

EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES IN NIGERIA SCHOOLS, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

Distribution of school facilities has been a challenge with many schools from different States in Nigeria. It has been observed that school facilities have not been equitably distributed to schools even when there is evidence of funding of the capital projects. Equitable distribution of school facilities is a prerequisite to the realization of educational goals and objectives. This paper discussed the equitable distribution of school facilities within schools in Nigeria, its challenges and the way

forward..There are growing concerns among Education stakeholders and Practitioners about the present poor state of Infrastructural facilities available for teaching and learning in Secondary Schools across the Country. The paper examines the concepts of school facilities, classification of school facilities. Highlights were made on problems of facilities distribution in schools which includes poor budgetary allocation to the education sector, poor human resource recruitment, incorrect data, politicization, poor supervision, and rural-urban migration. Some ways to ensure equitable distribution of facilities were highlighted and discussed.

Keywords: Educational facilities, Equitable distribution, Provision, Education, Teaching, Learning, Rural area and urban area.

Introduction

School facilities are veritable tools for educational delivery. The facilities provide a physical environment that is comfortable, safe, secure, accessible, well illuminated, well ventilated, and aesthetically pleasing for the achievement of educational goals. The school facility is much more than a passive container of the educational process: it is, rather, an integral component of the conditions of learning. Educational facilities are important for the enhancement of effective teaching and learning processes, and the overall functioning of the school system. The contribution of educational facilities to the success of educational programs cannot be overemphasized because they are critical in the educational system Ojiri (2022).

According to Emenalo (2007), School facilities are the entire scope of physical infrastructural facilities that are provided in schools to educate a child. The improvement of qualitative education and achievement of educational objectives through sufficient provision and distribution of school facilities to all schools irrespective of location are therefore imperative. Schools are situated in different localities. This is to give education access to all school age children in the different localities of the nation. The schools are to be provided with adequate school facilities for the achievement of educational goals. This calls for the principle of equitable distribution of school facilities. Adesina and Ogunsanji (1984) cited in Lasisi and Adetunj (2020) in their recognition of the need for a well-equipped school noted that for effective teaching and learning situations, physical facilities and educational goals should be viewed as being closely interwoven and inter-dependent. Fabunmi (2007) in support of this asserted that

school facilities when provided will aid teaching and learning programme and consequently improve academic performances of students.

School facilities have three major components these include: infrastructural facilities, instructional facilities and school physical environment. Infrastructural facilities include: buildings such as administrative block, which comprises the principals' office, staff room, classroom, laboratory, stores, record office, school shop, library, music room, cafeteria, Introductory technology laboratory, security post, staff quarters and school farm as well as storage house, electricity, water supply, sport field among others. The absence of these facilities often leave a lot of doubt in the minds of stakeholders, parents, students and the general society as to what type of teaching and learning that could take place in such a situation. Lawanson and Gede (2011) further classified school facilities according to their types and the purpose they serve in school as: (1.) Instructional facilities, (2.) Recreational facilities, (3.) Residential facilities and (4.) General Purpose facilities. Schools in Nigeria are situated in different localities both rural and urban areas. This is to give education access to all school age children in the different localities of the nation. The schools are to be provided with adequate school facilities for the achievement of educational goals. This calls for the principle of equitable distribution of school facilities.

Adiele et al. (2017) quipped that the principle of equitable distribution advocates equitability in the distribution of and accessibility to all provided learning resources no matter where the school is located. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2023) stated that all schools in the country through adequate planning be provided with adequate facilities. The policy also points out that these educational facilities would in no small measure help learners (students) to aspire higher in their educational pursuit and inspire them with a desire for self-improvement, and achievement for excellence. In a study of Aibgoje (2007) it was found that some school facilities were inadequate while others are not available at all. Nwadiani (2001) observed that the facilities are not only over utilized they are also poorly maintained. Where the facilities are available, they are not maintained. This Aminu (1986) in Abdulkareem and Fasasi (2010) supported by accusing Nigerian schools of poor strategic planning in their physical development. He observed that in certain schools, laboratories were dusty, bottles of chemicals were left open on the benches, unlabeled. The study carried out by Aminu (1987) in Babatope (2010) shows that in some schools visited laboratories were dusty, bottles of chemical were left opened on the benches unlabeled. Mbakwem and Asiabaka (2007) also lamented on the

