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## Centennial Landmarks in the Development of Basic Education in Nigeria

Onoguere, Ejiroghene Ohio

Department of Educational Foundations and Management  
Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria

### Abstract:

*The first level of education known as the primary school education with the duration of six years programme was changed in 1992 by the Federal Government due to education reforms based on expansion on duration of programme and its content. For instance the primary school education (six- year programme) was merged with junior secondary school (first three years in secondary school ) to form a nine- year programme for learners. Presently, the nine- year programme is the basic education level which is otherwise known as the first level of education in the Nigerian context. Primary school education started growing in Nigeria from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the activities of the Christian missionaries. This paper x- rays landmarks in the development of primary/ basic education during these periods: Christian missionary/ Colonial Administration and education before the amalgamation in 1914; Colonial Administration/ Christian missionary and education from 1914 to the 1940s; the Era of Self- governance and education from 1950 to the 1960s; the reconstruction era and education in the 1970s to 1980s and the Federal Government task of executing Education For All (E.F.A) goals from the 1990s till date.*

**Keywords:** Centennial Landmark, Development, Basic Education

### 1. Introduction

Basic education is the first level of education in Nigeria. In Nigeria, there are 374 ethno-linguistic and cultural groups living in varied vegetation belts from the rain forest of the south to the dry savannah of the north (Federal Ministry of Education & Youth Development 1993 and Remi-Doyen, 2012). Osokoya (2010) affirmed that the country, Nigeria, with the population of 180 million by the 2009 National Census came into being in January 1, 1914; gained her independence and became a Republic on October 1, 1960 and October 1, 1963 respectively. At and after independence, Bendel State Government (1978), Taiwo (1980), FMEYD (1993), Abiri (2010) and Osokoya (2010) affirmed that Nigeria was divided into three regions, namely: the Eastern Region, Northern Region and Western Region in 1946 while the fourth region, Mid-West, was created on August 9, 1963 as a result of the plebiscite conducted in July, a month earlier. The state creation began in Nigeria with the creation of twelve (12) states on May 27, 1967. There were the subsequent creations of more states in Nigeria, for instance nineteen (19) states with a Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) on February 3, 1976; twenty-one (21) states on September 27, 1987; thirty (30) states on August 27, 1991 and thirty-six (36) states on October 1, 1996.

The history of western education in Nigeria is traceable to the Christian missionary activities that spearheaded its implantation. Primary education started growing in Nigeria from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the activities of the Christian Missionaries. Before and after amalgamation, the colonial administration showed interest and supported missionary education through grant-in-aids and establishment of government (public) schools. Primary education had a boost during the period of self-governance in the 1950s and pre/post-war era reconstruction in the 1970s and 1980s respectively. Also, a major landmark in the development of basic education in Nigeria was in the 1990s in the effort to meet Education for All (E.F.A) commitment.

Adeyinka (1971), Fajana (1972), Fafunwa (1974), Nwangwu (1976), Awoniyi (1977), Ogunsola (1977), Taiwo (1980), Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite (1995), Lawal (2002), Osokoya (2002) and Abiri (2010) stated that the earliest (first) trace of western education in Nigeria, was the arrival of the Portuguese slave merchants in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This culminated to the introduction of rudiments of the Christian faith and schools but short-lived because of the slave trade which they saw as more profitable at that time. The second trace of the foundation of western education was ascribed to the Christian missions' activities. This was sequel to response to the invitation of some Yoruba immigrants who wanted missionaries to come and instruct them in Nigeria. The Wesleyan Methodist Society in company of Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman and Mr. & Mrs. William de Graft arrived on September 24, 1842. Also in 1842, precisely on the 19<sup>th</sup> December, the Church Missionary Society arrived in Badagry. In Badagry, the Wesleyan Methodist

Society built a mission house and a school named “Nursery of the Infant Church.” Missions like the Presbyterian Mission, Southern Baptist Convention, and Roman Catholic Mission among others followed suit (arrived and established missions/schools) in Nigeria.

Each of the missions was responsible for running of the schools purposely established for converts in terms of school curriculum, teachers’ salaries, codes of conduct, and finance among others for three decades (Fafunwa 1974, Nwangwu 1976, Taiwo 1980, Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite 1995, Osokoya 2002 and Abiri 2010). The colonial interest of the government on education was shown in 1872 and 1877 when it gave grant-in-aid to the three missions (the Church Missionary Society, Roman Catholic Mission and Wesleyan Methodist Society) involved in educational activities in Lagos. This marked the beginning of the system of grant-in-aids to education which formed the major education financing policy of the colonial government and subsequently adopted by the government of the First Republic in Nigeria from 1960 to 1966. Early schools established by the missions were faced with chain of problems but the most serious one as affirmed by Taiwo (1980), Osokoya (2002) and Abiri (2010) was the intense (severe) rivalry due to a wide variety of matters like converts, territory and patronage. Following the separation of Lagos colony from Gold Coast (now Ghana) in January, 1886, a new education ordinance was enacted on the 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1887.

