

Provision and Management of School Facilities for the Implementation of UBE Programme

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Abstract *This paper focuses on the provision and management of school facilities for the management of UBE programme. School facilities are those things that enable the teacher to carry out his/her work well and also help the learners to learn effectively. School facilities are vital tools in the teaching and learning process, hence the justification for their adequate provision and management. The school facilities are divided into instructional, recreational, residential and general-purpose types. They can be maintained through regular, emergency or prevention and periodic maintenance. Eight stages are discussed for the management of these facilities. However, it has been observed that these facilities are not adequately provided for our secondary schools for the implementation of this programme. The indicators are dilapidated school buildings, ill-equipped libraries and laboratories, lack of games facilities, computers e.t.c. However, for the successful implementation for UBE programme, all these school facilities must be adequately provided for and managed. The government should provide all necessary facilities, the school head should ensure optimal utilization of these facilities and make sure that they are well maintained.*

Keywords: UBE, provision, management, implementation and facilities.

Introduction

One major index for measuring the successful implementation of any educational programme is the provision and management of the facilities available for such programme. It is a very good means of measuring the standard and quality of the education to be provided. Hence, school facilities, educational facilities and school plants will be used interchangeably because they connote the same meaning.

What are School Facilities?

School facilities can be defined as those things that enable the teacher to do his/her work very well and helping the learners to learn effectively. The chalkboard for example, facilitates the imparting of information on the learner. School facilities also include school building e.g. classrooms, assembly halls, laboratories, workshops, libraries e.t.c. They also include teaching aids, chairs, tables, devices such as modern educational hardware and software in the form of magnetic tapes, films, and transparent stripes. School facilities are all the things that are needed for effective teaching – learning process to take place. They are designed to enhance the process of teaching. The absence of school facilities implies the non-existence of any set up that may be referred to as school.

Castaldi in Peretemode (2001:45) concludes that “educational facilities are those things of education which enables a skillful teacher to achieve a level of instructional effectiveness that far exceeds what is possible when they are not provided”. The successful implementation of any educational programme depends mostly on the quality of available school facilities that are to be provided for such programme. This is supported by the view of Adaralegbe in Abraham (2003:105) who posits that “the type of atmosphere required for effective learning is that consisting of better school buildings, more and better teaching facilities”.

Also, Adesina in Abraham (2003:160) posits that “the quality of education that our children get bears direct relevance to the availability or the lack of physical facilities and overall atmosphere where the learning takes place. Also in the words of Castaldi (1984:4) are these wise saying “Excellent school facilities and dedicated teachers are basic ingredients of good educational programme”. The desire for education

attainment is on the high side, the consumers of education therefore expect the attainment of standard and quality education that will give them a sense of belonging, fulfillment and satisfaction.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a laudable educational programme that can only be successfully implemented with the availability of adequate and quality school facilities. The UBE programme is an all embracing programme that tends to articulate the formal system of education as well as the non-formal for the total development of human potentials. All along, education has been recognized as the only vital instrument for national development. Education is all round symbol for the nation's development and transformation in the aspect of economic, social and the political activities of the nation.

For the UBE programme to be implemented therefore, school facilities which serve as the tools of a workman in the hand of a teacher must be adequately provided. It is of utmost importance that the availability of school facilities will duly contribute to the successful implementation of the UBE programme. These facilities must not only be provided, they must also be in good condition to enhance learning. This implies sound maintenance culture. This is supported by the view of Castaldi (1987:183) who says that "school building becomes important because of the extent that it helps in improving teaching – learning effectiveness".

There are strong indications that the school facilities needed for effective execution of the U.B.E. are inadequate, and in some places, they are totally absent. For example, in some communities, the school buildings are dilapidated, some de-roofed for years, and others in a state of total neglect. Some of the U.B.E. schools are yet to receive government attention. The absence of classrooms for effective teaching and learning presupposes the absence of other facilities such as libraries, instructional materials such as textbooks, audio-visual aids and so on. Majority of the U.B.E. schools have not been equipped with computer which will afford the learner the opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child to function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity. Even where there are school buildings, majority of them have no libraries to inculcate in the young learners, the habit of reading. Those that have libraries have no books meant for this level of education.

The basic facilities needed for the implementation of this programme are still not fully provided by the government. Few schools are being renovated while no new ones are being built where there are none. Most of the renovation works are in the hands of the politicians who are not interested in executing the jobs according to specification. Even in some areas where the Secretaries of Local Education Boards were given the money to ensure that the Head Teacher executed the projects, the Secretaries gave them money far below the cost of the jobs. The implication is that the jobs were not completed.

