

Inequality of Education and Universal Basic Education in Nigeria: What Role for Adult Education?

By

Ojo Ronke Christiana

Department of Adult Education, University of Lagos, Akoka-Yaba, Nigeria

Abstract

The issue of inequality in the education system in Nigeria is not an easy thing to discuss, due to multi-facet factors. First, to say that education is not equal is like saying people are not of the same height. Again: inequality has varying shades and interpretations. For instance, when children of the same age attend schools with differing amenities or gaining admission to school at different times instead of same time or simply put when they cannot access education or have the same access to education or to particular school, we say education is not equal.; but on the part of government and education planners, when education at the primary school is free and compulsory; choices are opened to all for secondary school education; various levels of tertiary education is opened for people to make choice and compete; and of course Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) is made available to all and sundry, it is believed that education is equal or that at least opportunity is giving equally to people. However, giving equal opportunity to all to compete has not solved inequality problem and in fact, it is adding problem to already existing ones. This paper sets to examine factors of inequality in the Nigerian Universal Basic Education (UBE), examine the role Adult education can play in abating the inequality and make recommendations on how to ensure equal education for all by year 2015 as stipulated by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Keywords: *inequality, basic education, education, adult education, equality, universal basic education*

1. Introduction

Ojo (2006) asserts that since 1990 the challenge of a development agenda became the focus of International collaboration. She further stated that the move became an International burden after the 1990, Jomtien (Thailand) Declaration and framework for action on Basic Education-for-All. Equally, the United Nations Economic Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among other agencies, has over the years sponsored substantive initiatives to ensure that human development is placed in the right perspective especially in education. Thus, it arouses in partner countries an urge to put in place structures that will support such landmark.

Torres (1999:25) asserts that between 1990 and 2000, various strategic policies were formulated by these partner countries, among which was the 1993 New Delhi (India) Declaration on the E-9 countries (countries with the highest number of illiterates), a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work for the implementation of the joint decision agreed upon at Jomtien for the eradication of illiteracy in the (E-9) countries, Nigeria was also included (Ojo, 2008:2). Other policies stated by FGN (2002:3) include, the Amman 1995 Reaffirmation that emphasized the need to pursue Jomtien recommendation and Durban (South Africa) 1998 Statement of Commitment for the realization of Education-for-All. The pursuit equally informed the focus of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) because education is regarded as the pillar upon which other developments are based. Again, the directive became relevant as education is regarded as the only means to eradicate inequality.

Not only had that, the directive became mandatory after the Johannesburg (1999) Conference, titled EFA: A Framework for Action in sub-Saharan Africa. Sequel to the above, the International collaborators directed the E-9 countries to pursue education with rigor in all ramifications. Nigeria as a leading figure in the E-9 countries, whose estimated population of about 130million as at then had about 50% literacy

level (Torres, 1999:15), saw it as a duty to fly the flag against inequality of education. So, in 1999, Nigeria furled the flag of Universal Basic Education (UBE) to implement the policy with a view to removing inequality in all ramifications through education. The pursuit of equal education became the main burden of UBE programme launched in 1999.

With other International partners like the UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank, ETF (Education Trust Fund), State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in collaboration with the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), all states in Nigeria have been involved fully in the programme. Funds, blocks of classrooms, furniture and learning materials were provided. Some states like Osun and Taraba have included mid-day meal in agreement with the federal government's initiative of free launch in all UBE schools. UBE Acts have been formulated to give insights to the step by step activities of the UBE. Unlike the Universal Primary Education (UPE- a programme of free education that was in practice before its overthrow by UBE in 1999) which terminated at Primary Six, UBE included Primary One to Primary Six and the Junior Secondary School One to Three making the free education (UBE) programme nine-year duration. The questions now are; what is Universal Basic Education for? Can Universal Basic Education remove the perceived inequality in Nigerian educational system? Can it remove the inequality in education? What alternative solutions are available?

