Universal Basic Education Programme and Incidence of Male Dropout of Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria: An Assessment, 2015-2024

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Abstract

Universal Basic Education Programme oversees the basic education initiative, as stated in national policy on education. The major objective of the programme is to broaden the availability of primary and secondary education in Nigeria. This consist a comprehensive nine-year programme for children and youth including six years of elementary school and three years of junior and senior schools including adult and non-formal education activities. The paper adopted survey research design in analyzing and interpreting data relating to the stated hypothesis using secondary and primary source from oral interview and questionnaire using descriptive statistics to analyze the collected data. The data from publications of Enugu state ministry of education and Enugu State Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC). The data were presented in tables to show the level of male dropout, human resources input and extent the programme has influenced male enrolment in Enugu State. This was analyzed to underpin the perceptions from officials of Enugu state government, ministry of education, population of male drop outs and their parents. The paper recommends that Nigerian government as a matter of urgency must uphold relevant sections of the 1999 constitution as amended that relates to education and implement UNESCO agreement in setting aside 26% of her annual budget in funding education in which

is signatory to premium assistance and attention to education in Nigeria is inevitable. In addressing the challenges is a significant milestone in stampeding ignorance and illiteracy bearing in mind that education is the gateway to human development in the society.

Keywords: Universal Basic Education Programme; Parents; Poverty, Out of school, Security.

Introduction

Universal Basic Education Programme system established clear, quantifiable and attainable goals, with a focus on successfully completion of high school within a nine-year timeframe (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022). Universal Basic Education Commission established the programme to ensure that all school-aged children in Nigeria have access to a basic and mandatory education, improve on the relevance and efficiency of formal school system to reduce the dropout rate and foster a high educated population that values education for its importance especially the male folk (Jatau et al., 2021). This will ensure that every student acquires basic knowledge and abilities in reading, writing, arithmetic, manipulation, communication and life skills, while cultivating their moral, ethical, and civic values to enhance their success in future. According to United Nations Organization article 26 (1948) on Universal Declaration of Human Rights assert that the importance of education to human development is one of the alienable rights of every human being, it states that everyone has right to education and this shall be free in elementary and primary stages. Ukeje (1985) and Ezeocha (1990) recalled that education act of 1944 guarantee that every citizen should be given education appropriate to his age, aptitude and ability. The achievement of this right requires that young people should be given opportunities necessary for acquisition of knowledge, skills attitudes and values to enable them live happily as individuals as basis for the global concern for educational development. UNESCO (1998) assert that World Conference on education for all held in Thailand on 5th to 9th March 1990 born out the belief that education is a right for all, women and men of all ages globally. The provision of education must be relevant, qualitative and quantitative improved and universal available to all. It has been noted that despite UNESCO effort to ensure right to education for all, the problems

associated with eradication of illiteracy in our society is unabated. According to UNESCO's report of 1998;

- More than 100 million children including 60 million girls have no access to primary schooling.
- More than 960 million adults, two thirds women are illiterate; this is a problem in all countries.
- More than one-third world's adults have no access to printed document, new skills and technologies that improve quality of their lives will help shape and adapt socio- cultural changes,
- More than 100 children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programmes. Million more satisfy the attendance requirements but do not acquire basic knowledge and skills.

  Worried by these problems and in response to the global concern to improve functional literacy, the summit proclaimed "Education for all (EFA) whose ultimate goal, according to UNESCO (1998), is to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults". Armed with these ideals, participants and signatories to the declaration were directed to set up their immediate goals and target in line with national aspirations which must be based on the following dimensions as reported by UNESCO (1992);
- Expansion of early childhood care and development activities;
- Universal access to and completion of primary education (or whatever higher level education that is considered "basic" by the year 2000;
- Improvement in learning achievement;
- Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate with sufficient emphasis on female literacy;
- Expand provision of basic education and training in other skills required by youth and adults, and
- Increase acquisition by individuals for knowledge, skills and values for sustainable development.

