

## **FUNDING POLICY OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION THE BANE FOR POOR ENROLMENT IN IMO STATE: NEED FOR REFORM AND IMPLEMENTATION**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper was to access the funding policy of Universal Basic Education (UBE) as a bane for poor enrolment in Imo state: Need for reform and implementation. Two aspects of the funding policy, the federal government and the state government counterparts funding policy were investigated. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population is 9024 teachers in Imo State from where 902 were drawn through simple random sampling as sample for the study. Questionnaire called: Instrument for the Study of Funding Policy of Universal Basic Education bane for poor enrolment in Imo State was developed, validated and used for data collection. The reliability of instrument was ascertained using Cronbachalpha method and it yielded on overall co-efficient value of 0.83. Data was collected with the help of research assistants from each local government. The collected data was later analyzed with mean and standard deviation statistics. The following findings were made at the end of the study: Federal government counterpart funding policy of UBE is a bane for poor enrollment of pupils and students in Imo state to a high extent; State government counterpart funding policy of UBE is a bane for poor enrolment of pupils and students into public primary and junior secondary schools in Imo state to a low extent. There is need for reform of UBE funding policy and implementations to a high extent. Recommendations based on the findings of the study were made which include among others: The federal government should reduce the tight steps in accessing UBE funds but with serious supervisions. Educational implications of the study were also given as well as the conclusions of the study.

### **Introduction**

The place of basic education in the overall education of the Nigerian child cannot be over emphasized. Its significant role in the preparation of the child for post basic education and playing of roles in the society has made the government come up with robust policies to strengthen and make it more worthwhile. One of those robust policies is the Universal Basic Education programme policy (UBE). UBE Programme was introduced in 1999 by the Federal Government of Nigeria as a reform programme aimed at providing greater access to and ensuring quality of basic education throughout Nigeria. To ensure the policy is a huge success, the Federal Government of Nigeria established Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) as an agency saddled with the responsibility for coordinating all aspects of UBE Programme as well as implementation of the policy.

The term basic education according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) involves 6 years of primary school education and 3 years of junior secondary education, culminating in 9 years of uninterrupted schooling, and transition from one class to another is automatic but is determined through continuous assessment. The term basic education suggests the first education or foundational base of education given to child before other levels of education. To Yusuf and Ajere (n.d) basic education means the kind of education that is given in the first level of education in quality and in content to a child between the ages of 1-6. In Nigerian context, basic

education was tagged with six years of primary schooling previously. Today basic education is extended to include the three years of Junior Secondary School. Universal Basic Education therefore involves formal education up to age 15 including adult and non-formal education.

UBEC is saddled with the responsibility of providing Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) or Pre-primary Education. This is the education given to younger learners before the age of entering primary education (6years). UBEC came as a replacement to Universal Primary Education with the vision to enhance the success of the first nine years of schooling which involves 6 years in Primary School and three years in Junior Secondary School. The third responsibility of UBEC is the implementation of Junior Secondary Education. Junior Secondary is a phase of Education in State Secondary Schools for Children in ages bracket 12 - 14. It helps to ensure the bridge between primary and secondary school is smooth, strong and consistent for all students.

The Universal Basic Education Commission was established by the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education and other Related Matters Act of 2004 with a mandate to formulate policy guidelines for the successful operation of the Universal Basic Education Programme, prescribe the minimum standards for basic education (MacArthur 2017). One of the major goals of the UBE Programme is to ensure that all children, regardless of ethnicity, religion, class, or gender, have access to quality basic education. This means that Access Equity and Quality are the cardinal pursuits of the UBE Programme.

Objectives of Universal Basic Education according to UBEC (2004) include among others: Development in the entire citizens a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotions; The provision of the Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school-going-age; reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency; and ensuring the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills, as well as ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

Highlighting on some problems of UBE Yusuf and Ajere (n.d) listed the following (1) Funding through UBE policy stipulated free education for all child of school age, but the financial burden on the government shoulders do not allow her to meet up with this obligation (2) Provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities like school buildings, equipment and instructional materials. (3) Supervision, inspection and monitoring. The government devotes little or no time for this onerous task educational development. (4) Distance. Most children trek for long distances to access the UBE schools. This is a big challenge to the programme. (5) Poor Planning, Lack of adequate or accurate statistics of pupils at this school age poses big challenge in UBE planning (6) Unhealthy rivalry between UBE school and private schools.

