Leadership:** Leadership quality was also indicated as factor that facilitates access to the intervention fund. A reasonable percentage of respondents in the selected states attribute access to the UBE Fund to the disposition of SUBEB Leadership which is referred to the SUBEB Boards in the respective state and the result is depicted through this histogram.

Figure 1.7: Histogram on SUBEB Leadership



Source: Field Survey, 2013

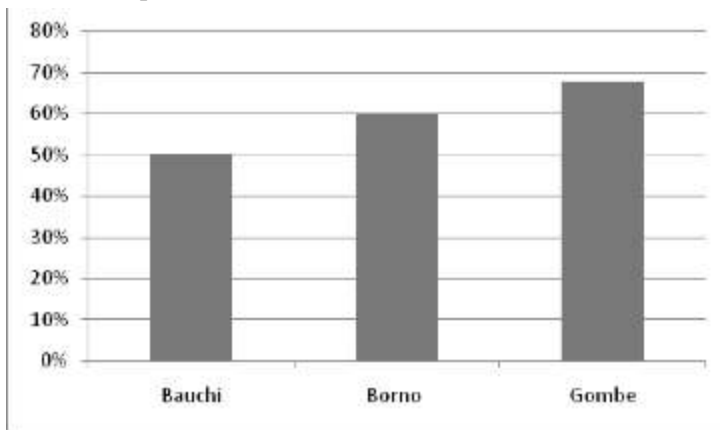
In Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Gombe: 18(90%), 16(80%), 17(85%) and 18(95%) of the respondents respectively acknowledged SUBEB Leadership as a factor in accessing the UBE Intervention Fund.

The observation of the respondents on political will and SUBEB Leadership as factors that cause slow draw down of matching grants was corroborated by GidadoTahir, a former Executive Secretary of UBEC while commenting on the performance of Adamawa State Universal Basic Education Board (ADSUBEB) in the implementation of the UBE Scheme. He said:

I think Adamawa Government has done pretty excellent job by way of promptly paying their counterpart fund in order to access the Federal Government Intervention Fund. I think of all the states in the North-East Sub-region, there isn't any state that has been able to achieve the kind of development that Adamawa State has been able to do largely because of the willingness and readiness of the state government. The governor himself, as well as the leadership at the State Universal Basic Education Board, (ADSUSBEB 2006:39 - 40).

- iii. **Rigidity of UBEC Conditionalities:** Respondents in the defaulting states in terms of accessing UBE Intervention Fund also mentioned stringent procedures in accessing the Fund which includes payment of high counterpart fund by the state, detailed blue print on what and when to use the matching grants.

Figure1.8: Responses on UBEC Conditionalities



Source: Field Survey, 2013

In Bauchi, Borno and Gombe 10(50%), 12(60%) and 13(68%) of the respondents respectively identified rigid UBEC conditions as a factor that affect access to the intervention fund by the states. In Adamawa, respondents didn't acknowledge rigidity of UBEC conditionalities as a factor. As earlier noted, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme requires productive intergovernmental relations to be fully implemented. Attempts were made to examine obstacles to the practice of intergovernmental relations in the implementation of UBE scheme and from the analysis of the available official records obtained, the following obstacles were noted:

Delay in the Payment of Counterpart Fund

Intergovernmental activities in the implementation of UBE scheme largely revolves around accessing the intervention fund by the SUBEBs. However, some states do not access this fund promptly. According to a former Executive Secretary of the UBEC, Dr. Ahmed Modibbo Mohammed, over 35 billion naira of counterpart funds for the nations' basic education sub- sector is idle at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The funds are part of the federal Government/UBEC Intervention for the UBE programme. The figure is the cumulative total of un-accessed matching grants to some state governments since 2005 (Daily Trust Editorial August 22, 2011 p. 34).

Non-Harmonization of Monitoring Bodies:

Under the monitoring mechanism of the UBE scheme, it was stated that specialized monitoring will be conducted jointly by UBEC, Federal Ministry of Finance, Federal Ministry of Education, National Assembly, Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, Budget Monitory, National Planning Project, Monitoring Unit in the Presidency, NGOs, CBOs, and other civil Society Organization (UBE Guideline,1999). The principles and criteria guiding the monitoring activities of these bodies are not clearly spelt out. Also of a challenge is that reports of the monitoring bodies are not harmonized and co-ordinated for effective implementation. This has not only created the dilemma of where and when to monitor among the bodies but has made SUBEB uncertain over reports and recommendation to adopt.

Poor Institution Co-ordination:

Institutions like UBEC, SUBEB, National Teachers Institute(NTI) and Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) play crucial role in the implementation of UBE scheme. Apart from UBEC and SUBEB whose roles are spelt out in the UBE guideline, other institutions are stakeholders with no defined role. This has often resulted in repetition. For instance SUBEB, NTI, and NERDC have organized training of teachers on Unified National Continuous Assessment Programme in separate instances but on the same topic (Field Information, 2012).

Discussion of Major Findings

- I. The study reveals that there are contributions to staff training programmes by both UBEC and SUBEB and further testing of hypothesis (see ANOVA Table 1.3) reveals that this joint staff training significantly affects the implementation of the scheme as it enhances it. However, these contributions in terms of teachers' training have not been able to meet the demand for trained teachers. Intergovernmental relations in this regard have not fully yielded the desired result as shortage of qualified teachers is still a major problem affecting the successful implementation of the scheme. In this regard, Obong (2006) noted that UBE scheme is in need of more than 40,000 qualified teachers. The implication of this is that UBEC and SUBEBs need to intensify efforts to train more teachers for quality delivery of basic education.

- ii. Political will of the state government and disposition of SUBEB leadership were found to be leading intergovernmental relation factors that affect access to the FGN-UBE intervention fund by the state governments. Political will of the state government is directly linked to the ability of SUBEB to pay its counterpart fund. This means SUBEB leadership backed up by a politically determined government enjoys matching grants more than a less determined government.
- iii. Delay in the payment of counterpart fund, non-harmonization of monitoring bodies and poor institutional co-ordination were constraints to intergovernmental relations in the implementation of UBE scheme.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that joint staff training by UBEC and SUBEBs has significantly enhanced the implementation of the UBE scheme.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered:

- i. Joint staff training programmes of UBEC and SUBEB should be intensified and improved upon. This can be achieved through the effort of state government in paying its counterpart fund promptly.
- ii. Since the power of the SUBEBs to access the FGN-UBE intervention fund is hinged on the political will of the state government, rights-based and civil society organizations should play advocacy role to influence the state government as well as monitoring the implementation of UBE projects. The State Houses of Assembly should legislate to provide more freedom for civil societies to take active part in implementation process.
- iii. Similarly, state governments should ensure the appointment of dynamic and visionary persons on the board of State Universal Basic Education. The need for this is two folds: as actors, they will facilitate the interaction with UBEC as well as ensuring that accessed funds are transparently utilized. In this case, the legislature (State House of Assembly) should bring men and women of probity on the board by insisting that nominees possess such qualities before being screened and approved.

Ministries and other offices that deal with intergovernmental issues at state level should be created and strengthened as the case may be to facilitate the co-operation between UBEC and SUBEB on UBE issues.

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