UNESCO (1992) also reported that the world summit provided guidelines for implementing the World Declaration on Education for all and this is known as framework for action for meeting the basic learning needs of individuals. These include assess needs, plan actions, develop supportive policy environment, design

policy to improve basic education, improve managerial, analytical and technological capacities, mobilize information and communication channels. In response to these declarations, Nigeria launched the Universal Basic Education programme in 1999. It has been argued that the evolution of Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria was launched in response to the world declaration on education for all (Udensi, 2001). Universal Basic Education covers early childhood education which involves nine years of formal education, skill acquisition programmes and education to special groups such as nomads and migrants, girl-child and women as well as almajiri, street children and disabled groups. It is expected that UBE impact both theoretical and practical knowledge to these groups of people mentioned above (Udensi, 2011). The objectives of Universal Basic Education UBE include;

develop citizen to a strong consciousness for education and commitment to vigorous promotion, provide universal basic education for every Nigeria child of school age, reduce the incidence of drop-out from formal school system through improved quality and efficiency, cater for learning needs of young persons who for one reason interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complimentary approaches to provide and promote basic education and ensure acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, number, manipulate communication skills as well as ethical, moral and civic value needed to lay solid foundation for life-long learning. Tahir (2005) and Mbah (2008) noted that the National Policy on Education (2004) stipulates that education should be learner-centered, self-directed, active, resource based, skill-oriented and functional. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is a new education culture in Nigeria in line with contemporary developments in the world. It is a laudable initiative geared towards globalizing "education for all" beginning at foundation levels, it is a bold step taken by federal government of Nigeria to address government desire to provide educational opportunities for children of school age from primary to junior secondary school levels irrespective of ethnic groups, gender, religion, political as well as socio-economic position by making education compulsory, free and universal (Mbanaefo, 2000). In Nigeria and most developing countries, policies like UNESCO (1992) World Declaration on education for all programmes are afflicted with challenge of school dropout practice. The idea of school dropout is a phenomenon of withdrawing from school before completing course

instructions. This relates to children under school age abandoning educational system, in absence of completing the academic year which they started. It involves the official document that proves that they finished the year of primary or secondary school. In some European countries, early school leaving (ESL) is one indicator to measure school dropout social problems. In most countries where the World declaration on education is implemented, there is a significant disparity between enrolment levels of males and females. In some countries, the female folks especially in Islamic countries suffer low enrolment compared to male counterpart. Even within the same country, variations in level of enrolment are observable between male and female folks. This educational phenomenon is experienced in Nigeria where states with Islamic background have low female enrolment. These states are mostly in core northern geo-political zones of the country. In south east geo-political zones, it has been revealed that Anambra state has large male dropout than female dropouts (Mbah 2008). This will assess the implementation of UBE Programme in Enugu State in relation to male dropout syndrome. The dynamism of the paper is to underpin factors orchestrating the incidence of this social malady within 2015 to 2024.

Conceptual Clarifications

Educational Development in Nigeria

In every society, there is this desire to work towards attaining some level of development. Interestingly, education plays a very important role in facilitating the much desired development (Joseph & Rahila, 2014). The role of education in the march towards development for any society or nation cannot be overemphasized. Ochoyi and Danladi (2008) as cited in Anaduaka (2013), opine that education is generally concerned with the transmission of worthwhile values such as skills, knowledge and planned activities that can develop learners' potentials for national development. In the same vein, Joseph and Rahila (014) believe that education is key to every society's growth and an important tool for national development. According to Adeyanju (2010) in Anaduaka and Okafor (2013), no development can occur at all without education, and no peace or security without development. At personal level of development, education is one of the strongest weapons for escaping from poverty because it improves the quality and chances of the individual's progress. Anaduaka and Okafor (2013) believe that education is not only for escaping poverty, but also influences an

individual's moral, spiritual, physical and intellectual self. Education trains people to be good citizens. An individual does not automatically become a good citizen; rather he is educated to be one. According to the authors, this education begins from the home and continues through school. Adeyanju (2010) citied in Anaduaka and Okafor (2013) pointed out that it may well be that some of the corrupt practices, unprofessional and anti-social behaviours we observe at all levels of society today, including the aggressive disruptive ones in our political, social and economic lives, result directly from the neglect of character education at home and in schools. Nigeria as a country has realized the value of education to the growing child and the need to train her citizen to be useful individual to themselves and the society. According to Udensi (2011), education can be viewed as a process of assisting learners to acquire knowledge, skills and acceptable attitudes and moral behaviours that would make them responsible citizens able to take care of themselves and their families and be more functional in their environment and ultimately his nation from generation to generation. Since independence, the successive administrations of the Nigerian nation have shown interest in and concern for the development of education. Realizing the role that education plays in national development, Nigerian governments have continued to venture into various educational policies and programmes, with the expectation of meeting the country's need in the areas of human and infrastructural development. According to Gideons and Sorkaa (2008), some of the policies that have evolved include the Universal Primary Education programme of Western and Eastern regions, the takeover of schools from the missionaries, the establishment of unity schools and the introduction of UPE nationwide. The UPE was introduced across the country by federal government in September 1976. Still with the intention of meeting the educational needs of the Nigerian citizenry. However, a decade after its introduction, according to Fafunwa (1986), the educational outcomes showed that the national objectives were not being fully realized. The failure of the programme was blamed on lack of fund, poor planning and implementation.