The theses (objectives) of this paper shall be as follows:

- that it is not feasible to make UBE bring about equality
- that equality of education is amiss in the Nigerian UBE
- that provision for all is a better ideal to aim at than equality in the Nigerian UBE
- that there are better alternatives through Adult Education in resolving the problem of inequality in education that might have been caused by UBE in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

At this juncture, it is necessary to explain certain concepts which are related to this work. Two concepts are germane and their interpretation cannot be underestimated for the smooth flow of this work. They are basic education, equality and adult education among others.

Basic Education

According to Ojo (2010: 365) 'Basic education can best be regarded as that form of education which is given for only nine years and no more'. This opinion is a subsidiary of the Nigerian National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004) which states that basic education 'shall be of 9-years duration comprising of 6 years of primary education and 3 years junior secondary education'. This is a brief description of what basic education is in the Nigerian National Policy on Education. But the interpretation does not give a clear-cut interpretation of basic education. It is an extended version of what basic education can be. Again, the type of basic education in that interpretation adapts in the beneficiary the ability to acquire the 3Rs Reading, (w) Riting and (a) Rithmetic.

The World Bank interpretation of basic education as quoted by Semali (1999) regards basic education as a supplement to formal education. The opinion of World Bank that basic education is playing supplementary role, is thus intended 'to reduce basic education to a functional, flexible and low-cost education for those whom formal system cannot yet reach or has already bypassed' (Semali). This conception is to show that basic education is basic literacy.

Further, National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004b:12) states that basic education should not only stop in the acquisition of the 3Rs (basic literacy), but should extend to the Junior Secondary level. At the junior level, students are exposed to pre-vocational, pre-science and pre-technical subjects. It is of note that basic literacy to the International partners go beyond a mere exposure to the 3Rs but to basic education which serves as a solid foundation for the eradication of abject poverty. It is also believed that; it will improve maternal health (as the education of mothers, is the education of health), increase

Environmental Education, Sustainability Development and World Peace among others (Ojo, 2010: 368). By implication, basic education remains a pillar upon which other developments are based and upon which other levels of formal education depend.

Equality

The concept of equality is a protean one. In fact, the concept cannot be easily pinned down and no single interpretation can be used to explain it. First, to say that something is equal is like saying that people are the same height. According to Akinpelu (2005), the concept of equality is complex and difficult to explicate. He then relayed the opinion of some philosophers; for Aristotle equality means 'fairness' (Abernethy 1969), for (Rawls, 1972) it means 'justice' and for (Akinpelu, 1987) it can be interpreted as 'sameness'. Ojo (2008:75) added a seemingly relevant interpretation when she called equality as simply 'same chance'. In furtherance of effort at explaining the concepts of equality, Ojo (ibid) attempted a replacement of equality with three related concepts; equality of treatment, equality of outcome and equality of opportunity. The three substitutes are interpreted as follows. That equality can be interpreted as equality of treatment if all are treated the same way without preferential treatment and without immunity. In the equality of outcome, for people to be referred to as being equal, the outcome of their treatment must be the same- the end normally justifies the means. This is a mechanistic treatment in which everybody that is treated this way must come out having the same gains, the same benefits and the same life achievements. The third, which is the equality of opportunity, according to Ojo (ibid), suggests that there must be similar opportunity for all so that everybody will enjoy the same chance. The chance could be in terms of competing for limited opportunity in industry, in social circle or in government establishments/institutions. However, competitors must be aware of limited chance they are vying for- the result of which is the survival of the fittest. These interpretations are quite intriguing and they give chance for stiff competition thereby resulting in what Osho (2008) calls 'absolute equality for which everybody compete absolutely'.

Without mincing words, it is quite explicit in the UBE guideline (FGN, 2002:3) that the desire of the heart of the Nigerian government to have her citizens educated with a view to bring about equality in education, especially as Nigeria is rated among the E-9 countries (countries with the highest number of illiterates). But the obvious cases of inequality in Nigeria UBE remain unresolved as there are many school- going children roaming the street hawking. There are many out-of-school boys in motor parks. Sarumi and Ojo (2010:15) reiterated that the effect of UBE at reducing incidences of drop-outs and education inequality at the Primary school level is not certain. There are reasons why many of these school-age children gave when they were questioned; lack of parental care, poverty of parents and broken homes among other. In a similar research, Osho (op. cit) submitted that 'attendance at school is becoming unattractive to many school-going children such that many of them prefer street trading or simply roaming the street'. Formal Education is also becoming unattractive to many especially the youths that are full of energy and having acquired school certificates up to degree level but cannot get good jobs and are not capable of becoming self- reliant, for lack of fund and training for such.