unhealthy nature of the buildings: uncompleted, old and antique, sometimes dilapidated buildings, overcrowded and uncondusive classrooms and unhygienic toilet, inadequate laboratories and workshops. Adiele et al. (2017) quipped that the principle of equitable distribution advocates equitability in the distribution of and accessibility to all provided learning resources no matter where the school is located. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2023) stated that all schools in the country through adequate planning be provided with adequate facilities. The policy also points out that these educational facilities would in no small measure help learners (students) to aspire higher in their educational pursuit and inspire them with a desire for self- improvement, and achievement for excellence. Hence, this chapter discusses the equitable distribution of school facilities in the different schools within the States in Nigeria. .

Concept of Educational Facilities/ School facilities

According to Abdulkareem and Fassasi (2010), Educational facilities refer to non-human and non-financial resources. They also include all movable and immovable materials which are used for teaching and learning and other school activities. They are synonymous with school physical facilities, school material resources, school plant and school facilities. Olaboye (2004) stated that educational facilities consist of instructional resources such as audio and visual aids; graphic, printed materials display materials and consumable materials. They also include physical resources such as building, land, furniture, equipment, machinery, vehicles, electricity and water supply infrastructures. Furthermore, Ojedele, (2004) identified three components of educational facilities. These are school infrastructure such as buildings and playgrounds instructional facilities (teaching and learning materials, equipments and furniture) and school physical environment.

Components of School Facilities

According to (Barron, 2000) there are three (3) major components. These are:

1. Infrastructural facilities
2. Instructional facilities
3. School physical environmental

Infrastructural Facilities:

These includes buildings such as administrative block,(which comprises, the principal's office, vice principal and staff rooms, classroom) laboratory, sick bay, music room, typing pool, school gymnasium, cafeteria, security post, school farm, sport field, school shop, storage house, computer room, language laboratory, constant water supply etc.(Bimler, 2009). According to Bimler

(2009), there are three major facets that buildings in schools should have. They include:

i. Acoustic and Noise

Noise levels greatly affect teachers' and students' performance. In fact, excessive noise causes dissatisfaction and stress to both teachers and students. Research has shown that schools that have classrooms with less external noise are positively associated with greater student engagement and achievement compared to schools with classrooms that have noisier environment. Thus, building schools that buffer external noise from classroom can improve students' outcomes.

ii. Air Quality

Indoor air quality is also a concern. Poor air quality is a major contributor to absenteeism for students with asthma and other respiratory diseases. Research also indicates that many schools suffer from "Sick Building syndrome" which causes absenteeism and affects academic performance of students in schools. Moreover, bacteria, viruses and allergens affect childhood ventilation system as a result of poor ventilation. Classes with poor ventilation discourage teaching and learning processes, which results to students' poor performance in academics.

iii. Classroom Size and Space

Over- crowded classrooms and schools have consistently been linked to increased level of aggression in students. Over- crowded classroom are also associated with decreased level of students engagement and therefore decreased level of learning. Alternatively, classrooms with ample space are more conducive for providing appropriate learning environment for students. School facilities especially the infrastructural (building) facilities ought to have these facilities to enhance effective teaching and learning among the teachers and students.

Instructional Facilities

These are teaching materials and equipment and comprise of laboratory equipment, introductory technological equipment, wall clocks, televisions, radio, V.C.D plates and players, pianos, flutes, chalkboard, cardboards, apparatus for science practical, models, pictures and charts, etc.

The Constituent of School Physical Environment

This includes; building and spacious parking lot, playground, sport field, agricultural farm, fire extinguisher, school bus etc. Also, school facilities includes mechanical material like technological machines, generators, photocopiers, computers, plumbing materials like water taps, electrical telecommunication like speakers, security network and fire suppression system.

Importance of School Facilities

Toria (2003) School facilities have a profound impact on both teachers and students' outcome. With respect to teachers, school facilities affect teachers' recruitment, retention, commitment and effort. In respect to students, school facilities affect health behavior, engagement, learning and growth in achievement. Thus, researchers generally conclude that without adequate facilities and resources, it is extremely difficult to serve a large number of children with complex needs.