The 6-3-3-4 system was also introduced nationwide by the Federal Government precisely in 1982. This system of education required a child to spend 6 years in primary school, 3 years in junior secondary school, another 3 years in senior secondary school, and 4 years in a tertiary institution. It replaced the 6-5-4 system that was in operation before its introduction. Gideons and Sorkka (2008), however,

noted that most of these educational policies and programmes in Nigeria were always implemented without a reliable assessment of the country's needs, without proper funding and without monitoring and evaluation. Expectedly, despite the 6-3-3-4 system, the rate of illiteracy was still high, the conditions of the schools' infrastructures deplorable, school dropout was increasing and unprecedented poverty, unemployment, crime and other vices still were the order of the day. The need for a more responsive education in the country became imminent especially following the outcome of the Jomitien World Conference held in 1990 and the declaration of Education for All (EFA) by the year 2000 at that conference. This was also followed a decade later by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which re-emphasized the EFA message, packaging it into eight main goals. The MDGs were an eight-point agenda adopted by 149 World leaders on how to curb the problem of poverty and its attendant problems in the under developed countries of the world. This decision was reached at the United Nations Millennium Summit held in September 2000. The outcome of the summit was a declaration committing all member countries, including Nigeria, to strive and achieve the following goals by the year 2015.

Goal 1- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Goal 2- Achieve Universal Basic Education
Goal 3- Promote Gender Equality and empower Women
Goal 4- Reduce Child Mortality
Goal 5 – Improve Maternal Health
Goal 6- Combat Hiv/Aids, Malaria and other diseases
Goal- 7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability
Goal – Develop a global partnership for development (Eze, 2008).

The introduction of UBE in is a move to achieve MDGs and address the agitations and yearnings of Nigerians for educational system that would be relevant to socio-economic, political, cultural background and government commitment to eradicate illiteracy in the country.

Universal Basic Education Programme

The basic education is fundamental to national development, it is the foundation in which other levels of education are built and a requirement for human progress

(Tahir, 2006). The provision of basic education for all citizens, according to Ochoyi and Danladi (2008) has been a global objective which Nigeria like some other nations sets out to achieve through the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. The need for such intervention scheme in the nation's educational system is borne out of the realization of the role of education in an individual's life and in the promotion o social, political and economic development in every nation. It is said that no nation can rise above it educational level. Before the introduction of the UBE programme, the existing policy and programme of government for education was found to give rise to distortions, high rate of dropouts, narrow curriculum content and half-baked graduates that did not meet the needs of the society. The UBE scheme was therefore launched to address these problems by providing frees, universal and compulsory basic education to all children regardless of sex, age, ethnic or religious inclinations, language or status to accommodate comprehensive adult literacy programme. The scheme is designed to ensure adequate and qualitative education that is directed towards the achievement of the nation's objectives. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was launched on 30th September 1999 by the then President of Nigeria, President Olusegun Obasanjo. The programme is designed to provide free and compulsory education for children in the primary and junior secondary schools in the country. President Obasanjo on launching he scheme assured that the many problems that bedeviled the 1976 Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme would not be allowed to hamper the 9-year basic education programme. He further pointed out that the scheme is aimed at arresting the decline and decay as well as expanding and improving on the UPE scheme. Prior to the launching of the UBE, a child starts primary school at the age of 6 years or thereabout and graduates with a first school leaving certificate. He takes common entrance examination that qualifies him/her for admission into secondary school. UBE came as a replacement of this system, it involves 6 years of primary school and 3 years of junior secondary school culminating in 9 years of uninterrupted schooling, transition from one class to another is automatic assessed through continuous assessment.

The UBE programme is designed to remove distortions and inconsistencies in basic education delivery and to reinforce the implementation of the National Policy on Education. This is to provide greater access to basic education and

ensure its quality throughout the country. The Universal Basic Education Act (2004) defines Universal Basic Education as early childhood care and education, the nine years of formal schooling, adult literacy and non-formal education, skills acquisition programmes and the education of special groups such as nomads and migrants, girl- child and women, almajiri, street children and disabled groups. UBE is more comprehensive than UPE or other programmes of Federal Government on education. According to Implementation Guidelines for the UBE, the scheme stresses the inclusion of girls and women and a number of underserved groups; the poor, street and roaming children, rural and remote population, monads, migrants, workers, indigenous people, minorities, refugees and the disabled. The formal education system is only one of six components included in UBE. Some others relate to early childhood, literacy and non-formal education or apprenticeship training for youths outside formal education system (Nigeria, 2000) took off in September 2006 in the country.