Having highlighted on some of the problems of UBE, how does funding constitute a problem despite the involvement of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The Federal Government had shown its commitment to improve basic education since 1999. This is visible through establishment of Universal Basic Education Commission. The UBE programme declared education from primary to junior Secondary school free and compulsory, and a fundamental right of all school-age pupil (HDI 2018).

Still according to (HDI 2018), The UBE Act provides 36 states of the federation and the federal capital with intervention funds which can be accessed upon meeting certain conditions. The conditions involve providing a fifty percent (50%) counterpart funding to match FG's own contribution (matching grant), (2) The presentation of an Action plan detailing proposed projects of how to spend the funds for education for every fiscal year. This Action plan is an

annual document prepared by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) of each state which indicates breakdown of intervention projects or activities to be implemented in public primary and junior secondary school of that state. In addition, the state's previous years projects must have reached up to 70% completion before accessing another fiscal year's fund at the UBE Commission. In the light of the above, how many states in Nigeria have been able to access these funds through meeting up with the stipulated conditions as to push Basic Education forward. Consequent upon this, UBE Commission administrators also complain that Federal Government matching grants always remain at Central Bank of Nigeria unaccessed. This causes lack of funds to implement UBE programme (HDI 2018). Supporting this view, Chukwuka, Uzor, Oloko and Adeniran (n.d.) asserts that over the past years, basic education in Nigeria has experienced mixed performance. On one hand, school enrolment has increased and gender disparity in primary education has been reduced in line with Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) target. On the other hand, educational outcomes remain weak on many indicators of quality and equity. According to Van Fleet, Kelvin and Lauren (2012) 58.3 percent of primary school children in Nigeria are not meeting the expected levels of literacy and numeracy skills. While several factors accounted for this disloyal performance inadequate finance contributed majorly to this. Nwoko in HDI (2018) went on to assert that between 2010 and 2014, the expenditure on education only accounted for 0.5 percent of the national GDP and 8.8 percent of the Federal Government spending. This is grossly below both UNESCO's recommendation of between 4 to 6 percent share of GDP and Dakar Education for All EFA's recommendation of 20 percent of national budget. In his further opinion, Nwoke in HDI (2018) said that apparently, while every other level of education level remains more underfunded. In the light of the above, the Education for All (EFA) Global monitoringreport (2014) shows that Nigeria needs to spend an additional US \$1.6 billion annually on primary school teachers alone in order to achieve Universal Basic Education Goals. In addition, data from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), (2015) shows that while general government expenditure (Federal, state and local) on non-basic education increased by NGN 194.7 billion between 2008 and 2012, universal basic education (UBE) funding increased by a modest NGN 19.1 billion.

The deficiencies in financing are reflected in the persistent supply-side constraints in Nigeria's Education sector. In basic education, inadequate funding is evident in the number of out of school children (OOSC) and shortages in school infrastructure. Nigeria presently has the highest levels of OOSC (8.7 million) in the world (Nwoko, 2015). In the same vein, estimates on classroom/facilities at the primary and junior secondary level points to a short fall of around 60 percent and 67 percent respectively (Digest of Education Statistics in Chukwuka et al. (2010).

In view of deficiency of funding of UBE in Imo state, how has enrolment of pupils in primary schools and junior secondary schools fared. The term enrolment refers to the number of pupils and students admitted in a particular academic session to study in the pupil primary or junior secondary schools.

With 1,280 primary schools in Imo, the table below shows State primary schools enrolment by class in primary schools 2021/2022 academic session.

