

Maintaining School Plants for National Transformation

Agenyi Emmanuel, Dr. Cletus Usman Idoko & Agenyi Rachel Makolo (Mrs
*Department of Educational Foundations and Management, Economics & Chemistry
Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa.*

Abstract

School plant maintenance is an integral part of the overall functions of the school administrators. Actualization of the pre-determined objectives of education, require the supply, efficient and effective utilization and appropriate maintenance of various school plants. In recent time efforts in diverse ways made by government and individuals to encourage school plant maintenance have been on upgrading of facilities and employing specialists to oversee them. The aforementioned efforts are yet to yield good positive results in plant maintenance, because there are no good facilities in schools to encourage teachers and learners. Further more, the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) necessitate that the school administrators evolve modern strategies for school plants maintenance. It improves the quality of teaching and learning. This paper describes maintenance of school plants, the procedures for school plant maintenance and types of school plant maintenance. The paper reveals that school plants influence teaching and learning process, that the services rendered by them is positively related to productivity and outcomes of students' learning experiences among others. It recommended that there is need to supply adequate computer soft wares by the three-tiers of government and philanthropists to ensure proactive maintenance culture and there is need to step up the institutional capacity building of school administrators on school plant maintenance by organizing professional training through workshops, seminars, to mention but a few.

Keywords: Maintenance, School Plant, National Transformation

Introduction

School plants are available in various forms. The plants may be movable or fixed assets that serve various functions in the learning environment. These plants include; school geographical location, classrooms, libraries, cafeteria, hostels, school generators, resource centre among others. These support facilities satisfy the teachers, non-academic staff and students' physical and emotional needs. Ngoka (2003) described school plants as fixed and mobile structures and materials in the school, such as the

classrooms and buildings, laboratories and laboratory equipment. He further affirmed that learning facilities such as furniture, chalkboard, tools and machines, generating plants, chalk, cars, trucks, computer sets, typewriters, audio and visual aids bore holes, etc, are necessary tools in the school programmes.

The problems facing many schools in Nigeria today ranges from inadequate teaching support facilities, substandard facilities and poor maintenance of existing school plants. This situation calls for the active participation of all stakeholders in defining concrete actions for the inclusion of school plants maintenance culture in educational policies and provision of supports for school administrators by adequately equipping persons concerned with plant maintenance through workshops, seminars and on the job training. This requires a paradigm shift from the traditional form of school plant maintenance to modern and sophisticated methods that improves the quality of teaching and learning.

Recently, there has been intensive promotion of effective maintenance culture at all levels of education in the country. This process has been supported by the Federal government, State government, Local government and some philanthropists by employing plant operators and technical maintenance crues for schools (Ngoka, 2003). Despite all these efforts there seems to be a gap between theory and practice.

Stressing the role of school plants to students learning outcome, Stricherz (2000) in his study indicated that students' achievement lags in shabby school buildings, those with poor or no science laboratory, library, technical workshop, inadequate ventilation and faulty heating system. Oyesola (2007), reported that the main objective of school plants is to satisfy educational goals which have been Pre-determined that better planned school plants will enhance better school programmes and the community help by providing a place of psychological and physical safety for students and teachers and enhancing the good quantity and quality of instruction. According to Ajayi (2007), high level of students' performance role will be defective where school plants such as, classrooms, light plants, hostels and even school sites are ill-sited, structurally defective, not properly ventilated, not spacious enough and

poorly maintained. Several studies have shown that a close relationship exists between the school plants and academic performance of students. Ihuoma (2008) and Ogunsaju (1980) stated that the quality of education children receive bears direct relevance to the available or lack of physical facilities in overall atmosphere in which learning takes place.

Concept of National Transformation

Transformation is a process whereby an entity phenomenon changes in attribute, character, condition, structure or form by a concerted effort of institution or an effort of another force. Nwadiani (2012) stated that it is in the process of transformation, the stage of change should be better in state than the former. National transformation therefore, means planned change to improve various sectors according to the new vision of those who are charged to carry out the wave of the changes required.

In Nigeria, many persons are worried about the state of affairs in the education sector. Some of the problems border on untold sufferings of school administrators, teachers and students because of inadequate supply of learning facilities. The Nigerian educational system is believed by Nwadiani to be dysfunctional with unintended and undesirable outcomes. There is no nation of the world that has all sufficiency of education. Uyaga (2012) believed that even in the developed nations, where one can conveniently assume that educational and developmental goals have been achieved, efforts are still been made to revise, review and rejuvenate educational process to meet the demands of the new millennium. This is because education is tied to development, wealth creation, social and cultural empowerment.