In fact, there are insinuations in various quarters that the usefulness of formal education to a pauperized people was the major basis and philosophy behind book haram before it escalated to terrorism sort of. Ojo (2008:75) submitted that, equality of treatment is not ascertained, equality of outcome is not attainable and that equality of opportunity is thwarted such that formal education through UBE has become unfashionable and undesirable.

Desirability condition in Education

There are different reasons why individuals enter into a particular kind of education especially the adult; it may be to alleviate poverty or to improve literacy level among others. This means that education is serving the purpose of meeting ones needs; whether material or developmental needs. Quoting Hirst and Peters, Ojo (2008) submits that there exist reasons that many people concern themselves with education. It means that education is value lading. Such value includes what learners consider important in

education. Not only this, there are qualities like personal development or material acquisition with which one develop himself or others. To specify more precisely educational goals will depends on individual desirable end and the end for which the education is desirable in the society. Indeed, there are some limitations on what might count as an end in the case of education because education does not specify that what it develops in someone is and individual belongs valuable but that it involves the development of knowledge and understanding. In a poverty-ridden country like Nigeria, the common expectation is that the goal of the education will be; *learning to be* better economically and materially, learning for monetary goal, learning for self development and so on. Meanwhile, it is a known fact that economic advancement is a remote gain of education and so, it is not fit to be the objective for educating but the attitude of poor citizens who feel cheated by the attitude of the affluence of the minority few, who wish to be equal with the rich the affluence and wish to get their condition, improved. One question that comes to mind at this juncture is, what type of education or what ideological status should a form of education has, to make it satisfy the agitation of the citizenry? Or put differently, what form of education programme is actually desirable in an already pauperized society? The underlisted as some of the forms of education that will be desirable in a pauperized, E-9 country and unequally benefitting education country like Nigeria.

Adult Education

Adult education is defined in many ways at different times and places by different writers. Rogers (1992:97) defined adult education as:

all planned purposeful learning opportunities offered to those who are recognized and who recognize themselves as adults in their own society and who have left formal initial system (or who have passed beyond the possible stage of initial education if they were never in it), whether such learning opportunities are inside or outside the formal system, as long as such learning opportunities treat the learners as adults in decision making, use appropriate adult learning methodologies and styles and purposes and to meet their own needs.

This interpretation purports to say that adult education is that type of education that is given to those categories of people who in Akinpelu (2002) 'is matured physically, mentally and psychologically... a socially responsible person... has self respect and dignity...'

Sarumi (2006:111) listed some criteria for conceptualizing adult education. The activity that is being referred to as adult education must be educational in nature; it must be relatively organized, purposeful and the target clientele must be adult. It must be voluntary, need-oriented, situational relevant, learner-centered and flexible. Therefore, adult education can be summarily defined as the education that is designed for the category of people that are referred to as adults. Such education is not only one form; it includes formal, informal and non-formal education. Hence, any form of education that satisfies the above criteria is adult education. It can be basic literacy, post-literacy, continuing education, remedial education, extra-mural study and functional literacy among others.

Conceptual Framework

Plato is regarded as the father of idealism. His philosophy is essentially based on idealism. To him, objects are primarily concerned in the form before it translates to the physical. So, he treats universal as objects (forms or ideas) separate from their instances and as common entities.

In this view, universal is regarded as an idea which is conceived prior to its existence. As an idealist, Plato believes that an idea must have existed in the mind before it can be perceived as a form, that is, the idea is primarily considered as a product of human sense perception. To refer to something as universal, to Plato, it must have existed primarily in the mind and it does not need to first appear in the physical. In fact, objects are primarily the reflection or the expression of the human mind. Therefore, for anything to be referred to as universal it must be perceivable by the senses first, that is, it must have existed in the

world of form. Likewise, it must have existed and lived in the thought of people; otherwise it is not universal. It must have been perceived as having form by all and sundry. Forms in Plato's explanation, is the theory that knowledge is gained not primarily by coming to know what is in the physical world, but rather by coming to know the forms which exist in the mind, world of experience and other world which encompasses the universal world.

