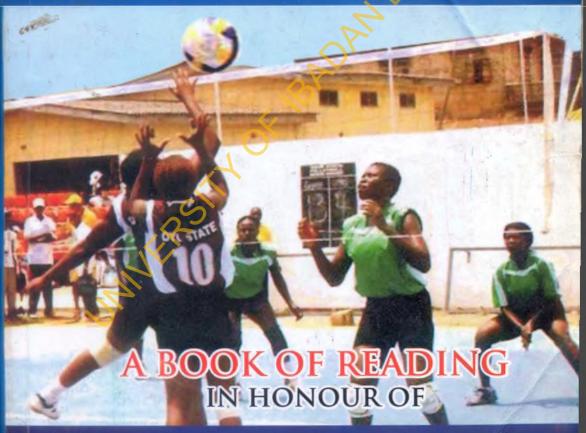
**OPTIMAL HEALTH PERFORMANCE:** 

# THE BASIS OF HUMAN MOVEMENT EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY



PROFESSOR VERONICA CHINYELUM IGBANUGO

### OPTIMAL HEALTH PERFORMANCE: THE BASIS OF HUMAN MOVEMENT EDUCATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

# A BOOK OF READING IN HONOUR OF PROFESSOR VERONICA CHINYELUM IGBANUGO

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# Provision and Management of Health Facilities and Services in Primary Schools: A Pre-Requisite for Effective Universal Basic Education in Nigeria

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#### Abstract

Basic education provides a foundation for acquisition of further knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies in future endeavour. It is particularly crucial in Nigeria as it may be the only opportunity for many children to have access to formal education. The present Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme was designed to cover Primary school and Junior Secondary School. The Primary school education is crucial to the success of UBE scheme. The paper examined primary school education and found that the provision of health facilities and services is grossly inadequate. Meanwhile, poor school health environment will produce unhealthy staff and pupils and such situation will invariably hamper the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Therefore the paper suggested the strategies for the provision and management of health facilities and services in Nigerian Primary schools to enhance the effectiveness of UBE scheme.

#### Introduction

Children of primary school ages are still in the process of growth and development. This process must be guided to ensure that the desired citizens for nations building are produced in schools because children of today are the leaders of tomorrow.

Effective growth and development is anchored on conducive environment. The quality of the environment in formal school settings greatly influences the physical, emotional and intellectual development of the child. Health and Education are conditions necessary for the all-round development of a child. The relationship between health and education is that of interdependence because for an individual to be educable he must first be healthy. On the other hand, a person is healthy to the extent that the individual is educated.

Nigeria being a developing country is understandably anxious to develop politically, economically, socially and technologically in order to join the comity of developed nations of the world. Health and functional education ensure acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, abilities, competences and capability for work which are necessary for nation building. Udoh and Ajala (1988) described health as a quality of life which results from ones total functioning within his environment. They opined that how effective an individual is determines his quality of life. Education ensures acquisition of relevant knowledge, skill and attitudes to live effectively and efficiently. Oyekan (2000) noted that the state of health and education of citizenry is a critical factor which influence the productive and prosperity of a nation. Therefore Nigeria's quest for greatness calls for the production of healthy citizens through education.

The school is a place where learning the process of education takes place. There is a strong relationship between the health of the learners and his learning capacity. Therefore no effective learning can take place in any formal school setting without the integration of health facilities and services into total educational programme of the school.

#### Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme

The agitation for Universal Primary Education (UPE) dated back to 1923 when three Lagos candidates for legislative council campaigned for compulsory education throughout the country. Also in 1939 the Nigerian Youth Movement demanded that the Government should make elementary education progressively free and compulsory (Mark, 1981). The agitation continues to re-echo by different groups in 1943, 1946 and 1949.

According to Mark (1981) the first hint of Universal Primary Education (UPE) was contained in a 1951 Action Group Policy which called for free and compulsory education for all eight of existing primary education course. This was followed by the launching of UPE scheme on the 17th January 1955 by the then Premier of Western Region in person of Obafemi Awolowo. The Eastern Region of Nigeria also started her own free education scheme in 1957. The Northern region at that time was pre-occupied with development of rural education and promotion of adult literacy. The Universal Basic

Education (UBE) nationwide was launched on the 12th September 1976 by the then Head of State in person of General Olusegun Obasanjo. Concidently the present UBE scheme was launched by the same person as the President of Federal Republic of Nigeria at Sokoto on the 30th September 1999.