Needs for Proper School Facilities in Schools

Ariyo (2008) stated that School facilities are designed to serve specific purposes in a school system. There are so many types of facilities which stimulate teaching and learning. They are used to:

1. Illustrate concept
2. Provide opportunity for the hand experience
3. Helpful in better school administration and organization
4. Protect the individual and also ensures safety in school and also provide comfort
5. Provide diversity of thoughts
6. Helpful in the all -round development of the personality of the students
7. For scientific investigation and discovery
8. For experimentation and demonstration
9. Boost the teachers' morale. Since the facilities they require are available, they would put in their best thereby giving the students the best.
10. Beautify the environment thereby encouraging parents to enroll their wards and this increases the desire to learn.

Equitable Distribution of School Facilities

Resource allocation in education does not take place in a vacuum. Instead, it often reflects policy conditions that form a context in which opportunities for effective leadership can be created. For example, effective leaders know how to use data strategically to inform resource allocation decisions and to provide insights about how productivity, efficiency, and equity are impacted by allocated resources. The purposeful and practical allocation of resources to support equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities is a major component of education policy at the federal, state, and local levels (Lynch, 2011). According to Ojiri (2022) When it comes to the

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distribution of school facilities, “equity and equality” are very dissimilar. The idea of equality indicates if per- students funding at every school should be the same. Hence, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2023) stated that all schools in the country through adequate planning be provided with adequate facilities. Therefore, leaders at all levels of education are charged with making decisions about how to effectively distribute and leverage resources to support teaching and learning.. Ensuring that schools who need more to achieve success receive those facilities and opportunities illustrate equity in action. Equitable distribution in this study is distinct from the definition of simple equity, which has to do with being fair and impartial. The equitable distribution of school facilities here refers to the allocation of facilities in all school districts, independent of their location. This Ojiri (2022) supported by stated the importance that equity centers on if less advantageous students should get more to catch up. The students who are the utmost behind- most often are students from the rural areas and they require more of these facilities to catch up, succeed and eventually close the achievement gap. Giving students who come to school lagging academically (because of some factors outside of the school's control) the same facilities as students in the urban areas will not close the achievement gap. But making sure that schools in rural areas have access to exceptional teachers and other facilities they need to succeed will to continue bridge the gap Furthermore as a principle, Adiele et al. (2017) asserted that equitable distribution advocates equitability in the distribution of and accessibility to all provided learning resources no matter where the school is located. Resource equity refers to the allocation and use of resources (people, time, facilities and money) to create student experiences that enable all children to reach empowering and rigorous learning outcomesno matter where the school is located (Lynch, 2011).

According to Ojiri (2022), Equitable distribution ensures that school facilities are appropriately channeled to areas where they are required in the right quality and quantity to avoid over or under-utilization which amounts to wastage. This guarantees effective operation and maintenance of standards in the educational system. This enables all children to reach empowering and rigorous learning outcomes. In this respect, leaders are concerned not only with the level of resources and how they are distributed across districts, schools, and classrooms but also with how these investments translate into improved learning. The provision of educational facilities and equitable distribution, therefore, cannot be overemphasized.

Problems of Facilities Distribution in Secondary Schools

Facilities distribution in secondary schools in recent times has contributed immensely to the present state of education in the country. However, some problems or challenges inhibit the proper distribution of facilities. According to Ojiri (2022), the following are the challenges facing the equitable distribution of facilities in schools:

1. **Poor budgetary allocation to the education sector:** The percentage of the national budget allocated to education depends on certain factors which when considered will make or mar the education system. Edem as cited in Obasi and Asodike (2007) noted that such factors include the rate of national economic growth, the condition of the world market especially the price of oil which is the major foreign exchange product, the competition of other sectors of the economy and the nature of revenue for education. Budgetary allocation by the Nigeria government to the education sector is below the recommended 26% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of each country in the world as stated by UNESCO. This will no doubt impact negatively on the financial and material resources available in the secondary schools. It needs not to be overemphasized that the funding of education is becoming a burden for the government, being the major financier. Thus, all stakeholders, parents, companies, Non-Governmental Organizations should contribute to the funding and sustenance of education. The government should recognize that education is synonymous with growth and development because no country grows and develops beyond its educational standard. For this reason, budget allocation for education should be equitably distributed to schools.