Plato's universals are more naturally called substances because they have inherent similarities with objects that stand to refer to generality of all and their instances. Moreover, Plato's universal can also be regarded as a particular kind of matter because it suggests that the existence of individual substance is responsible for the existence of common entity. By implication, this view implies that the availability of individual is a prerequisite for the existence of majority. For instance, the word, 'man' in *man has evolved slowly* suggests that an entity man has existed and so man (that is, human being or race) evolved slowly. Man's (human race and so on) existence is premised on the existence of man. That is, a parent man has lived before the total nature of man eventually emerged. In short, Plato's universals are more naturally instances, which can be treated independently. His idea of universal in this paper can be summarized as follows; *that the existence of individual is prior to the availability of common entity and that common entity is an elaborate version of the individual entity.*

However, the main preoccupation of this sub-section is the analysis of the aspect of Plato's educational philosophy that relates to equality of education and the concept of universal in universal basic education. Education, for Plato 'should be given equally to both men and women'. His reason for this, he argues, that each member of the state should undertake the work for which he or she is best fitted by nature. While admitting that women are weaker physically than men, he maintains that with regards to political or governing ability or training, the woman is the equal of the man. Had he affirmed that with regards to intellectual ability that the woman is on the average the equal of the man, he would have anticipated the conclusion of modern researches. Both in his *Republic* and *The Law* Plato addresses himself to the subject of co-education. His aim of education remains the same. According to Davies and Vaughan (1997) Plato stated in *The Law* that:

at present when we speak in terms of praise or blame about the bringing up of every person, we call one man educated and another uneducated although the uneducated man may be sometimes very well educated for the calling of a retail trader, or a captain of a ship. For we are not speaking of education in this narrower sense, but of that other education in virtue from youth upward which makes a man eagerly pursue the ideal perfection of citizenship and teaches him how rightly to rule and how to obey.

The relevance of Plato's contributions to this paper could be seen from the following perspectives. The paper attempts to take cursory look at the input of the Nigerian Universal Basic Education at abating the trend of inequality in education in Nigeria. The effort was to identify universality and to examine how universal in the Nigerian Universal Basic Education. For education to be universal Plato proposes an educational principle, which must be for men and women, young, and old, without gender discrimination and without restriction. Again, he also refers to education not only as schooling "but of that other education in virtue from youth ...". He has also earlier mentioned that a person, who is called uneducated may "...very well be educated for the calling of a retail trader or a captain of a ship..." Plato in essence is affirming the importance of non-formal/apprenticeship education that are integral part of Adult Education. The profundity of Plato's doctrine could be found in his later writings especially *The Law*. In *The Law*, education is universal. It is not restricted (as in the *Republic*) to the guardian class and it is to be compulsory. The children shall come to school not only if their parents 'please but also if they do not please and that truly equal education must carry on both male and female without restriction'. Education must be the duty of the state. Education must be provided equally to all without restrictions. As he remarks that:

all and sundry as far as this is possible, the pupils shall be regarded as belonging to the state rather than to their parents. My law shall apply to females as well as males; they shall both go through the same exercise. (Davies and Vaughan, op. cit)

Plato's positions could be juxtaposed with the objectives of universal basic education in Nigeria. The objectives of UBE are as follows:

- developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitments to its vigorous promotion.
- provision of free, universal basic education for every child of school-going age
- reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from the formal education system through improved relevance, equality and efficiency,
- catering for the learning needs of persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling, through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education and
- ensuring the learning acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeric, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning. (FGN, 2002:2)

There is contingent relationship between these objectives and Plato scheme of education. In the division of education by Plato, there are roughly three tiers in Plato's educational scheme- the Elementary, the Secondary and the Higher Education corresponding to the segments in his Simile of the Line and the Allegory of the cave, (Jowett, 1942:332). The Nigerian educational scheme is also categorized into three; the Elementary being the current UBE of 9years duration. According to Akinpelu (2005:96), 'Plato's Elementary education embraces subjects like; Music, Literature, Civics, Poetry and Culture- for the nurture of the soul and Gymnastics... for the training of the body.' The Nigerian UBE curriculum from Primary level include Physical and Health Education, Religious Knowledge, Agricultural/Home Economics, Social Studies and Citizenship Education, Cultural and Creative Arts (FGN, 2004b:9).