Challenges of Universal Basic Education Programme

Inadequate Funding: the UBE planning and Implementation Document (Nigeria, 2000) stated that the sum of 5 million dollars was estimated for renovating the existing school structures and building new ones. Such an amount of money has not been disbursed for renovation of schools. However, the need for it is obvious as most schools have dilapidated structures with no libraries, laboratories and other support facilities where they exist, they may be very much ill equipped.

Inaccurate Data for Planning: when data provided for planning is inaccurate and then decisions based on such data would be faulty. Dare, Onekata dn Auwal (2000) pointed out that the National Population Census, for instance, which is expected to provide the most reliable data for educational planning and implementation has always been politicized. It is of course common knowledge that after each head count, figures are rolled out and in some cases, these figures may not quite represent the actual number of people in the locality. When planning is done based on such inaccurate statistical data, surely there would be problem.

Lack of enough competent teachers: the teacher-student ratio in the UBE scheme is put at 1:40. Obviously this is not what obtains in most UBE schools where some classes have up to 70 pupils/ students. This has continued to bring challenge to

government considering the cost implication of employing such a large number of teachers as the scheme demands.

Poor Implementation of the New UBE Curriculum: a teacher is an indispensable tool in achieving educational goals in all educational institution; he is at the centre of knowledge and learning. Curriculum process in Nigeria can be considered as consisting of 3 levels-what is intended, what is implemented and what is learnt attained. Curriculum reform can only be effective if teachers are trained and equipped with the skills to implement the intended curriculum, and such training often does not hold for all teachers.

Poor Public Enlightenment: most stakeholders are unaware of the responsibilities and some are laws that must be obeyed for instance, the enabling law of UBE has prescribed punishment for parents and guardians who keep their children and wards from school. Such offence is punishable by imprisonment or payment of fine. Yet up till date, young children are hawking and begging for alms on the roads during school hours and no action was taken about it.

Poor Motivation of teachers: there is no doubt that the morale of our teachers is generally low. The teaching profession and teachers themselves are relegated to the background in terms of what and when they are paid salaries by government and other owners of schools, and this goes a long way to affect their productivity.

Benefits of proper Implementation of the UBE Programme

Ensuring quality in Nigeria Education: education is qualitative to the extent that it is functional. Since new curriculum for basic education devices from immediate needs of the Nigeria, education is more functional as recipients of it would be more useful in the society.

Achievement of the MDGs: the MDGs according to Eze (2008) are ends in themselves but they are the means to a productive life, to economic growth and to peace and stability. The central need for member countries to work towards the attainment of the MDGs is for the eradication of poverty and its attendant horrors which the UBE strives to achieve. When individuals are empowered, poverty paves way for a more fulfilled life.

More jobs for Nigerian Citizens: enrollment of children in schools is expected to increase at an alarming rate with UBE, and with such increase in the number of schools and students, more teachers will be needed to be employed. This would create enormous job opportunities and so more individuals would be engaged in the labour market, thereby bringing about a reduction in the level of unemployment in the country.

Curbing of Indiscipline and Crime: the idle mind is said to be the devil's worship. When someone is idle and of course religion is not a powerful dynamic force in the individual, crime can take over. UBE is designed to provide individuals with basic education enough to enable them live a more productive life in the society. However, where many Nigerian children are not taught the values and norms of their society in schools and then perhaps no one mentions them at home either, the children can easily yield to crime. The removal of moral and civic education from curriculum was a mistake. This brought bad situation worse, but with UBE curriculum, such values help a child grow up as a good citizen have been built back into the curriculum.

Reduction in child labour: ILO (2001) defines child labour as some type of work done by children under the age of 18, child labour include full time work done by children under 15 years of age that prevents them from going to school or that exposes them to health risks. Compulsory basic education is the key to ending this exploitation and abuse of a child's right to education. Children who attend school are less likely to be engaged in such hazardous and exploitive jobs. Moreover, since the major reason for child labour is poverty and UBE is supposed to be free, parents would also not have any reason not to send their children/wards to school.
Reduction of gender imbalance in educational attainment: the UBE programme will help to produce educated women that can contribute meaningfully and effectively to national development. The development of any nation no doubt depends largely on inputs made by all her citizens, and considering the fact that women constitute about half of the Nigerian population, Nigeria may well be undermining the contribution of about half of its citizens if women are not given opportunity to go to school. Interestingly, the UBE programme focuses on gender imbalance with a view to reducing it to the barest minimum for the benefit of the country.

