

Diminishing Marginal Productivity in the Development of Quality Basic Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the diminishing marginal productivity in the development of quality education in Nigeria. It considered the birth, nature and characteristics of Universal Basic Education (UBE) with focus on achieving Education For All (EFA). The problems of UBE, quality education, barriers and factors influencing the delivery or development of quality education in Nigeria as well as meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The economic application of the law of diminishing marginal productivity in education, way forward, conclusion and suggestions were discussed.

Keywords: Education, Diminishing Marginal Productivity, Quality, Education For All, Millennium Development Goals, Enrolment, Total, Average and Marginal Productivity.

INTRODUCTION

The twenty—first century has brought with it profound changes and challenges to the nature, values, and control of education in Nigeria especially the Universal Basic Education (UBE), which was previously known as Universal Primary Education (UPE) to the various states in the federation. Societal expectations and public resources for the UBE are undergoing fundamental shifts.

Basic Education is the foundation for sustainable life-long learning. It provides reading, writing and in numeracy skills. It comprises a wide variety of formal and non-formal educational activities and programmes designed to enable learners to acquire functional literacy.

In the Nigerian context, basic education includes primary, junior Secondary and Nomadic Education as well as adult Literacy. The Universal Basic Education encompasses the following levels of education in hierarchical order: Early Childhood Care Development or Pre-School/Nursery/kindergarten, Primary Education, Junior Secondary Education and the non-Formal Education. This shows that Universal Basic Education is concerned with not only the young children but also Adolescent and Adults who did not have the ample opportunity of formal education.

The main tenet of Universal Basic Education is to make sure that the many school age children in the country today who are involved in hawking and other vices go to school. It is expected to be mandatory for all pupils within the target group in the 21st century. The desire for Basic Education in Nigeria stressed Universality. Lenhart (1999) opined that Universal Basic Education means different things for different countries. In Tanzania, it implies conveying appropriate knowledge and skills to both young people and adults within the context of African sexualism. Ihebereme and Maduewesi (2007) conceived universal basic education as the most important solution in the chain of efforts to make every Nigerian citizen literate. It also enhances the status and quality of life for all Nigerians. Presently, there is paucity of Teachers and Counsellors when compared with large class size. This makes teaching and learning burdensome. The Federal Government has trained about forty thousand teachers with many Counsellors in preparation for the scheme.

Although, the Nigerian philosophy of Education (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004) clearly spelt out the Objectives of Primary and Junior Secondary Education but the implementation has not meet the stated Objectives as far as Guidance and Counselling is concerned.

For instance, the blueprint as Guidance and Counselling for Educational Institution in Nigeria. Aluede (2006) observed that the primary school child is in the process of transaction from home to school and is faced with adjustment problems and therefore needs to be follow up such a child with adequate Guidance and Counselling.

The educators and executors of Universal Basic Education whose children attend the private schools may not make the programme really work. The Universal Basic Education as envisaged will commence with a period for nine (9) years of compulsory schooling. This is because primary Education alone cannot adequately prepare the child to survive in the world of prevalent fast technological development. It seems plausible that many states are yet to recognize and appreciate the centrality of professional development of Counsellors in the Universal Basic Education reform programme. Alongside, majority of states keep funds meant for Counsellors training unutilized, despite repeated reminders by the commission.

The law of diminishing productivity is an economic law stating that if one input in the production of a commodity is increased while all other inputs are held fixed, a point will eventually be reached at which additions of the input yield progressively smaller, or diminishing increases in output. This law is most important when we look at what is happening in the education sector. Some teachers for example, continue year after year to teach a particular class with the same scheme of work; time will come when the teacher rather than increasing in his/her knowledge of the subject he/she will be retrogressing in knowledge especially if the curriculum of the subject is changed.

Nature and Characteristics of Universal Basic Education

The introduction of Universal Basic Education is part of the global initiatives to achieve Education For All (EFA) in 2015 and to reduce the problem of illiteracy and ignorance in Nigerian society to the barest level. In response to the global initiatives to achieve Education For All, the Federal Government launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999. Prior to this, the government of General Olusegun Obasanjo had launched a Universal Primary Education in 1976 in what Labo-Popoola, Bello and Atanda (2009) claimed to be the government's attempt to make "universalization of the primary education a national project." The programme, as claimed by Aluede (2006) was abandoned mid-way. The introduction of Universal Basic Education came at a time when the world was in need of efforts to tackle the problems of illiteracy, ignorance and diseases.