Not only UBE, the position of Plato can also simultaneously go with the goals of mass literacy adult and non-formal education. The goals of mass literacy in Nigeria are as follows:

- Provide functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who have never had the advantages of formal education or who did not complete their primary education. These include the nomads, migrant families, the disabled and other categories of group.
- Provide functional and remedial education for those young people who did not complete secondary education.
- Provide education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills.
- Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal education system through improved relevance, equality and efficiency.
- Catering for the learning needs of persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling, through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeric, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning (FGN, 2004b:32).

These are well conceived ideas which if are properly harnessed may eventually help in abating the spate of inequality of education in Nigeria. It is obvious that the initiators of UBE felt these objectives are suitable in abating inequality of education in Nigeria, (since it has taken care of basic education from the primary school to the junior secondary school) and will be capable of removing inequality in education and provide education for all the children of school-going ages and adults who had never being to school or those who left the formal school early without been truly literate.

Forms of Adult of Education that are desirable for the eradication of inequality created by UBE in Nigeria

Many authors have examined the number of factors in the issue of equality of education in Nigeria; Enoh (2001) identified the ideals of equal education in Nigeria. Akinpelu (2001) revisited the inequality issue in the education in Nigeria. He identified a number of factors that culminate in the inequality of education in Nigeria. To him opportunity to have access to equal form of education is an issue. He also identified political climate, political will, poverty and employment among others. Ojo (2008:57) identifies other factors like goal unattained or non-pursuance of objectives that are set, poverty, parental attitudes to schooling and the inequality of wealth and affluence. Suffice to say that ignorance, the state of economy and bad leadership are other factors that are adding to the continued problem of inequality of education in Nigeria. Although, there are schools in almost all nooks and crannies of Nigeria, name it, Primary school, Junior school, Polytechnics, Colleges and University. There are government and private schools, yet there is still issue of inequality of education. This paper had examined the reasons for this cankerworm (inequality). But what are the veritable forms of educations that can abate this cankerworm?

First, education of the adult remains a very viable form of education to correct whatever form of inequality of education that might have existed. The Basic Literacy is a viable formal schooling to correct whatever inequality or gap that might have existed in a persons schooling career. Again, the Distance Learning is a veritable avenue to bridge the gap that might have come up after primary education. The Distance Learning Programme has become a compelling force in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Take for instance; the 2010 take off number of the basic literacy class of the department of adult Education, University of Lagos, was 141 out-of-school adult learners. They were assigned classes based on their literacy level: many that are tagged “never attended school adults” (25) are in Nursery school, those who dropped out of primary 3, (47of them) are distributed to primary 1 and 2. There are 7 of them in primary 3, 17 in primary 4 and 5 and 10 in primary 6. There are also the category of those who have completed primary school, they are 35 in number. They form JSS 1 class. The first graduates, that is, those who passed out of Nursery school were 17 out of the 25 enrollees. The department of Adult in conjunction with UNICEF, Adult and Non-Formal Education (ANFE) Department of the Ministry of Education, Lagos State, Lagos State Ministry of Education and the University of Lagos partnered to organize a befitting graduation ceremony for the first set of Nursery class completers on November, 15th 2011 at the Faculty of Education Auditorium. (Adult Education Literacy Record, 2011).

The Distance Learning Institute of the University of Lagos, has nothing less than 12,000 undergraduate students in its enrollment and the courses it offers span through Education to Law, Social Sciences to Pure Sciences and so on. The number according to Olanrewaju (2010:26) takes care of a great number of admission seekers that UTME has failed to absorb. UNESCO (2001) reports that the illiteracy level in Nigeria is 50% may have dwindled as Distance Learning Institutes of Universities and Polytechnics Colleges have improved the literacy level of a number of people in Nigeria.