The 1887 Education Ordinance was tagged by scholars like Taiwo (1980), Ogunsola (1977) and Osokoya (2002) as the “First Education Ordinance for Nigeria” which promoted formal basic education in Lagos Colony (Lagos Island, Ebute-Metta, Yaba, Badagry and Island of Palma and Lekke). In the provision of the 1887 Education Ordinance, Section No 5 and No 7 dealt with the issue of government lackadaisical attitude towards giving education to the people irrespective of individual’s birth, sex, religion, territory and family background; and severe discrimination by missions. This made the colonial government brace-up to open the first owned (public) primary school for Christians/ pagans and Muslims in Lagos in 1887 and 1889 respectively.

On December 27, 1899 the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria (Western, Eastern, Mid-Western Nigeria and the interior areas of Delta) were created while in 1906, the Colonial government merged the Colony of Lagos with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria until 1946 (Fafunwa 1974 and Taiwo 1980). By the year 1913, Fafunwa (1974) and Ogunsola (1977) opined that there were 150 primary schools (59 government owned primary schools and 91 mission primary schools) with 35,714 pupils’ enrolment in the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. In the Northern Protectorate, where Qur’an education was more prevalent, there were some 19,073 Qur’anic schools with an enrolment of 143,312 pupils spread all over the area. The establishment of primary education by the government and missions was at a slow pace in Northern Protectorate due to the lackadaisical attitude on education by the then (first) High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria (Sir. Fredrick Lugard), Director of Education for Northern Nigeria (Sir. Hanns Vischer) and most especially the resistance of the Emirs to the establishment of western formal education which they regarded as an imposition of another religion.

## **2. Christian Missionaries/ Colonial Administration and Education from 1914 to the 1940s**

At the time of amalgamation in 1914, there were five (5) major educational issues which according to Fafunwa (1974), Taiwo (1980), Kosemani & Okorosaye (1995) and Osokoya (2002) plagued the development of education in Nigeria for over six (6) decades: (i) the two different educational departments control and 2 different educational systems until 1929 and 1948 respectively (ii) the uneven distribution of schools and pupils between the Southern Nigeria and Northern Nigeria. For instance, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria with an estimated population of 9,000,000 had only 1,131 pupils while in the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria with an estimate of 7,858,689 had a pupils’ enrolment of 37,100 in primary school.(iii) the dual control of education by the missions and government (iv) the educational disparity between the Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria due to geographical, religious, and political reasons, and (v) the intensive rivalry among missions in the Southern Nigeria which led to the indiscriminate establishment of unviable schools which were called either “Mushroom Schools” or “Hedge Schools”.

Lord (Sir) Fredrick Lugard, the Governor-General of Nigeria (1914-1919) introduced some education reforms aimed at “education for good character and usefulness to individuals and the society at large” as enshrined in the draft adopted as an Education Ordinance No 50 on December 21, 1916 and Education Code on December 24, 1916 respectively. Both the Ordinance and Code covered the whole country (Fafunwa 1974, Taiwo 1980, Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite 1995 and Osokoya 2002). The aforementioned scholars affirmed that though the two (2) separate education departments were not merged, the education documents brought about an increase in financial participation in education by government; increase co-operation between government and the missions, and a measure of government control over education. Then in 1919, the 1916 Education Ordinance which was amended gave the government impetus to inspect all assisted / unassisted schools and to close down schools where necessary. This was a major achievement made by Sir. Hugh Clifford, Governor-General of Nigeria (1919-1925) and the two (2) Directors of Education: Sir Selwyn Grier (Southern Protectorate) and Sir. Urling Smith (Northern Protectorate) to improve the quality of education. So by 1922, there were 195 government and assisted primary schools with pupils’ enrolment of 28,000 while the total number of unassisted primary schools was 2,432 with 122,000 pupils.