In the context of Nigeria, universal basic education comprises early childhood education, six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary school education. Then there is also the non-formal programme which is set to take care of those who dropped out of school. According to Obanya (2004), the target clientele (children, adolescents, youth and adults) are those whose basic learning needs can be met in order to effect positive changes in the society. Thus, it incorporates formal, non-formal and informal programmes to achieve Education For All.

Basic education in this respect, involves the provision of infrastructure, continuous and sustainable in-service training for teachers and giving prominence to skills acquisition in primary and secondary education (Tahir, 2008). Further to this explanation, Tahir contends that in Nigeria, Universal Basic Education is designed to ensure free access to education, reduce the rate of dropout to the minimum, make education relevant to the needs of learners and make education a lifelong enterprise. In Nigeria, this notion as represented by Tahir is a mere paper work since its implementation has been dwarfed by Nigerian leaders' ineptitude.

According to Tahir (2008), the cardinal concerns of Universal Basic Education are deeply rooted in how to meet the basic learning needs of children, adolescents, youth and adults. It is hoped that meeting these basic learning needs will translate to meeting the needs of the society. However, the beneficiaries of the programme are not homogenous, hence, each beneficiary is expected to achieve its basic needs through the Universal Basic Education programme. Thus, Universal Basic Education programme emphasises 'education' rather than schooling and this has been the view of Obanya (2004), who says that the curriculum of Universal Basic Education goes beyond the famous 'three Rs'. As he aptly puts it, "it is determined by the basic survival needs of the beneficiary". In other words, it has to do with the all-round development of the child. It is a life-long learning programme aiming at improving the literacy level of the children and adults by 2015. In Obanya's (2004) view, the emphasis is on literacy, basic needs and continuing education, that is education in its totality. Following the objectives of UBE in Nigeria as noted below:

- Developing in the entire citizenry strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its rigorous promotion.
- The provision of free, universal basic education for Nigerian child of school going age.
- Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency).
- Catering for young persons who for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling as well as other out of school children, adolescence, through approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and life skills as well as the ethical moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

With the UBE Act of 2004, three areas are specifically designated for the programme, these are; (a) formal basic education encompassing the first 9 years of schooling (primary and junior secondary education) for all children, (b) nomadic education for school age children of pastoral and migrant fishermen, and (c) literacy and non-formal education for out-of-school children, illiterate adults, street children and disabled groups.

Nigeria has the primary aim of achieving a 100 percent enrolment rate in primary school. As part of this primary objective, Nigeria's ultimate goal in her subscription to the goals of Education For All (EFA) is also to improve the quality of life of the individuals within the society in order to achieve sustainable human development (Federal Republic of

Nigeria, 2004). However, attitudes of government officials, parents and the community members have made the implementation of the programme a mirage. Governments hold back fund and refuse to enforce laws that guide the implementation of the programme, parents refuse to support governments in their efforts while communities are not ready to assist governments in the area of infrastructure (Obanya, 2004).

The Problems of UBE in Nigeria

- **Inadequate Funding:** The funding from the government is not enough to cater for the increasing population of children that need basic education. Dilapidated classrooms, insufficient teaching aids and the likes tell the tale of insufficient funding.
- **Corruption:** There are corrupt officials that embezzle the funds allocated to the progress of the scheme. This is another major problem of the UBE scheme.
- **Low Educational Quality/Standard:** The standard of education in this scheme is very low. Children that acquire Universal Basic Education cannot compete favourably with their counterparts from other parts of the world.
- **Ignorance:** Despite the rising level of literacy, some parents still feel that their young children don't need education. They either send them to the farms, to hawk or to learn a trade. This happens especially to the females.
- **Insecurity:** The current state of insecurity in the country keeps a lot of children away from the school, in the safety of their homes.
- **Religious Belief:** Some religious fanatics believe that western education makes their children especially the females morally corrupt. They bluntly refuse to send their children to school.

The Concept of Quality Education

The word quality as saw by various individuals is diverse relying upon the specific circumstance and conditions. The teacher uses work instructions, methods, and tools to create the product we call learning, just like a factory worker. If the product that produced (learning) has problems or defects (i.e. learning is not occurring as expected) then the teacher must change their work instructions, methods, or tools in order to decrease the defect rate and increase the quality of the product. Teaching is to a school as working is to a factory.