Consequently, the existing state of school facilities leaves much to be desired. Most of the primary and secondary schools in Nigeria are ugly sights to behold. It is only recently that some governors, notably among who are Rivers State and Lagos State Governors – Rotimi Amaechi and Babatunde Raji Fashola respectively started and have completed a number of re-construction of old schools tagged as Model Schools. In most of the other schools, there are de-roofed buildings, no office spaces, leaking roofs, cracked walls, broken-down: vehicles, typewriters, chairs and tables, doors and windows, walls, duplicating machines and photocopying machines without replacement. Some students still learn under mango-trees while many of the pupils and students sit on the floor to write even where classrooms are available. The teacher on his part has no writing materials, staffroom, tables, chairs and sometimes 'one-legged chalk board'. It is saddening to note that in this 21st century our primary and secondary schools are still using blackboards in the classroom when we should be talking about chalkboard and markers.

With inadequate provision of the school facilities and non-existence in some U.B.E. schools, it will be difficult for the government to fully implement the U.B.E. programme in the face of the scarce school facilities and consequently the desired objectives of the U.B.E. will however, be difficult to meet. This paper will focus on the various types of school facilities that are mandatory to be provided in our schools, the types of maintenance services available, the need for managing the school facilities and the stages involved in the maintenance of these facilities.

Types of School Facilities

Instructional Facilities

These are facilities that are specifically meant for direct teaching and learning. It includes classrooms, classroom seats, laboratories, libraries, experimental equipment, chalkboard, audio-visual learning equipment, zoological gardens and experimental agricultural farms. These facilities bear directly on the teaching – learning process and are therefore considered of prime priority among other school facilities.

Recreational Facilities

These are spaces, lawns, fields, pitches and equipment for sports, games and general recreation. Games and Sports apart from developing specific skills also develop a good learning socio-psychological as well as mental environment through relaxation. The importance and level of resources committed to the development and provision of recreational facilities must not exceed their values in facilitating the overall goal of the educational institution.

Residential Facilities

These include hostels and hostel facilities, refectory and refectory facilities, staff quarters and other associated facilities meant to provide residential convenience for staff and students.

General – Purpose Facilities

These are facilities that can easily be converted to uses other than those for which they are being used. Such facilities in most cases are made of space facilities. There are basically two types of open space facilities namely: The developed and the undeveloped spaces. Developed Open Space are spaces used as sporting pitches, fields, lawn, school farms, access roads, parking lots and so on. Their uses can easily be modified as occasion demands. The Undeveloped Open Spaces are all the land area within the legal authority of the institution which are yet to be developed into specific uses.

What UBE is all about?

Universal Basic Education is the foundational education that is available to everyone within the stipulated age limits, and also not restricted to any particular gender, place and time and upon which all other educational strata rest. The UBE is a nine year schooling which comprises six year primary and three year junior secondary. According to the National Policy on Education (2004), UBE shall be free and compulsory. It shall include adult and non – formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary and out of school youths. The objectives of UBE as enumerated in UBE Annual Report (2000) in Mbanefo (2000) include the following:

- Development in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
- The provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age;
- Reducing drastically, the incidence of dropout from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency);
- Catering for young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their school;

- Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life
- skills as well as the ethical moral and civic values needed for laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

These objectives are quite ideal and they require efforts and commitment on the part of all the stakeholders to ensure that U.B.E. succeeds. However, it has been observed that there are problems in the area of provision and management of school facilities which may pose some difficulties to the smooth implementation of the programme.

Availability of School Facilities

Our schools can only be what we want them to be if only proper steps are taken in the provision of all that will make teaching and learning effective. Learning cannot take place where facilities are not provided. Therefore the provision of facilities such as building, equipment e.t.c. is of utmost importance.

It is important to note that students and indeed their teachers need a conducive environment to be able to teach and learn adequately and effectively. The school facilities therefore, must meet the needs of the school community. Each building in the school should be ceiled to reduce the intensity of heat. They must also be constructed with a design that makes for cross ventilation. Good sanitary facilities (W.C. System) must be provided. Classrooms must not be over crowded and must be spacious enough for free movement. Jacobson et al in Abraham (2003).

The school farm is another important ground of the school, it is an integral part of the school facilities. It is a part of the school compound which many people tend to ignore. Other important facilities are standard and well-equipped library and laboratory, games facilities, equipment etc. Our school can only be what we want them to be only if proper steps are taken to plan the buildings, the grounds and in fact the general layout of schools.

What are School Facilities Management?

School facilities management is a systematic process of rationalizing the provision, use and maintenance of these facilities within an educational institution to ensure their optimal utilization and achievement of educational objectives both in the immediate and in the future given the available resources. In other words, it is a process that involves rationally:

- Determining which facilities are required to achieve school goals;
- Providing such facilities most advantageously in terms of resource use;
- Monitoring to ensure optimal use of educational facilities so provided;
- Maintaining the facilities regularly to ensure their longevity;
- Reviewing the provision of these facilities to ensure that it continues to meet both the changing educational needs in the advantageous manner.

