## **ESUT Journal of Education (EJE)**

Vol. 6 Issue 1, May 2023

# Managing School Plant for the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): the Proactivity of Education for all in Enugu State.

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Education for All is a global challenge that interplays between other items on the SDG's list. The worry over a significant number of school—going aged children being out of school and the failure of the numerous governmental policy /strategies to take children out of streets in the past decades underscores the researcher's interest. To that effect, the study investigated the extent to which school plant management could heighten the chances of achieving the SDGs "Education for All" in Enugu State. 1 research question and 1 null-hypothesis guided the study. A total of 2,177 formed the population, out of which 246 was sampled. The findings revealed that school plant management can to a great extent lead to the achievement of education for all in Enugu State. Based on this, the researcher recommended among other things as follows, 1. Secondary schools in Enugu should be beautifully afforested so as to be attractive enough to make the children feel at home, 2. Classrooms should be designed /constructed to make for proper ventilation

**Keywords:** Education, Secondary education, School plant, School plant management and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

### INTRODUCTION

Every 21<sup>st</sup> century society considers education as a developmental-tool per' excellence. It is seen as an instrument which houses every other instrument for the realization of a nation's goal. It is the level of a nation's literacy that determines her extent of development. This accounts for the reason why nations world over accord preeminent attention to education in their developmental plans. Education is a process by which positive change is influenced for the benefit of the society. The national educational aims and objectives for all levels of education are: the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; and training for understanding the world around (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013).

Supportively, Alatunji (2012) asserts, the development of every society depends on the nature and functionality of educational system. The central focus of education in Nigeria is the arming of the citizenry with such knowledge, skills, attitudes and values as to enable them to derive maximum benefits from their membership in society, lead a fulfilling life and contribute to the development and welfare of the community. It can as well be thought of as the transmission of values and accumulated knowledge of a society into the newer generation. It can be said to have been designed to guide the children in learning a culture, molding their behaviour through the ways of adulthood and directing them towards their eventual role in the society. It is likened to what social scientists call socialization or enculturation. By



implication, no nation can hand down anything meaningful to its vounger generation without the process of education. Education is the machinery technological, economic and social advancement. Education is attained at different levels Secondary, Primary and Tertiary.

Secondary education comprises the formal education that occurs during adolescence. It is characterized by transition from the typically compulsory and comprehensive primary education for minors, to the optional, selective tertiary, "postsecondary", or "higher" education (e.g. university/ vocational school) for adults, the purpose of which may include to give common knowledge or to train directly in a profession. Depending on the system, schools for this period, or a part of it, may called high schools, gymnasiums, lyceums, middle schools. colleges, vocational schools. The exact meaning of any of these terms varies from one system to another. The boundary between primary and secondary education also varies from country to country and even within them but is generally around the seventh to the tenth year of schooling. UNESCO (2009), Posited that Secondary education covers two phases on the International Standard Classification of Education scale. Level 2 or lower secondary education (less common junior secondary education) is considered the second and final phase of basic education, and level 3 (upper) secondary education is the stage before tertiary education. Every country aims to provide basic education, but the systems and terminology remain unique to them. Like primary education, in most countries secondary education compulsory, at least until the age of 16, it This level is meant for stated further. children between the ages of 12-17 years (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013). Secondary education occurs mainly during the teenage years. According to Ozoagu

(2015), it prepares the children for future challenges in life and helps make them adaptable citizens of a given society. In a similar view, Obanya in Ozoagu (2015), opined that secondary education in Nigeria provides the beneficiaries both with literary and basic skills, which the individual can use for himself or in the industries and establishments government performing a task for living. Similarly, the above reflects the view of Taiwo in Ozoagu (2015) who noted that most workers of preindependent Nigeria were products of the voluntary grammar schools. It equally provides the bulk of the nation's workforce. It is against the above background, that Mkpa in Ozoagu (2015) noted that proper handling of secondary school will yield good result in National development. In secondary schools, the principal is the chief executive that is charged with administrative tasks necessary for progress of the institution, while teachers are left with daily classroom activities. The teacher is assumed to have passed through a-teacher-training institution and possess at least National Certificate in Education (NCE), which qualifies one to Nigeria. Secondary teach in school education can only be productive if there is effective and efficient management of human and material resources available to it. Despite the position of adolescence minds for technological advancement, students' enrollment has not been encouraging. Many researchers accuse this menace on the persistent harsh weather in school environment. Researchers have also suggested that good learning environment be created through plant management.