Nursery 1	56,890	55,457	112,347
Nursery 2	36,120	35,918	72,048
Nursery 3	32,745	32,260	65,005
<b>Summary</b>			
	Male	Female	
	125,755	123,635	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>249,390</b>	

Primary 1	97,274	94,795	192,069
Primary 2	54,686	52,411	106,943
Primary 3	54,890	52,317	107,044
Primary 4	55,246	53,935	109,012
Primary 5	54,565	51,573	105,959
Primary 6	54,262	52,546	106,808
<b>Summary</b>			
	Male	Female	
	370,923	357,577	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>728,500</b>	

Source: UBEC Imo state.

The above figures give an average of 569.14 pupils' enrolment per public primary school in Imo state. This covers all the levels of study from Nursery 1 to Primary 6 in 1,281 primary schools

### 2022/2023 Imo State Basic Enrolment for Public Primary Schools

	Male	Female	Total
Nursery 1	42,646	42,358	85,004
Nursery 2	40,761	40,226	80,987
Nursery 3	42,658	42,300	84,958
<b>Total</b>	<b>126,065</b>	<b>124,884</b>	<b>250,949</b>
Primary 1	72,715	73,692	146,407
Primary 2	98,377	97,597	195,971
Primary 3	74,413	73,813	148,226
Primary 4	76,138	75,137	151,275
Primary 5	77,584	75,725	153,309
Primary 6	80,406	77,678	158,084
<b>Summary Total</b>	Male	Female	
	480,254	473,998	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>954,252</b>	

Source: UBEC Imo State.

The above figure gives an average of 944.93 pupils per a public primary school in Imo state. This covers all the levels from Nursery 1 to Primary 6.

Further breakdown of the above figure shows that only 112,347 Nursery one pupils were enrolled in all the Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) in Public schools. This gives us a total of 87.77 Nursery 1 school pupils per school in Imo state in 2021/2022 academic session. In the same vein, a total of 192,069 primary one pupils were enrolled in all the 1,280 schools in Imo state in the same academic session. This also means that only 150 primary school pupils were enrolled per one primary school in Imo state in 2021/2022 academic session.

In 2022/2023 academic session, a total of 85,004 Nursery 1 pupils were enrolled in all the 1,281 public primary schools in Imo state. This means that only 66.36 pupils per school. A total of 146,407 pupils were enrolled in the whole 1,281 schools in Imo state. This gives us an average of 114.29 pupils per school.

Imo State Basic Education for public junior secondary school enrolment 2021/2022 academic session. This data covers all the 304 secondary schools in all the Local Governments in Imo state.

	Male	Female	Total
JS1	54,659	58,924	113,583
JS2	55,392	58,858	114,250
JS3	55,808	60,240	116,048
<b>Total</b>	<b>165,859</b>	<b>178,022</b>	<b>343,881</b>

From the above data 113,583 JS students were enrolled for students all the 304 secondary schools in Imo state which covers all the Local Government Areas. This leaves us with an average of 373.63 students per school.

Imo State Basic Education for Public Junior Secondary School enrolment 2022/2023  
307 public secondary schools

	Male	Female	Total
JS1	63,758	66,897	130,655
JS2	65,009	68,032	132,069
JS3	64,628	68,011	132,639
<b>Total</b>	<b>193,395</b>	<b>202,940</b>	<b>396,335</b>

From the above data, 130,655 JS Students were enrolled in all the 307 Secondary Schools in Imo State in the 2022/2023 academic session. This leaves us with an average of 425.59 students per schools.

With Imo state UBE enrolment for a period of two years in view, it is therefore implicit to look at the word reform and the need to carry out a reform on the funding practice of UBE. The word ‘reform’ simply means to make changes in (something, especially an institution or practice) in order to improve it. Other words synonymous with “reform” are improve “make better” better, ameliorate, refine, mend among others. Reform means to make better by removal faults (Merriam n .d).

Writing on the need to restructure Universal Basic Education Commission funding Nwoko (2015) observed that the current constitutional arrangement in Nigeria for funding basic education recognizes the state and the local governments acting as key providers, though the federal government assists in order to make sure minimum standard is maintained in the whole country. Hence, the Federal Government allocates 2 percent of her consolidated revenue Fund annually to UBEC funding. This is shared to all the states based on the current Revenue sharing formula. To access this fund, the states must provide a counterpart 50 percent of fund. This condition has posed a lot of bottle-neck to Universal Basic Education. Once a state cannot meet up with her own 50% counterpart fund, accessing the federal government own to fund basic education comes a problem.