Reduction of the level of Poverty: poverty is a disease. In the face of poverty, people strive frantically and labour so much, engaging in any kind of activity that will fetch them their daily bread. This paves way for a lot of anti-social behaviors such as arm robbery, prostitution, human trafficking. One factor that can eradicate poverty is employment which itself is gained after an individual have had some sort of training in a school or have learnt some kind of trade or skill, which are all what UBE provides for.

Better health for the Nigerian Child: realizing the importance of food for the intellectual as well as the physical wellbeing of an individual, the Federal Government of Nigeria September 2005, launched its home-grown school feeding and health programme aimed at providing highly nutritious meals to primary and junior secondary school students under the UBE scheme. This for some children could be the only good meal they would be able to have in a day and it will help to enhance their health status. Poverty and consequently poor eating habits increase the risk of child malnutrition which has adverse effect on growth and intellectual development.

Help to Parents: all parents want to see their children grow up normally, the primary school age is a time when a child goes through remarkable physical changes of all kinds and so their food intake becomes an aspect of this development. The UBE programme makes provision for feeding of the students in schools and such would reduce the burden of impoverished parents. Moreover, UBE is free and so parents helped to have their children in school and yet spend less.

Motivating Students to enroll in Schools: the rich curriculum of UBE and the home-grown school feeding and health programme can encourage students to enroll and be regular at school especially children in rural communities where poverty level is high, school enrollment low and drop-out rate high. A child who would not be sure of getting food at home would rather prefer to go to school where it is certain that he would have a good meal with this positive attitude developed, the child's interest in school and in learning may from there be ignited.

Steps for Proper Implementation of UBE

Adequate funding: UBE scheme, judging from its provisions is obviously capital intensive and so requires adequate funding for the programme to succeed. The government should strive to make funds available for the proper implementation of the programme.

Provision of Infrastructure and other facilities in schools: educational facilities are imperative to qualitative UBE programme in Nigeria. Facilities such as textbooks, libraries, classrooms, seats and tables, laboratories, computers, technical/vocational equipment, electricity, etc. are very important for effective implementation of UBE scheme. There is need for adequate supply of these facilities and such facilities when provided should not be diverted.

Recruitment of enough competent teachers: there is need for recruitment of enough trained teachers for the effective implementation of the UBE programme. There should also be re-training of teachers already on the job to ensure that they update their knowledge base.

Better Motivation for teachers: teachers should be properly motivated to render quality service by regular payment of their salaries and improve in what they are paid. Adequate motivation and remuneration, the teachers, can work with renewed spirit and commitment to the UBE scheme.

Effective Monitoring/Evaluation: the programme should be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure that the system does not deviate from the set goals.

Out-of-School Children Phenomenon in Enugu State

The issue of out-of-school children is a global concern; UNESCO declares that10.5 million out-of-school children in Nigeria to many State governments in Nigeria. In recent times, Governments at all levels embarked on rigorous advocacies and mobilization of communities to increase enrolment and retention; but such efforts did not yield the desired targets.

Reasons for Out-of-School Children

According to survey report of Enugu State Ministry of Education (2015) on out-of-school children, the major reasons for out-of-school children are general medical reasons, hearing impairment, mental health issues, physical disability, financial constraints and loss of father.

Tab. 2.1: Percentage Reasons for Out-of-School Children in Enugu State (2015)

Possible Reasons	**Percent**
General Medical Reaction	11.5%
Hearing impairment	6.4%
Hiv/Aids Stigma	4.8%
Mental Health issues	9.6%
Physical Disability	14.2%
Visually impaired	1.9%
Cultural reasons	0.2%
Albino	0.4%
Gender	0.1%
Marriage	1.4%
Migration	0.2%
Insecurity	3.6%
Apprenticeship	3.7%
To go and Earn Money	21.4%
Financial constraint	3.3%
Loss of Both parents	1.5%
Loss of mother	7.7%
Unwanted Pregnancy	0.3%
Distance	0.6%
School not meeting the entrepreneurship Needs	0.2%
Child has no interest of Attending school	3.7%

Source: ENSG (2015). Enugu State, Nigeria out-of-school children survey Report.

Table 2.1 reveal the reason for out-of-school children was financial constraint (21.4%), physical disability (14.2%), medical reason (11.5%), mental health issues (9.6%) and loss of father (7.7%). The Focus Group Discussions (FGD) across 17 LGAs confirmed that reasons for out-of-school to financial constraint, loss of parents and insecurity.