School plant is the controlled milieu/environments which facilitates teaching and learning process as well as protect the well-being of the occupants. According to Xaba (2012) school plant incorporates operational input resources in the school system. It comprises the site,

buildings, play grounds, health facilities, instructional materials and all forms of school equipment. It is the site, the buildings, the equipment and all essential structures, permanent and semipermanent machines, laboratory equipment as well as blackboard/chalkboard needed for effective teaching and learning (Ololube, Kpolovie. Amaele. Amanchukwu Briggs, 2013). Similarly, Azever. Gire. Kpernyam & Akpe (2019) opine that school plant includes the school sites, medical facilities, instructional materials, school laboratories. classroom facilities. recreational facilities among others. All this, Azever et al note further, are relevant in the teaching and learning process in a school system. In their own, Yusuf, Ajayi, and Sofoluwe (2013) defined school plant as interpretation of the curriculum. Njoku in Ebimuna (2021) refers school plants as educational facilities that are tangible such as buildings, land, equipment, machineries, furniture, fixtures and fittings which are put into use and capable of providing excellent educational services. It is also said to be the entire physical infrastructural facilities provided in the school for the purpose of educating the child, which include the school site and all the structures that have been put in place to aid effective teaching and learning in the school. More so, it refers to all nonconsumable and durable physical and infrastructural facilities available in the school for teachers' and students use in order to make not just teaching and learning effective but also make schooling attractive achievement thus ensure the of predetermined aims and objectives education. Hence, the school plant involves the space within the school premises which houses the basic systems and structures capable of attracting and retaining a student till pass-out year (Ebimuna, 2021). School plant are those structures which include buildings, libraries, chairs. machines. technical workshops, playground and other

non-human resources that aid the actualization of teaching and learning objectives. It is seen as an integral element of teaching/learning environment because of the direct and indirect roles it plays in the achievement of educational success. For instance, Enwezor (2021) observed that it will be impossible for the curriculum to be implemented if the physical facilities required for teaching and learning are not available. It is believed that a comfortable and caring school plant contributes to academic success/excellence. It is also the view of Azever, Gire, Kpernyam & Akpe (2019) that Poor lighting system, noise, high level of carbon dioxide in classrooms and inconsistent temperatures make teaching and learning difficult and by extension may discourage learners' interest. It is of general believe, that poor plants location and ineffective ventilation systems lead to poor health among the people including students and teachers. Absence of school plant makes teaching ineffective and also hampers desired learning outcome. The implication of the above is that, school plant is or should be designed to satisfy the physical and emotional needs of both students and staff. It should be however noted that, the physical need of staff and students can only be met by ensuring safe structures, adequate facilities. balanced visual sanitary environment, an appropriate thermal satisfactory environment. a acoustic environment and sufficient accommodation for their work and relaxation. Also, the emotional needs of both staff and students can be met by creating conducive and pleasant surroundings. A friendly and an inspiring school plant is capable of not just increasing academic performance students and staff job satisfaction but also increasing the number of students enrolment at all levels thus reducing the number of out-of-school children on the thereby tilting towards the achievement of education for all.

Management is a specific process consisting of the activities of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, performed to determine and accomplish stated objectives with the use of human beings and other resources (Ozoagu, 2015). A common idea in these and many other definitions is that management is goal-directed. The definition conveys the idea that management involves a series of on-going activities, individuals and groups working together, use resources, efficiency and effectiveness. These ideas and terms are applicable to the management of the school plant. School plant management entails the making and carrying out a series of decisions by individuals and groups in building school a plant according to need, operating and using it effectively and efficiently and ensuring that it is in a functional state as the educational program is being implemented (Okeke, 2013).

