

**PROVISION OF LEARNING FACILITIES AS AN OPTION FOR THE
ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA STATE**

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Abstract

Secondary education occupies a very important and strategic position in any nations' educational system. It provides all primary school leavers with opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background. It prepares its beneficiaries for adult life and motivates them for life-long learning. Secondary education therefore has a strategic role to play for the achievement of Millennium Development Goals.. Four research questions and two null hypotheses were used for this study. A 32 item instrument was used to elicit responses from 279 secondary school principals in Abia State and the 283 senior administrative staff in the zonal education management board. Mean scores were employed to analysis the research questions and z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance and at 558 degree of freedom. The paper concluded that learning facilities in Abia State are inadequate and this militates against the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. The paper recommended that the principal should be allowed to use the equipment fee paid by the students to repair the learning facilities and communities where the schools are located should be actively participate in the provision and maintenance of the learning facilities.

Secondary education occupies a very strategic position in Nigerian's education system. It is not only an acceptable qualification for clerical jobs but also the gateway to a sound higher education, whether academic or professional. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2004) secondary education is the form of education children received after primary education and before the tertiary education. The broad goals of Secondary education according to the policy shall be to prepare the individual for: useful living within the society; and higher education.

In specific terms, the policy stated that secondary education shall:

Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background.

Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles.

Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades.

Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage.

Inspire students with a desire for self improvement and achievement of excellence.

Foster National unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.

Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens (FRN,2004:18).

Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

It prepares its beneficiaries for adult life, promotes social change, social stability and social mobility. It also helps young people to identify and choose their roles in adult life and motivates them for continuing education. Secondary education therefore has vital roles to play in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals which includes: eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; reduction of child mortality; improvement of material health; combating of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environment sustainability; developing global partnership for development; and achievement of basic education.

The factor resources essential for the achievement of secondary education objectives are physical facilities and equipment. Physical facilities and

equipment include school buildings, instructional materials, laboratory facilities and equipment, sports equipment, library facilities and equipment. At secondary school level, they are made up of the school land and all the physical structures on it. They represent the totality of the school environment for the realization of the school business. Olutola in Omu (2006) classified physical facilities and equipment in a secondary school to include classrooms, dormitories, libraries, laboratories, and staff rooms, teachers' quarter's examination halls and administrative buildings, among others. Physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools are therefore important vehicles with which secondary education objectives could be effectively and efficiently achieved. The importance of physical facilities and equipment cannot be over emphasized. For instance, classrooms constitute a ground for sharing experiences and for testing research findings, for the purpose of implementing them if found workable and fruitful. The libraries provide a good reading place for teachers and students. Teachers plan their lessons and mark students' assignments and script in the staff rooms.

Statement of the Problem

The conditions under which secondary school students learn in Abia State is very unconducive and deplorable. This is because according to Mgboto (200)

most secondary schools have dilapidated buildings, broken windows, and roof, this situation, therefore may affect students' academic aptitude and achievement. Most of the schools lack physical structures, good psychologically conducive buildings, library facilities, adventurous playgrounds, and furniture, classrooms, and staff rooms. On this Nwuzor in Eze (2006) observed that the physical condition under which majority of students in secondary schools in Abia state are taught is dehumanizing. On the state of physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia State, Eze (2006) observed that cracked/dilapidated decaying walls, sagging roofs, blown-off roofs, broken doors and windows and bushy surroundings are common phenomenon in the schools. This situation surely militates against students' holistic contribution to the achievement of the millennium development goals. This paper asserts that the achievement of the millennium development goals will be better accelerated with the improvement in the provision and management of physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in the state.

Research Questions

1. What is the state of physical facilities and equipment in the secondary schools in Abia state?

2. What factors create inadequate physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia?
3. How does inadequate provision of physical facilities influence staff and students' performance?

What strategies are to be adopted to abate the situation?

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of School Principals and senior administrative officers of the Zonal Secondary School Management Board (ZSSMB) on the state of physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of School Principals, and senior administrative officers of the Zonal Secondary School Management Boards (ZSSMB) on the strategies to be adopted to improve the poor state of physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia State.