Phelps-Stokes Commission therefore came out with strong recommendations for adapting education to the need of the various African communities. Scholars like Fajana (1972), Fafunwa (1974), Taiwo (1980), Nwangwu (1976), Ogunsola (1977), Itedjere (1995), Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite (1995), Osokoya (2002) and Abiri (2010) asserted that the Commission’s recommendations influenced all educational policies (Ordinances/ Codes) introduced by the colonial government for some decades while FME (2004) gave an affirmative period that: “the memorandum guided Nigerian educational development from 1925 to independence in 1960”. On May 26, 1926, two separate educational policies namely: Education Ordinance (Colony and Southern Provinces) No 15 and its Regulations, and the Education Ordinance (Northern Provinces) No 14 were enacted. The reasons adduced for the two (2) different educational (policies) documents were: the two groups of provinces (South and North) practised two different systems with different

educational departments. Besides, the major provider of education in the former provinces was the Christian missions while the latter province was spearheaded by the government. In addition, the ordinance/ code checked the opening of schools and the closing of existing ones, as a step towards checking the growth of “mushroom/ hedge schools” and to improve the quality of the teachers and teaching among others. For instance, Fafunwa (1974) noted that the number of unassisted primary schools reduced from 3,578 in 1926 to 2,432 in 1929 but the population was not affected for in assisted and unassisted primary schools, pupils’ enrolment increased from 138,000 in 1926 to 139,000 in 1929. By 1929, Taiwo (1980) stated that the government total expenditure and grant-in-aid stood at £228,624 and £80,047 respectively.

The unification of the two (2) separate provincial educational departments was achieved on July 17, 1929 with the appointment of Mr. Eric R. J. Hussey as the Director of Education for the whole country from 1929 to 1936 ( Fafunwa 1974, Taiwo 1980, Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite 1995, Osokoya 2002 and Abiri 2010). Despite the unification of the two educational departments, there was no common educational legislature for the entire country until the enactment of an Education Ordinance in 1948. Moreover, the provider of education in the south was the voluntary agencies while in the north, the government was responsible. The Hussey educational proposal titled Memorandum on Educational Policy in Nigeria of 1930 was accepted by the Colonial Office. This culminated to the introduction of a six –year primary education programme (which prior to this period, had been eight years duration) with the local language (vernacular) as the medium of instruction.

Despite the severe economic depression of the 1930s that affected all sectors, some of the Hussey’s reforms were achieved. In Southern Nigeria by 1937, as Ogunsola (1977) stated, there were 108 government primary schools, while in Northern Nigeria, there were 195 government primary schools with pupils’ enrolment of 12,183 and 9,130 respectively. Besides, the voluntary agencies had 206,427 pupils (assisted: 69,464 pupils/ unassisted: 136,963 pupils) in 3,125 (assisted: 339/ unassisted: 3,086) primary schools in the south. Also, by 1937 in Northern Nigeria the voluntary agencies established 344 primary schools with 11,139 pupils. This pointed to the fact that providers of education in the two areas were voluntary agencies in the Southern Nigeria and government in the Northern Nigeria respectively. In addition, religion had much impact on education implantation as well. The government total expenditure was £269,152 while grant-in-aid for schools was £108,263 between 1938 and 1939 as affirmed by Taiwo (1980).

According to Fafunwa (1974) and Taiwo (1980) the Director of Education, Mr R.A. Mac Davidson’s ten-year plan and the Memorandum on Education Policy in Nigeria, brought about an Education Ordinance that was enacted in 1948. It was the first policy document which covered the whole country. Prior to this time, Mr. E. G. Morris, the Director of Education who died while in office in May, 1943 masterminded the off-shoot of the 1948 Education Ordinance with his aborted 1942 Education Ordinance. This plan covered all levels and types of educational institutions. Its components were: finance, administration and control of education. Moreover, it also centred on delegation of power to Local Education Authority, and as well emphasized matters like language, adult education and Islamic/ Arabic Studies. Kosemani and Okorosaye-Orubite (1995) affirmed that though the ordinance covered the whole country, unfortunately it was not fully implemented because of the regionalization/ self-governance. See Table 1 in relation to financing of education:

Year(s)	Total Expenditure (£)	Grant-in-aid (£)
1942-1943	352,896	186,864
1943-1944	481,226	296,948
1944-1945	485,113	288,281
1945-1946	615,663	393,759
1946-1947	745,850	529,264
1947-1948	1,260,121	992,180
1948-1949	1,961,761	1,305,058
1949-1950	2,308,530	1,557,746

*Table 1: Government Expenditure/ Grant-in-aids, 1942-1950*  
*Source: Taiwo (1980)*

### 3. Era of Self –Governance and Education from 1950 to the 1960s

The era of self-governance in education in Nigeria witnessed traumatic expansion of primary school education (Fafunwa 1974, Taiwo 1980, Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite 1995, Osokoya 2002 and Abiri 2010). The regionalization introduced in 1946 by the Sir. Arthur Richard Constitution was strengthened by the 1951 Sir. John Macpherson Constitution which organized a democratic election in 1952. Each of the regional assemblies were empowered by the constitution to pass laws and provide social amenities like education, health, agriculture and among others that eventually prepared the stage for intensive political rivalry in their own area of jurisdiction.