Methodology

The paper adopted survey research design in analyzing and interpreting data relating to the stated hypothesis using secondary and primary sources of data. The data from publications of Enugu state government, ministry of education, Enugu State Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), while the primary data from oral interview and questionnaire using descriptive statistics to analyze the data. The data were presented in tables to show the level of male dropout, human resources input and extent the programme has influenced male enrolment in Enugu State. This was analyzed to underpin the perceptions from officials of Enugu state government, ministry of education, population of pupil-male drop outs and their parents. Also interviewed were officials of Enugu state Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).

Findings and Discussions

In Enugu State the way and manner UBE programme implement influence male-drop out even in enrolment for instance the teachers of the UBE programme always inform the male pupil that men are meant to make money in life in order to marry and take care of their family. As reported by one interviewee at Ngwo Enugu state states that his little son in primary school always tell him of his reluctance to continue primary schooling as a result of his quest to make money early in life to marry on time. The influence of UBE teachers on pupils affect even little children who has been enrolled at all. This phenomenon is demonstrated in poor male enrolment in primary schools in Enugu State compared to girls as seen in 4.1 (Enrolment) for classes 1-3 and table 4.2 (male drop out statistics in Enugu state 2015-2024 below.

Table 4.1 Enrolment in public primary schools by class, sex in Enugu State 2015-2024

	Class 1			Class 2			Class 3		
LGEA	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
Aninri	1,272	1,191	2,463	1,279	1,156	2,435	1,277	1,125	2,402
Awgu	989	898	1,887	931	883	1,814	975	861	1,836
Enugu East	975	1,083	2,058	1,060	1,197	2,257	1,190	1,389	2,579
Enugu North	908	908	1,816	1,018	1,062	2,080	1,145	1,145	2,290
Enugu South	626	750	1,376	750	865	1,615	913	1,061	1,974

Source: Ministry of Education (2010). Enugu State Annual School Report 2015-2024.

Table 4.2: Male drop-out statistics in Public Primary Schools in Enugu state (2015-2024).

	Class 4			Class 5			Class 6		
LGEA	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
Aninri	1,250	1,114	2,364	1,227	1,111	2,338	1,136	1,102	2,238
Awgu	859	840	1,699	876	765	1,641	878	779	1,657
Enugu East	1,263	1,405	2,668	1,377	1,475	2,852	1,270	1,400	2,670
Enugu North	1,277	1,233	2,510	1,264	1,422	2,686	1,122	1,227	2,349
Enugu South	1,006	1,215	2,221	1,023	1,267	2,290	968	1,149	2,117
Ezeagu	814	716	1,530	788	668	1,456	754	668	1,422
Igbo-Etiti	1,625	1,559	3,184	1,552	1,550	3,102	1,477	1,469	2,946
Igbo-Eze North	1,986	1,917	3,903	1,953	1,932	3,885	1,819	1,810	3,629
Igbo-Eze South	1,015	917	1,932	1,011	946	1,957	894	892	1,786
Isi-Uzo	952	926	1,878	945	955	1,900	850	903	1,753
Nkanu East	1,154	1,112	2,266	1,085	1,099	2,184	1,060	1,014	2,074
Nkanu West	759	601	1,360	731	631	1,362	696	617	1,367
Nsukka	1,969	1,919	3,888	1,965	1,954	3,919	1,694	1776	3,470

Oji River	727	634	1,361	624	564	1,188	635	544	1,179
Udenu	1,159	1,089	2,248	1,193	1,185	2,378	1,140	1,068	2,208
Udi	956	878	1,834	1,053	946	1,999	946	863	1,809
Uzo-Uwani	1,639	1,542	3,181	1,630	1,623	3,253	1,505	1,534	3,040
TOTAL	**20,410**	**19,617**	**40,027**	**20,297**	**20,093**	**40,390**	**18,845**	**18,869**	**37,714**

Source: Ministry of Education (2010). Enugu State Annual School Census Report 2015-2024

The same phenomenon is in Junior Secondary Schools in Enugu State is in table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3 Enrolment in Public Junior Secondary schools by class, sex in 2015-2024

