

## **BASIC EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Abstract**

*Basic education is the core and foundation of any sound education system. It is the bedrock upon which other levels of education are built and is imperative to human capital development in the society. Education enhances and improves productivity and human potentials and skills which leads to improved performance and promote economic growth as a result of knowledge gained. Human capital is quantified by national educational standards. Education is the key way of achieving human capital. Therefore, this paper focuses on quality education, basic education, human capital development, the relationship between human capital and education, challenges and possible suggestions were made among which is the need for partnership in education to improve its quality to enhance economic growth of the nation.*

**Keywords:** Education, basic education, human capital development, universal basic education.

### **Introduction**

Education remains a vital factor of national development as it has the capacity of enhancing people understanding of themselves and the world around them. Education is the instrument par excellence for human capital development (NPE 2014). Edison (2018) described education as the process of making it possible for acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits by individuals in a given society through discussion, teaching, training and directed research under the guidance of professional known as the teacher in a formal settings. This informal and formal education affect the way one thinks, feels and so on. Education is seen as an act of teaching worthwhile values to make a balanced living of individuals in a society. No wonder parents and other stakeholders in education and companies spend a lot of money on their children and employees to gain knowledge to improve on their mental capacities and improve performance. Education is the only bridge between the poor and the rich, urban and rural. Harris (2018) described education as the process where individuals develop their capacities for their consumption and that of the society at large. Okere (2018) agreed with the above and stated that education is the main instrument available to government and society to prepare individuals for a speedily changing and increasable demanding work as to improve their efficiency and employability.

Basic education is seeing as the bedrock of quality education, hence the need for the establishment of Universal Basic Education programme (UBE) aimed at repositioning education, so it can play a role of positive instrument of change for development of human capital (Asuru,2006). Basic education is seen as the foundation upon which other educational levels are built upon (Ilogho,2016).. The question is what is the quality of our basic education in the country? What are the set standards in our basic education system? The teacher is said to be the centre of training and teaching, what is the level of effectiveness of our basic education teachers? It is rightly stated in UBE Acts 2004 that No education can rise above the level of its teachers. UBE programme was launched to ensure improvement of school quality, capacity building for teachers and help reduce ignorance in the minds of the youth and prepare them ahead for efficiency in their various chosen career in the future. The issue of quality basic education is paramount to achieving the goals of Education for All (EFA). The EFA goal six states that 'improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essentials life skills'.

### **Human Capital Development**

Human capital is the state of knowledge, skills, habits, social and personality attributes including creativity, embodies in the ability to perform labour activity to produce goods and services that have economic value (Addoo 2010). The measure of abilities, educational quality and effectiveness of the workers in nation, influencing their productivity or potentials is known as human capital (Teachmint, 2021). According to Dimension (2013) Human capital is the energies, skills and knowledge of people which are potentially available for use in the production of goods and services. Human capital is to help the individual to be most effective in his or her chosen career. If the individual is effective then he/she can control all other resources available in production of goods and services which will lead to a more fulfilled life. Living a more fulfilled life is one of the purposes of education.

The human capital development in basic education includes all that help in the teaching learning process, which includes the teacher, learners, non-teaching staffs. Developing the capacity of the teacher through training, attendance at workshops, seminars are part of the implementation guidelines for UBE. Human capital development entails improving on the capabilities of individuals/workers through workshops and seminars attendance, additional qualification through training in higher institutions. This is one of the driving forces in Ondo State Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) to ask all teachers to have an additional qualification for quality delivery. Jones (2018) opined that the provision of enabling educational environment for the workers will go a long way to give them the ability to upgrade their knowledge, skills in line with the current trends in the nation. Human capital is meant to be developed. This development can only take place through education. Less investment in the education sector is less investment in human

capital development which is dangerous to socio-economic development of a nation. The abilities and capacities of human beings are improved through education. The more investment in education, the more potentials are developed for more productivity and the rate of employability increases which in turn leads to socio-economic wellbeing of its citizens. Hence, education plays an important role in human capital development.