Types of Maintenance

Three types of maintenance services include the following:

Regular Maintenance

This type of maintenance is given to special equipment in the school on a periodic basis. For example,

servicing of machines like typewriters, vehicles, generators, computers etc. These routine services are aimed at keeping the equipment working and to minimize cases of total breakdown of the equipment.

Emergency Maintenance

This is the type of maintenance that is more common in the system. It simply means that service men are called in when the equipments are out of use or broken down e.g. the wall of a dormitory may crack, and this crack requires urgent repairs to avoid total breakdown of the building.

Prevention and Periodic Maintenance

This is a programme for servicing machines, systems and structures device to prevent a breakdown of the system or one of its components. This allows an equipment or building to remain in the original useful life. Maintenance is carried out before there is malfunction of the equipment. Manufacturers usually indicate parts of equipment to be replaced at intervals to avoid breakdown and give the equipment maximum useful life.

Periodic maintenance on the other hand represents a deliberate effort to schedule maintenance of equipment on periodic basis .Some equipment require quarterly maintenance, while office equipment require periodic maintenance. School facilities are to be maintained regularly because the best plant that is not maintained soon becomes defaced and loses its aesthetic value and worth.

Justification for Managing School Facilities

Castaldi (1985) has established the fact that when a skillful teacher works in a well designed and highly functional school building with necessary instructional facilities, he is likely to achieve a level of instructional effectiveness than when those facilities are not provided.School facilities therefore became vital tools or resources in teaching – learning effectiveness and there is need for their proper management. The basic justification for giving sufficient attention to the management of educational facilities as an administrative task of the educational system includes the following:

- The needs to ensure that the right type of facilities are made available at the right time and place for the right type of teaching – learning activities. Since these have been known to have significant bearing on teaching – learning effectiveness, the right educational specification must be brought to bear on the provision of these facilities to meet the desired objectives.
- The need to inject economy into educational facilities provision and use. Educational resources are scarce relative to the varied and competing educational needs and demands. Colossal Wastage (under-utilization and over-utilization) is however, eliminated .Choices are made in favour of school facilities that are economical to operate and maintain.
- The need to guarantee the safety of facility users. School facilities must conform to some standard specifications or guidelines to make them safe for the students and teachers. It is only through monitoring, supervision, control and regular maintenance that the provision of these school facilities in an educational institution can be safely guaranteed.
- The need to improve physical facilities. Since education is dynamic both in content and methods, educational facilities need to be constantly evaluated and modified, not only to remove absolute and dilapidated structure but also to ensure that such facilities continue to meet the modern and ever changing educational needs, changing technology and the dynamic socio-political and economic environment.

- The need to add aesthetic value to educational facilities not only to enhance their utilization value but also to make them more healthy, safe and convenient to use and maintain. Poorly organized facilities are not only clumsy to use but accident prone as well as difficult to maintain.

Stages in Facilities Management

The activities that come under the umbrella of educational facilities management or educational facilities planning and administration are sequentially linked. Consequently, these activities will be recognized as stages in a chain of activities. The following are stages in sequential order:

Identification of Learning Needs

Specific educational facilities requirement of community or institution in terms of type quantity and quality needs to be properly assessed to provide the operational guide for facilities provision. At the community level, peculiar learning needs are usually tied to people's culture, religion, occupational life style and the environment. It must be recognized that the learning needs in terms of facilities are contingent on the fundamental educational objectives being pursued.

Inventory Survey

A comprehensive diagnostic inventory survey of the existing stock of educational facilities in the community or institution should be done. Inventory data has to be collected and analyzed to provide information on the location, condition, age, quantity and type of existing educational facilities. This will provide the educational map or the distributional network of the existing educational facilities needed in the development of the facilities master plan.

Facilities Utilization Analysis

Relevant utilization indicators are required to assess the legality of utilization of these educational facilities. Such analysis are meant to reveal areas of stress and weaknesses (i.e. under – utilization and over – utilization) in the existing arrangement with a view to developing facilities master plan.

Establishment of Educational Facilities Master Plan

This is a blue-print that indicates where specific educational facilities are to be provided and existing ones relocated or completely removed during an educational development phase to enhance the level of utilization of such facilities as well as meet the educational needs of the community or the educational institution.

Site Selection and Acquisition

This is the first step in the implementation of the master plan. Professional expertise is brought into selecting and acquiring the most appropriate sites for the specific educational facilities envisaged in the master plan. Site acquisition has to do with purchasing the land, paying of compensation, getting the necessary documents that entitle the institution to the land and fencing or demarcation.