Enahwo (2004) alludes to quality as an outflow of standard in training conveyance that can be accomplished, though, Maduagwu (2000) considers quality as an item or administration that fits the reason, while Edem (2003) respects it in connection to instruction conveyance as that which is pertinent and adjusted to the changing needs of the universal public, and could be surmised that quality is vital and versatile marvels that concurs with changes and needs. Bernard (1999) sees quality in training conveyance as all-compassing when he says "in all part of the educate and its encompassing instructive group, the privileges of the entire youngster and all kids, to survival, security, improvement and investment be at the middle. This implies the attention is on realizing which reinforces the limits of youngsters to act continuously without anyone else benefit however the obtaining of pertinent information, valuable abilities and fitting state of intelligence. However UNICEF (2000) alluded to quality training conveyance as follows:

- Learners who are sound, very much sustained and organized to acquire an interest and learn and bolstered in learning by their families with groups.
- Environment that are sound, sheltered, defensive and sex delicate and give sufficient assets and offices.

- Context that is reflect in pertinent educational module and materials for the procurement of essential aptitudes, particularly in the zones of proficiency, numeracy and abilities forever and learning in such regions, sex, wellbeing, sustenance, HIV/AIDS anticipation and peace.
- Process through which prepared educators utilize focus instructing approaches in all around oversight classrooms and schools and apt appraisal to encourage learning and lessens inconsistencies.
- Outcomes that incorporate learning, aptitudes and demeanours and are connected to national objectives for training and positive interest in the public eye.

Quality in instruction conveyance involves how lessons are conveyed, the instructive offices are overseen, stores are sourced and the whole school condition in which training takes place are composed. In a comparable vein, Ocho (2005) sees quality in training conveyance as the height of instruction advance as an arrangement of deliberately characterized by desire of practices judged, as sufficient by segment approved and as a posting by specialists least topic substance to be shrouded in a recommended course of concentrate together with different elements as a duration of time materials utilized and the condition for utilizing them. Quality training conveyance in secondary school will deliver quality students, quality learning condition, quality substance, quality process, quality out-comes because of value programs that bring the success of objectives with goal of instruction to a standard satisfaction.

In another development, Quality education is a crucial tool for improving the prospects of higher income levels for individuals, and for the economic growth of nations. Goal 4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is focused on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all. However, in low and middle-income countries like Nigeria, many children do not have access to quality education. This blog looks at how Nigeria can make better education a reality and achieve SDG 4.

Dilapidated structures, overcrowding and lack of adequate furniture are common features of public schools in Nigeria. LEA Primary School City Gate in Abuja is no exception. The school has 360 students, a third being Internally Displaced Persons. Classes are overcrowded and lack adequate furniture to accommodate the children. In one of the classes, 87 students share 8 tables and chairs. This forces students to take lessons sitting on the bare floor or on window sills.

LEA Primary School City Gate is only one of many examples of why Nigeria's quality of education ranked 125th out of 137 countries on the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index in 2016. Nigeria currently has the highest number of out-of-school-children in the world of primary school age. Significant deficiencies exist even among those who attend school as they lack grade-level competencies. For instance, only 70.9 % of men and 59.3 % of women between the ages of 15 and 24 that have completed primary school in Nigeria are literate.

Barriers to Quality Education

No doubt, Nigeria experienced significant progress in expanding access to school under the Millennium development goals (MDGs) and the domestic Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme. However, this expansion has not resulted in improved learning. The flat learning curve in Nigeria is proof that getting children to school does not automatically translate to frequent attendance, grade progression, effective classroom governance, and more importantly, learning. Additionally, Nigeria faces challenges in ensuring equitable education and learning outcomes across gender, ethnic and regional lines.

The country's quality of education is very unlikely to experience significant progress because of several factors that hinder improvement. Teacher absence, student nonattendance and irrelevant and culturally unresponsive curricula are some of the reasons. But also, poor pedagogical content knowledge, dilapidated structures, insecurity (specifically, the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast region of the country) and inadequate funding are issues that need to be addressed.

Factors that influences quality education in Nigeria

- Teachers qualification

Not surprisingly, teachers are the main players when it comes to impacting on a child's education. It has been demonstrated that teacher quality affects a child's education by as much as 70%. This means that not only does the teacher have to be academically sound, they should be trained in education, hence, passing on their knowledge and they should ideally be motivated individuals with a passion for the occupation.