According to Enwezor (2021), school plant management involves a number of on-going and related activities vis-a-vis determining the need for school plants, educational program planning, school facility or building design, building construction, furnishing and equipping the school, school plant operation, utilization and maintenance and school plant modernization or renovation if and when the need arises.

In the words of Fenker in Ozoagu (2015), facilities management generally, is a process that ensures that building and other technical systems support the provisions of an organization. School plant management ensures that school buildings and grounds, equipment, materials, technical and other service systems, facilitate and support the provision of education by a school. Azever, Gire, Kpernyam & Akpe (2019) argue that great relationship exist between the state of school facilities and goals achievement. May be, this explains why Ada in Jibrin (2014) posited thus "a well-developed

curriculum will fail if it is not supported with adequate and functional facilities just as a well-trained teacher who can improvise will not succeed if he or she does not have the minimum facilities to work with/ or on. Indeed. teaching and other learning activities of the school can only successfully take place in a conducive environment. These are facilities which physically and spatially enable teaching and learning and by extension help in producing desirable results as evidenced by good academic performance of products of an education set up/system (Olaniyan and Anthony, 2013). The general attitude of government cum school administrators towards the institution/management of school plants in determines to some extent, the efficiency in the use and effectiveness of the school plant in supporting the academic programme and satisfying the needs of both school and society. It is believed that a wellmanaged school plant will gear up expected outcomes of education that may facilitate teaching/learning, effective academic achievement and retention of children in the school through the period of a programme (Adesina in Olaniyan and Anthony, 2013). Emphasizing the importance of school plant Oluchukwu in Ebimuna management, (2021) asserts that proper maintenance of such plants as school buildings, classrooms, library and laboratory, school environment an essential aspect of educational administration and management. If school facilities are not well maintained, adequate utilization becomes impossible entailing that effective teaching and learning may not take place. School plants will enhance better school programmes and the community providing needs by a place psychological and physical safety for students and teachers thereby enthroning high quality and quantity of instruction. The availability of, adequate and well managed school plants will therefore favourable environment for teachers to use

their creativity and knowledge in teaching for the students to learn effectively.

The failure of many nations to address the specified in the Millennium goals Development Goals whose timeframe expired in 2015 led to the emergence of Sustainable Development Goals Sustainable development goals usually shortened as SDGs or Project 2030 is a global call to put an end to poverty, secure the planet and ensure that everyone enjoys peace and prosperity by 2030. It was adopted by 193 countries with Nigeria as one. The SDGs are a set of seventeen interconnected goals which have targets with at least one or two indicators for each target. SDGs seventeen global goals which have education as the number 4 were designed as a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all" (Wikipedia the free encyclopedia). It is regarded the panacea for confronting the challenges of development, facing many nations of the world, especially the Less Developed Countries. To Ciegis, Ramanauskiene, and Martinkus (2009).development sustainable embraces environmental,  $\quad \text{and} \quad$ economic, social developments, which they described as "interrelated and complementary". The overall goal of sustainable development according to Emas (2015) is for long-term stability of the economy and environment; which could only be achieved through a proactive governmental decision. In the words of Flint (2013)sustainable development is a programme of action developed from the consequences of past exploitation and from scientific demonstration of the long-term harm inflicted on environmental and social capital". United Nations (UN) General Assembly in Olajide & Aladejebi (2019) sees sustainable development as type of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

According to UN Development Group (2013), SDGs were developed not by a group of experts but by an unprecedented global priority-setting process, engaging more than a million people around the world surveys, reports, through global consultations in nearly 100 countries. Sustainable Development Goal no. 4 is identified to constitute a force contributes to social, economic and in fact all round development. Corollary, Nigeria as member state to United Nations is committed to achieving not just the global goals but with specific interest in goal no.4 as it dwells on equitable and quality education for all (El-Rufai, 2020), in his report El-Rufai notes further, that a key challenge confronting the Nigerian nation has to do with Out-of-School Children among other things. Olajide & Aladejebi (2019) reiterates thus "the significance of SDG4 lies in the fact that, quality education is a requirement for the transformation of societies". In a very close remark, Sikwibele in Flint (2013) pointed out that education helps to produce trained human resources needed for carrying out the research and development activities relevant to all the other goals, provide service and monitoring programmes. Supportively, United Nations Scientific Education and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2017) assert that education is the key that will allow many other Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved". The reason for the above is because, through education knowledge can be inculcated into the people on how to protect and free themselves from hazards, poverty, labour, exploitation and disease. To this end, it is therefore necessary that Nigeria do not provide just education but also try making it more qualitative and attractive, as this will enhance attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **Statement of the problems**

