



The Role of Planning on Improving Learning Environments in Public Secondary Schools in Bukoba district Tanzania

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Abstract. Tanzania government is trying to improve learning environments in public secondary schools because some schools are operating without adequate teaching and learning facilities. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of planning in improving learning environment in secondary schools. Human relation theory focuses on the factors that influence human behavior at the work place, while the motivation theory aims to determine what motivates teachers in order to enhance their efficiency towards achieving the agreed education objectives. The researcher used mixed research approach, that is, qualitative and quantitative research approaches in the research process. Data was collected through unstructured interview and questionnaire. The analysis showed that planning has an effect on the learning environment because through proper planning, education stakeholders save time in decision making, and this is very important in the initial stages as it serves as a monitoring tool. The study concluded that, through planning the government should improve learning environment by engaging teachers, heads of schools, parents and community, because these groups are very important in decision making concerning education matters. The study recommended that the government should explain clearly about the policy of free education and lay down all that is entailed, so that parents and the community would be aware to what extent the government is committed to the provision of secondary education. This will clear out any contradictions between them, because parents and the community at large leave each and everything in the hands of the government, which can create a lot of problems in matters school development, for example the construction of classrooms and laboratories.

Keyword: Education; Planning Education; Learning Environment; effective teaching

Received 11 August, 2022; Revised 24 August, 2022; Accepted 26 August, 2022 © The author(s) 2022. Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. Introduction and Background of the study

Tanzania attained her independence in 1961, after which political leaders committed themselves to fighting against poverty, diseases and ignorance as a way of bringing about prosperity to all Tanzanians. In response to that, the numbers of political and economic reforms were introduced. In the 1990s the government introduced strategies aimed at poverty reduction and economic growth. Among these, there is the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP). This strategy is part of Tanzania's 2025 Vision which is committed to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) which include sector plans (agriculture, education and health), institutional plans (strategic plans, action plans and performance budgets) and individual work plans (Bana and Shitindi, 2009).

In 2004 Tanzania embarked on the most rapid secondary educational expansion programme in the region, driven by a combination of internal and external factors. One of these factors is the achievement of universal primary education participation (Makombe, et al, 2010). According to MOEVT (2007), Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP), which was introduced in the years 2002 to 2006, raised the enrolment rate in primary education from 59 per cent in 2000 to 97 per cent in 2007. This situation created a great social demand in the expectation of transition from primary education to secondary education.

Secondary Education Program (SEDP) was implemented between the years 2004 to 2009 in order to solve the challenges of secondary education. The plans also recognized the need for higher quality secondary education in order to expand tertiary education. Objectives of SEDP I included improvement of access, with equity, quality, management reforms and delivery of secondary education in Tanzania. Other objectives

included the need to increase the enrolment for girls and boys in secondary schools and to increase the numbers of students for upper secondary school to 25% for form IV leavers (URT, 2005).

The increased number of students in secondary schools overstretched school infrastructures leading to shortage of teaching and learning materials. Many secondary schools had no adequate desks, and because of that situation the teaching and learning environment has not been conducive; a situation that has led to poor academic performance of students (Kiishweko, 2013).

Kabendera (2011) says that over 3000 ward secondary schools have been built across the country but challenges such as lack of teachers' houses, classrooms, toilets and laboratories are yet to be addressed. In fact students conduct practical science examinations and laboratory studies alternatively. It is argued that the government fails to send sufficient funds to secondary schools because of poor planning and weak accountability. URT (2014) also reported that the number of secondary schools have increased since 2004 to 2013 as indicated in the table below.

Table 1: Number of Government Secondary schools from 2004 to 2013

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Secondary schools	828	1202	1690	2806	3039	3283	3397	3425	3508	3528

Source: URT (2014)

Colby et al. (2000) assert that teachers' working conditions affect their ability to provide quality education; many aspects of school life and educational policy go into teachers' perceptions of their employment. As mentioned above the condition of infrastructure, availability of textbooks, learning materials, and class sizes all influence the teacher's experience as an educator. This situation shows that there is lack of participation between teachers and educational planners in planning on educational activities. Effective teachers are highly committed hence they need a supportive teaching and learning environment to maintain excellent students' academic performance. On the same line of thought the government should engage in good educational planning to overcome education challenges.

