

Role of School Administrator in Managing Environmental Changes in Secondary Schools in Enugu State of Nigeria

Ukamaka N. Nweze

Social Science Unit, School of General Studies
University of Nigeria Enugu Campus (UNEC)

Abstract:- This study examined the role of school administrators in managing environmental changes in secondary schools in Enugu State. It is an explanatory survey in which text books were consulted. The finding showed that the school administrator could play major role in managing environmental changes. Hence, the study further revealed that school administrators deserved to support by relevant authorities in managing the environmental changes, more fund are required for effectiveness as well as co-operation of the community leaders, if the school administrator must succeed. Therefore, the researcher recommended the followings; there is the need for enough fund to be made available to the school administrator for prompt action should there be any environmental change. Fund provided would be used in the procurement of equipment's in compliance with the modern technological challenges especially in the area of acquiring computers for the staff and students. The community leaders should also co-operate with school administrators in providing a conducive environment for learning, ensuring that the community activities such as festivals, beliefs and practice do not interfere with the school activities. There is need for implementation and inclusion of environmental education on the school curriculum especially in the secondary school and university. This provide forum for everybody to know what goes on in our environment, particularly in the school system.

Keywords:- Administrator, Management, Environment, School and Change.

I. INTRODUCTION

Environment in all countries of the world is undergoing some levels of change in all aspect of human existence. Natural and human factors drive, influence and affect environmental change at the global, regional, national, local levels as well as in schools. Drivers of environmental change vary in nature and scope but can be broadly grouped together as demographic; economic and social; science and technology; conflict, and governance. Critical social dimension include poverty and health. Policy and institutions like schools, although most often thought of as the response

to mitigate such change, may also drive environmental change and impact directly on human vulnerability. Omenyi in Ndu, Ocho and Okeke (ed) (1997:138) stated that change in one form or the other is inevitable fact of life and of the world in which we live. This agrees with the idea that the presence of change is not in doubt in any place.

The educational sector is not left out in this great problem facing the entire globe. The educational environment is also being affected by this menace. It involve the physical and social aspect of the school environment. The regular occurrence of this change poses serious difficulties to the school administrators due to the possible effects of it on the learning processes of the school. The effect could have either positive or negative result on the entire system. These change are inevitable and can occur at any point in time without pre- information. Hence, this paper is meant to suggest the possible role of school administrators in the management of environmental changes in secondary schools in Enugu State. Ocho in Ndu, et-el (1997:65) observed that:

Environmental change could be technological, legal, cultural, climatic, economic, or human and they affect the organization in different ways. For example, population increase or decrease affect school environment and school enrolment affect administration. Most western nations are now faced with decreased enrollments in schools with such attendant problems laying off teachers and workers, closing down long established institutions etc. While most African nations face the problem of increasing enrollments in schools with such attendant problem as teaching larger classes, insufficient financing and manpower, lack of school space and a host of administrative problems.

In the above position, environmental changes could have both positive and negative effects on the entire school systems. These positive effects create a conducive atmosphere which enhance learning at all levels. On the other hands, the negative effects are always more regular which have contributed in the great measure lowering of standard of education in Nigeria. As a result of this, the school administrator plays key role in ensuring that environmental change are fully control to ensure sound academic work.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

For this work, it is necessary to define the conceptual framework, such as Administrator, Environment and Change. Many scholars have made several attempts to define them.

A. Administrator

An administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared supported by the school community. According to Ogbonnaya in Mgbodile (ed) (2003:18) posits that administrators performs very important roles in the enhancement of the teaching and learning process. Generally, it's they who procure and manage funds, provides and maintain staff, physical facilities as well as equipment. An administrator is somebody whose job is to manage the affairs of a business, organization, or institution like educational institutions.

However, Abah (1997:20) defined administration as a planned system of co-operation in which various individuals have functions assigned to them which they perform in concert for the accomplishment of some commonly desired objectives. Therefore, an administrator is solely concerned with the success of the business, organization, or institution. He sees to the day to day running of the organization and ensure that it is properly administered for maximum profit as it also applies in school administration.

B. Management

Management is a process of making use of human and non-human resources to achieve organizational goals (Onifade, 2004). Management involves planning, controlling, organizing, staffing, leading, coordinating, and directing the available resources (Adeleke, 2001). Management of environmental changes refers to a process of making sure that these changes do not disrupt the achievement of an education goal at all levels of school.