Carol (2012), observed that school administrators do not take transformation policy seriously when all these transformers or reformers can do or will do is vehemently advocate their kind of transformation to the sole of exclusion of decency, respect, humility and ability to think through alternatives, we lose much and gain little. Wendy (2012) observed that fostering the leadership necessary for transformational outcomes in education is a hard work and in countries around the world, there is a constant search for easier solutions.

Transformation cannot be achieved in a vacuum therefore; school plant is a panacea to the realization of the vision. To buttress this statement, Onyeche and Okafor (2012) observed that a total transformation is not possible due to several environmental blocks but gradual initiation of changes and change utilization is very germane at this moment in our national development.

Fenker (2004) believes that school plants maintenance is a process that ensures building and other technical systems put in proper shape for the

operations of an organization, especially to assist in actualizing educational objectives. It should be realized that without school administrators' leadership capacity, better policies, enhanced technology or adequate funds will fail to achieve the pre-determined goals of school plants maintenance.

The goal of national transformation is to evolve a strategy for radical development of all sectors of the economy, education sector inclusive. There can not be a meaningful educational development without deliberately planning for efficiently and effectively school plants maintenance.

Maintenance of School plants:

One of the problems facing schools in recent times is lack of proper maintenance of school plants. The physical appearance of school plants speaks volumes about it. Isaac (2010) asserts that poorly maintained buildings, untidy walls and over grown compounds may suggest that the education within the building follow the same pattern. Ihuoma (2008) stated that, an aspect of school management that is generally overlooked is school plant maintenance. When new buildings are constructed and taken over by the appropriate authorities, practically, no attention is paid to the maintenance of such buildings. Ihuoma maintained that several school buildings that are over fifty years old have never undergone renovation or any form of modernization in spite of the changes in the educational system. School plant maintenance is an issue that concerns all levels of educational system ranging from the pre-primary to the tertiary levels. Some of the buildings and equipments in schools are architecturally obsolete, lacks the taste of the present time and they cannot contribute to functional education.

According to Oguche (2011), maintenance of school project is the keeping of the buildings, equipment and landscapes at its best condition of completeness and efficiency either through repairs or replacement. It is necessary to put some staff in charge of maintenance of buildings and equipment to avoid fast damage or depreciation. One of the needs of maintaining school project is that the school environment and the activities that take place in it must be considered healthy and productive. If facilities are not catered for, it reveals the untidy, careless and non-chalet attitude of the administrators, teachers, students and their educational programmes. Secondly, it helps to reduce the rate of repairs or breakdown of school equipment.

Changes in whether conditions and lack of maintenance culture are responsible for aging of school plants. School administrators, teachers and students who constantly use school plants lack knowledge of plants maintenance administration. Consequently, school managers failed to integrate

plant maintenance into the school activities. The issue of plant maintenance is poorly handled at all levels of education in Nigeria. As observed by Ihuoma, repairs take place only when problems arise due to break down of the existing plants. It is in view of all these problems that this paper is advocating for a paradigm shift from what use to be to a modern method that requires the use of computer software to monitor predictive faults before the equipment get worsened. School plants in this regard should be computerized and educational managers be trained to handle such equipments for maintenance plan. The procedure for school plant maintenance includes, identification of structures and equipment that needed repair, prioritize maintenance, maintenance workshop and keeping of repair inventory book.

Identification of Structures and Equipment that needed Repairs:

There must be a regular check on buildings, equipment, landscape etc, to ascertain the ones that needed repair and the extent of damage.

Prioritizing the maintenance; the school manager has to engage in the scale of preference, as regards to repair or replacement of school plants. Any complex repairs that need very urgent attention should be referred to the professionals while the laymen handle the minor repairs.

Maintenance workshop: The school manager should establish a maintenance workshop with skilled workers to handle maintenance that are not too complex. For instance desk and chair repairs, leaking roofs, etc.

Repair inventory book: There should be an inventory book or file containing records of damaged buildings and equipment, better be computerized for easy access. A check should be maintained to avoid releasing money several times for the repair of equipment to some dubious members of staff. The record will enable the manager know how much has been spent on various maintenances.

Types of maintenance:

Ngoka (2003) and Ihuoma (2008) identified four types of plant maintenance: These includes;

- **Preventive maintenance:**

This is a type of maintenance carried out on school plants to avoid breakdown and to ensure optimal performance of the equipment. The maintenance is carried out not because of its immediate effect but because if not done it is capable of causing further damages. Preventive maintenance saves cost and time. Decisions on preventive maintenance are collectively made and implemented.

