

Availability and Utilization of Educational Resources in Selected Rural Communities of Enugu State: Implications for Achieving Universal Primary Education of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper is focused on the availability and utilization of educational resources in selected rural communities in Enugu State: Implication for actualization of millennium development goal No2 in Nigeria. The study was guided by three research questions formulated in line with three specific objectives. The population of the study was 118 primary schools found in the four local government areas that make up the study area. Methodologies employed for data collection included Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in sampled communities, questionnaire surveys designed in form of a checklist, and use of secondary data sources. Data collected was analyzed by simple descriptive methods and uni-variate summary statistics (e.g. percentages) in tabular and graphical forms. The findings of the study showed the net enrolment in each of the five communities; Eha-Alumona and Opi have 10.63 per cent, Eha-Amufu as 21.27 per cent, Ikem having 31.92 per cent, Obollo-Afor and Obollo-Eke having 36.67 and 19.98 per cent respectively, indicating that one out of ten school children drops out of school in these localities. In terms of human resources, there is adequate staff available for UBE implementation, whereas there is gross inadequacy of material resources which is bound to affect the quality of education given to pupils of these areas.

Keywords: Education, Educational resources, Availability, Utilization, MDGs

INTRODUCTION

Education in a broad sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. Technically, education is the process by which the society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another (Olelewe and Amaka, 2011). The educational system in Nigeria is classified essentially into primary, secondary and tertiary levels with the philosophy aimed at development of an individual into a sound and effective citizen, integration of the individual into the community and provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at primary, secondary and tertiary levels (FGN, 2004).

A teacher according to Ogwo (2005) is essentially a facilitator of learning. As much as possible, the teacher facilitates learning by permitting the learner's own interests, attitudes, aptitudes and experiences to influence the kind of learning that will take place. The role of a teacher is often formal and ongoing. A good teacher can use various learning technologies (such as computer, internet and multimedia resources) which are increasingly being used in support of the learning process, presenting new challenges and opportunities for staff and

students to translate information into relevant knowledge that a student can understand, retain and pass on to others under a conducive school environment (Olelewe and Amaka, 2011).

The availability and accessibility of rural infrastructure, such as schools and healthcare facilities can often be used as an indicator of the level of rural development (Ali and Onokala, 2008; Nzeadibe and Ajaero, 2010). Availability of educational resources such as time, information, money, material and human capacity makes a school environment conducive to teaching and learning. The availability of educational resources is very important because of its role in the attainment of educational objectives and goal. The extent to which an educational institution attains her objectives is directly proportional to the educational resources available and their utilization. According to Agabi (2010), educational resources can be categorized into four namely human, material, physical and financial resources.

Human resources in education are the students, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, bursar, librarian, laboratory attendants, clerks, messengers, mail runners, gatekeepers, gardeners and cooks as well as educational planners and administrators (Ebong, 1999). Material resources include textbooks, charts, maps, audio-visual and electronic instructional materials such as computer, multimedia, internet connectivity, radio, tape recorder, television and video tape recorder. Other category of material resources consist of consumables in form of paper supplies and writing materials such as biro, eraser, exercise books, crayon, chalk, drawing books, notebooks, pencil, ruler, slate, etc.

Physical resources include school plant such as classrooms, lecture theatres, auditoriums, typing pools, administrative block, libraries, laboratories, workshops, gymnasias, assembly halls, special rooms like sickbay, staff quarters, students' hostels, kitchen, cafeteria, lavatory, etc while financial resources are the monetary inputs available for and expended on the education system. These include financial allocation to education in form of government grants, PTA levies, and donations from philanthropists and internally generated revenues (IGRs).

The importance of educational resources cannot be over emphasized. Functional literacy will continue to elude us without some level of relevant resources available. Hence, it will be extremely difficult for Nigeria to achieve the universal primary education component of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) no2 by the year 2015, without the provision of adequate resources. The MDGs explicitly recognizes the interdependency between functional literacy, poverty eradication and sustainable manpower development. According to the (United Nations Summit, 2000), the three basic indicators for monitoring the progress of achieving universal primary education include:

1. The net enrolment ratio in primary education,
2. The proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary, and
3. The literacy rate of 15-24 year-old women and men.

The millennium project aims at proposing the best strategies for meeting the MDGs and at the same time developing a concrete action plan that can be utilized by the world to reverse grinding poverty, hunger and disease affecting people around the globe.