In 1952, the Western Region, Leader, Government Business, Chief Obafemi Awolowo in his budget speech presented, education was one of priority area. Then in July of the same year, the Western Region Minister of Education, Chief. S. O. Awokoya presented to the Western House of Assembly a comprehensive proposal for the introduction of a free, universal and compulsory primary education scheme in the Western Region in 1955. Between 1952 and 1954, a preparatory master plan was fashioned and efforts were made to

solve envisaged problems like the apathy demonstrated by illiterate parents in sending their children to school especially females; the shortage of teachers, lack of funds to meet both capital and recurrent expenditure, among others. The master plan for the free Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme to meet the 1955 deadline included a massive teacher training programme; expansion of teacher training facilities, putting up of new school buildings (primary and post-primary) among others. Having been satisfied with the preparation, the Action Group (A.G.) led government of Western Region launched the non-paying fees Universal Primary Education Scheme on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1955. The impact of this scheme culminated to the establishment of more primary schools and pupils' enrolment increased as well in the Western Region. The impact of the scheme was very impressive and immediate as can be seen in the Table 2.

Year	* Number of Pry. Sch.	* % increase over the previous year	* Number of Pupils	* % increase over the previous year
1954	3,550	--	456,600	--
1955	6,407	44.5%	811,432	77.7%
1956	6,603	2.9%	908,022	10.6%
1957	6,628	--	982,755	8.2%
1958	6,670	--	1,037,755	5.2%
1959	6,518	--	1,080,303	3.9%

Table 2: Number of Primary Schools/ Pupils in Western Region (Nigeria), 1954-1959

Sources: Government of Western Nigeria (1959), in Taiwo (1980) and Oyan (2013)

According to Taiwo (1980) and Osokoya (2002) Lagos Area was included in the UPE scheme of the Western Region (Nigeria) but it was carved out of the region and made the federal capital of Nigeria by the 1954 Right. Honourable Oliver Lyttleton (also called Lord. Chandon) Constitution. Education in Lagos therefore became the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Education that sponsored its launching in January, 1957 but administered by the Lagos City Council. Hence Lagos, unlike the Western and Eastern Regions did not face financial difficulties. Finance (money) was available to built upon the existing sites while teachers were attracted to the urban life of Federal capital, Lagos. In 1955 and 1966, the number of primary schools, pupils' enrolment and teachers rose traumatically as could be observed because of the UPE scheme. See table 3.

Year	* Number of Primary Schools	* Pupils' Enrolment	* Number of Teachers
1956	96	50,182	1,646
1966	129	140,000	4,200

Table 3: Number of Primary School/ Pupils' Enrolment/ Teachers in Lagos, 1956-1966

Source: Taiwo (1980)

In the Eastern Region, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme was concretized with the enactment of Education Law, 1956 (Number 28 of 1956) but officially launched in February, 1957, two years after the introduction of the same programme in Western Region and Lagos (Taiwo 1980, Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite (1995) and Osokoya (2002). In the Eastern Region, number of primary schools increased from 59 in 1956 to 68 in 1957. There was a positive change in pupils' enrolment as well in 1956, for the 904,235 pupils increased to 1,209,167 in 1957 with 33.7%. Osokoya (2002) noted that in 1959 and 1960, there was increase in the number of primary schools established and pupils' enrolment due to the introduction of the UPE scheme by the Eastern Region government. See Table 4.



Year	* Number of Primary School	* Pupils' Enrolment	*% increase over the previous year
1955	52	742,542	--
1956	59	904,235	21.8
1957	68	1,209,167	33.7
1958	82	1,221,272	1.0
1959	89	1,378,403	12.9
1960	96	1,430,514	3.8

Table 4: Number of Primary Schools/ Pupils' Enrolment in Eastern Region, 1955—1960

Source: Digest of Statistics, Federal Ministry of Education in Osokoya (2002)

Taiwo (1980), Kosemani & Okorosaye Orubite (1995) and Osokoya (2002) stated that the Northern Region Government was concerned with the promotion of education in the rural areas and adult literacy programme than with UPE scheme. As observed the programme affected primary education, for it witnessed increase in the establishment of schools and pupils' enrolment from 1955 to 1960 (see the table 5).