The UBE Acts (2004) also takes care of the nomads this is an instance of special form of education (although children education) that helps in bringing the gaps in equality of education. The migrant herdsmen now has compulsory assignment of sending their children to school for nomads, that is, the Nomadic School, which are strategically set up in rural pastoral areas, in Oyo state there are four of them (Saki, Iseyin, Ago Amodu & Tede and the Oyo/Osun border village of Ikonifin). (Olanamni, 2011:17).

According to Ojo (2010:7), there are other wide range of adult education programmes that help in ameliorating the problem of inequality of education and help in reducing the number of illiterates in Nigeria. According to her continuing education programme has gone a long way to correct inequality of education in Nigeria, she quoted Akinpelu (1986) as defining continuing education as “education that continues some forms of schooling which a person had had before” If this definition of continuing education is anything to go by, then a person who had had a form of education may be an adult or other. But the main suspect is adult. Therefore, such a person will have the opportunity to continue his/her education. Again, either the person had had reason to break the education or he has changed line of education, thereby, eroding inequality.

Further, all Sandwich programmes of National Teachers Institute, Colleges of Education and Universities are good adult education programmes meant to bridge the gap in inequality of education. The sandwich programmes also award certificate that is of the same weight with those that attend the school on a regular basis. Hence, the availability of Sandwich programme for adults, there is hope for the advertent removal of inequality of education in Nigeria. May I assert here that, countless numbers of people have benefitted immensely from the Sandwich programme. A very good example is illustrated by Ojo (2006:10). In her assessment of Sandwich programme of the College of Education Ikere-Ekiti in Ekiti state. She explained that more than 30,000 primary school teachers benefitted from the Sandwich programme from 1993 to 2006. The Colleges established satellite (sandwich programme) Campuses to cater for the learning needs of the serving primary school teachers when they were mandated by the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Education to pursuit at least National Certificate in Education (NCE) as minimum certificate for primary school teachers.

The College of Education Ikere, National Teachers’ Institute Kaduna and other tertiary institutions took the advantage to open their facilities for sandwich education. The participants were all adults. Many of them after completion moved to pursue degree programmes either on Sandwich or fulltime. The Programme goes a long way to remove inferiority complex in the primary school teacher thereby improved their educational standards and qualification and entrenched equality of education appropriately.

Conditions for the realization of equal education in the Nigerian universal basic education

The summary of the effort of this section is to bring up a dimension that is germane to the proper realization of equal education and the removal of inequality in education in the Nigeria universal basic education. Therefore, in this part I intend to state, though briefly, certain conditions that are indispensable to resolving the challenges of inequality.

First, the criteria of needs as stated by Maslow cited by Oladapo (2001:65) shall be adopted. Maslow argued that a person’s needs range from self-actualization, integration, self-esteem, belongingness, safety, and physiological/gratification needs. In Maslow’s submission, people’s desire for meeting needs must first be given consideration after which any other gestures could be appreciated. It follows that, if citizens will appreciate the gesture of free education, satisfaction of needs like food, clothing and shelter that fall within the realm of physiological needs must as a matter of priority be met. Food for all, decent accommodation and clothing to put on are incentives and life essentials before a successful voyage in education. Other needs which include security of life and properties, enabling socio-economic environment and right political will must be put in place. By autonomy, this work assumes that the right that an individual has to choose what he needs at the time he needs it, is an existential reality which dictates that needs should be satisfied adequately before other life realities follows. Therefore, to facilitate equality of education in Nigeria, there is need to first and foremost ensure that the needs of the target audience are met. The needs include; physiological needs, safety needs and need for self-actualization among others.