Researches have shown that over 59 million children of school going age are out of school and also, that among those 59 million children, 2 in every 5 dropped out. To worsen the situation recent trends suggest that 3 in every 5 of out-of-school aged population may never set their foot to classrooms. This is attributable to among other factors the way and manner in which our education system is handled and the conditions our schools are left in. Apart from other issues which are always found at the button of every educational problems, there is the issue of lack of proper management of the school physical facilities and out-right negligence on the part of both government and school administrators. While some children are not in school because their families lack such thing as the finance to pursue the course of education, many dropped because the system is neither encouraging nor attractive. The sight of many Nigerian schools today are very irritating, some classes pose veritable threats lives, environments not save inhabitable, laboratory and other facilities dilapidated, computer sets and machines left in non-functional states. The issue of insufficient buildings for use as classrooms and administrative purposes, inadequate seats, absence of chalk/ink-boards etc, partly account for the loss of interest in education among the school aged population. The positioning of education as item number 4 on the SDGs list is not unconnected with its importance. There is no disputing of the fact that, the UN SDGs Agenda are laudable and timely, this notwithstanding, attainment of these goals especially that of No. 4 (Education for all) by Nigeria might be a mirage. This is because Nigeria is not just a developing nation but also has never been found to be proactive and strategic with respect to developmental processes. As a result, the study was initiated to explore means by which SDGs "Education for All" can be attained. The emphasis on the

number 4 of the seventeen items goals is because education is adjudged and widely acknowledged the hub around which every other factor of development revolves.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to examine the contribution of school plant in the realization Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought the extent to which school plant management can lead to the actualization of SDGs "education for all" in Nigeria

## **Research question**

The question below guided the study:

What is the extent to which school plant management can lead to the achievement of SDGs "education for all" in Enugu State?

## **Hypothesis**

The study was anchored on the hypothesis below:

There will be no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and principals on the extent to which a school plant management can lead to the actualization of SDGs "education for all" in Enugu State.

## Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The researcher's interest in survey is because it analyzes data in their natural design. It is however, noteworthy that for the purpose of objectivity, the study was narrowed to a particular education zone; Enugu to be précised. The population for this study was 2,177 comprising 31 principals and 2,146 teachers in the public secondary schools in the zone (Enugu Education Zone Board). Due to the fact, that this population was a humongous one and could not be managed for the study, a stratified/proportionate random sampling was employed to select schools from the Local Government Areas, then, principals of each and 10% of the teachers from selected schools form the study sample. This agrees with Uzoagulu (2011). Therefore, a sample size of 246 (31 principals and 215 teachers) was drawn and used. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire titled "Managing School Plant for the Achievement of the SDG's "Education for All" In Enugu State (MSPASDGEFA)".

The instrument was developed by the researcher. It has two sections, where section "A" is concerned with the respondents' bio-data, section "B" contains information on the extent to which management of school plan can lead to the achievement of SDG's "Education for All" in Enugu State. The said questionnaire was based on four points rating scale of Very (1point), Little Extent Little Extent (2points), Great Extent (3points) and Very Great Extent (4points). The instrument was face validated by two experts in educational

management and one in measurement and evaluation unit of Mathematics & Computer Department, Eaculty of education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Agbani. The researcher with the help of his assistance administered and retrieved the questionnaire. However, out of the 246 copies of questionnaire issued, 212 were retrieved representing 86.18%. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at .05 level of significance. decision was that any item that scores mean of 2.50 and above, was rated "great extent", while anyone below was rated "little extent". The rule for the hypothesis is if the t-cal. value is less than the t-cri. Value the null-hypothesis is rejected but where the reverse is the case, do not reject.