Method

Research Design

The research design used for this study is descriptive survey design which adopted an ex-post-facto design. A descriptive survey design seeks to document and describe what exists or the present status of existence or absence of what is being investigated (Ali, 1996). The

ex-post-facto is considered appropriate because the events had taken place and the researchers cannot manipulate the variables.

Area of the Study

The study was done in Abia State which has 279 secondary schools scattered in the 3 Education Zones of Aba, Umuahia and Ohafia

Population for the Study

The population for this study is made up of the 279 principals and the 283 senior administrative staff of the State Zonal Schools Management Boards (ZSMB) totaling 562 in number. These two groups are in the best position to give information with regard to the provision and management of physical facilities and equipment in Secondary Schools in Abia state.

Sample and Sampling Technique

No sampling was carried from both the principals and the senior administrative staff of the ZSSMB because of their manageable numbers, 279 and 283 respectively. All the 279 principals and all the 283 senior administrative staff of the ZSSMB were therefore involved in the study. The total number of subjects used for the study were therefore 562.

Instrument for Data Collection

Questionnaire titled strategies for improving provision and management of learning facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia State (SIPMLF)

was used to elicit information from the subjects the questionnaire has two sections A and B. Section A dealt with the personal data of the respondents, while section B contained four clusters with 32 items which elicited information from the subjects. A four-point rating scale was provided for the respondents to indicate the strength of their opinions as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by three experts, two in Educational Administration and Planning, and one in Measurement and Evaluation from Abia State University, Uturu. Their corrections and inputs formed the basis for the modification of the items of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the internal consistency of the instrument, a test-retest exercise was carried out with ten principals and ten senior administrative staff from Imo State Education Management Board. The internal consistency reliability for each of the three clusters was computed using Cronbach Alpha statistics. The computation yielded 0.71, 0.72, 0.68, and 0.75 which indicate that the instrument is reliable.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers employed the services of six trained research assistants to administer and collect data from the principals and senior administrative staff of the ZSSMB. The research assistants were teachers recruited from each of the six education zones in the state. After recruitment, they were trained on the modalities for the administration of the instrument. After the training, 562 copies of the instrument were given to them to administer to the respondents two senior administrative staff of the ZSSMB did not return their questionnaire because they were on their annual leave, so that only 560 copies of the instrument were returned by the subjects. Mean scores were employed in analyzing the research questions. A mean score of 2.50 and above in a four-point rating scale was accepted while below 2.50 was not accepted. The z-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses.

Results

The results are presented in line with the research questions, and the null hypotheses that guided the study as presented on the tables below.

Research Question One: What is the state of physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Principals, and Senior Administrative Staff of ZSSMB on State of Physical Facilities and Equipment.

S/N	Items	Principals			Senior staff of ZSSMB		
		X	SD	Dec	X	SD	Dec
1	Physical facilities and equipment are in state of disrepair	2.68	1.08	A	3.06	0.75	SA
2	Laboratory equipment in the schools are obsolete	2.8	0.91	A	2.84	1.02	A
3	The classrooms are not adequate	2.86	0.98	A	2.64	0.93	A
4	The staff rooms are inadequate and unconducieve	2.81	0.01	A	2.86	0.92	A
5	Both the teachers and the students suffer lack of furniture	3.06	0.74	A	2.86	0.92	A
6	Teaching aids are outdated, and dilapidated	3.14	0.64	SA	2.78	0.96	A
7	Office blocks and classrooms are dilapidated	2.82	1.04	A	2.66	1.05	A
8	Most of the schools do not have adequately equipment laboratories and libraries	3.24	0.71	SA	3.04	0.92	SA
	Average/cluster mean	2.94	0.88	A	2.81	0.93	A

From the data presented on the table above, it is observable that the respondents are of the view that the state of physical facilities and equipments in secondary schools in Abia State is poor.

