

## **FUNCTIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN NIGERIA: A PANACEA FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE)**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the place of local government councils and their relevance in the management of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in their areas of authorities. Universal access to education has been the prime target of Nigeria since the middle of the 1970s when the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme took off. Later on in 1999 the Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched. The local councils as the third tier in government have critical roles to perform in the management of UBE programmes as stipulated by Decree No 3 of 1991. It states inter alia "Decree No 3 of 1991 essentially marked the handover of primary school education to the local government. According to section 2 (1a) of the decree, one of the functions of a local government education authority is the management of primary schools in the local government area". It looked at the history of UBE and its objectives. These include, developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education, provision of free basic education for every Nigerian child, reducing drastically the incidence of school drop-outs, and ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literary, numeracy, manipulation, communication and life skills. Unfortunately, as laudable as this programmes is, a major problem of implementation was observed. Obanya (2000) therefore suggested the devolution of powers to state and local governments in keeping with the constitution as essential for the achievement of any sustained impetus in the realization of the objectives of UBE. The critical areas that would guarantee sustainable management include appropriate harnessing of human resources, management of learners, financial resource management, community relations management and management of available facilities. It also examines the institutions involved which include; federal ministry of education, state ministries of education and the local education authorities. Intervention strategies for making local council functional include; possessing direct access to recipients and parents, close supervision, availability of teachers within the catchment areas and useful and effective community-school relationships were also discussed. The paper concluded by suggesting the way forward as; UBE schools should be under the control of local councils, special funds provided, strategic planning at that level enhanced and that inspectorate division staff should be qualified.

A repositioning of the level government education departments remains the only alternative to the success of UBE in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** UBE, Local Government Council, Nigerian Constitution, Management.