Year	* Number of Primary School	* Pupils' Enrolment	*% increase over the previous year
1955	25	168,521	--
1956	27	185,484	10.1
1957	27	205,769	10.9
1958	31	230,000	11.8
1959	36	250,912	9.1
1960	41	282,949	12.7

Table 5: Number of Primary Schools/ Pupils' Enrolment in Northern Nigeria, 1955—1960

Source: Digest of Statistics Federal Ministry of Education in Osokoya, (2002)

The UPE scheme introduced by the Regions/ Federal Capital (Lagos) Governments in Nigeria during the era of self-determination in establishment of basic education witnessed traumatic increase in the number of schools and pupils' enrolment but was short-lived (Fafunwa 1974, Taiwo 1980, Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite 1995 and Osokoya 2002). The Western Region Government received the highest derivational revenue allocation from the federal government and expended 90 percent of it on the scheme yet failed after some years. The failure of the UPE scheme was adduced to set-backs like inadequate trained teachers coupled with inadequate personnel, facilities, statistic for planning among others.

Both the 1960 Banjo and the 1968 Taiwo Commissions reviewed the UPE scheme and education in general in the Western Region. The commissions condemned the high wastage rate and the falling standard of education brought by the scheme. In the Eastern Region, the UPE scheme was as well faced with the aforementioned set-backs which culminated to the Dike Commission in 1958. About the UPE scheme in the Eastern part of Nigeria, the 1958 Dike Commission recommended the abolition and subsequent modification of the scheme. The situation in the Northern Region was not better either which precipitated to the setting up of the Oldman Commission in February, 1961.

#### 4. Reconstruction Era and Education in the 1970s and 1980s

During the reconstruction era, Nigerians witnessed notable events such as the change of governments, creation of states, thirty (30) months civil war among others that affected the education sector (Fafunwa 1974, Nwangwu 1976, Taiwo 1980, Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite 1995 and Osokoya 2010). The change of government brought about the centralization (federal control) of all sectors. The thirty (30) months civil war had a devastating effect on primary school education nation-wide but more severe in the Eastern Nigeria where schools were destroyed and most households became impoverished. In order to soften the harsh situation, the federal government embarked on a policy of reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation with the creation of twelve (12) states in May 27, 1967; and additional seven (7) states in February 3, 1976 and two (2) states in September 27, 1987. Moreover, the federal government engaged in rapid expansion of educational institutions with the objectives of improving access to education at all levels.

At the primary school level, scholars like Fafunwa (1974), Nwangwu (1976), Taiwo (1980), Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite (1995), Osokoya (2002) and Abiri (2010) stated that the federal government introduced UPE scheme on September 6, 1976 in Lagos,

Nigeria, sequel to the outcome of the 1950s Defunct Regional UPE scheme, the 1960 Ashby Commission's report, the decision of African Ministers of Education in Addis-Ababa (Ethiopia) in 1961 and the 1970 Somade Commission's report to give basic (primary school) education to school-going age children on or before 1980. In Nigeria, the 1976 Free UPE scheme introduced by the federal government was aimed at establishing equal educational opportunity for all children of school age and to gradually eliminate illiteracy and ignorance. Unlike the 1950s Defunct Regional UPE scheme, the federal government undertook some measures like finance, training of teachers, and construction of classrooms among others to see its success nation-wide.

Taiwo (1980), Kosemani et. al (1995), Osokoya (2002) and FME (2004) affirmed that when the UPE scheme started in 1976/1977 academic session the total number of enrollees and primary schools established were 811,304 and 20,888. By 1980/1981 academic session, the number of pupils and schools increased to 15,664,424 and 37,430 nation-wide respectively. See Table 6 and Table 7.

States	*1975/1976*	1976/1977*	1977/1978*	*1978/1979*	*1979/1980	*1980/1981
Anambra	641,725	826,783	907,252	903,014	1,036,789	1,777,263
Bauchi	126,300	220,211	329,611	357,212	438,522	510,238
Bendel	606,115	676,373	751,712	792,921	891,893	994,899
Benue	256,747	535,096	629,243	838,723	1,120,915	1,406,402
Bornu	136,964	121,982	369,052	589,620	693,130	854,626
Cross River	597,182	719,55*	768,292	863,700	977,988	1,091,645
Gongola	158,200	265,335	322,313	397,705	488,805	573,200
Imo	739,031	938,400	1,003,824	1,014,467	1,107,774	1,207,406
Kaduna	218,204	460,349	613,091	747,125	870,073	1,000,613
Kano	160,340	341,806	472,813	667,998	788,132	910,333
Kwara	181,050	250,716	494,030	493,241	599,405	709,767
Lagos	355,645	388,429	400,405	442,057	476,822	509,240
Niger	55,377	113,852	181,731	277,495	376,196	478,877
Ogun	240,701	282,333	299,015	345,393	385,959	427,113
Ondo	332,611	403,200	428,119	465,395	533,539	604,930
Oyo	--	699,267	866,840	996,362	1,123,716	1,249,198
Plateau	147,873	317,487	365,554	455,500	563,387	673,552
Rivers	275,591	346,961	430,388	470,438	574,024	677,019
Sokoto	138,138	206,117	301,542	397,401	499,243	608,082
<b>Total:</b>	<b>*5,367,794</b>	<b>*8,114,307</b>	<b>*9,845,838</b>	<b>*11,457,772</b>	<b>*13,546,312</b>	<b>*15,664,424</b>

