INFRASTRUCTURAL DECADENCE: A CHALLENGE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.

Joshua Olalere and Amina Isyaku

Abstract

Infrastructure is the basic structures and facility inform of building, transportation, water, energy sources and administration system necessary for a country or organization like schools to function efficiently. Infact, it is the basis for quality education. The decadence and inadequacy of the structures and facilities posed strong challenges to effective and functional education in our secondary schools. This paper examines the challenges and proffers some remedies such as government rising up to the challenges of building structures in our secondary schools, i.e construction of classroom, library, ICT centre and stabilizing the epileptic power supply in the country amongst others.

Availability of infrastructural facilities both in terms of quantity and quality is necessary for effective and functional education. Ayis (2006) puts it that in some secondary schools, one can get 80 to 90 students in a small classroom. The overcrowded nature of classroom today poses a great danger to the teaching and learning and invariably poses a serious threat to the quality of education.

When we talk about facilities what readily comes to our mind are; classroom, desk and chairs, laboratories, libraries, workshops, play grounds, chalk and other consumables. In many of our secondary schools even the structure is not available not to talk of other things. Where they exist, the buildings are dilapidated and in most cases, grossly inadequate for the population of the students. In some cases also, funding arrangement are more of paper or budgeting estimation whose implementation is never concluded. The laboratories are ill-equipped, the laboratory space that used to take 28 students, in the 80s now takes over hundred students, equipment and materials for practical are not longer available. All these facts are evident in the research findings of Etuk (2003), and Agbana (2005). However, with these problems at the background, teaching and learning for quality education in secondary schools can not be possible.

Challenges of Energy Sources

There exists a strong relationship between the quality of education and the power sector of any country as it is impossible to build a nation educationally without an efficient supply of power/energy sources. As an essential component for developing a society, energy plays an essential role in communication, education and other sectors.

Nigeria is blessed with abundant energy resources. Nigeria has the 11th largest deposit of crude oil in the world as at 2007 (Wikipedia, 2010) and has the largest deposit of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Nigeria also has two major rivers running through the country, wind and abundant sunshine. In-spite of these resources, the country faces serious electricity shortage. Fatunde (2008) states that Nigeria produces 2, 500 megawatts of electricity a day out of a total maximum daily production capacity of 3,000 megawatts. In December 2009, Okereke (2009) reported that the nation’s power generation to the grid peaked at 3, 600 MW.

This was the highest output in three years according to then minister of power Dr Olarewaju Babalola during his media briefing in Lagos. However, all the potential generating capacity falls short of the 6,000 megawatts promised to be achieved by the president Yar’Adua. These therefore, pose a strong challenge to the school development, functionality of the laboratory equipment in the schools, and so affect the quality of education negatively in our secondary schools.

Knowledge Review Volume 26 No. 4, December, 2012
Challenges of ICT Centre

Information and communication technology (ICT) consists of facilities and features that are capable of changing and enhancing teaching learning and society in Nigeria. They have the potential to enhance access, quality and effectiveness of education in particular and development in general. Aluko, et al (2006) are of the opinion that information and communication technology is one of the major contemporary factors shaping and producing rapid changes in the quality of education in the society. ICT facilities have fundamentally changed the way students learn and communicate.

The ICT facilities that aid learning and teaching included computer, internets, projector digital camera, CDS, cell telephone, communication satellites, fibre optics, television, videos, cassette recorder etc. some of them are cheap but on the whole they are mostly costly. The major challenges is that of getting them available in our schools. In some secondary schools, one can not get even the transistor radio, not to talk or power point presentation and the like. Without ICT facilities and building infrastructures to have them safely, information as well as effective teaching and learning cannot adequately get across to the growing number of students in our secondary schools. It also makes learning of sciences difficult.

Challenges of Library

The decay of teaching and learning infrastructural facilities has greatly rendered Nigerian educational system inactive. According to Dorathy (2001), the absence of teaching infrastructural facility has made the teachers to take to oral exposition which has forced the learner to adopt memorization as the method to teaching at the expense of understanding and possessing the required competence. The challenge passed by lack of library for information in our secondary schools are overwhelming. It is an indisputable fact that information is power and an important working tool for the advancement of humanity and the society.