Again, the current spate of local terrorism in Nigeria, in terms of militancy in the Niger Delta, kidnapping in the Eastern part of the country, armed robbery in the Western part of the country and of boko Haram in the Northern part of Nigeria require urgent constitutional and legislative attention. For many days, school children will not go to school because of fear of insecurity in the hand of either kidnapers or boko harams. Not only that, for many weeks, schools were shut in the troubled states in Nigeria, (Oladokun, 2011). In the Northern part of the country, Taraba state, to be precise, about 30% of the teaching workforce resigned their teaching appointments and left the troubled areas; those that came from others states of the Western and the Eastern parts of the country (Sekoni, 2011). This resignation is a big challenge for the quality and equality of education in Nigeria. However, it is chagrin that boko haram has not attacked any school, not a single one. The case of militancy and kidnapping is different, school children were kidnapped in group on their way to school inside their school bus in Asaba in Delta state and they were released to their parent after huge ransom have been paid; the time they spent with the kidnapers and the psychological torture they were subjected to can marred and distort the learning of these pupils. Then, the effect of explosives and disruption of activities at the Niger Delta region are all detrimental to the ethics of quality and equality of education in Nigeria.

In an independent research by Ojo (2011), sampling opinions of returnees from the Northern part of the country in Osun, Oyo, Lagos and Osun states. It is chagrin to find out that many school children were displaced. For instance, more than 1880 school children whose parents came down from the troubled parts of the country were in Osun state looking for primary school enrollment. In Oyo state, there were about 2190. In Ogun state, there were about 2,660 and in Lagos state, there were more than 3,800. Fifty (50) schools were visited in each state and questionnaires given to Head Teachers. Twenty-five (25) Questionnaires on Primary School Admission Seekers (QPSAS) were given to each school and within 3months, the Head Teachers in 38 schools in Oyo state, 41 schools in Osun state and 43 schools in Lagos state turned in filled questionnaires. In the colon for number of admission seekers, the total number of the admission seekers who claim to have returned from the Northern part of the country because of the spate of boko haram were as stated above (1880, 2190, 2660 and 3800 in Osun, Oyo, Ogun and Lagos states respectively) It was also discovered that parents could not produce letter of transfer from the states they were coming from because of the nature of their exits from the various states. The implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) is suffering serious setback; first, many of the displaced children are either not able to get admission to schools or are not able to go to school again because they have lost their parents to menace of bomb attack of boko haram and many of them are now street hawkers on the street of Lagos, Ibadan and on major streets across the Western part of Nigeria (Sekoni,op.cit).

Second, the political terrain of this country needs to be re-directed. Politics of sectionalism, politics of bitterness, corruption, ethnic chauvinism and politicization of education need be eschewed. In a bid to win political post, many a times, Nigerian leaders promise unity of purpose, equality of treatment and equitable distribution of wealth and utility but at the time when promises are expected to translate to action, what Nigerians have is sectional treatment largely influenced by moral corruption and play of selfishness.

Citizens are looking forward to leaders to implement programmes that will harness their comfort. Part of what they expect is provision of common utilities like health care, portable water, electric supply and other social amenities. What they however have is leaders enriching their own immediate families or at best their own local constituencies. For instance, some governors provide 'ultra-modern' facilities in their constituency at the expense of other parts of the state. For educational equality to thrive in the Nigerian UBE, the political terrain needs to be re-orientated and be made favourable for all.

The economic order is the third of these conditions; the economic order must ensure full employment of school leavers. When this is not practicable, there is need for welfare schemes so as to ensure that every family has income. Poverty is a deterrent to pursuit of equal education.

Fourth is the perfect equal educational opportunity. Visible poverty is a key to pseudo-equality of education. If education is acclaimed to be free but books had to be bought with exorbitant prices, furniture has to be procured by the students themselves. Worse still, registration fee as high as ₦7,000 – will have to be paid for registration in JSS I and (P.T.A) teachers have to be employed by the students who they claim that they give equal education to before students are taught. Then, we are yet to see equality.

2. Conclusion and Recommendations

Politicization of education, misplaced priority, selfishness and high rate of embezzlement are parts of the problems facing education in Nigeria. The leadership in this country has very wrong orientation about foreign commitments. They display high level of mediocrity with their habit of rushing to implement programmes before they give considerations to the conditions required to operate such a programme in the country. Again, there is need to put some fundamental structures in place; there is need to encourage honesty and selfless effort on the part of the leadership of this country, to ascertain true leadership, to tackle security challenges, to give priority to the education of the displaced children, to ensure easy access to formal education for all the children of school going ages including the displaced children, to ensure that adult education programme is adequately funded so that anyone who for one reason or the other had had to interrupt his/her (UBE) schooling will have reasons to continue formal education through various forms of Adult Education.