Table 6: Primary School Pupils' Enrolments in Nigeria, 1975/1976 to 1980/81

Sources: Federal Ministry of Education, Planning Statistic Unit, Lagos in Kosemani & Okorosaye- Orubite (1995), Osokoya (2002) and Oyan (2010)

States	*1975/1976	*1977/1978	*1979/1980	*1981/1982
Anambra	1,708	1,900	1,931	2,054
Bauchi	1,086	2,235	1,889	1,805
Bendel	1,562	1,594	1,665	1,754
Benue	1,200	2,667	2,688	2,703
Bornu	1,526	1,854	1,886	2,088
Cross River	1,505	1,620	1,478	1,690
Gongola	1,568	1,868	1,849	1,864
Imo	1,880	1,925	1,939	1,958
Kaduna	859	2,821	2,857	2,875
Kano	679	3,028	3,050	3,063
Kwara	539	1,123	1,215	1,487
Lagos	244	1,033	1,725	1,863
Niger	245	1,033	1,033	1,067
Ogun	1,161	1,203	1,222	1,262
Ondo	1,159	1,388	1,471	1,595
Oyo	1,955	2,318	2,445	2,701
Plateau	685	2,422	2,455	1,661
Rivers	595	870	946	1,001
Sokoto	732	2,692	2,865	3,939
<b>Total:</b>	<b>* 20,888</b>	<b>* 35,594</b>	<b>* 35,589</b>	<b>*37,430</b>

Table 7: Number of Primary Schools by State: 1975/1976 to 1981/1982

Sources: Federal Ministry Education, Planning Statistic Unit, Lagos in Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite (1995), Osokoya (2002) and Oyan (2010)

Though, the 1976 Free Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme introduced by the Federal Government achieved the equalisation of educational opportunities for all children of school age at primary education level nation-wide but it failed. The scheme was faulted with factors like: inadequacy of teachers, infrastructures, finance (the diversion of educational funds to other areas) among others (Taiwo 1980, Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite 1995, Osokoya 2002, FME 2004 and Oyan 2010).

The first Nigerian educational philosophical document-National Policy on Education- produced in 1977 and revised in subsequent years 1981, 1998 and 2004 was earlier backed up with the Decree No 16 on August 16, 1985 by the Federal Government (FME 1986, Osokoya 2002 and Oyan 2012). Oyan (2012) further stated that the educational policy document witnessed series of revisions due to one reform or the other in the Nigerian educational sector. Apart from the philosophical base prescribed by the policy document and re-affirmation of free primary education by the Federal Government, there is a uniform educational system for the country today. The Nigerian education system prior to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 1981) had been structured into 6 years of Primary, 5 years of Secondary, 2 years of Higher Secondary (Advanced Level) and 3 years University education. The structure is made up of 6 years Primary, 3 years of Junior Secondary, 3 years of Senior Secondary and 4 years of University education. Taiwo (1980), Osokoya (2002) and Oyan(2010) affirmed that the former 6-5-2-3 educational system was not relevant to the political, economic, social and cultural needs of the Nigerian people. So the 6-3-3-4 education system was aimed at acquisition of skills, appreciation of the dignity of labour, solving the country's problem of illiteracy, manpower shortage and promoting scientific and technological advancement. Besides, Federal Government reaffirmed her total commitment to make education free and compulsory, especially primary school education to all as embedded in Section 3 Item 15 of the policy document (FRN, 1981) and Article 19 of the Nigeria Constitution (FRN, 1989).