The overwhelming argument is that information is needed for man to be liberated from the shackles of ignorance, misconception, economic stagnation, social unrest and political instability. It is beyond the burdens of controversy that no nation can strive and survive without relevant information to guide its development plans and objective. Amucheazi (1998) gave a good definition of information literacy as a set of skills and strategies which includes the abilities to recognize a need for information, to retrieve the required information, and to evaluate information. The challenge facing our secondary schools today is the dilapidated library buildings and non-existed of libraries in many secondary schools.

Challenges of Administration System

The government schools ware wholly funded by the government via the grant by either states or federal. As time went on it become necessary for government, for obvious reasons, to acquire the voluntary agency schools and fund them completely. The control and supervision of such schools became the responsibility of the government.

Of recent however, it has become obvious that government alone cannot fund education, continuous in fees would only lead to more drop-out in view of present economic melt down. Some state government have complained that to adequately fund education alone would required almost thrice the annual budgetary provision made to the entire state. However, based on these challenges associated with funding education, the area of cooperation in funding is for the government to encourage individual to contribute in funding education. Thus, lack of appropriate funding is a blow to the quality of education because all the necessary things needed will not be appropriately founded.
Challenges of Transportation

Generally, travelling in Nigeria is a challenge. This is due to a total infrastructural decay in the transport sector. Different geographical locations have historically suffered neglect in development terms. The roads and other basic infrastructure are generally poorly developed. Indeed, Nigerian roads are more or less a death trap. Poor transportation facilities pose the following challenges to secondary schools and quality of education in Nigeria.

i. Lateness to school and absenteeism
ii. drop-out from school by students of poor background
iii. Discouragement of teachers posted to schools.

i. Lateness and Absenteeism: - in most secondary schools especially those in the rural settings, the roads are in a deplorable state. Transporters are discouraged from plying such roads. Students in such locality have to go to school by trekking the distance. The corollary of that is coming to school late and hence resuming the academic work of the day very late. This leads to poor participation in class work resulting in reduction in the quality of education received and consequently leads to poor performance in the academic work.

ii. Increasing the Cost of Schooling and Leading to Students Drop-Out: - Due to the poor state of the roads, transporters consider the effect of the road on their vehicle and the time they spend. All these are transferred to the final consumer who are the passengers. The cost of transportation is therefore increased. The students finds it difficult to fund going to school regularly due to the high transportation fare. Those from poor background are discouraged from going to school. All these defeat the goal for quality education in our secondary schools.

iii. Discouragement of Teachers:- the deplorable condition of roads discourages the teachers from going to schools regularly. Those that are posted to the school in the rural areas find the school unattractive and thereby apply for transfer. The consequences is brain-drain from the schools in the rural areas of qualified teachers by leaving them if at all with unqualified teachers sourced within the locality. The effect is reduction in quality of education received by the students leaving them unprepared to face the future academic challenges in the contemporary society. No wander Davis (1990) lamented that transportation problem has reduced the quality of education in our country.

Conclusion

Having identified some of the infrastructural challenges that impede the achievement of quality education in our secondary schools, it will be appropriate if the recommendation given below are implemented. It is hoped that the quality of education in Nigerian secondary schools will improve in the 21st century.

Recommendation

Considering the role played by infrastructure in our educational system, I would like to make the following recommendations to improve the quality of secondary school education in Nigeria;

i. substantial funding should be extended to secondary schools that are able to perform well in their results.
ii. Government should endeavour to stabilize the epileptic power supply in the country.
iii. Government should give more attention and funds to buildings of school; library, laboratory, ICT etc.
iv. Good road network to our secondary schools should be facilitated by government and individual.
v. NGOs should partner with government in areas of infrastructural development and provision of potable water supply for laboratories to improve their utility.
vi. The secondary schools principals should make infrastructural development a priority and emphasize its contribution to quality education.

vii. Provision of schools buses to secondary schools by state and federal governments should be taken seriously.

viii. Tracking of resources to ensure their proper, adequate and accountable utilization is a necessity.

Reference