Research Question Two: What factors create inadequate physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia state?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Principals, and Senior Administrative Staff of ZSSMB on the Causes of Inadequacy of Physical Facilities and Equipment

S/N	Items	Principals			Senior Staff of ZSSMB		
		X	SD	Dec	X	SD	Dec
9	Secondary schools in the state are over populated	3.12	0.76	SA	3.24	0.71	SA
10	Secondary education sector is poorly funded	3.68	0.99	SA	3.72	0.42	SA
11	The government is unable to provide adequate facilities and equipment in the schools	3.56	0.06	SA	2.42	0.74	SA
12	Principals' non-challance to the provision of facilities and equipment in the schools	2.74	1.04	A	2.89	0.94	A
13	Schools' physical facilities and equipment are not properly managed	2.61	0.98	A	2.92	0.96	A
14	Most of the principals exhibit poor maintenance culture	2.61	0.98	A	3.08	0.86	A
15	Most of the facilities and equipment in place are out-dated	3.36	0.58	A	2.81	1.08	A
16	The facilities and equipment are destroyed, and or stolen by unknown persons	2.64	1.06	A	3.13	0.74	SA
	Average/cluster mean	3.40	0.87	SA	3.15	0.81	SA

The data on the above table show that the respondents are of the opinion that certain factors are responsible for the inadequacy of physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Question Three. What are the impact of inadequacy of physical facilities and equipment on academic work?

Table 3: Mean Ratings of Principals, and Senior Administrative Staff of ZSSMB on the Effect of Inadequacy of Physical Facilities and Equipment on Academic Work

S/N	Items	Principals			Senior staff of ZSSMB		
		X	SD	Dec	X	SD	Dec
17	Inadequate physical facilities and equipment hamper management of school programmes	3.58	0.78	SA	3.48	0.66	SA
18	Poor facilities and equipment creates poor level of teaching and learning process	3.63	0.76	SA	3.71	0.64	SA
19	Inadequate facilities and equipment militates against the achievement of goals/objectives of secondary education	3.16	0.72	SA	3.21	0.73	SA
20	Poor state of facilities and equipment contributes to falling standard of education	3.72	0.64	SA	3.76	0.46	SA
21	Inadequate facilities and equipment frustrates students and many of them drop out	3.04	0.76	SA	3.76	0.42	SA
22	Poor facilities and equipment affects effective interaction between teachers and students	3.06	0.76	SA	3.11	0.62	SA
23	Poor state of facilities and equipment in secondary schools stunts students' development	3.06	0.78	SA	3.16	0.70	SA
24	Inadequate facilities and equipment encourages indiscipline among staff and students	3.04	0.74	SA	3.13	0.59	SA
	Average/cluster mean	3.27	0.78	SA	3.31	0.63	SA

The data presented on the above table indicate that inadequacy of physical facilities and equipment in secondary school in Abia State has serious advance effect on academic work.

Research Question Four. What strategies are to be adopted to check the poor state of physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia state?

Table 4: Mean Rating of Principals and Senior Administrative Staff of ZSSMB on the Strategies to be Adopted to Check the Poor State of Facilities and Equipment

S/N	Items	Principals			Senior staff of ZSSMB		
		Mean	SD	Level	Mean	SD	Level
26	Students enrollment in secondary schools in the state could be based on the available facilities, and equipment	2.87	0.92	A	2.83	0.92	A
27	The education sector should be adequately funded	3.64	0.84	SA	3.68	0.84	A
28	Part of the equipment fee paid by students should be used for the purchase of equipment and tools	2.74	0.88	SA	2.84	0.91	A
29	The school authorities should adopt good maintenance culture	3.31	0.68	SA	3.58	0.68	SA
30	The communities should be actively involved in the provision of facilities and equipment	3.13	0.81	SA	3.06	0.86	SA
31	Individuals and corporate bodies should donate facilities and equipment to schools in the state	3.48	0.70	A	3.67		SA
32	Effective security should be provided in all secondary schools to safeguard school facilities and equipment	2.86	0.89	A	2.93	0.95	A
	Average/cluster mean	3.26	0.82	SA	3.31	0.86	SA

It is observable from the data presented on the above table that the respondents are of the opinion that certain measures should be adopted to check the poor state of physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia state. Some of these measures include: admitting student according to available facilities and equipment; adequate funding of the education sector; using the equipment fees paid by students to purchase equipment and tools, adopting good maintenance culture; involving the communities, corporate bodies and individuals actively in the provision of facilities; and providing effective security to safe guard facilities and equipment.

Hypothesis One

Table 5: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Difference Between the Mean Ratings of Principals and Senior Staff of ZSSMB on the State of Physical Facilities in Secondary Schools in Abia State.