Recently with the news of the 22,000 sacked teachers in Kaduna state, it's evident that a lot of teachers in Nigeria aren't equipped with the literacy skills required to stand in front of a classroom, let alone training in education or sometimes not even a complete university degree. One key reason why this happens is because most qualified people shy away from the teaching profession. Teachers in Nigeria are not highly regarded due to low salaries (sometimes below minimal wage) and working conditions that they are usually subjected to. It then becomes difficult to find a truly qualified person who is motivated enough to take on this responsibility of teaching.

Understandably, most people would say that lack of funding is one of the most serious hindrances to the Nigerian Education sector. Even though public data shows that very minimal funds have consistently been budgeted towards Education over recent years, an even bigger problem may be the allocation of these scarce education resources. This is because even in some private schools where funds are more readily available, they still fail to invest in the right teaching aids and tools that will actually impact learning in this 21st century.

That being said, a lot more can still be done when it comes to subsidizing the cost of education for schools and for students. Overcrowded classrooms, lack of laboratory equipment or even basic writing materials in some rural schools hinder quality learning and resources must be invested into these schools for them to be successful. The truth is that a good education does not come cheap.

- Outdated Curriculum.

Most educators agree that the learning curricula in many of our schools are severely outdated. Some subjects simply do not reflect the times that we live in. For example, History (in most secondary schools that teach the subject) focus more on International History than basic national history. Ask a Nigerian university student questions about the civil war, colonial era or even who was the third president of Nigeria and they would struggle to answer. Simply put, a high quality curriculum is one that meets the present needs of a society and equips the student for further life and work in that society. With the way the world is going, we definitely need a revised curriculum that scraps some less important areas and emphasizes skills like STEAM thinking, project based learning and other innovative areas.

- Grading and Evaluation Standards:

The evaluation standards in primary and secondary schools also need improvement and a shift of focus. Students would not feel compelled to cram for exams if they were rewarded instead for proving to have more practical knowledge of what they have been taught. A greater provision should be made in the overall evaluation to prove application of knowledge through hands-on individual or group projects. How else would we know for sure that each individual is actually developing the necessary skills being taught as opposed to cramming notes for an exam? Many school systems around the world are already having similar debates.

- Administrative systems

Of course, for all these strategies to come together, there needs to be a strong management procedure in place. The admin is meant to monitor and evaluate processes, enforce standards and relay appropriately to higher authorities for policy making. Standards should be treated not as a mere suggestion to be flaunted but a necessity to be adhered to as closely as possible. This would require frequent, thorough inspection, record keeping and reporting measures be put in place to track & measure progress and ensure adherence to standards. Others are:

- Teachers-students ratio:
- Budgetary allocation to education

The Concept of Diminishing Marginal Productivity

Diminishing returns, also called law of diminishing returns or principle of diminishing marginal productivity is an economic law stating that if one input in the production of a commodity is increased while all other inputs are held fixed, a point will eventually be reached at which additions of the input yield progressively smaller, or diminishing, increases in output.

In the classic example of the law, a farmer who owns a given acreage of land will find that a certain number of labourers will yield the maximum output per worker. If he should hire more workers, the combination of land and labour would be less efficient because the proportional increase in the overall output would be less than the expansion of the labour force. The output per worker would therefore fall. This rule holds in any process of production unless the technique of production also changes.

Early economists, neglecting the possibility of scientific and technical progress that would improve the means of production, used the law of diminishing returns to predict that as population expands in the world, output per head would fall, to the point where the level of misery would keep the population from increasing further. In stagnant economies, where techniques of production have not changed for long periods, this effect is clearly seen. In progressive economies, on the other hand, technical advances have succeeded in more than offsetting this factor and in raising the standard of living in spite of rising populations.

Marginal Product/Productivity (MP)

Marginal productivity is the addition to total product as a result of employing an extra or additional unit of variable factor. It can be expressed as:

$$MP = \frac{\text{change in TP}}{\text{Change in variable factor}}$$

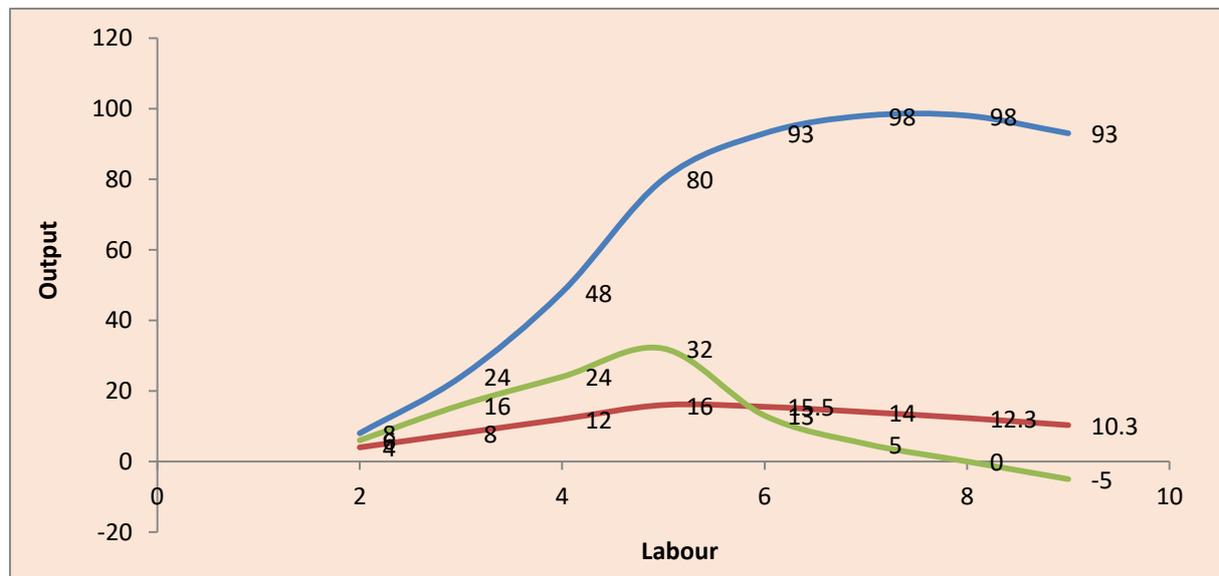
Total, Average and Marginal Productivity can be presented in a table as below.

Table 1: Total, Average and Marginal Productivity

| No. of Labour | Total Product | Average Product | Marginal Product |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 2 | - |
| 2 | 8 | 4 | 6 |
| 3 | 24 | 8 | 16 |
| 4 | 48 | 12 | 24 |
| 5 | 80 | 16 | 32 |
| 6 | 93 | 15.5 | 13 |
| 7 | 98 | 14 | 5 |
| 8 | 98 | 12.3 | 0 |
| 9 | 93 | 10.3 | -5 |

The relationship between Total Product, Average Product and Marginal Product can be represented in a graph as shown below.

Figure 1: Graphical illustration of total, average and marginal productivity



Application of Marginal Productivity Law to the Development of Basic Education in Nigeria

Like a man who is thirsty of water, takes sachets of pure water for instance, at the first sachet, the man will finish it without removing it from his mouth but at the second sachet, he will drink and remove it from his mouth and still finish it but at the third sachet, the man will struggle to finish it but he will not be able to finish it.

In the same vein, at the introduction of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria in 1999, Nigeria as a nation was passionate and very thirsty in accomplishing the objectives of UBE in the nation and to some degree success was achieved. According to Tahir (2008) in his position and explanation, Universal Basic Education in this respect, involves the provision of infrastructure, continuous and sustainable in-service training for teachers and giving prominence to skills acquisition in primary and secondary education. Further to this explanation, Tahir contends that in Nigeria, Universal Basic Education is designed to ensure

free access to education, reduce the rate of dropout to the minimum, make education relevant to the needs of learners and make education a lifelong enterprise. This to him was very good and if followed up in line with the objectives of UBE as stated above will yield positive result in the Nigerian educational system.

For example, in the Northern part of Nigeria, almost two-thirds of students were functionally illiterate. The states of Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina, Kano, Sokoto, (Benue and Kwara) have shown commitment to improving their education systems, but they face severe challenges including high poverty levels, low enrollment, gender disparities, poor quality and relevance, poor infrastructure and learning conditions. In order to combat these menace, the Global Partnership for Education Secretariat approved grants totalling nearly US\$2.4 million to support education sector analysis and planning, as well as education program development in the north. Under a GPE grant, Kano State in Nigeria started the disbursement of N1.5 billion in scholarship to 34,698 schoolgirls in the state to improve access to quality education which also help to improve the literacy level in the state (Okonkwo & AmakaObineli, 2013).