References

- Abernethy, D. B.(1969). *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education*, California, Stanford University Press.
- Akinpelu, J. A. (1986). ‘Equality of educational opportunity revisited’, An abridged version of a paper as part of *LASU SEMINAR SERIES* of Lagos State University.
- Akinpelu, J. A. (1987). *Relevance in Education*, Ibadan, Ibadan University Press.
- Akinpelu, J. A. (2001). ‘Looking Forward: Nigerian Education in the 21st Century’ , in *Nigerian Journal of Educational Philosophy*, Vol. vii No.1.
- Akinpelu, J. A. (2002). *Philosophy of Adult Education*, Ibadan, Stirling-Horden, Publishers (Nig.) Ltd.
- Akinpelu, J. A. (2005). *Essays in Philosophy and Education*, Ibadan, Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig.) Ltd.
- Davies, J.L. and Vaughan, D.J. (1997). *Plato’s Republic*, Great Britain, Wordsworth Classics of the World Literature XIV.
- Department of Adult Education (2011). *Adult Education Literacy Record*, Lagos, University of Lagos.
- Enoh, A.O. (2001). ‘The Ideal of Equal Educational Opportunity’, *International Journal of Educational Philosophy*, Vol. 2: No. 1.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2002a). *Guidelines on Universal Basic Education (UBE)*, Abuja, Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2002b). *Information of the Implementation of UBE*, Abuja, Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).
- Federal Government of Nigeria, (2004a). *National Policy on Education*, Lagos, NERDC.
- Federal government of Nigeria (2004b). *UBE Acts*, Abuja, (UBEC).

- Jowett, B. (1942). *Plato*, New York, Walter J. Black Inc.
- Ojo R. C. (2006). 'Sandwich Programme as an Avenue for Sustainable Equality for Education', a Paper Presented at the Annual Lecture MUOED, Ibadan.
- Ojo, R.C. (2008). 'Universal Basic Education and Equal Educational Opportunity in the Nigeria: A Philosophical Analysis of an Educational Programme', an unpublished Ph.D thesis in the department of Adult Education University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Ojo, R. C. (2010). 'Universal Basic Education and Equal Education Opportunity in Nigeria: Myths and Realities', in *Journal of Educational Review, New Dehli, India, Vol. 3, No.3*
- Ojo, R. C. (2011) 'The Effect of Current Security Challenges on the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in Nigeria', a paper accepted for publication in *Journal of Educational Thoughts*, Department of Adult Education, University of Lagos.
- Oladapo, C. O. (2001). *Psychology of Adult Learning*, Ibadan, Sibon Books Limited.
- Olakanmi, A. (2011). 'Special School for Nomads in UBE', in *The Nation*, Thursday May 13.
- Olanrewaju, A. B. (2010). 'This UBE: A long way still has to cover' in *The Nation*, Thursday, 20.
- Oladokun, O. (2011). Nomads and Schooling, in *The Nation* Saturday, February 17.
- Osho, A. (2008). 'Agony in UBE', in *The Nation*, February, 24.
- Rawls, J. (1972). *A Theory of Justice*, London, Oxford University Press.
- Rogers, A. (1992). 'Development and adult education', in *Adults learning for development*, London, Cassell Educational Vol.2.No.11.
- Sarumi, A.A. (2006). 'Non-formal Education and Investment in National Development', *unpublished department paper in the Department of Adult Education*, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Sekoni, R. (2011). 'Boko Haram and book wisdom', *The Nation*, Sunday, July 10.
- Semali, L. (1999). 'Literacy and Basic Education', in *Literacy: An International Handbook*, Wagner, D.A., Venezky, R.L. and Brian, V.S. (eds.) London, West view Press.
- Torres, R. M. (1999). *One Decade of Education for All*, Buenos Aires, UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2001). *World Declaration FORUM Final Report*, Darka, UNESCO.