Unlike the UPE which provided for six years of primary education only. The UBE provides for a nine year universal, free and compulsory education covering six years of primary school and three years of junior secondary school. The scheme is all-encompassing in that it includes rural, urban, slum and nomadic populations, as well as physically challenged, street children and adults with special needs (Ojewole, 2008).

Children occupy a sizeable proportion National Population Commission (NPC) in 1991 estimated that there are about 42 million children under age 15. This figure is likely to increase to 109 million by 2021 with the present birth rate (Okanlawon, 2000). Few of these children are in school, of this few many will end their schooling at primary school level, apart from those who will drop out before completion. Nigeria as a developing country has low literacy level as a result of poor school enrolment, retention and completion. In order to address the problem, Federal Government of Nigeria (2000) has set the goals of UBE as follows:

(i) Develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.

(ii) Produce free Universal Basic Education for every child of schoolgoing age.

(iii) Reduce drastically the increase of drop-out from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency.

(iv) Cater for school drop-outs and out-of-school children and adolescents through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.

(v) Ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy numeracy, manipulative and life skills (as well as the ethical, moral and civic values) needed for laying a solid foundation for the life-long learning. Olikoye (1990) asserted that many children ages 6-15 die from many episodes of ill-health such as malaria fever, leg ulcer, accident, cough, anaemia and problems of adolescent. The problem can be competently tackled by a well designed and implemented school health services. Therefore, Universal Basic Education presents an ideal situation in which to begin to addressing the problem of poor health status of school age children.

The UBE probably came at the nick of time to give opportunity for children who hitherto have been alienated from benefiting from formal educational activities by the ignorance and poverty of their parents. The UBE has implication for the expansion of educational facilities because of the envisaged increase in pupils enrolment. Government may not necessarily build new schools but provision must be made for more classrooms with additional toilets, water supply, waste disposal facilities and equipment.

#### Primary School Education

Primary school education is the foundation on which other levels of education is built. It is described as the education given in an institution for children aged normally 6 to 11<sup>+</sup>. This level of education is so important that it can make or mar the success of the whole system of education. The objectives of primary school education as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) are as follows:

- (i) The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively.
- (ii) The laying of a sound basis for reflective thinking.
- (iii) Citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
- (iv) Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes.
- (v) Developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment.
- (vi) Giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him/her to function effectively in the society within the limits of his/her capacity.
- (vii) Providing basic tool for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and craft of the locality.

The whole gamut of activities that take place in primary schools according to the policy include inculcation of literacy and numeracy, the study of science, the study of social norms and values of the total community and of the country as a whole through civics and social studies, the giving of health and physical education, moral and religious education, the encouragement of aesthetic, creative and musical activities, the teaching of local crafts and domestic science and agricultural science: These activities as contained in the curriculum are meant to assist the child in the process of growth and development as well as enable him/her to face challenges of political instability, unemployment, food scarcity poverty, diseases and hazardous should however be realised that implementation of the curricular activities demand adequate provision of classrooms, educational services, health facilities and services and trained personnel to manage the whole process.

Status of Health Facilities and Services in Nigerian Primary Schools
The provision of health facilities in schools is meant to encourage the
pupils to practice good environmental health habit. A survey of most
primary schools in Nigerian showed that health facilities and services
are not adequate in some, and lacking in others.

Lawal and Gbadamosi (2001) found that primary schools in Osun State lack educational services such as laboratory facilities, health schemes, library facilities and toilet facilities among others. Sanusi and Igbanugo (2001) quoting Akpa and Igbinogbenu (1987) described health facilities in schools as non-existent and where they are available the scope is limited to the presence of First Aid boxes that do not contain much. Kolawole and Arikpo (2000) found out that First Aid services, latrines and recreational facilities are not adequate in primary schools in Oyo, Ogun and Osun States.

In a research conducted by Universal Basic Education Office (2001) it was found that only 201 (16.97%) out of 1184 primary schools sampled for the study had good sources of water supply (pipe borne and borehole), 468 (39.52%) had no games/sports facilities 696 (58.8%) had recreational facilities that were not useable and 510(43.07% of the schools had no toilet facilities.

In many primary schools, facilities for waste disposal like dustbins, toilet and simple incinerators are not provided consequent upon which there is indiscriminate dumping of refuse. Teachers and pupils alike resort to unhygienic method of defaecating in bushes. In many schools where the facilities are provided teachers pay a passing attention to how they are utilized. Also they take little or no interest in the personal health habits of the pupils.