The table below shows huge unaccessed Basic Education Funds in Billions of naira.

Year	Matching Current	Disbursement	Unaccessed	No of states next accessing .....
2005/2006	38.4	38.4	0	0
2007/2008	55.5	55.5	0	1
2009/2010	42.7	42.7	0	0

2011/2012	68.8	54.9	8.9	10
2013	38.1	23.7	14.4	14
2014	35.2	10	25.3	27
2015	16.2	-	16.2	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>289.9</b>	<b>227.7</b>	<b>62.2</b>	

**Source UBEC, 2015.**

Further presentation of data to present time may no doubt have similar if not worse nature of the above table. No wonder provision of instructional materials and Equipment, provisions of essential physical infrastructure and UBE staff trainings are not forth coming in most of the UB E schools. Most classroom blocks are dilapidated and in ramshackle. No wonder the poor enrolment seen in the above tables across the country especially in Imo state.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The federal government of Nigeria's vision for Universal Basic Education in Nigeria was an enviable one. The project targets giving basic education up to JS3 to every school age citizen of Nigeria. Not only this but, the vision also has it that such basic education should be tuition free. To ensure commitment to the success of the programme, the Federal Government went ahead to ear mark 2% of her consolidated fund to finance the programme. It also mandated the state Governments and Local Governments to make available a counterpart fund to support the federal government 50% of the funding. In view of this, no private primary school in Nigeria should be better in funding than the Federal Government, state and Local Government joint sponsored primary schools. Consequently, no private or mission primary school in Nigeria should command greater enrolment of pupils each academic year better than the government owned ones. Instead of being better in all dimensions, the break down in pupils' enrolment done in above tables leaves much to worry about. Average of 87.77 Nursery 1 children per each primary schools in Imo state only were enrolled in 2021/2022 academic session. This to a great extent is far below what we notice in some privately owned Nursery/Primary Schools in Imo state that year. Average of 150 primary school pupils were enrolled per primary schools in Imo state in the same academic session which is also considerably low. On the other hand, average of 66.36 Nursery pupils per school and average of 114.29 of primary pupils per school respectively were enrolled in 2022/2023 academic session. A cursory view at the two academic sessions, under review shows that there is a reduction in enrolment despite the government's huge funding.

It is therefore against this background that the researchers decided to embark upon the study on funding policy of Universal Basic Education, bane for poor enrolment in Imo state: Need for reform and implementation.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study is investigation of the funding policy of UBE as a bane for poor enrolment of pupils and students into public primary and junior secondary schools in Imo state: need for reform and implementations. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate:

1. The extent federal government counterpart funding of UBE constitute a bane for poor enrolment of pupils and students into public primary and junior secondary schools in Imo state.

2. The extent state government counterpart funding of UBE constitute a bane for poor enrolment of pupils and students into public primary and junior secondary schools in Imo state.
3. The extent there is need for UBE funding policy reform to enhance enrolment into public primary and junior secondary schools in Imo state.

### Research Question:

Two research questions were generated to guide the study they are:

1. To what extent does Federal Government Counterpart Funding constitute a bane for poor enrolment in UBE Imo state?
2. To what extent does State Government Counterpart Funding constitute a bane for poor enrolment in UBE Imo state?
3. To what extent is there a need for reform of the funding policy of UBE to enhance pupils' enrolment in Imo state?