Subjects	N	X	SD	df	Level of sig	z-cal	z-table	Decision
Principals	279	2.94	0.88	558	.05	1.69	+1.96	Ho1
Snr staff of ZSSMB	281	2.81	0.93					Do not reject

From table 5 above, it can be seen that the null hypothesis was accepted because the calculated z-value of 1.69 is less than the z-critical table value of 1.96 at 558 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis Two

Table 6: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Difference Between the Mean Ratings of Principals and Senior of ZSSMB on the Measures to be Adopted to Improve/Check the Poor State of Physical Facilities and Equipment in Secondary Schools in Abia State

Subjects	N	X	SD	df	Level of sig	z-cal	z-table	Decision
Principals	279	3.15	0.82	558	.05	-1.13	+1.96	Ho2
Snr staff of ZSSMB	281	3.23	0.86					Do not reject

From table 6 above, it can be seen that the null hypothesis was accepted because the calculated z-value of -1.13 is less than the z-critical table value of 1.96 at 58 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance.

Discussion of Findings

With reference to research question 1, the principals and senior administrative staff of the ZSSMB unanimously share the view that physical facilities and equipment are lacking in secondary schools in Abia state. According to them, the physical facilities and equipment in the schools are in state of disrepair; the laboratory equipments are obsolete; the classrooms are inadequate; and the staff rooms are inadequate and unconducive. They also share the view that both the teachers and the students do not have enough furniture; that office blocks and classrooms are dilapidated, and that most of the schools do not have equipped laboratories and libraries. The cluster means for this cluster are 2.94 (for principals) and 2.81 (for senior administrative staff of the ZSSMB).

The findings are in line with the observation of Omu (2006) that the secondary school system is facing severe shortage of classrooms. The findings equally agree with the observation of Mgboto (2000) that most secondary schools have dilapidated buildings, broken windows and roof; that the classrooms are inadequate and unconducive so that the students scarcely find space to sit or move about. The findings are in line with the

findings of Ogbonnaya (2001) that most facilities and equipment in our secondary schools are in the state of disrepair, that there is poor ventilation in the classrooms and that the available facilities and equipment are in the state of disrepair. This is quite unfortunate bearing in mind that certain development targets of the millennium such as eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achievement of universal primary education; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease; and promotion of gender equality, can not be effectively realized in Abia State if the youths in the secondary schools are not effectively and efficiently prepared for their adult roles. The Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved in the state when such large populations of the State are not well groomed to play their roles effectively and efficiently in society.

With reference to research question 2, the respondents share the view that certain factors are responsible for the poor state of physical facilities and equipment in the secondary schools in Abia State. These factors, according to them, are over population of the schools; poor funding of education; inability of the government to provide adequate facilities and equipment; principal's apathy to the provision of facilities and equipment; poor management of facilities and equipment by the principals, staff, and students; poor maintenance culture on the part of the principals; obsolete state of most of the equipment; and destruction of school facilities by both natural and human causes. The cluster means are 3.04 (for

principals) and 3.15 (for senior administrative staff of the ZSSMB).

The findings agree with the view of Oladapo (1987) that the growth rate in student population has outstripped the rate of development of facilities and equipment in schools. The findings are also in agreement with the view of Korgba (1988) that government financial allocations have continued to improve except that as they do students' numbers increase at a higher rate. The findings are in line with the observation of Aminu (1987:7) that "our educational facilities are very inadequate, but what is sad is that even what is available is very insufficiently utilized, through sheer lack of organization, incompetence, mismanagement, and lack of respect to assets". The findings agree with the view of Onwurah (2003) that there is lack of systematic approach to maintenance of physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools.

Poor funding of schools and inadequate provision of resources to cope with the ever increasing demand for educational provision have led to inadequate provision of facilities for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools and thus, hindered the achievement of the objectives of secondary education. It may be argued that if the population presently in the secondary schools (and those who will enter) does not acquire the expected skills, values and knowledge, then their effective contributions to the achievement of the

development goals of the millennium should be forgotten.