2. **Poor human resource recruitment:** Another challenge is the recruitment of staff. Recruitment connotes all those activities designed to search for and attract the desired quality and quantity of staff to satisfy the established needs. Given the strategic role of teachers in the education process and the level of inadequacy in secondary schools, the government should recruit additional teachers and distribute them to schools where they are not enough majorly in rural schools. In the educational system, teachers are recruited and selected by the Ministry of Education or the various Education Board after advertisement of the teaching vacancies have been made in the electronic or print media. Those recruited are then posted to different schools where their services are needed. Oftentimes, this process is poorly carried out in the sense that some of the teachers recruited are not qualified for the position or do not have the experience to handle the facilities provided. This poses a big challenge to the educational planners and the school.

3. **Incorrect data:** Data is a veritable tool an educational planner needs to make good decisions and provision of educational facilities. The widespread collection of data in education has given rise to vast amounts of information. According to Arne Duncan, United States Secretary of Education from 2009 through 2016, “Data gives us the roadmap to reform”. It tells us where we are, where we need to go, and who most is at risk” (US Department of Education, 2009). For any facility to be adequately distributed there is the need for correct or actual data. Incorrect data is a problem confronting the distribution of school facilities. Without sufficient and up-to-date information on the population for whom such facilities are to be provided, there cannot be an efficient and equitable distribution of the school facilities.
4. **Politicization:** School facility is affected when politic is taken into consideration indistributing it. The outcome of it is that some schools will be provided for more while others will be sparsely distributed. Most times, where schools are given more, they are still for political reasons located close to the abode of politicians that are in control of the government or the seat of power. A drastic step should be taken to address this imbalance to bring about equitable distribution of school facilities in schools that may promote patronage.
5. **Poor supervision:** Poor supervision of the distribution of school facilities is another challenge. It is not a gainsaying that supervision plays a great role in achieving quality education in schools. There is a need for proper and adequate supervision by the Ministry of Education in schools. When these facilities are not properly supervised until it gets to the rightful destination, they can be diverted to other places or used for personal interest.
6. **Location of schools:** The location of schools can aid or discourage the distribution of school facilities. For instance, when schools are located where there are no access roads, it will be difficult for the facilities to get there. But well-located schools with access road networks allows for easy distribution of the school facilities. More schools in the rural areas lack access roads and this has adversely affected the delivery of some school facilities in such areas unlike in the urban areas where the roads are accessible for quick and easy delivery.
7. **Rural-Urban migration:** Migration is a huge challenge in schools as it negatively affects school population and quality education. Most of the rural dwellers that move to the urban areas attributed to the problem of distributing school facilities equitably. The majority of the families that moved from rural to urban settlement consider education better in urban more than rural areas. This then necessitates a change in population in the areas they relocated or migrated to. Teachers deployed to rural areas prefer to be redeployed to the urban areas

(Adeyemi, 2009). This situation has led to an imbalance in the distribution of teachers in the state.

Effective Ways to Ensure Equitable Distribution of School Facilities

Resources according to the Economists are always inadequate in supply in various fields of human endeavors and even when they become available, they amount to nothing if not well distributed. When administrators distribute school facilities to schools, they are tasked with determining how their time and money will address educational goals. In some situations, an administrator may allocate an equal amount of facilities to every school in the State. On the other hand, even though the amount is equal, some schools may require far more facilities than others to maintain educational equity. Auta (2012) opined that the lack of equitable distribution of facilities results in depression in the students learning. Equitable distribution of the school facility means appropriate channeling of the amenities to areas where they are required in the right quality and quantity to avoid over or under-utilization which will amount to wastage. In addition to how the facilities are distributed across schools, educational planners and stakeholders must pay close attention to how these resources translate into improved learning. The rural-urban dichotomy in the provision and distribution of human and physical facility is perceptibly in Nigerian Schools. Agabi as cited in Adiele, Obasi, and Ohia (2017) observed that concerning school standards, provision of facilities and distribution, the school in urban areas are considered more due to overpopulation. He further stated that most schools in the rural areas are poorly equipped, staffed and lack in social amenities. As a result of this, teachers begrudge posting to such areas because of what they consider as poor social life and lack of opportunities. This is a typical experience in Imo State where most secondary schools face the challenge of adequate school facilities. The reality of rural-urban disparity is that parents find it difficult to accept or allow their children placed in schools located in the rural communities and thus, they do everything possible in their capacity to get them into the well-endowed, famous or prestigious schools located in the urban centers where they believe that their children would make it to the tertiary institution. The current effects of rural-urban dichotomy on facilities distribution to schools are unquantifiable. It exacerbates many out-of-school students. Such a structure has an infinite capacity for the continued recycling of the poverty of the rural dwellers. This point is buttressed by the findings of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2005). According to the report, the place of residence (urban-rural) influences the likelihood that a child will be out of school. The proportion of children out of