Utilization according to Ngurukwem (2005) is the proportion of the available time a system is operating. In terms of educational resources, it could refer to the extent of available resources that are put to use. It therefore becomes imperative that availability and adequate utilization of educational resources such as human, material, physical and financial in some rural communities of Enugu State be explored to determine their applications for knowledge

delivery as well as its relationships between resources availability and performance towards achieving universal primary education goal no.2 of Millennium Development Goals.

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

A review of previous educational programmes in the country shows that resource inadequacy has long been a major education shortcoming (Fafunwa, 1974; Taiwo, 1985; Aiyepku, 1989). The level of educational resources provided for the implementation of education programmes is inadequate and irregular. This inadequacy is compounded by the meager budgetary allocations for education which have been steadily declining over the past two decades. While in 2007 the education sector was allocated 11% of the national budget, this came to 13% in 2008, and in 2009 it dropped to 8% and 6% in 2010. The resources provided by government for the execution of education projects in Nigeria are inadequate leading to frequent industrial actions in the education sector. Moreover, due to the general level of poverty in the country, the contributions of rural communities and households to support educational resources have been grossly negligible.

These not doubt account for the poor performance of students in external examinations such as Junior SCE, SSCE, NECO, NABTEB, JAMB etc. The poor performance continues to increase yearly. In the Unity schools for instance, 85% of the students failed SSCE ; 61% graduated with score grades between 0-9%; 15% graduated with score grades between 10-39% (pass mark); while the number of students who made five credits including English and Mathematics stood at 20% (FGN, 2006). The rate of school dropout continues to escalate with many youths taking to social vices such as armed robbery, youth restiveness, kidnappings and prostitutions because functional education is lacking (Opara, 2007).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The research is designed to determine the availability and utilization of educational resources in selected rural communities in Enugu State towards attainment of MDGs. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. The level of educational resources available in selected rural communities of Enugu State towards actualization of MDGs
2. The net enrolment ratio in primary education in selected rural communities of Enugu State as a measure of the actualization of MDGs
3. The proportion of pupils starting and completed primary schooling in selected rural communities of Enugu State

Research Questions

1. What is the level of education resources available for the attainment of MDGs in selected rural communities in Enugu State?
2. What is the net enrolment ratio of primary education in selected rural communities of Enugu State?
3. What is the proportion of pupils who started and completed primary schooling in selected rural communities of Enugu State?

AREA OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in eight communities of Enugu state listed in alphabetical order as follows: Eha-Alumona, Eha-Amufu, Ikem, Nsukka, Obollo-Afor, Obollo- Eke, Opi and Orba.

These communities are distributed in three LGAs as follows: Isi-Uzo L.G.A (Ikem and Eha-Amufu); Nsukka L.G.A (Eha-Alumona, and Opi); Udenu L.G.A (Obollo-Afor, Obollo-Eke and Orba). Population of the LGAs from which the communities were sampled is 807,335, comprising 394,762 males and 412,573 females (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodologies employed for data collection included Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in sampled communities, questionnaire surveys, and use of secondary data sources. Ground-truth was undertaken to verify some of the claims made by the participants in the FGDs especially on the available educational amenities, status and capacity. In addition, the study employed random sampling procedures to select 118 primary schools from the 236 primary schools present in the study area. Data analysis and presentation of results was by simple descriptive methods and uni-variate summary statistics (e.g. percentages) in tabular and graphical forms, which were considered the most appropriate analytical techniques for the study objectives.

Table1. Summary of Government Approved Primary Schools for the Study LGAs

<i>LGA</i>	<i>No. of Schools</i>	<i>Enrolment</i>	<i>No. of Teachers</i>
Ezeagu	82	11,586	761
Isi-Uzo	78	14,676	572
Nsukka	110	28,889	1,534
Udenu	66	11,369	935

Source: Enugu State Primary Education Board.

Presentation of Data

Table 2. Level of Availability of Educational Resources

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Resource Items</i>	<i>Available (state no./adequate)</i>	<i>Current Status</i>	<i>Not Available</i>
1	Classrooms	96 (Adequate)	HU	
2	Auditorium			NA
3	Administrative office			NA
4	Assembly hall			NA
5	Playing ground/pitch	118 (Adequate)		
6	Running water			NA
7	Staff quarters	NIL		NA
8	Toilet/urinary facilities	(84 adequate)	HU	
9	Reading table and seats	75 Adequate	HU	

(Continued.....)