	JS 1			JS 2			JS 3		
LGEA	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
Aninri	684	865	1,549	660	813	1,473	701	925	1,626
Awgu	832	896	1,728	756	942	1,698	773	988	1,761
Enugu East	791	2,274	3,065	1,048	1,850	2,898	1,129	1,560	2,689
Enugu North	1,133	1,896	3,029	882	2,298	3,180	779	2,107	2,886
Enugu South	1,304	1,376	2,680	1,528	1,330	2,858	1,504	1,230	2,734
Ezeagu	591	624	1,215	649	693	1,342	618	721	1,339
Igbo-Etiti	790	870	1,620	947	921	1,868	927	895	1,822
Igbo-Eze North	1,472	1,777	3,249	1,301	1,805	3,106	1,422	1,834	3,256
Igbo-Eze South	533	647	1,180	556	641	1,197	504	656	1,160
Isi-Uzo	459	715	1,174	579	682	1,261	590	722	1,312
Nkanu East	527	652	1,179	485	581	1,066	440	583	1,023
Nkanu West	519	646	1,165	560	738	1,298	530	661	1,191
Nsukka	2,519	2,448	4,967	2,342	2,269	4,611	1,966	2,078	4044
Oji River	519	437	956	408	528	936	384	498	882
Udenu	795	1,144	1,939	794	1,088	1,882	735	1,147	1,882

Udi	892	1,016	1,908	925	1,128	2,053	870	1,086	1,956
Uzo-Uwani	429	406	835	401	420	821	372	414	786
TOTAL	**14,749**	**18,689**	**33,438**	**14,821**	**18,727**	**33,548**	**14,244**	**18.105**	**32,349**

Source: Ministry of Education (2010). Enugu State Annual School Census Report 2015-2024

In most societies, gender categorization of teachers in the school system affects the dynamics of children drop out of schools. In the UBE implementation in Enugu state the scenario is not different as the greater female composition of the teaching staff, affects the drop-out rate of the males in school. According to one respondent from Nsude community of Enugu state named Agu Nwankwo Godwill (father) his child's perception of the greater number of female teachers at the primary school makes him feel that education is generally better for women than men. The child's reasoning is that women occupy teaching positions more than men. There is not much motivation to continue to read or go to school as he may not be employed as a teacher after his schooling. The UBE role in this matter is that most teaching employees of primary and mostly junior secondary schools in Enugu state are occupied by the female folk to the disadvantages of the male folk. From oral interview respondent of Mr Eze John from Ibagwa-Aka community of Nsukka senatorial zone on this matter (a teacher in the primary school) the UBE programmer's teaching positions salary and conditions of service is to meager for most men to be attacked to the job. The poor conditions of service of UBE employees do not enjoy male folk to pride the job and indirectly influence male-pupil to drop out of school. For instance in Enugu state government employment of teachers in primary schools, it is observed that female members UBE out-numbered males, all these are shown in table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 Number of public primary school teachers by sex and LGAs in Enugu State.

	All teachers				**Public qualified teachers**		
LGEA	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**% female**	**Total**	**% Qualified**	**% female**
Aninri	210	520	730	71.2	461	63.2	71.8
Awgu	120	454	574	79.1	477	83.1	79.9

Enugu East	85	786	87.1	90.2	799	91.7	91.7
Enugu North	45	882	927	95.1	875	94.4	95.4
Enugu South	46	771	817	94.4	773	94.6	94.8
Ezeagu	180	435	615	70.7	542	88.1	71.4
Igbo-Etiti	307	318	625	50.9	535	85.6	51.4
Igbo-Eze North	499	535	1,034	51.7	915	88.5	50.9
Igbo-Eze South	259	342	601	56.9	500	83.2	58.2
Isi-Uzo	261	177	438	40.4	351	80.1	40.2
Nkanu East	265	1,053	1,318	79.9	825	62.6	77.3
Nkanu West	116	424	540	78.5	471	87.2	78.6
Nsukka	379	844	1,223	69.0	1,133	92.6	69.4
Oji River	79	509	588	86.6	489	83.2	87.1
Udenu	354	456	810	56.3	738	91.1	56.9
Udi	138	751	889	84.5	806	90.7	84.7
Uzo-Uwani	302	359	661	54.3	484	73.2	51.7
TOTAL	**3,645**	**9,616**	**13,261**	**72.5**	**11,171**	**84.2**	**72.9**

Source: ENSG (2015). Enugu state, Nigeria out-of-school children survey Report, October

From the table, 4.4 it has been noted that most teachers in those primary schools are females for instance in Aninri local government, the number of the females teachers are 520 compared to 210 for the males. The same goes to the other local governments of the state as summarized to 3, 645 male teachers compared to 9,616 female teachers composition for the junior secondary schools, the phenomenon is same, as more female teachers are employed more than the male teachers. In table 4.5 as seen below, it is noted that in all most all the junior secondary schools in Enugu state, the preponderance of the teaching staff are females.