### Method

This section describes the steps and ways the researchers adopted in carrying out the study. Descriptive survey was used for the study. The population is 9,024 teachers excluding Federal Teachers Scheme (FTS) teachers, Community Employed Teachers and National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) teachers. Through cluster and simple random sampling 10% of the total population was selected for the study across the states. This gives us 902 primary UBE teachers. Questionnaire instrument called Instrument for the Study of Funding Policy of Universal Basic Education bane for Poor Enrolment in Imo state (ISFPUBEPEI) was developed and used for data collection. The instrument contains three clusters A, B and C, Cluster A gathered data on Federal Government counterpart funding, cluster B dealt on state government counterpart funding, while cluster C gathered data on the need for reform. It is a four-point likert scale with options Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE), with weighted scale of 4,3,2, and 1 respectively. The decision rule is 2.50. This means that any score from 2.50 – 3.00 is High Extent. Scores range from 3.00 – and above Very High Extent. On the other hand, scores range of 2.00 to 2.49 is Low Extent, while score range of 0.00 – 1.99 is Very Low Extent.

The instrument was validated by three experts. Two from Department of Educational Administration Faculty of Education, Imo state University and one from department of Guidance and Counseling (Measurement and Evaluation) Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri. The reliability of the instrument was as ascertained using Cronbach Alph. Different clusters of the instrument yielded coefficient values of 0.83, 0.90 and 0.93. The overall coefficient value was 0.88 which was considered adequate for the study. Data was collected with the help of instructed research assistants in the Local Government Areas. Collected data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics.

**Research Question One:** To what extent does Federal Government counterpart funding constitute a bane to poor enrollment of UBE pupils and students in Imo State?

**Table 1: Analysis of data for answer to research question one**

S/N	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	$\bar{X}$	S	D
1.	Federal Government Counterpart Funding of UBE is too meagre and causes poor enrolment of pupils in Imo state.	402 1,608	215 645	100 200	85 85	902 2,538	2.81		H.E
2.	The Poor budgetary allocation of the Federal Government to UBE is the reason for poor enrolment in the state.	305 1,220	271 813	301 602	25 25	902 2,000	2.95		H.E

3.	The conditions put in place by federal government in the assessment of UBE funding as the bare for poor enrolment in UBE Imo state	321 1,284	253 759	174 348	154 154	902 2,545	2.82		H.E
4.	Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) bureaucracy in assessment of UBE fund is the bane for poor enrolment in Imo state	327 1,308	300 900	201 402	72 72	902 2,682	2.97		HE
5.	UBEC laxities in assessment of the federal government counterpart funding is the bang for poor enrolment in Imo state.	200 800	105 315	305 610	292 292	902 2,017	2.24		LE
6.	Other condition s involved in assessment of the fund constitute a problem and same as bane for poor enrolment of pupils and students in Imo state.	175 100	281 843	350 700	96 96	902 2,339	2.59	1.65	HE
Grand $\bar{X} = 2.73$									HE

The analysis of research question one in table I above shows that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that federal government counterpart funding of UBE in Imo State constitute a bane to poor enrolment of pupils and students in Imo State. This is evidenced in the mean ratings of 2.81, 2.95, 2.82, 2.97 and 2.59 in items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6. the grand mean score of 2.78 and standard deviation of 1.65 answer the research question one that federal government counterpart funding policy is a bane to the poor enrolment in UBE in Imo State to a high extent.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent does State Government counterpart funding constitute a bane to poor enrollment of UBE pupils and students in Imo State?

**Table 2: Analysis of data to answer Research Question Two**

S/N	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	$\bar{X}$	SD	D
7.	The state and LGA counterpart funding of UBE is small and a bane to poor pupil' enrolment I N Imo state	320 960	175 525	350 700	57 57	902 2,242	2.49		LE
8.	Non accessibility of UBE fund by the state University Basic Education Board (SUBEB) is a bane to poor enrolment of pupils in Imo state.	111 444	215 645	375 750	201 201	902 2,040	2.26		LE
9.	Poor budgetary allocation to UBE is a reason for poor enrolment of pupils in Imo state	175 700	281 843	301 602	145 145	902 2,290	2.54		HE
10.	States government inability to meet up with own counterpart fund constitutes a reason for poor enrolment pupils in UBE in Imo state.	350 1,400	181 543	131 262	240 240	902 2,445	2.71		HE
11.	SUBEB delay assessment at fund is a reason for poor enrolment in Imo state.	271 1,084	232 696	340 680	59 59	902 2,516	2.79		HE
12.	Political problems in the state hinders accessibility of UBE fund hence is a bane for poor enrolment in Imo state.	101 404	207 621	223 446	371 371	902 1,842	1.57		LE
Grand $\bar{X} = 2.47$									1.57 LE