Sharma (2011) says that planning is the formal process of making decisions for the future of individuals and organizations. It is concerned with setting aims and objectives, selecting strategies and programs to achieve the aims, determining the resources required and ensuring that the plans are communicated to all the stakeholders. Plans are statements of things to be done and the sequence and timing in which they should be done in order to achieve a given end. Educational planning deals with the future, drawing enlightenment from the past, it is the facilitator for future decisions and actions. All the same, educational planning is a continuous process concerned not only with where to go, but with how to get there and by the best route. Planning to be effective must be concerned with its own implementation with progress made or not made with unforeseen obstacles that arise and how to overcome them. One of the central tasks of educational planning is to determine how best to keep internal and external relationship of the educational systems in reasonable balance under dynamic changing circumstances and to bend them constantly in the required direction.

Babyegeya (2002) asserts that, educational planning has several roles and analyzes four major roles of educational planning as normative, strategic, operational and administrative functions. Normative function is naturally to plan how the task will be conducted, who will be responsible and how much resources will be used in particular activities. Strategic function on planning is used to identify or clarify the direction in which the school wants to achieve in future. Operational function deals with bringing together the prime resources required to make the system function. Smooth Administrative function deals with the provision of insight and a desire to improve the organization.

URT (1995) states that it is not possible to ensure access and equity in education without ensuring the availability and equitable distribution of resources which include teachers, leaning materials, school equipment and other facilities as well as adequate financial resources. In addition, the owners and managers of all secondary schools should also ensure that standard infrastructure, facilities, equipment and instruction materials necessary for effective and optimum teaching and learning are of good quality and available in schools (URT, 1995).

Despite the fact that education policy aims at providing enough resources in secondary schools, the government does not provide adequate facilities to create conducive learning environments in secondary schools. Due to poor planning it has been noted that there are few resources like text books, classrooms and laboratories in secondary schools compared to the real needs of the schools.

It is argued that problems facing secondary schools today are as a result of poor planning. The government established poorly equipped schools which have poor learning environments with inadequate classrooms, toilets, teachers' houses, play grounds and laboratories. It is on such a premise that this study is aimed at examining the effects of planning on enhancement of learning environments in secondary schools.

The government of Tanzania is trying to modify the education standards throughout the country that every child should attend secondary school education. To achieve this, the government through SEDP I issued the directives that each ward should establish a secondary school URT (2005). Challenges of learning environment in secondary schools were revealed on inadequate laboratories, libraries and classrooms. However Nyirenda (2012) asserts that education sector in Tanzania is facing many challenges including inadequate resources, insufficient teaching and learning facilities and inadequate infrastructure, and this is due to poor planning in education sector. Effective planning seeks to provide equitable quality education and vocational skills to all, this requires conducive environment for stakeholder and willing to participate in providing educational delivery and conducive teaching and learning environment for teachers in schools (URT 2010).

Effective planning is highly needed to improve learning environment in secondary schools because teachers are still teaching in poor conditions. Students too, are experiencing poor learning environment in secondary schools due to the fact that these schools were established without planning. Therefore, the study was aimed at examining the effect of planning on enhancement of learning environment in public secondary schools in Bukoba District Tanzania.

The Empirical Literature

Empirical literature was obtained from the previous studies that relate to the study objectives. This section involves the accumulation of the factual knowledge obtained from previous different sources about planning and learning environments in secondary schools.

Learning Environment

Teaching and learning environment is a paramount aspect that enriches students with quality skills and knowledge necessary in furthering their aim of being at school. Most schools in Tanzania experience unsatisfactory teaching and learning environments since they face a number of challenges. Babygeya (2002) explained that schools have been run in poor and unfavourable environment for learning. Babygeya asserts that: "Schools are operating without physical facilities. For instance schools have no enough classrooms, play grounds, furniture, libraries, laboratories and other necessary amenities such as water and sanitary facilities. Teaching and learning activities are conducted without enough teaching materials like chalkboards, textbooks, apparatus, handbooks, and other instructional materials".

Tarlakson (2011) contends that research has consistently shown that students' academic performance increases when the schools they attend are clean, well maintained and possess the classroom teaching tools that support a 21st century learning environment. Studies also show that student attendance rate increases when they know that their school leaders and their community are willing to invest in quality school facilities. Also, Willms (2000) conducted a study in Latin America and found that children whose schools lacked classroom materials and inadequate libraries were significantly more likely to show lower test scores and higher grade repetition than those whose schools were well equipped.