Preparation of Educational Specifications

Each educational facility, project or programme requires specific patterns in design and implementation. The

educational manager or the facility planner is therefore expected at this juncture to prepare educational specifications (i.e. a written description of the curriculum and learning experiences of a project) required for implementing each of the various educational facilities such educational specifications must contain a statement of the philosophy behind the project, the grade levels to be served, enrolment capacity as well as the specification of materials and structural requirement for erecting different types of educational structures (classroom building, laboratories etc) and for purchase and installation of the equipment specified in the master plan. All specifications must however be in line with the ministry of education requirement and must make provision for flexibility to meet changing needs of the institutions.

Educational Project Design

Once the educational specifications have been drawn for each project to be executed or facilities to be purchased the educational facilities or plant planner must employ the assistance of other professionals to design the projects in line with the educational specifications. Such professionals may include architects and plant engineers.

Implementation of Educational Project Specifications

Implementation of project specification involves selecting bids, letting contracts for construction and furnishing of buildings or purchase and installation of facilities as well as monitoring and supervision of project execution to ensure they meet the specifications. To accomplish these tasks, the educational facilities planner requires the assistance of a whole lot of professionals, like lawyers to sign contracts, accountant to cost projects, businessmen to execute and architects /engineers to supervise and inspect.

Maintenance of School Facilities for the Implementation of U. B. E.

It has been observed that many school heads forget to realize that they have a duty to play towards the maintenance and upkeep of school plants. Deighton (1971) Nwagwu (1998) Ani (1997) and Nwogu (1997) in their separate studies have confirmed the roles of the school administrator towards the maintenance as:

- The identification of plants that needs repair,
- the establishment of a repair inventors ,
- the establishment of a maintenance workshop,
- Renovation of dilapidated school plant.
- Repair and redecoration of school plant.
- Appointment of teachers to custodial duties.
- Instruction to students on the careful use of the school plants, preventing students from damage or defacements through writing or drawings on the walls.
- Ensuring that school plants are adequate for students' population.
- Supervising school custodial staff
- Providing working materials for the custodial staff allocating un-accommodated buildings where applicable to staff as residential quarters since buildings deteriorate faster when they are not in use.
- Reporting all major parts to the government on time.
- Teaching students to treat plants as personal properties instead of government facilities.

The U.B.E. programme however, must ensure that all these measures are taken in the maintenance of school plants. Maintenance fund should be given to the school heads since the school heads cannot run to

the ministry every time for minor repairs. The principals and headmasters should also not divert these funds into their private pockets while treating these properties as 'Government Property'. The children, teachers and heads should treat these plants as they treat their own personal properties.

Since man loves beauty and becomes relaxed and comfortable within a beautiful environment. It is therefore imperative that managers of U.B.E should endeavour to put the existing structures into proper functioning by either renovating or do repairs to meet with the present expected standards. Ntukidem (1992) maintains that attractive school plants with superior lighting, attractive decoration, comfortable seating and useful service facilities such as libraries, multi-purpose room e.t.c stimulate learning.

The students in the attractively decorated school will perform better with all the advantages derived from the school plants. A student sitting on a comfortable seat is prone to produce a better handwriting than a student writing while sitting on a broken chair and table, Nwogu (1997).

Suggestions

The following suggestions are considered necessary for the provision and management of school facilities for the UBE programme.

- The government should make sure that all the school facilities such as instructional, recreational, residential and general-purpose facilities should be provided.
- The school heads should also ensure proper utilization of the facilities to keep working to minimize a total breakdown.
- Choices of school facilities should be made in favor of school facilities that are economical to operate and maintain.
- There should be guideline for plant users (teachers, students, non-teaching staff) to ensure that educational facilities are maintained on a regular basis for every educational institution.
- A maintenance department must be established to carry out either major or minor maintenance services for furniture & other less technical & sophisticated educational equipment or facilities.
- There must be a maintenance unit with well trained and remunerated personnel in each of the task areas.

Conclusion

School facilities are the essential facilities necessary for the enhancement of teaching and learning process; these include: libraries, classrooms, chairs, tables, computers, shelves, equipment etc. Hence, excellent school facilities and dedicated teachers are basic ingredients of good educational programme like Universal Basic Education.

However, these school facilities must be sufficiently provided in our educational institutions and well maintained to ensure that optimal use and achievement of educational objectives both in the immediate and in the future, given the available resources.

It is however, no news that the school facilities needed for effective implementation of the U.B.E. programme are inadequate, and in some places, they are totally absent. For examples, there are dilapidated buildings, absence of libraries in most schools, shortage or total absence of laboratory equipment, shortage of tables, chairs, classrooms where available, lack of textbooks, computers and other audio-visual aids.

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