The research question two analysis in table II above reveals that slight majority of the respondents are of the opinion that state counterpart funding is a bane to the poor enrolment in UBE in Imo State to a low extent. This was deduced from the mean score s of 2.49, 2.26, and 2.04 in items 7, 8, and 12. Items 9, 10 and 11 however showed high means of 2.54, 2.71 and 2.79 respectively. However, the grand means of 2.47 and standard deviation of 1.57 proves that the state counterpart funding policy is a bane to poor enrolment of pupils into UBE in Imo state to a low extent.



**Research Question Three:** To what extent is there a need for reform of UBE Funding policy and its implementation for increased enrollment in Imo State?

**Table 3: Analysis of data to answer Research Question Three**

S/N	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	$\bar{X}$	SD	D
13.	There is need for because basic education is grossly underfunded compared to other levels of education	301 1,204	203, 906	179 358	219 219	902 2,687	2.98		H.E
14.	There is need for reform due to constant pressure to increase access and quality at basic education, yet number of OOSC always go high	250 1000	300 900	301 602	51 51	902 2,553	2.83		H.E
15.	Basic education is a viable social protection policy for power household, hence its quality in the state should be improved	211 844	271 813	231 462	189 189	902 2,308	2.56		H.E
16.	Basic education is a base for improved health, poverty alleviation and others in the state, hence policy for its funding should be functional	181 7224	290 870	300 600	131 131	902 2,325	2.58		H.E
17	Public Basic education in Imo state may die naturally if it is not improved via vibrant funding policy	271 1,084	281 843	200 400	150 150	902 2,477	2.74	1.66	H.E
<b>Grand Mean</b>							<b>2.74</b>		

The analysis of research question three in table III above revealed that most of the respondents are of the opinion that there is a need for UBE funding policy to be reformed. This is evidenced in the high mean scores in all the items- 2.98, 2.83, 2.56, 2.58 and 2.74 and 2.74. Hence, the grand mean score of 2.74 and standard deviation score 1.66 answer the research question three that there is need for reform of the funding policy of UBE to enhance pupils' enrolment in Imo state to a high extent.

## Discussion

This section of the study discusses and further interprets the analysis done in the previous section. The study focused on investigation of funding policy of Universal Basic Education (UBE) as a bane for poor enrolment of pupils in Imo State.

Three purpose of study and three research questions guided the work through which the instrument for data collection was developed and collected data analysed table by table according to research questions.

Data analysis done in the bid to answer research question one shows that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that federal government counterpart funding policy to UBE is a bane for poor enrolment of pupils and junior secondary school students into public schools in Imo state. The rationale behind this result may not be far from the facts that the federal government counterpart funding of UBE which is only 2% of the consolidated fund is too meager and cannot serve adequately to realize the objectives of UBE. It may also be in the light of poor budgetary allocation of federal government into Basic Education in Nigeria. It is obvious according to Nwoko in HDI (2018) who asserted that between 2010 and 2014, the federal government expenditure on education only accounted for 0.5 percent of National GDP and 8.8% of the federal government spending. This, Nwoko in HDI (2018) asserted, is grossly below both UNESCO recommendation of between 4 to 6 percent share of GDP and Darkar Education for All (EFA) recommendation of 20% of national budget.

Another reason for this result may be due to some stringent conditions and bureaucracies put in place by the federal government on states accessing this fund. This may include Central

Bank of Nigeria very tight protocols and UBEC laxities in making the funds available for assessment by states. In support of this finding, Nwoko (2015) noted that in basic education, inadequate funding is evident in the number of Out of School Children (OOSC) and shortages in schools' infrastructural facilities, equipment and instrumental materials.