Thus a conducive teaching and learning environment motivates teachers to teach and students to be ready to receive what their teachers teach. Overcrowded classrooms interfere with learners' attention. Thus education planners should make sure that each school has enough physical facilities which motivate teachers to teach effectively and students to get quality education. Educational planning and decision making is an interactive process involving many policy making entities and technical and administrative bodies at the national level; because the general purpose of educational planning in any country is to assist and facilitate the development of the educational system. This task includes linking education to the economy, culture and the society at large.

Planning Roles and Process

Adesine (1981) explains education planning as the process of applying scientific or rational procedures to the process of educational growth and development so as to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational systems.

Manichander (2015) asserts that, planning in the education sector is needed because it ensures success of the institutions, for it takes into consideration the important issue and focus on the future objectives, vision and goals. Education is a public service demanded by the public and supplied by the government and private sectors, so for any government effort of such a large magnitude as education, planning is absolutely necessary. Educational planning is also one of the components of the overall national socio-economic development; the overall planning has to provide the objectives of education and the finances for educational development for accomplishing these objectives.

In addition Manichander (2015) says that planning is the formal process of making decisions for the future of individuals and organizations; planning involves dealing with aims and objectives, selecting to collect strategies and programs to achieve the aims, determining and allocating the resources required and ensuring that

plans are communicated to all concerned. Plans are statements of things to be done and the sequence and timing in which they should be done in order to achieve a given end. Educational planning strives to research, develop, implement and advance policies, programs and reforms within educational institutions. Educational planners might work at the local, national and international level.

The nature of educational planning is based on the assumption that planning is an intellectual process of thinking in advance; it is a process of deciding the future on the series of events to follow. Planning is a process where a number of steps are to be taken to decide the future course of action. There are two basic kinds of planning: strategic and operational planning. Strategic planning also known as long, comprehensive, integrated, overall and managerial planning has its dimensions such as the identification and examination of future opportunities, threats and consequences. Another dimension is the process of analyzing an organization's environment and developing compatible objectives along with the appropriate strategies. On the other hand operational planning also known as decisional planning which is concerned with the implementation of the objectives is also concerned with improving current operations with the allocation of resources through the operational budget.

Educational planning process typically includes the interaction of sets of activities and feedback loops. These processes include an articulated vision of the future, education sector and creation or the setting of objectives, the review of existing educational policies and consideration of the new ones needed, explication of programs, projects and targets, and the assessment of the needed human and physical resources (Malik et al, 2011).

Manichander (2015) argues that planning is a continuous process and a never ending activity of a manager in an enterprise based upon some assumptions which may or may not come true in the future, for the manager has to go on modifying revising and adjusting plans in the light of changing circumstances: Manichander (2015) reports that: "Planning is a continuous process and there is no end to it, it involves continuous collection, evaluation and selection of data, and scientific investigation and analysis of the possible alternative courses of action and the selection of the best alternative".

II. Research Methodology

The researcher used mixed research approach, that is, qualitative and quantitative research approaches in researching on the effects of Planning on Enhancement of Learning Environment in Public Secondary Schools. The study used a cross sectional survey. Cross Sectional Design was used by the researcher to carry out the study by using unstructured interview and questionnaires as the means of data collection. In this study the researcher used the sample size of 104 respondents which obtained from Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967). It includes one (1) Education officer; ten (10) heads of secondary schools were drawn systematically from thirty (30) public secondary schools as the key informants and ten (10) school board chairpersons. Quantitatively data were collected to 83 teachers. The researcher used two research instruments to collect data and these instruments were questionnaires and unstructured interviews. The researcher ensured reliability of the research instrument through test re test method where by the same test was given to teachers during piloting and the correlation coefficient of 0.75 were obtained so the instruments were reliable. The research permit and clearance was obtained from the Saint Augustine University of Tanzania. Then, appointment was made to meet all the respondents in the study. Confidentiality was ensured to respondents in fact that not asked to mention their names for that matter and the researcher has protected the participants' identity.