Table 2. Level of Availability of Educational Resources (.....continued)

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Resource items</i>	<i>Available (state no./adequate)</i>	<i>Current Status</i>	<i>Not Available</i>
10	Air-conditioning systems	NIL		NA
11	Ceiling fans	1 (3.03)		
12	Security guards	NIL		NA
13	Messengers	NIL		NA
14	Secretary	NIL		NA
15	Whiteboard	NIL		NA
16	Library	15 not adequate		
17	Computers/laptops	NIL		NA
18	Multimedia	NIL		NA
19	Internet facility	NIL		NA
20	Electricity		NU	NA
21	Radio		NU	NA
22	Tape recorder			NA
23	Television			NA
24	Video tape recorder			NA
25	No of male teachers	146 (adequate)	HU	
26	No of female teachers	558 (adequate)	HU	
27	Others			

Table 3. Summary of Drop-out Rate According to L.G.A

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Total no. of Pupils admitted in primary one between 2000-2011</i>	<i>Total no. of Pupil who completed primary six between 2000-2011</i>	<i>Net Enrolment Ratio</i>	<i>Percentage drop-out rate of pupils</i>
1	Nsukka: Eha-Alumona & Opi	5174	4624	550 (1:9)	10.63%
2	Eha-Amufu	3370	2656	714 (1:6)	21.27%
3	Ikem	2465	1678	787 (1:3)	31.92%
4	Oboll-Afor	2525	1599	926 (1:3)	36.67%
5	Obollo-Eke	2787	2230	557 (1:5)	19.98%

Table 4. Proportion of Pupils Who Started and Completed Primary Six According to Locality

<i>Area</i>	<i>Year of Entry</i>	<i>No. of pupils admitted into primary one</i>	<i>No. of pupils In primary six</i>	<i>Drop rate in percent</i>
<i>EHA-AMUFU</i>	2000-2005	441	390	11.54%
	2001-2006	430	364	15.34%
	2002-2007	456	343	24.78%
	2003-2008	452	367	21.01%
	2004-2009	470	359	23.61%
	2005-2010	464	415	38.57%
	2006-2011	657	425	35.31%
<i>EHA-ALUMONA & OPI</i>	2000-2005	NA	NA	NA
	2001-2006	NA	NA	NA
	2002-2007	NA	NA	NA
	2003-2008	NA	NA	NA
	2004-2009	1724	1638	4.98%
	2005-2010	1624	1462	9.97%
	2006-2011	1826	1524	16.53%
<i>IKEM</i>	2000-2005	340	260	23.52%
	2001-2006	298	220	26.17%
	2002-2007	346	210	39.30%
	2003-2008	410	260	36.58%
	2004-2009	360	222	38.33%
	2005-2010	315	263	16.50%
	2006-2011	396	243	38.63%
<i>OBOLLO-AFOR</i>	2000-2005	401	285	28.92%
	2001-2006	349	273	21.77%
	2002-2007	336	204	39.28%
	2003-2008	324	225	30.55%
	2004-2009	473	219	53.69%
	2005-2010	324	201	37.96%
	2006-2011	318	192	39.62%
<i>OBOLLO-EKE</i>	2000-2005	392	341	13.01%
	2001-2006	437	329	24.71%
	2002-2007	424	336	20.75%
	2003-2008	422	362	14.21%
	2004-2009	454	359	20.92%
	2005-2010	369	268	27.37%
	2006-2011	289	235	18.68%

Note: NA= Not available record

Data presented in Table 2 revealed the level of educational resources available for implementing universal basic education in the 118 Basic primary schools sampled in the rural

communities of Enugu State. The resource materials that are available though not adequate for the programme include administrative offices, classrooms, play ground, reading tables and seats, and toilets while the most essential ones required for functional teaching and learning staff quarters, air-conditioning systems, computers/laptops, whiteboards, multimedia, internet resources, radio, tape recorder, televisions are unavailable and so not utilized in the actual learning process.

Data presented in table 3 above shows the total number of pupils admitted into primary one, the total number of pupils who completed primary six as well as the net enrolment for the period under review. It was discovered that the net enrolment for each of the five communities such that Eha-Alumona and Opi with 10.63%, Eha-Amufu with 21.27%, Ikem with 31.92%, Obollo-Afor and Obollo-Eke has 36.67% and 19.98% respectively. The table further revealed that on the average one out of eight school children drops out of school from these localities.