C. Environment

Environment has been defined by different scholars. They defined it from different background of their study. From the field of education, environment means the learning situation where learning is taking place (Ebenebe and Unachukwu, 1995:5). Ezeugwu, et-al (1997:95) defined environment as the sum total or aggregate of the conditions, agencies and influences which affect the development, growth, life and death of an organism specie or race. In his view, Akinsola (1993) states that the environment is the general surrounding of people wherever they may be leaving on the earth surface. People occupy different places on the earth surface for different purposes such as school.

The definitions point that environment can be grouped into physical and social environments. Nweze (2004:18) maintains that the physical environment suggests where man can be found. People are found in mountains area, plains, low lying areas or flat land. Some live near the lakes, rivers, or oceans, more still live in desert conditions, some fertile and others in barren lands. Man within the physical environment tries to socialize with others. This gives rise to the social environment. Man who is a social being depends and enjoys the company of others at all times. He does it in order to better his living conditions. Man brings about changes in his environment through education. Hence education plays a vital role in the process of changing man's social environment. Therefore, as the social environment undergoes changes everything therein is being affected.

D. Change

The concept of change is always around man in his environment. It occurs with or without the consent of man at any time. Omenyi in Ndu, A. N., et-al (1997:137) said that change is neutral; it does not necessarily beget progress. It is possible to regress, to change for the worse rather than the better. In his own words, Morphet in Ndu, A. N., et-al (1997:137) opined that changes have occurred generally because:

1. People are now better educated and better informed than before, and therefore understand problems and suggest solutions;
2. The increase in knowledge and understanding has given rise to the development of further knowledge which has led to further new ideas; and
3. The advent of technology has led to the intensification of research which often results in new ideas, new knowledge, and new theories which has led to the replacement of old ideas with the most recent discoveries.

It is obvious that change is a regular occurrence and is inevitable due to the inherent factors responsible for it. Changes in education can occur at different educational levels as a result of the environmental changes.

E. Causes of Environment Changes

There are many causes of environmental changes on Earth. Natural events cause changes in the climate. Over longer time spans, tens to hundreds of thousands of years, natural changes in the geographical distribution of energy from the sun and in the amounts of greenhouse gases and dust in the atmosphere have caused the climate to shift from ice ages to relatively warmer periods. On a longer timescale the presence of life on Earth has changed the environment of the planet radically, transforming a predominately reducing atmosphere made up of methane and ammonia to today's oxygen-rich gaseous envelope.

Human activities can also change the environment. Orbiting satellite have photographed the transformation of deserts into productive agricultural areas. Conversely, satellite have tracked the advanced of deserts (desertification) and the loss of forests (deforestation) as a result of human activity. Okebukola and Alaka- Osinowo in Adesewo, et-al (Ed) (2010:2018) noted that the underlying causes of environmental changes are numerous, interdependent and located in the social, economic, political cultural and historical character of the school such as pervasive poverty. The environmental changes in schools are mostly caused by the following factors; poverty as depicted by relatively the low allocation of funds and affecting the purchasing power of the schools, constitute a major cause of environmental changes. In their attempt to survive and escape from poor condition, staff and students exploit their surrounding for various resources beyond sustainable degree.

Another causes is non-implementation of set of policies regarding environmental protection. Agricultural practices such as bush burning, tree felling, overgrazing, urbanization and quest for industrialization is also considered as a cause of environmental change. Transfer of staff can rise to changes in the environment following the new innovations that can be put in place by new staff. The causes of environmental changes have made it inevitable that changes must always occur in different environment including the school environment. In this direction the school administrator is expected to take certain steps to manage and control environmental changes.

For some years now, Earth's environment including school environment has been changed for the better (e.g., transforming deserts to agricultural area) and the worse (e.g., the ozone hole, greenhouse warming, desertification, etc.). In the future, the challenge will be to remain aware of the accompanying changes to the environment and responsibly guide and monitor those on the school environment. Here, the school administrator should be abreast of the changes taking place in the school environment and perform the expected roles for conducive learning environment .

III. THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR IN MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Every school administrator should understand and appreciate the inevitability of environmental change that usually take place in school system and manage them appropriately. The school administrator is expected to play these key roles to make the environment conducive and sustainable. School administrator can and should provide an enabling environment for the protection of the environment by both the staff and students. This will curb indiscriminate farming on the school land that may bring about environmental changes. Land speculators should not be allowed to encroach in school land. The boundaries of the school land should be properly demarcated from others. The

school administrator should encourage staff participation in the decision making process with regard to environmental change.