- **Routine maintenance:** Certain equipment require periodic servicing by the school administrators, the servicing may be monthly, quarterly, yearly or as the condition of the

facility may require often the manufacturers guide provide information on the nature and maintenance intervals. For example computer, internet, typewriter, car servicing and generator, etc.

- **Emergency maintenance:** Certain equipment may require urgent repair because of its importance or incase of unforeseen eventualities. The problem could be as a result lack of maintenance culture of school administrators. In this circumstance, collective decisions may not be necessary for lack of time to bring together all the necessary stakeholders to make decisions. It is often expensive because due to lack of maintenance, the extent of damage may demand total replacement of the equipment or high cost of repair. In some times, the break down may cause injury or even death to staff or students of the school. School administrators should avail themselves of the transformation opportunities to proactively develop and implement plants maintenance plan to addressing equipment needs.

- **Structural maintenance:** Some equipment structures need to be periodically checked. To ascertain which of them needs refurbishing, reshaping and changing. Examples of such equipment include cars, chairs, tables, etc. These facilities require the changing of the form in order to meet current demands.

- **Predictive maintenance**

The fifth and the most vital and relevant types of school plants maintenance is predictive maintenance. This involves the use of computer softwares to predict equipment failure based on age, manufacturing fault, user demand, and quality control performance measures.

Recommendations

Following the problems identified above and the discussions that ensued, the following recommendations are made.

The adequate supply of computer soft wares to schools by various tiers of government and individuals should be carried out to maintain and sustain teaching /learning prcess in various educational institutional in the country. These computers when installed, they will provide base for predictive maintenance of school plants to forestall system breakdown.

There is need to step up the institutional capacity building of school administrators on school plant maintenance by organizing professional training through workshops, serminars, etc.

School plants significantly influence the teaching and learning at all levels of educational institutions, therefore administrators, teachers, students and other workers in the school should join hands in monitoring existing plants in their schools. They should not see the plants as government affairs or no man property.

Communities, societies and individuals benefit directly or indirectly from existing school facilities like halls, playing grounds and dormitories, the government should continue to encourage the support of Parent- Teachers Association, philanthropists and education foundations in replacing and providing enabling environment for school plant maintenance.

Conclusion:

The hope we have is that all over the world, countries and most promising leaders are beginning to channel their energy towards educational outcomes in their nations and highest need communities. School plants are critical to the achievement of overall educational national goals. School administrators in their efforts to continue to achieve high maintenance of school plants quite efficiently and effectively must consistently device new and improved strategies of maintaining the school facilities.

References:

1. Ajayi, J.A. (2007). *Issues in school management*. Lagos, Bola-bay Publishers.
2. Berg, peter. (2012). *Why transformation may hit a snag. Observation from The field*. <http://www.educationtransformation.org/>
3. Carol, C. (2012). Vermont secondary schools for the 21st century. carol. c. King @ state.vt.us.
4. Fenker, M. (2004). *Organizational change, representations and facilities, In facilities management: innovation and performance*. Alexander,k. (ed.) u.k.taylor francis
5. Futter, J. (2006). The class could help you learn: student participation increasing Better environment. *Education review* 58 (2) 182-193.
6. Ihuoma, P. A. (2008). The need for effective facility management in schools in Nigeria. *New York Science Journal* <http://www.science.pub.org>.
7. Isaac,A.A., and musibau, A.Y. (2010). *School plants planning and student learning Outcome in S.W.Nigeria secondary schools*. Ado Ekiti Kamla Raj.
8. Ngoka, G.N. (2003). *Concepts and issues in advanced educational administration*, Nsukka, University Press.
9. Nwadiani, Mon (2012). Managing education for national development. A Key Note Adress presented at Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP) 31st Annual National Conference, Makurdi.
10. Oguche, I.B. (2011). *Foundation of education in Nigeria*. Kaduna Euneeks & Associates
11. Ogunsaju, S. (1980). *Some aspects of school managemen.t* Ibadan. Ogunsaju Press.
12. Onyeche, Virgy & Okafor, Ogechi (2012). Transforming basic education for sub-sector quality and national development. Unpublished conference paper presented at NAEAP 31st annual conference, Makurdi.
13. Oyesola, G.O. (2007). Planning educational building and facilities. *Alphabetic list of Journal articles*. Ilorin; <http://www.Ijeumilorin.net>.
14. Uyaga, R. E. (2012). Secondary education in Nigeria for youth leadership and governance. A Lead Paper presented at Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP) 31st Annual National Conference, Makurdi.
15. Wendy, Kopp. (2012). *Transformation in education*. U.S.A. Rindehart and Winson.