Data presented in table 4 revealed the proportion of school children in per cent who entered into primary one and completed primary six for each of the five communities within the period under review. Data analyzed indicated that 88.46%, 84.66%, 76.00%, 78.99%, 76.39%, 72.43% and 64.69% of school children completed primary six in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively in Eha-Amufu community. In Eha-Alumona and Opi community there was a significant shift from what was obtained in Eha-Amufu in terms of completion rate as seen by 95.02%, 90.13%, and 83.47% in 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively. However, there exists a down ward trend in figures over these periods among these two communities in the completion rate of primary six by school children indicating a persistent increase in the rate at which pupils drop out from schooling. The findings of data further revealed that in Ikem community, only 76.48%, 73.83%, 60.70%, 63.42%, 61.67%, 83.50% and 71.37% of school children completed Basic six in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively. For Obollo-Afor area, data collected revealed that 71.08%, 78.23%, 60.72%, 60.45%, 46.31%, 63.04% and 60.38% of school children completed basic six respectively while in Obollo-Eke community, only 86.99%, 75.39%, 79.25%, 85.79%, 79.08%, 73.63%, and 81.32% of school children completed basic six respectively.

DISCUSSION

On human resource availability, the analysis of data on teacher quality and availability was based on the assumption that teachers with National Certificate on Education (NCE) are qualified to teach up to primary six and JSS 3. This assumption is in line with the provision of the National Policy on Education which states that the NCE certificate should be the minimum teaching qualification. The findings revealed that all the teachers in the study area have minimum teaching qualification with 55 per cent possessing NCE and 35 per cent of teachers having B.Sc.(Ed)/PGD. The only problem teachers encounter is lack of basic amenities such as running water, decent accommodation and constant power supply. Owing to these, teachers resort to travelling long distances to school on daily basis thereby creating room for lateness and truancy. Furthermore Table 1 revealed student teacher ratio of, 1:25 in Isi-uzo, 1:18 in Nsukka and 1:12 pupils in Udenu L.G.As thus indicating that teachers available for implementing UBE in these localities are adequate.

The findings revealed that resource materials that are highly utilized such as administrative offices, classrooms, playground, reading tables and seats, libraries, and toilets contribute to the implementation of UBE programme while the not available materials such as running water, staff quarters, ceiling fans, air-conditioning systems, computers/laptops, whiteboards, multimedia, internet resources, radio, tape recorder, televisions etc which makes for

permanent and meaningful experience as well as guarantees retention in the learners are unavailable and therefore not utilized within these rural communities.. This finding is line with (Fafunwa, 1974; Taiwo, 1985; and Aiyepetu, 1989) that scarcity or unavailability of these educational resources will constrain educational system from attainment of educational goals and objectives.

On non-completion of basic education, substantial proportions of school children still do not complete primary six within the required years as seen in table 4 which indicated an average drop-out rate of 23.20% in these localities. This phenomenon was attributed to poor economic status of parents whose major means of livelihood is subsistence farming and petty trading, coupled with large family size of six to ten children.

IMPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this study have serious implications for the implementation of universal basic education and attainment of millennium development goals no.2 in Nigeria by year 2015. For example while the implementation of nine-year compulsory education programme is seen to be successful especially in urban areas, it is yet to make huge impact in rural communities. This can be attributed to lack of availability and utilization of educational resources. Virtually, all these schools in rural communities have deplorable structures that make functional education an activity that is better imagined than experienced. Consequent upon this is the increasing drop-out rate of school children which continues to increase the illiteracy rate of women and men; and increase in number of school age children engaged in hawking at major traffic areas like Obollo-Afor and Opi junctions thus exposing the children to risk ranging from cold and pneumonia, accidents, to untimely deaths with majority of them becoming social deviants.

CONCLUSION

The development of a nation requires a significant percentage of the population acquiring functional education both in science, technology and arts adequate to support rapid technological, economic and social development. In Nigeria, the nine-year compulsory universal basic education programme aims to develop this singular objective by equipping the youths with basic knowledge and skills-to proceed to higher levels of education, enter the world of work, earn a living, and contribute to the wellbeing of the society. This noble objective cannot be achieved without making educational resources such as human, material, time, information, and money available to every community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The federal and states government through the ministry of education should as matter of urgency improve access to and expand learning opportunities for all school-aged children, especially those in the poor and remote communities.
2. There is great need to increase the efficiency of educational resource management in other to enable all basic educational institutions carry out their functions more efficiently and effectively.
3. There is need to evolve policy actions that will increase access to basic education and actions to improve its quality, because basic education and completion cannot be separated from enhanced education quality.

4. There should be a nation-wide jingle created to sensitize Nigerians on the importance of completion of basic education by their children and wards.
5. All major stakeholders in education (parents, community leaders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sectors should assist the government through mobilization of resources for providing, maintaining and improving the nine-year compulsory universal basic education programme for our future generations.

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