The 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Council on Education held in Akure, Ondo State in September, 1989, Fafunwa (1991) stated that an ad-hoc Planning Committee was set up and charged with the responsibility to fashion out a nine-year qualitative and quantitative schooling system for the country. This decision was prompted by two factors: (i) the assertion in Article 19 of 1989 Nigeria Constitution (FRN, 1989) which reads "Government shall direct its policy toward ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels" (ii) the pronouncement made by the then military Head of State, General Ibrahim Badanmosi Babangida that education would be made free up till the junior secondary school level as from 1992. In March, 1990, the Planning Committee submitted its report to the National Council on Education that culminated to the setting up of a Technical Committee. The

Technical Committee studied the report's recommendations and proposed strategies for its implementation. In a subsequent meeting of the National Council on Education held in Calabar, Cross River State in October, 1990 the Technical Committee submitted an interim report. This Federal Government intention on education for the masses and the international covenants/ protocols signed by her formed the base for "a free and compulsory universal nine-year basic education programme in 1992".

##### **5. Federal Government and Education from the 1990s till date**

This period witnessed lot of educational reformations at the primary and junior secondary schools which formed the basic level more especially after the failure of the 1992 Universal Basic Education programme. This was the precursor of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999 till date.

By 1990, the pupil's enrolment was 15.6 million out of 21 million children of school age nation-wide (FME, 2004). So in order to give basic education in particular to the masses, the Nigerian government signed the following international covenants/ protocols:

- The 1990 Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA),
- The New Delhi (1991) Declaration on E-9 countries,
- The Ouagadougou (1995) calling for the forceful pursuit of the Jomtien recommendation on basic education
- Amman (1996) Affirmation on the pursuit of the goals of Jomtien,
- The African Union Decade of Education in Africa (1997-2006), on inter-Africa co-operation calling for massive reduction of illiteracy within the shortest possible time span,
- The Durban (1998) Statement of Commitment to the promotion of Education for All (EFA) with a strong/vigorous pursuit of basic education,
- The Dakar World Education Forum (2000) which set an agenda for education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and among others.

Following the content embedded in the aforementioned covenants/ protocols – Education for All (EFA) by 2000, the Nigerian government introduced 9-year (nine-year) basic education programme in 1992. Besides, it was a programme designed for children between the ages 6 (six) and 15 (fifteen). The programme envisaged that children would remain in school until completion of junior secondary education for them to acquire basic competencies and life-long skills. The enrolment figure increased from 15.6 million to 16.2 million in 1994 while it declined to 14.1 million in 1996( Oyan 2010). Moreover, Oyan (2010) ascribed factors like: the economic downturn, unfavourable political/ military government regime, low value placed on education, inadequate funding, lack of infrastructures, inadequate teachers, inadequate facilities, poor/ inconsistent statistical data among others to the failure of the 1992 UBE scheme after some years.

According to Federal Ministry of Education (2004), Abiri (2010), Osokoya (2010), Oyan (2010) and Obayan (2014) stated that the failure of many countries to meet the goals of the 1990 Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA) necessitated the adoption, in 2000, of the Dakar Framework for Action and total commitment to achieve Education for All (EFA) by the year 2015. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme launched on September 30, 1999 specifically, includes early childhood care and education; 9(nine) years of formal schooling starting from primary through junior secondary; out of school skills acquisition for youths; and education of adults and special groups who for one or the other reason cannot participate in the mainstream formal system (FGN,1999). When launching the programme in Sokoto-Nigeria, President Matthew Aremu Olusegun Obasanjo (1999) the then Nigerian Head of State as cited by Oyan(2010) states that "efforts will be made to counter the factors which are known to have hindered the achievement of the goals of Universal Primary Education (UPE)"

In essence, the 1999 UBE programme is an off-shoot of the previous (UPE of 1950s, UPE of 1976 and UBE of 1992) educational programmes that failed (FME&YD 1993, Okorosaye-Orubite 2000, FME 2004, Abiri 2010, Osokoya 2010, Oyan 2010 and Obayan 2014). To check the previous education (UPE/UBE) programmes setbacks like instability of government policies, inadequate staff/ teachers, inadequate infrastructures/ facilities, inadequate planning, problem of supervision and monitoring, poor funding and among others, the federal government embarked on implementation processes/ strategies embedded in the Implementation Guidelines (FGN,1999).

One of such implementation strategy for the UBE programme was the enactment of the UBE Act of 2004 which gives a concrete legal backing to it. The UBE Bill was proposed by the Executive arm of government and submitted to the National Assembly in 2000. The document was delayed due to government/ internal court proceedings. The Act which was endorsed by the President on May 26, 2004 provides among others as follows: Section 2(1) Every government in Nigeria shall provide free, compulsory and Universal Basic Education for every child of primary and junior secondary school age. Section 2 (2) Every parent shall ensure that his child/ ward attends and completes the (a) primary school education and (b) junior secondary school education, by making efforts to send the child to primary and junior secondary schools. In Section 2 (3-4a, b & c) states a parent or guardian who fails to send his child/ ward to school commit an offence and is liable to: (a) On first conviction, to be reprimanded, (b) On second conviction to be fined N2000 or imprisonment for a term of one month or to both and (c) On subsequent conviction, a fine of N5000 or imprisonment for a term of 2 months or to both.