Analysis of data in table II to answer research question two revealed that state government counterpart funding of UBE is a bane to the poor enrolment of pupils and students in Imo State to a low extent. This result may owe to the fact that where the state government make their counterpart fund available, but cannot access that of the Federal government, the little from state and local government area, may not go far in catering for the numerous needs of UBE in the state. Again, if there are huge bottlenecks in accessing the Federal government fund, the state may be non-challant about their own counterpart funding thereby leaving the UBE programme to suffer in remain in ramshackle in shackle. This result also proves that both the state poor budgetary allocation, non-accessibility of federal fund, inability of the states to meet up with the conditions for accessing the federal fund, delay on the side of SUBEB of the state in assessment of the fund among others are all contributory to the poor enrolment of pupils and students in UBE Imo state, but to a slight low extent. Supporting this finding HDI (2018) listed some conditions the state must meet before accessing the federal government counterpart fund. This condition includes among others presentation of an Action plan detailing proposed projects of how to spend the funds for education for every fiscal year; and that the state's previous year's project must have reached up to 70% completion before accessing another fiscal year's fund at the UBE commission. In the light of the above, the states may have been meeting up with these conditions through one way or the other to qualify for the next fund while some states with leaders with integrity may not meet up due to some factors, hence may not qualify to access more funds.

The analysis of research question three in table 111 above shows that the respondents are of the opinion that there is need for reform of funding policy of UBE to a great extent. The reasons may not be far from the assumption that UBE education is currently and grossly underfunded compared to other levels of education. Again, due to constant pressure for increase access and quality of basic education caused by high number of Out of School Children (OOSC). The need for reform and implementation of UBE funding policy may also owe to the fact that UBE is indeed a foundation for education. It has bearings to so many sectors-health, family, productions, social services among others. Most children may not have the capacity to further to senior secondary education, so whatever knowledge acquired in UBE is what drives them to contribute to economy, sustain self and family, interact with others and be a useful member of the society.

In support of the need for reform, Nwoko (2015) asserts that basic education is viable social protection policy for poor household. He went further to stress that without a charge in priority (budgetary allocation of fund to sectors of the economy) the quality of basic education will further deteriorate, given the huge and widening financial gap.

## **Conclusion**

This study has accessed funding policy of Universal Basic Education as a bane for poor enrolment of pupils in Early Childhood Care Education, Primary Education and Junior Secondary education in Imo State. The two wings of funding the programmed were accessed which include: the federal and state government joint counterparts funding policy, as well as the need for reform of the policy and its implementation. The study finds out that federal government counterpart funding policy of UBE is a bane for poor pupils and students' enrolment in public primary and junior secondary schools in Imo state to a high extent. In addition to this, the study finds also that to a low extent, state counterpart funding policy is a

bane for the poor enrolment, and there is urgent need for reform of the policy and proper implementation.

Basic education has suffered major setback in the country in general and Imo state in particular because its finance is still based on meager 2% from Federal budgetary allocation. As a result of this, private schools spring up everywhere in the state draining the public schools of the pupils and students. These private schools lack proper supervision and inspection as well as adequate funding too.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The federal government should lessen the tight bureaucratic steps in accessing UBE fund, but with serious supervision.
2. The states Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB) should sit up in both tidying retirement for previous accessed funds and speeding already begun projects to qualify for further access for funds
3. The Federal government should consider other sources for funding UBE like Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) instead of basing only on 2% consolidated revenue which does not reach anywhere.

### **Educational Implication**

In this section of the work, the researchers based on the findings deduced the following educational implications.

1. Since the federal government counterpart funding policy is a bane for poor enrolment of UBE in Imo State, it then implies that ECCE, primary education and junior secondary education are actually suffering serious set-backs. One therefore wonders the quality of education the children receive at these levels of education to face the challenging future.
2. It was also found that the state somehow contributes to poor enrolment of UBE in Imo State though to a low extent. It therefore implies that both the federal, state and local governments are contributors to the poor enrolment of pupils and students into UBE in Imo State. This implies that the future of basic education under the UBE is shaky. No wonder the mass exodus to private schools.

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