III. Result and Discussion

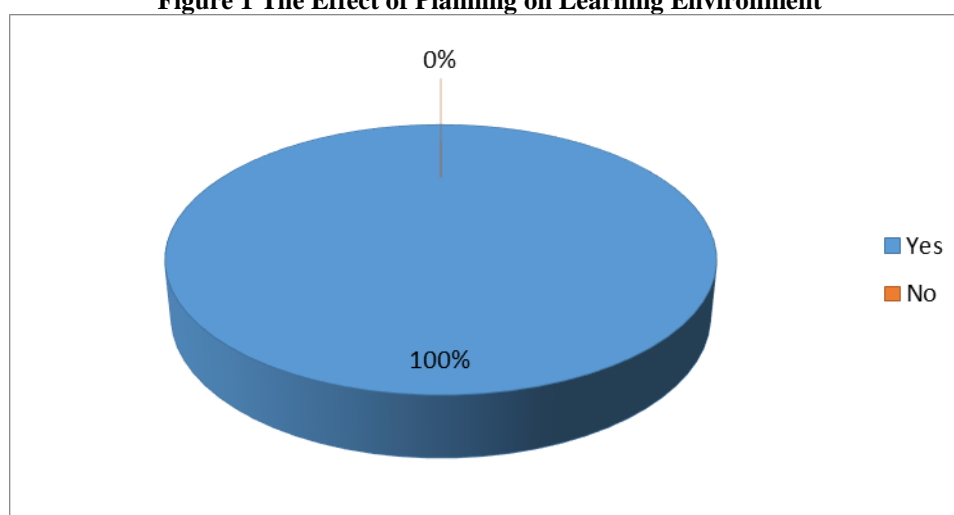
This section provides the results obtained from questionnaires and unstructured interviews related to the role of planning to improve learning environments in secondary schools. The researcher asked if teachers consider that planning can improve the learning environments in secondary schools. The responses are shown in table 2 and figure 1 below:

Table 2. The Effect of Planning on the Learning Environment

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Do you consider that planning can improve learning environment in secondary schools?	Yes	83	100%
	No	0	0%

Source: Field Study 2016

Figure 1 The Effect of Planning on Learning Environment



Source: Field Study 2016

The researcher examined the role of planning to improve learning environments in secondary schools. The questionnaire asked the respondents: “do you consider that planning can improve learning environment in secondary schools? Figure 1 above indicates that (100%) of the teachers responded that planning can improve the learning environment. On the other hand all the 10 (100%) heads of secondary schools indicated that planning is important to improve learning facilities in their secondary schools. 83 (100%) teachers gave many reasons why planning is important to improve learning environment in secondary schools as presented in the table 3 below:

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics on the Effect of Planning to Improve Learning environment

Reasons	Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1. Planning can improve learning environment because teachers are engaged in decision making about education matters.	83	16	19%
2. Planning ensures the availability of learning facilities in secondary schools.	83	14	17%
3. Planning is very important in initial stages it ensures adequate teaching and learning materials.	83	11	13%
4. Planning improves learning environment because teachers share their ideas in decision making.	83	10	12%
5. Through planning, learning environment becomes conducive for both teachers and students hence achieving good performance of students.	83	8	10%
6. Planning makes it easy to manage the available learning resources.	83	8	10%
7. In fact planning improves learning environment because adequate facilities help teachers to deliver the content smoothly.	83	7	8%
8. Every school has its own demands and barriers so planning is important to overcome such challenges.	83	6	7.5%
9. Planning enables teachers and education planners to set education objectives which guide them in decision making.	83	2	2.5%
10. Planning helps to show the direction of what you want to achieve in particular time.	83	1	1%

Source: Field Study 2016

In unstructured interview the researchers asked the heads of schools and education officers how planning is important to improve learning environment. They gave responses that, planning helps to give guidelines to monitor and evaluate education activities. Planning also helps an institution to use resources accordingly because resources are always scarce and not enough. This idea is supported by Keefe and Jenkins (2013) who say that a learning environment, be it a classroom or a resource center is a workplace that requires management if it is to be safe, supportive and productive. Teachers must exercise certain executive functions if they and their students are to be successful. These functions include planning and communicating goals and creating a pleasant environment for work. Planning is fundamental to an organized and productive learning environment. Planning includes selecting content within the district and school guidelines, scheduling the use of time, and choosing tasks and activities for learning and instruction. By all means teachers must plan, for all students are to be served. However teachers must be well organized and highly involved to prevent and respond to students’ misbehavior. Furthermore educational planning helps in coordination between education

stakeholders such as teachers, heads of school and education officers in decision making. Planning helps to perform activities according to objectives.