### **The Concept of Basic Education**

Edison (2018) describe education as the process of making it possible for acquisition of knowledge, skills, value, beliefs and habits by individuals in a given society through storytelling, discussions, teaching, training and directed research under the guidance of professional known as the teacher in a formal or informal settings. This formal and informal education affect the way one thinks, feels or acts. Raji (2018) explored education as a balanced wheel of the machine that drives a nation to a sustainable growth and development. Karabayeva (2018) define education as a process and result of mastering systematic knowledge, skills, a necessary condition for preparing a person for life and empowerment. This means that education acquired makes one to live an independent life adapt to social changes in the socie. It is stated in National Policy on Education (2014) that, education is an instrument par excellence” for national development and it is mandatory for all her citizens. Education is describe as an act of teaching “Worthwhile values to make a balanced living of individuals in a society (Ilogho, 2016.). Harris (2018) described education as the process where individuals develop their capabilities for their consumption and that of the society at large.

Basic education is the first level of formal education for developing the potentials and mental ability of an individual. In Nigeria it's a nine-year programme which comprises of six years primary school and three years junior secondary school. The reason for its basic and universal is to enhance the access of all to education, provides good learning environment and eliminate illiteracy. UBE programme was launched with the aim of providing free education for every Nigerian child of school going age; to reduced drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal system and to improved relevance quality and efficacy; caring for the learning needs of young ones whose schooling is interrupted; and ensuring the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy, numeracy and communicative skills . UBE programme was launched to ensure improvement of school quality, capacity building for teachers and help reduce ignorance in the minds of the youth and prepare them ahead for efficiency in their various chosen career in the future. The issue of quality basic education is paramount to achieving the goals of Education for All (EFA). The EFA goal six states that 'improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recongnised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essentials life skills'. The indicators of quality in the basic education sector are quality teachers and learners, quality content of curriculum, quality instruction, child-friendly learning

environment (UBE,2004). The UBE Act 2004 stated that for effective implementation of the programme there must be some minimum standards in the areas of resources, processes and performance.

### **The Role of Basic Education in Human Capital Development**

As aptly noted by Obemeata (1995) in Ilogho 2016, education is the only means by which the individual can acquire specialized knowledge and skills that will improve the development of human capital. Hence, it is an important instrument for effective social change and social mobility. It provides the attitudes, skills, knowledge and personality which modern technology, industrialization and human capital development demands. The launching of the UBE programme is seen as a welcome development. It is expected to ensure the improvement of school quality and help reduce ignorance in the minds of the pupils and prepare them ahead for efficiency in their various chosen career in the future. Basic education helps to reduce the rate of illiteracy in the nation by empowering young minds (human capital) with knowledge, skills and values needed to cope with the everyday needs of the society. This was done through learning how to read, write and performing simple arithmetic calculation of everyday to improve his abilities and potentials and leads to his wellbeing and the society at large. Basic education helps to improve on how the young learners who are our future leaders on how to interact and relate with people around them. Basic education is seen as an agent of socialization. The ability of the young learners through basic education can enhance social and economic development of a nation.

According to Dimson (2013), basic education deals with human beings, teaching, non-teaching staffs and the learners whose knowledge and skills are developed for future life. He further stated that knowledge is power, power in turn is the capacity to do work which is an index of development. This implies that no basic education, no development of human capital. This was supported by Onuoha (2011) who stated that there can be no meaningful human capital development without education. The starting point of a building is very crucial to the end of it, the basic education level is that starting point level of education which contribution to human capital development cannot be overemphasized. The production of high-quality personnel through basic education will bring development of human capital and economic growth of a nation. Since education is considered as the bedrock for development of any nation, hence the government is duty bound to ensure that all children at this age are given a better foundation in education by providing every facility that all children at this age are given a better foundation in education by providing every child free education that will help enhance quality. Education remains the fundamental tools for the development of human and transformation of the society at large.