There is considerable increased volume of imported technology available in Nigeria. These technologies were created as a direct or indirect response to the needs of the local environment including the school environment. The most challenging technology is the Information Technology (IT). Every organization like school, is struggling to be IT compliant by ensuring that the student are computer literate. The starting point for achieving this computer literacy in the students is the provision of sets of computers and empowerment of teachers. Cutler Cleveland observed that;

In the last 20 years, the advances in technology have been monumental. Key areas of development include more effective monitoring and assessment techniques, such as remote sensing, the transformation of information and communication technology (IC T), biomaterial engineering, rapid advances in biotechnology and genetic modification, and more efficient and faster transportation. Technological innovation can offer important opportunities for responding more effectively to challenges in areas such as economic productivity, agriculture, education, gender inequity, health, water, sanitation, energy and participation in the global economy.

The school administrator is to ensure the availability of computers in the school because computer has brought many changes to the school environment. The school administrator's knowledge and access to information are essential for effective environmental management and have significant impacts on the economy and the livelihood choices people make. Indigenous knowledge systems based on centuries of observation and continually developed in response to changing social and environmental conditions are important resources for many rural people. This knowledge will be of good help to him to know how best to plan the activities of the school. It is obvious that the use of computer in education enhances learning, facilitates teaching, boosts curriculum development, makes educational management easier and brings out the best in educational endeavor.

Changes can occur in the school environment through the transfer of workers in school system. In some cases, it brings a lot of challenges to the entire system. For instance, a teacher may go on transfer without a replacement as experienced in many schools in the recent times. This little change can endanger school into a serious academic problem if not addressed will produce a negative effect on the whole system. The school administrator can equally make adjustment to accommodate the transfer without delay, pending the replacement.

Administrators should also promote and participate in multi-disciplinary planning to develop environmental-related goals and objectives, with measurable outcomes. For example; changes in students' and teachers' attendance can be as a result of environmental changes like the period of feasting. In some places, certain traditional practices such as New Yam Festival, masquerading rites of passage can affect the attendance of both staff and students to school. In planning for each year, the administrator should bear this in mind so that the activities of the school are not badly affected.

Moreover, in educational institutions, we have educational policies that guides every aspect of educational systems including the school environment. Dior (1973) define policy as a major guideline for action. As an administrator, he is expected to be guided by the educational policies on the school environment and ensure that they are been implemented accordingly.

Apart from planning, directing, organizing, supervising functions etc., functions of a school administrator, he is also charged with the function of decision making and providing welfare services to the staff and students of the institution. This will help to provide healthy working and learning environment for both the staff and the students and ensure effective utilization of human resources in the institution (Ani, 2000:5). The provision of welfare services to both the staff and students of any institution is viewed as veritable tools in the management of environmental changes in schools. For example, a newly posted teacher and new students may have problem with accommodation. The school administrator is supposed to ensure that accommodations are readily made available.

This changing educational climate has created an imperative need for schools to identify tools, strategies, and model programs that enhance the safety and success of all children and the professionals who serve them. Because young people are legally required to attend school, school administrators have a corresponding duty to provide children with a safe, secure, and peaceful environment in which learning can occur. Achieving this end requires that every school district and each individual school develop a school safety plan. Developing of such plans is not limited to the school alone but must necessarily involve the entire community. The school administrator should promote a cordial relationship between the school and the community in trying to solve environmental changes.

IV. CONCLUSION

Combating environment changes should be a task that must be accomplished at all costs, as all hands should be on deck to make this visible. As observed in this work, the problems are very serious and complicated since change is essentially caused by both natural and human factors. School administrators should be supported to provide an enabling environment for the protection of the environment. The management of environmental changes should be seen as a concern for everybody. Each sector should work harmoniously with others in managing environmental changes with special emphasis on school environment. This will curb indiscriminate farming on the school land that may bring about environmental changes.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this work was to examine the specific function of school administrator in managing the environmental changes. The work looked into the meaning of different relevant words such as administrator, management, environment and change. The causes of environmental change were also explored with their positive and negative effects on the learning environment. The role of the school administrator was discussed extensively.

SUGGESTIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

To make the school administrator to adequately play his roles in the management of environmental changes, following steps should be taken:

- Relevant authorities and agencies should ensure that school administrators are well trained in the management of environmental change through regular seminars, workshops and conferences. It will enable them to know what to do at the appropriate time.
- There is need for enough funds to be made available to the school administrator for prompt action should there be any environmental change. Funds provided would be used for procurement of equipment in compliance with the modern technological challenges especially in the area of acquiring computers for the staff and students.
- Community leaders should also co-operate with the school administrators in providing a conducive environment for learning, ensuring that the community activities such as festivals, beliefs and practices do not interfere with the school activities.
- There is need for implementation and inclusion of environmental education on the school curriculum especially in the secondary school and university. This provides forum for everybody to know what goes on in our environment, particularly in the school system.

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