

## **Efficacy of Systematic Approach in Effective School Plant Maintenance in Nigeria Schools**

BY

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### **Abstract**

*The quality of the available school plant is a potent indicator for measuring how standard and quality educational activities in the schools are for the fact that provision of education in a country is a joint responsibility of the government and every citizen. Government alone cannot provide all the needed school plants and at the same time maintain them. This paper therefore discusses in detail the concept and needs for school plants reasons for school plant maintenance and systematic approaches that the educational administrators can adopt in order to enhance effective school plants maintenance in Nigeria Schools. Recommendation and conclusion were made.*

### **Introduction**

#### **Concept of School Plants**

Nigeria is facing a lot of crises in the educational industry and the crises were attributed to inadequate funding, students population explosion, acute scarcity and under utilization of resources, shortage of school plants and inadequate number of educational facilities and equipment that are needed for effective teaching – learning processes and for educational goal attainment.

The current population explosion coupled with the high exodus of teachers, as a result of poor teachers condition of service couples with poor teacher morale and inadequate number of available educational facilities and school plants.

In view of this teaching – learning process is uncondusive for both teachers and the pupils. Oyedeji (1998) noted that the total number of school plants and educational facilities provided in the school in one of the potent indicator for measuring the quality and standard of education given in a particular school. Poor and inadequate school plants and educational facilities affect the students academic performance. Unfacilitating school environment; have negative effect on attainment of educational objectives. School plants are vital in the educational system and are crucial for students academic performance and for the teacher effectiveness. School plant can be defined as the structure both permanent, non-permanent or semi-permanent, that are used for the students programmes in the school.

#### **The Need for Effective School Plants in Nigeria School**

The following school plants and facilities are necessary in the school setting. Buildings like classrooms, library complex, hostels, administration offices, recreation centers, dinning hall, assembly hall, stores and facilities, bulleting board, instructional materials, furniture, science equipment. Semi-Structures like sport field, and teaching learning facilities like instructional materials, science equipment computer machine, agricultural equipment, library materials. These facilities are very important for effective teaching – learning processes and no teachers; job performance and satisfaction.

The Federal Government of Nigeria also recognized the importance of school plant and educational facilities to the teaching – learning process and as such billions of naira were disbursed into capital expenditure during her yearly budgetary allocation and through Educational Trust Funds many buildings have been constructed in all the educational levels in Nigeria. Yet, the school plants is grossly inadequate for the student use. Despite high committement of the Federal Government to develop school plant, still, to the dismay of educational planners in Nigeria most of the buildings and structures in the various schools are those ones constructed right from the inception of each school and no proper attention is paid to the reconstruction or proper maintenance of those buildings.

These buildings are now surrounded by thick bush with big trees which make them to dysfunctional use and some had been destroyed by burning fire. Most of the school buildings in both the primary and secondary schools are varying level of dilapidation and destruction many

exist without roof and there are inadequate space in each of the classroom to accommodate the students population. Most of the school facilities had been stolen, destructed and vandalized by the students and many windows exist without louver blades etc.

Among the questions that bothers the mind of current educational planners over the years is what systematics approach can both the schools, parents and the students apply towards effective school plant maintenance and management in Nigeria schools, so as to complete Federal Government efforts.

It should be noted that despite the Federal Government efforts and commitment to improve the quality and standard of Nigerian education, the issue of school plant management is yet to be attended to. Nigerian school plants were not properly managed nor maintained.

School managers therefore, need to be adopt appropriate strategies in order to enhance effective maintenance culture and proper management of the few available school plants and facilities in interest of Nigerian educational system.

#### **Reason for School Plant Maintenance**

The proper management and maintenance of the school plants is the responsibilities of every member of the society like parent, teachers, students, artisans, philanthropist associations, government and all the members that have a good will to help in the development of educational system.

Effective management and maintenance is very necessary in order to keep or restore every facility – part of the site buildings and contents to an acceptable standard.

Maintenance is also necessary in order to retain their value, and original status and to keep them in good condition for use and to prevent wastage of those facilities. The maintenance of facilities are necessary for corrective, preventive and preservative purposes.

#### **Systematic Approach for School Plant Maintenance**

The basic strategies that the school managers can adopt in order to enhance effective school plant maintenance in Nigerian schools are:

- ❖ Educational planners in the country should introduce school plant maintenance into the school curriculum as a way of making the students at all educational levels in order to embrace good maintenance culture.

- Another systematic approach that can be used for effective school plant maintenance and management is *Community Participatory Approach* – those members of the society that are among the parent Teachers Association (P.T.A.) and have professional skill such as carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, electricians can be co-opted into school plant maintenance committee and they will give professional advice and to assist in keeping the facilities in good order. The school managers can still employ the casual labourers to help in the general cleaning of the school compound so as to reduce the existence of jungles that is very common in the present day system.
- *Damaged Preventive Systematic Approach* can be adopted by the school heads. This is the method of inculcating the spirit to use and handle with the care the schools infrastructural facilities. The teachers, the students and non-teaching staffs should have respect for the school property and the school head should make provision for dustbin, trash-trays, illumination building, and incinerators. If this approach is adopted, it will be very difficult for the people to steal and vandalize those properties in the school system and since prevention is better than cure and sting in time saves nine. The spirit of preventing damages to the school plants should be inculcated in the mind of the teachers, students and every members of the school community.
- Finally, *Utilization of the Internally Generated Funds for the School Plant Maintenance and Management Approach* can be adopted since school plant needs to be improved both in quantity and quality in order to raise the standard of the schools in Nigeria. Government capital expenditure is not enough for school plant maintenance therefore, the school manager should make use of the internally generated funds to embark on the school plant maintenance. Certain percentage of funds should be made use to embark on the school plant maintenance. The school managers should always raise funds through various sources, the funds raised should be diverted to school plant maintenance in the interest of Nigerian educational system.

In conclusion, if all educational processes and policies are to go on smoothly, it is very important for every member of Nigerian society to take part in the management and maintenance of school plant.

Since educational development in Nigeria is a joint responsibility of all citizens, since educational can never be free at all levels (FGN 2004) it is therefore advisable for the school managers to make use of appropriate systematic approach towards effective maintenance of Nigerian school plants and other educational facilities so that there will be adequacy and effectiveness in the use of available school plants.

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