Also, the UBE Act, 2004 imposes a fine not exceeding N10,000 or imprisonment for the term of three(3) months or both on any person who receives or obtains any fee contrary to the provision of Sub-section 1 above. In Section 7, 9 and 10 of the UBE Act, 2004, provide for the establishment, membership and functions of an educational agency, "Universal Basic Education Commission" (UBEC) Another vital implementation strategy for 1999 UBE programme was the introduction of a sequential yearly schooling programme for newly admitted pupils. Obanya (2002) in Oyan (2010)and Remi-Doyen (2012) stated that the sequential implementation commenced in 2000/2001 with primary one (1) pupils progressively ensuring qualitative uninterrupted education for them over a nine (9) years



basic (formal) education cycle which terminated in 2008/2009. To this end, the basic education level is well regularised due to the gradual phased off of the three years junior secondary education programme.

There were other implementation strategies embarked upon by the federal government as embedded in the Standard Action Plan, UBE Act, 2004: (i) the establishment of UBE organisational structure and appointment of manpower to oversee the programme, (ii) the abolition of Federal and State Common Entrance Examination for placement into Junior Secondary School, (iii) the standardization of the UBE Certificate issued at the end of the nine-year UBE programme, (iv) the streamlining of the operations of private school proprietors in education delivery to ensure compliance with the requirement of the UBE Act, which stipulates nine-year of uninterrupted compulsory basic education within the cultural and context of each State and among others.

The Federal Government sees a teacher as one of the cardinal features for success of the basic education programme, consequently, in Section 9b6 of the Standard Action Plan (UBE Act, 2004) affirms that for effective teaching learning, the teacher: pupils ratio shall be 1 : 35 (Early Childhood Care Education) and 1 : 40 (Primary and Junior Secondary School Education) respectively.

In Section 4:2 (UBE Act, 2004), indicates government total commitment to the actualization of basic education with the provision of books, instructional materials, classroom, furniture and among others.

To this end, the basic education programme (UBEC,2013) activities have led to: (i) "proper funding" for the first time basic education has a quantum of funding being released out by the government (ii) teachers professional development well funded as being accorded much priority by government led to 1,493,352 teachers trained (iii) transformation of the educational terrain as it affect basic education in the area of school infrastructural development (a) number of new classrooms constructed-41,009 (b) numbers of classrooms renovated-59,444 (c) number of furniture(pupils and teachers) supplied- 1,139,196 sets (d) number of toilets constructed-14,769 (e) number of boreholes provided-996 (iv) number of instructional/ play materials supplied-77,570,540 (v) number of textual materials in Mathematics, English Language and activity-based sciences supplied-16,356,812 while for the assorted library resource sector-1,710,091.

In addition, other sectors of the basic education programmes (UBEC,2013) like the disadvantaged (physically challenged) groups and out-of-school children (Almajarai) witnessed much greater attention than before which culminated to:

(i) "proper funding"-Physically Challenged Children Fund

- Number of schools/ centres that have benefited-368
- Number of classrooms constructed/ renovated-710
- Number of resource rooms-344
- Number of boreholes/ hand pumps-36
- Number of toilets/ bathrooms-263
- Number of furniture sets for teachers/ pupils-4,784
- Number of beddings-2,266
- Instructional materials-75,255
- Equipment (computer, wheelchairs, braille machines, television sets, radio sets, etc-14,641
- Number of teachers trained-6,247
- Enrolees increased to 20,639.

For the education for the out-of-school children (Northern Nigerian street kids A. K. A. Almajarai) as well witnessed traumatic reform, for the government commissioned the first 100 schools on April 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 in Sokoto while classes for them commenced proper in June, 2012 across the nation (Remi-Doyen, 2012).Sambo (2013) stated that government has established additional 134 modern schools for the Almajarai spread over the northern part of the country and on the aspect of their feeding, accommodation etc is free because the basic education programme is free and compulsory to all sundries nation-wide.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, the writer has analysed the development of basic education level in Nigeria for a century, from 1914 to 2014. The writer appraised the growth of basic education during the missionary era as well as the era of self-determination and independence. Also, the writer examined the effect of the thirty months Nigeria civil war and the post war reconstruction era. Finally, the writer examined the development of basic education at the period of commitment to Education for All (EFA) by 2015

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