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school is greater in a rural area. All things being equal, the provision and distribution of school facilities should follow the same trend since there are lofty concentrations of school age in the rural areas knowing too well that rural schools lack good facilities, they have low enrolment, less qualified teachers, fewer textbooks and other teaching and learning materials whereas urban schools are generally overstaffed with qualified teachers, over-enrolled, better funded, properly monitored or supervised, have better infrastructure and adequate resources to work with. The achievement gap between urban and rural schools is a pressing problem in this contemporary time because former methods to bridge the gap have been largely urban biased in character. Ojiri (2022) stated that School facilities can be distributed considering the following criteria:

1. **Identification of Needs:** School facilities may be distributed based on the need of the school, department or units. In school organizations, facilities that are needed in schools such as teachers, books, laboratory equipment et cetera should be identified and distributed based on the need of the school. For instance, a need for some subject teachers like English, Mathematics or Sciences should be carried out wisely by getting the number of students enrolled for the subject to know the number of teachers to provide to avoid under or overestimation. Also, the physical facilities such as classrooms, laboratory equipment, textbooks and so on should be distributed to schools based on the number of students in the school.
2. **Inventory Survey:** A comprehensive diagnostic inventory survey of the existing stock of school facilities should be carried out. Inventory data has to be collected and analyzed by the education planners to provide information on the location, quantity, and type of facility needed before it can be provided and distributed to the schools. This will provide the educational map or the distributional network of the existing school facilities needed in the development of the facilities master plan. Without proper inventory data, the school administrator may not be able to itemize those facilities needed for the school.
3. **Adequate Specification:** School facilities, project or program requires a specific pattern in design and implementation. Such specification could be in terms of size, quality or quantity (number) structural requirement for erecting different types of educational structures (classrooms, laboratory, library, etc) and installation of the equipment to ensure that the needs are adequately met. The school facility requires adequate specifications for proper distribution. For instance, in a situation where a school is provided with excess chairs and tables for the student in a classroom that occupies only one hundred capacity of the student, the rest will amount to wastage as there will be no classroom to keep them. All specifications must, however, be in line with the Ministry of Education

requirement and must make provision for flexibility to meet the changing needs of the schools.

4. **Enrolment rate:** The enrolment rate of each school need to be considered in distributing school facilities. Schools with high enrolment rates need to be given adequate facilities that will accommodate the number of students in such school. Likewise, the number of teachers that would be deployed to such schools should equate the number of students considering the student-teacher ratio.

Conclusion

This paper examines the equitable distribution of school facilities as it applies to schools in Nigeria. The provision and distribution of school facilities are very essential and is of paramount importance to all levels of education. Many problems related to equitable distribution of school facilities were examined in this paper. They are stated as poor budgetary distribution to the education sector, incorrect data, politicization, urban-rural migration amongst others. Some effective ways to ensure equitable distribution of school facilities were proposed to overcome most of the identified problems. The achievement of secondary education objectives can be determined by the extent schools are provided with the school facilities, distributed and properly utilized suggestions. The following suggestions were made to strengthen the need for equitable distribution

of school facilities in schools in Nigeria:

1. The proper procedure for the distribution of school facilities to secondary schools should be developed by the planning section of the Ministry of Education and monitored strictly when distributing to schools.
2. The government should provide recent textbooks and resource materials in the school libraries for teachers and students to enhance their knowledge; E-library can also be provided for the schools.
3. The government should make funds available to school principals for the procurement of educational facilities to enhance and improve the students' academic performance.

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