Table 4.5 Number of public secondary school teachers by sex and LGEA

	All teachers				Public qualified teachers		
LGEA	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**% female**	**Total**	**% Qualified**	**% female**
Aninri	80	68	148	45.9	140	94.6	48.6
Awgu	168	238	406	58.6	391	96.3	59.1
Enugu East	147	639	786	81.3	745	94.8	81.3
Enugu North	196	710	897	78.1	870	97.0	78.7
Enugu South	111	502	613	81.9	599	97.7	82.5
Ezeagu	214	259	473	54.8	459	97.0	55.1
Igbo-Etiti	218	172	390	44.1	366	93.8	46.4
Igbo-Eze North	234	282	516	54.7	506	98.1	55.3
Igbo-Eze South	113	181	294	61.6	280	95.2	62.9
Isi-Uzo	108	102	210	48.6	205	97.6	48.8
Nkanu East	97	112	209	53.6	195	93.0	53.8
Nkanu West	104	178	282	63.1	256	90.8	66.4
Nsukka	412	678	1,090	62.2	1,057	97.0	63.3
Oji River	53	193	246	78.5	244	99.2	78.7
Udenu	172	296	468	63.2	454	97.0	64.3
Udi	255	442	697	63.4	665	95.4	64.2
Uzo-Uwani	122	60	182	33.0	182	100.0	33.0
TOTAL	2,806	**5,101**	**7,907**	**64,5**	**7,612**	**96.3**	**65.3**

Source: ENSG (2015). Enugu State, Nigeria out-of-school children survey Report, October

The table reveals that 5,101 female teachers were employed in Enugu state junior secondary schools in 2015 compared to 2,806 male teachers. This forms 64.5% population of teaching staff. All these influence male pupils prove that the nature of human resource management of UBE programme in Enugu state is a factor for male drop out syndrome in schools.

Discussion

The challenge of school-aged children who for one reason or another did not enroll in school at all or enrolled and later dropped out for some reason has become a challenge to education the world over. Nigeria alone is said to house over 10 million out of school children. This is in spite of the universal basic education programme which has been running in the country since 1999. The goal of UBE programme is to ensure access to free, compulsory education from early child development and primary and junior secondary schools education to all Nigeria children. Enugu state is leading the way on the march towards achieving qualitative, quantitative, accessible and affordable education through effective implementation of Education Sector Plan 2009-2016. The state government is not just focused on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) timeline but prompted by felt need to fill the gap in knowledge base through adequate provision of education deliverables to its people.

Despite the leading role of Enugu State in implementing Basic Education programme and other educational policies, 37,263 boys and 34,537 girls aged 12-14 (junior secondary school age) dropped out from school. In all, there were 156,092 boys and 150, 168 girls aged 3-18 years that dropped out from school in the State. Moreover, 23.4% of the dropout children were 12-14 years of age (junior secondary school age).

There were 3,353 boys and 3,608 girls aged 12-14 (junior secondary school age) that never attended school across the 17 LGAs of the State. In all, there were 54,513 boys and 56,059 girls aged 3-8 years that never attended school in the State. Moreover, 6.3% of the children that never attended school were 12-14 years of age (junior secondary school age). The overall, 416, 832 children aged 3-18 years were out-of-school which constitutes 28.6% of the total projected population of children 3-18 years of age in the State out of this, 40, 616 boys and 38,145 girls aged 12-14 (junior secondary school age) were out-of-school across the 17 LGAs of the State. In all, there were 210,605 out-of-school boys and 206,227 out-of-school girls aged 3-18 years in the State. Moreover, 18.9% of the out-of-school children were 12.14 years of age (junior secondary school age). Again, 26.0% of the out-of-school children were 15-18 years of age (senior secondary school age).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Universal Basic Education Programme is designed to remove distortions and inconsistencies in basic education delivery and to reinforce the implementation of the National Policy on Education. In Enugu State, the paper shows high level of out-of-school children and low male enrollment in the State. Some of the factors responsible to it are death of parents, diseases and sickness and disability. The findings, the paper conclude that UBE programme in Enugu State have not contributed in reducing the number of out-of-school children in the State. The quality of teachers needs to be improved to yield better results towards implementing the policy. In the light of this paper, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should go beyond policy formulations and put more efforts on implementations of policies for a better result.
2. Campaign should be taken to rural communities on the need for child education, not just only male child but female child education as well.
3. To improve quality of teachers, there is need for continuous training and retraining in the State.
4. The stakeholders in education sector need to brainstorm together to implement policies suitable for the system to enable them curb the alarming rate of out-of-school children in the state.

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