Provision and Management of Health Facilities and Services

The health facilities that should be provided in an ideal primary school include sewage disposal, refuse disposal, portable water, well ventilated classroom with vector control, electricity and fire control measures services. Sanusi and Igbanugo (2001) documented that an ideal school should have such health services as health appraisal service, health personnel, emergency health service, referral health service and preventive and control measures for communicable diseases.

Having highlighted what heath facilities and services are. It is just good in the concluding part of this paper to suggest strategies for ensuring the provision and management of these facilities and services with a view to setting out the roles expected of the stake holders in education.

Strategies for Ensuring the Provision of Health Facilities in School

The Ministries of Education and Health are important stakeholders in education at Primary School level therefore they have roles to play in this regard. The Ministry of education though has been saddled with the responsibility of making education policy. The roles should be extended to include documentation and dissemination of health related laws and conditions for healthful schools living to proprietors, administrators, teachers and pupils as well. The Ministry through its inspectorate division should ensure strict adherence to the provisions. The Ministry of Health should not limit its activities to hospital only, health personnel of the ministry should ensure inspection of healthful school environment and conduct health examinations of the school

pupils.

The Non-governmental Organization (NGO) whose focus is on the health of the school age child should in addition to their seminars, symposia and lectures provide health facilities and services. This step will be more effective to achieving their goal of safeguarding the health of the school children.

The Education Trust Fund has been known for its efforts at providing classrooms and other educational services in schools. The appeal now is that the Agency should make the provision of health facilities and services as part of its programme.

The parents can through the Parent Teacher Association mount pressure on school proprietors to provide essential facilities that could ensure the well being of their children while in school. They can also initiate development programme that could include provision of health facilities and services in school.

The mass-media should create awareness as to the problem of inadequate health facilities and services in schools. The focus of attention on the pressing health problems could spur the Government, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and philanthropist to provide these facilities and services in schools.

## Strategies for Ensuring Effective Management of Health Facilities and Services

Health education preparation of the school administrators and all teachers so as to identify and perform effectively their roles in school health management. School Administrators should ensure inspection and supervision of health conditions of school buildings, school environment and learners. The teacher should monitor the conditions of health of the pupils and environmental health of the school.

Health education should be taught as compulsory course in school, this is with a view to inculcating good health habit in the pupils. The health behaviour of the pupils can be regulated by giving reward to good health behaviours and punish the deviant behaviour.

Active participation of staff and pupils in the planning of School Health Programme is another strategy. In this way both assume the responsibilities of effective utilization and management of health facilities and service in the school.

#### Conclusion

Education, the process of imparting knowledge, attitudes and skills must take place in schools in order to ensure effective growth and total development of the child. Healthful school environment is crucial to the attainment of the nation's educational objectives. This is because the impact the school environment makes on the health of the teacher and the children determines to a large extent the effectiveness of teacher and education of the child. It therefore becomes imperative for Nigerian Government to provide healthful school environment alongside with better education for the children through its UBE scheme.

The UBE scheme was launched eleven years ago but its impact is yet to be felt. Educational facilities and services meant for its implementation at primary school level are not in place. No feasible provisions have been made for nomads, physically challenged and street children.

The past similar programmes did not go beyond their launching. In some, the implementation was marred by poor planning, over politicisation of education, poor funding, inadequate personnel and poor supply of educational facilities and services. In order not to allow the present UBE scheme to go the way others had gone, the pitfalls of the past must be avoided.

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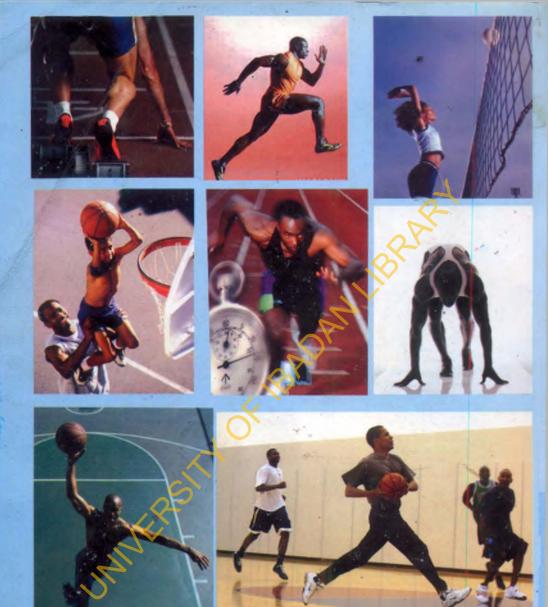
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