According to Anan in Chikwe et al (2015), “Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of human development”. In Nigeria, the interest for the development of basic education,

through Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was launched on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1999 to eradicate illiteracy, poverty and ignorance. Its objectives as stated in the commissioning annual report in 2005 is to increase and improve national and political development, reduce the incidence of drop – out from the formal school system and the ensuring of acquisition of life – long skills.

### **Factors affecting the quality of basic education in Nigeria**

Yankari Retreat of 2008 as cited in UBEC (2010) listed some of the quality issues affecting the basic education as:

1. Inadequate budgetary provision for routine monitoring and evaluation, supervision and inspection;
2. Low presence of inspectors/ supervision of inspectors/supervisors in state ministries of education/SUBEBS:
3. Late release of fund for quality assurance activities:
4. Inadequate report to principals and feedback to and from end-users;
5. Non- prescription of sanctions for non-compliance to guidelines;
6. Lack of research into quality assurance issues:
7. Low achievement:
8. Inadequate partnership with relevant stakeholders in monitoring and supervision of UBE programmes and activities as well as low empowerment of communities for participation in quality assurance in the schools located in their areas : and
9. Politicalisation of appointment of Executive Chairmen/Education Secretaries.

In addition to these factors affecting basic education is dearth of quality infrastructure, including furniture, equipment and facilities; and the low standard of some existing ones that could not impact efficient basic education delivery. Inadequate number of teachers, poor qualities of teachers, teacher's poor attitudes towards work, lack of motivation of teachers. Education standards comprises of all aspects of the education enterprise, such as inputs, process and output. According to UBE (2010) Education for all is the responsibility for all highlighted some minimum standards which all basic education should meet in the areas of recourses, processes and performance for effective delivery. Most of these standards are not met in the states and local Governments ranging from classroom sizes, maximum number of pupils per class, pupil- teacher ratio, amenities such as good source of water, equipped clinic, first aid box, toilets, playground, electricity supply, transportation, laboratory, workshops, libraries , kitchen and dining halls, assembly/ examination halls, physical structure and staff quarters. Again, Nigeria over- time is blessed with different educational programmes but the major challenge is implementation. Some of the challenges as cited by Ilogho (2016); Dimson (2013) and Ugada and Da-ue (2022) are overcrowded classrooms, poor funding of the school activities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, non-availability of functional library, inadequate infrastructural materials, poor supervision and monitoring.

## **Conclusion**

Basic Education is a critical tool for human capital development. (Chikene, Ogidi, Nwachukwu, 2015). It is evident that a country's development in human capital lies solely on its educational system. The foundation of our educational system is the basic education which is being marred with lots of challenges.

## **The Way Forward**

1. Educational planners and administrators should provide adequate funding at the basic education level. This can be through Government- private partnership to improve the implementation strategies of UBE.
2. The UBE programme which is at basic education level needs to be improved upon for effective implementation and delivery. Let all stakeholders take responsibility and make the programme worthwhile. This is because high standard of quality basic education in the nation will give rise to improved human capital development and leads to socio-economic growth in the nation as well as fulfilled individual life.
3. Government should appoint professionals in the leadership of basic education.
4. There is need for research development prospects of basic education in Nigeria. Government should take serious the area of research for an educational system without research is leading to collapse.
5. Basic needs of basic education level should be provided to meet the minimum standard required, so students can be early spotted and be encouraged towards areas of special needs, interest and acquisition of skills to fit into the societal demands.
6. There is need for Government to improve the standard of living of its citizens so as to encourage people from attending schools.
7. Continuous increase in the intervention funds from the government
8. Immediate scrutiny, correction and timely adjustment starting from the grassroots to the top of affairs in the UBE programme.
9. Establishment of effective laid down rules
10. Adequate training of recruited personnel
11. Constant maintaining of ageing and unfinished projects to the day of completion towards a strong consciousness for education with an attendant positive effective cognitive and affective gains.

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