#### Results

Mean ratings of Principals and Teachers on the extent to which school plant management can lead to the achievement of SDGs "education for all" in Enugu State.

	Principals=23	Teachers =189		
Items	x SD Dec.	X	SD D	ec.
1. A well afforested and secured School environment	2.58 0.91 GE	2.55	0.91	GE
2. A beautiful and well- mapped out walk ways within the school compound	2.56 0.95 GE	2.57	0.99	GE
3. A well-furnished/ventilated classroom and offices	2.67 0.99 GE	2.59	0.98	GE
4. Standard/durable sanitary facilities In the school for students& teachers	2.59 0.95 GE	2.53	0.91	GE
5. Accessible & functional internet Facilities e g. e- library	2.53 0.99 GE	2.58	0.90	GE
6. Modern & functional laboratory equipment	2.64 0.91 GE	2.56	0.93	GE

The table above reveals the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which school plant management can lead to achievement of SDGs "Education for All" in Enugu State. With the mean ratings of principals falling between 2.53 and 2.67 and those of the teachers between 2.50 and 2.59

plus the grand means of 2.61 and 2.55 respectively is an agreement that a well-managed school plant can lead to the achievement of Education for all. The basis for this assumption is that the means are above the bench of 2.50.

## **Hypothesis**

Table 2: t- test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which school plant management in Secondary can lead to the achievement of SDG's "Education for All" in Enugu State.

Group	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit.	Decision
Principals	23	2.61	0.92				
				210	0.29	t 1.96	do not rejected
<b>Teachers</b>	189	2.55	0.94				

The above table showed that the calculated value of 0.29 is less than t1.96. this result means that the hypothesis is not rejected. furthermore, the result indicated that there difference in the responses of Principals and teachers on the extent to management of school plant can lead o the achievement of SDG's "Education for All" in Enugu State.

### **Discussion**

The result of table 1 shows that to a great extent school plant management can lead the achievement of Education for all. As is evident in the above table, all the items (a afforested secured well and environment, a beautiful and mapped out walk ways within the school compound, a standard and durable sanitary facilities, a well-furnished and ventilated classrooms, accessible and functional internet facilities e-library, modern and functional

laboratory equipment, an effective lighting system and sufficient needed instructional materials) are unanimously agreed by both principals and teachers in Enugu State of great extent. While item no. 3 is rated very high considering the opinions of principals teachers being far beyond the acceptable of point 2.50, item numbers 1, 2,5,6,7 and 8 are moderately high. This is found to be closely aligned with the submission of Ebimuna (2021), who noted thus "school plant involves the space within the school premises which houses the basic systems and structures capable of attracting and retaining a student till the pass-out year" and that of Adesina in Olaniyan and Anthony (2013) who believes that a wellmanaged school plant will gear up expected outcomes of education that may facilitate effective teaching/learning, academic achievement and retention of children in the school through the period of a programme. The t-test analyses on table 2 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of principal and teachers on the extent to which school plant management can lead to the achievement of SDG's Education for all in Enugu state.

#### Conclusion

This research was carried on actualization of SDG's 'education for all" with bias on the contribution of a well- managed school plants. To that effect, principals and teachers agreed that a well afforested and secured school environment, a beautiful and mapped out walk ways within the school compound, a standard and durable sanitary facilities, a well-furnished and ventilated accessible classrooms. and functional internet facilities as e-library, modern and functional laboratory equipment, effective lighting system and sufficient needed instructional materials can help in the achievement of SDGs "education for all". Hypothesis also revealed no significant difference in the mean responses principals and teachers on the extent to which school plant management can lead to the said goal.

#### Recommendation

Based the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- 1. Secondary schools in Enugu should be beautifully afforested to make for the necessary shades and breath of fresh air
- 2. Classes be designed/constructed to allow proper ventilation
- 3. Equipment capable of arming the students with skills requisite for modern day survival should made available in the schools
- 4. Sanitary facilities within the reach of students and staff be constructed and maintained throughout the schools in the state

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