The GPE grant of US\$100 million was to support Nigeria Partnership for Education Project (NIPEP). The project primarily focuses on supporting the five states mentioned earlier in the implementation of their basic education objectives. This was in line with the GPE main components:

- Improving the effectiveness of schools and learning outcomes by providing grants to support school improvement plans and teacher professional development.
- Supporting the inclusion of girls in basic education and promoting gender equality through providing cash transfers to encourage girls' participation, scholarships for women to attend colleges of education, capacity-building and operational support on issues affecting girls' retention and gender sensitivity.
- Supporting robust monitoring and evaluation, regularizing the annual assessments of student learning, and financing impact evaluations of school improvement grants and girls' scholarship programs.

As at 2009 ten (10) years later, basic education in these northern states has improved significantly with:

- High enrolment rate
- Reduction in the illiteracy rate.
- Reduction in dropout rate among others

All these efforts were put in place in order to meet up with the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals are eight goals that all 191 UN member states have agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. The United Nations Millennium Declaration signed in September 2000 commits world leaders to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women. The MDGs are derived from this Declaration, and all have specific targets and indicators.

The Eight Millennium Development Goals are:

- to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- to achieve universal primary education
- to promote gender equality and empower women
- to reduce child mortality
- to improve maternal health

- to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- to ensure environmental sustainability; and
- to develop a global partnership for development.

Specifically, Goal 2. aim at achieving universal primary/basic education with the target 3. to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary/basic schooling to achieve:

- Literacy rates of 15-24 years old, both sexes, percentage
- Literacy rates of 15-24 years old, men, percentage
- Literacy rates of 15-24 years old, women, percentage
- Net enrolment ratio in primary education, both sexes
- Net enrolment ratio in primary education, boys
- Net enrolment ratio in primary education, girls
- Percentage of pupils starting grade 1 reaching grade 5, both sexes
- Percentage of pupils starting grade 1 reaching grade 5, boys
- Percentage of pupils starting grade 1 reaching grade 5, girls
- Primary completion rate, both sexes
- Primary completion rate, boys
- Primary completion rate, girls.

However, rather working toward achieving these targets by year 2015, instead from 2013 till date there was an increasing level of illiteracy in these states somehow due to:

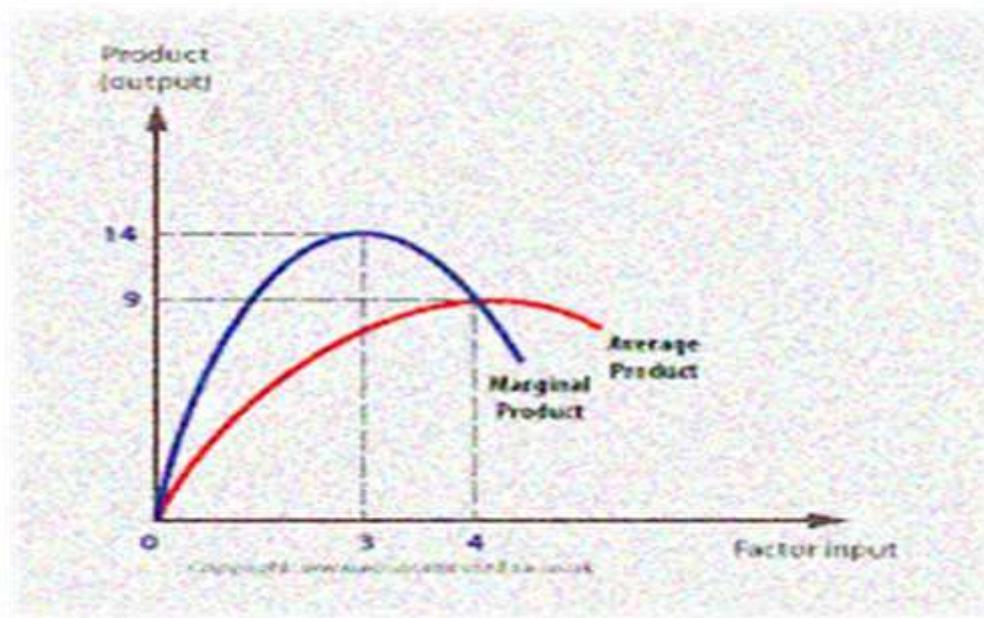
- High poverty rate
- Boko haram insurgency
- Herdsmen’s related activities
- Economic meltdown
- Bad governance among others

With these indices, no doubt the law of marginal productivity was brought to bear on the basic education in these northern states. Assuming one factor is fixed, the addition of extra workers will result in increasing returns followed eventually by diminishing returns.