Regarding the third research question of the study, the principals, and the senior administrative staff of the ZSSMB share the opinion that the inadequacy of physical facilities and equipment adversely affect academic work in secondary Schools in Abia State. According to them, it hampers management of programmes; it creates poor level of teaching and learning process; it militates against the achievement of the objectives of secondary education; it contributes to falling standard of education. They equally opine that the situation frustrates students and make many of them to drop out of school; it equally affect interaction between teachers and students just as it stunts students' development; encourages indiscipline among staff and students; and creates frustration in the teachers and the students. The cluster means are 3.27 (for principals) and 3.31 (for senior staff of ZSSMB).

The findings are in line with the view of Nworgu in Onwura (2003) that no matter the strength of manpower resources in the school system, the educational process must require conducive physical accommodation, libraries, furniture, and play ground. They equally agree with the observation of Mgbodile (1986) that the social expectations of societies for establishing schools are hardly met due to absence of physical facilities and equipment. The findings agree with Ezeocha (1990) that poor nature of

physical facilities and equipment in schools constitute a serious bottle neck to the achievement of school goals and objectives, the lack or scarcity of physical facilities and equipment does affect the standard of education.

The inability to achieve the objective of secondary education in Abia State cannot be unconnected with the poor state of physical facilities and equipment in the schools. This will adversely affect the effective contributions of the beneficiaries of secondary education to the Millennium Development Goals.

With reference to the fourth research question of the study, the respondents agreed that certain strategies could be adopted to improve on the state of physical facilities in secondary schools in Abia State. Some of these measures include: admitting student according to available facilities and equipment; adequate funding of the education sector; using the equipment fees paid by students to purchase equipment and tools, adopting good maintenance culture; involving the communities, corporate bodies and individuals actively in the provision of facilities; and providing effective security to safe guard facilities and equipment.

These findings agree with the view of Bosah (1997) that there should be effective supervision and control of physical facilities and equipment to ensure their effective use. The findings agree with the observation of Okeke (1983) that efforts should be made to take good care of educational equipment. They equally agree

with the view of Okoro (1991) that efforts should be made to repair equipment that have been damages. Improvement in the funding of the education sector will surely improve the provision of facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia State. The government can no longer provide facilities and equipment alone, the private sector (communities, individual, and corporate bodies) should therefore participate actively in the provision, especially in our secondary schools so that the beneficiaries of secondary education will be effectively prepared for their roles in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Equally when these facilities and equipment are provided they should be properly maintained and safeguarded. The enrolment of students in secondary schools should be guided by the facilities and equipment available in the schools so that each school will avail to its student's adequate facilities and equipment for effective and efficient teaching and learning activities.

Conclusion

Physical facilities and educational goals are closely interwoven and inter dependent in order to achieve effective teaching and learning. There is therefore the need for adequate provision of physical facilities and equipment for effective teaching and learning activities.

Physical facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia State are inadequate and in state of disrepair. The buildings are inadequate, uncondusive and dilapidated. The available facilities and equipment are not properly managed and

are seldom repaired or replaced when they stop functioning. The beneficiaries of secondary education are leaders and developers of tomorrow. They are expected to acquire in the schools the skills and knowledge with which to be useful to themselves and their society, but they are not acquiring these skills and knowledge due to inadequate state of physical facilities and equipment. And this militates against their effective contribution to the development of themselves and their society and thus their contributions to development goals of this millennium. Improvement of the provision and management of facilities and equipment in secondary schools in Abia state will equip the beneficiaries of secondary education better for their roles in their families, immediate society, and the world at large. And when they play their roles effectively, the achievement of the millennium development goals will be accelerated.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this work, we make the following recommendations:

1. Principals should be allowed to use the equipment fee paid by students to do emergency repairs of facilities and equipment in their schools.
2. The chairman of Abia State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) and the School Management Board (SSMB) should regularly visit secondary schools in the State to inspect facilities and equipment.
3. The State Schools Management Board (SSMB) should regularly organize training programmes for its technical staff on how to keep, protect and maintain schools equipment.
4. School authorities should repair and refurbish school equipment as the need arises.
5. The State Schools Management Board (SSMB) should adopt stringent measures against any principals which facilities and equipment are "stolen".
6. The communities where schools are located should be actively involved in the provision of facilities and equipment since the government can no longer do that effectively.
7. The education sector should be adequately funded to enable the ministry of education and its supervisory agencies to provide the necessary facilities and equipment.

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