Table 2: An assumed yearly enrolment from 2011-2019 to illustrate the law of diminishing marginal productivity

| Years | S/No | Total students | Average students | Marginal students |
|-------|------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 2011 | 1 | 6 | 6 | - |
| 2012 | 2 | 16 | 8 | 10 |
| 2013 | 3 | 28 | 14 | 12 |
| 2014 | 4 | 42 | 21 | 14 |
| 2015 | 5 | 56 | 28 | 14 |
| 2016 | 6 | 66 | 33 | 10 |
| 2017 | 7 | 69 | 34.5 | 3 |
| 2018 | 8 | 70 | 35 | 3 |
| 2019 | 9 | 69 | 34.5 | -1 |

Figure 2: graphical enrolment of students and the law of diminishing productivity



What happens to productivity?

Marginal productivity in basic education in these states was relatively low in 2011 and 2012. However, marginal productivity rises quickly as in 2013 to 2015 and contributed more successes and achievement both on the enrolment rate, teacher-pupils ratio, budgetary etc. than the previous two years. Eventually, marginal productivity begins to decline from 2016 and was at worst situation in 2019 when marginal productivity was negative.

The Way Forward

The thirst and propensity that drove Nigeria to embark on the journey of Universal Basic Education as the short-cut to achieve Education For All by 2015 according to Millennium Development Goals can be rejuvenated or resuscitated as follows:

- Recruitment of qualified teachers;
- Adequate facilities to accommodate the pupils;
- Sticking to the approved teacher-pupils ratio;
- Budgetary allocation and proper funding: the government should increase allocation to the scheme so that the quality of education is improved through modern infrastructure and teaching aids;
- Public Sensitization: The public should be regularly sensitized on the need for basic education. They should be made to understand that education enables individuals to make better and more calculated decisions, bringing progress to their family and to the nation at large;
- Provision of in-service training and academic upgrading for teacher: Teachers under this scheme should be allowed to constantly update themselves in their respective fields. Workshops should be organized regularly for teachers on the best ways to teach the children; and
- Diversion of fund should be made capital offense: Embezzlement of UBE funds should be thoroughly investigated and erring officials brought to book. The proper mode of punishment should be given to such people.

CONCLUSION

The concept of the universal basic education may not be a new idea totally. From all indications, the Universal Education can be regarded as an offshoot of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme, which was launched in the country in 1976 and brought into reality in 1999. As usual with Nigeria, this scheme was abandoned mid-way (Aluede, 2006). The fact that the scheme—UPE had something to offer perhaps led to the re-introduction of the programme in another name and concept known as Universal Basic Education in 1999. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a policy reform measure of the Federal Government of Nigeria, aimed at rectifying distortions in the basic education. UBE is conceived to embrace formal education up to age 15, as well as adult and non-formal education including education of the marginalized groups within the Nigerian society.

The National Policy on Education, 2004 section 3 defines Basic Education as a type of education comprising 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary school. The policy stipulates that the education shall be free and compulsory. This scheme shall include adult and non-formal educational programmes at primary and junior secondary school levels for both adults and out-of school youths. The UBE has three main components universal, basic and education. Universal here means the programme is for every one irrespective of tribe, culture or race and class (Aluede, 2006; Eddy & Akpan, 2009). The term basic depicts that which is a fundamental or essential thing that must be given or had. It is on this factor that every other thing rests on. Without it, nothing may be achieved. It is the root for acquisition of any knowledge (Eddy & Akpan, 2009). Hence, UBE can be seen as that type of education that every individual must have. It should not be a privilege but a right and it should be the sum total of an individual's experience.

Amidst all these egalitarian steps and move, the programme only recorded its successes and achievements in the early years that it started but like the UPE it reached its peak before marginal productivity's law was set in. Presently, UBE programme in Nigeria is below the average productivity that is, the programme is beginning to have negative successes and achievements in the country.

Suggestions

The following suggestions if adhere to will help improve the quality and maintain an upward productivity in education:

- Provision of in-service training and academic upgrading for teacher.
- Teachers should not be allowed to become a particular class teacher, teaching all the subjects in that class.
- There should be replacement of teachers whenever some teachers have been transferred.
- Inspectors and supervisor should not allow school principals to influence them whenever they are doing their primary responsibility.
- Educational facilities should be kept in good condition to aid active or effective teaching and learning.

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