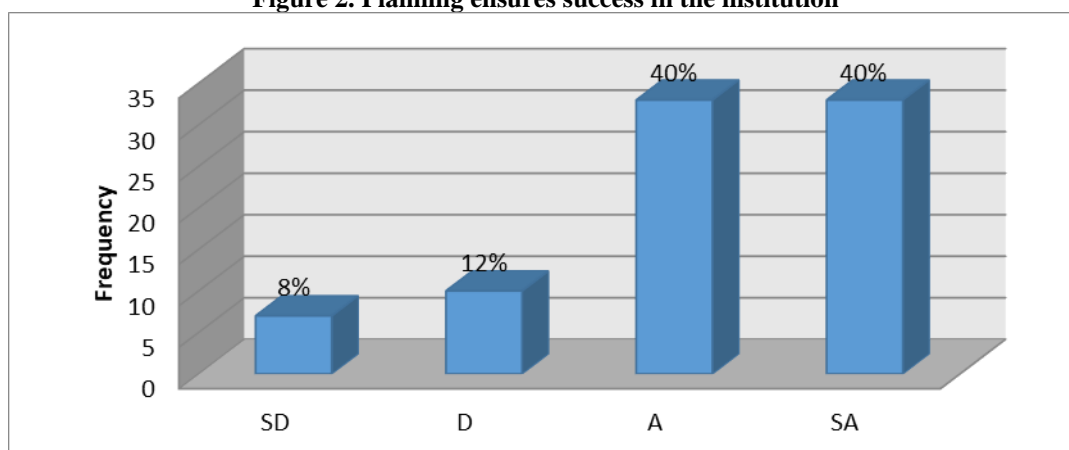
In addition the researcher asked teachers the extent to which they should engage in planning. The results are presented in table 4 below:

Table 4 The extent to which teachers should engage in planning

Roles of planning	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Planning ensures success in the institution	7	8	10	12	33	40	33	40	83	100
2. Because resources are scarce, we need to use them very carefully	0	0	0	0	31	37	52	63	83	100
3. Planning saves time	5	6	5	5	46	55	27	33	83	100
4. Planning brings and introduces changes					49	59	34	41	83	100
5. Planning makes management to be effective			11	13.3	41	49.4	31	37.3	83	100
6. Education Planning is absolutely necessary because education is a public service					71	85.5	12	14.5	83	100

Source: Field Study 2016

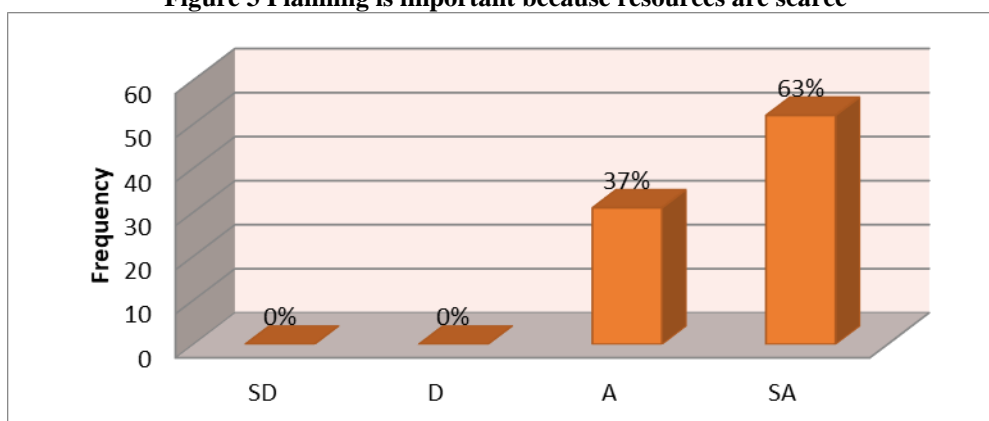
Figure 2. Planning ensures success in the institution



Source: Field study 2016

The results shown in figure 2 indicate that 33 (40%) teachers agreed and 33 (40%) more teachers strongly agreed that planning ensures success in the education institutions because activities are done according to the set objectives, and strategies are prepared to achieve the agreed objectives.

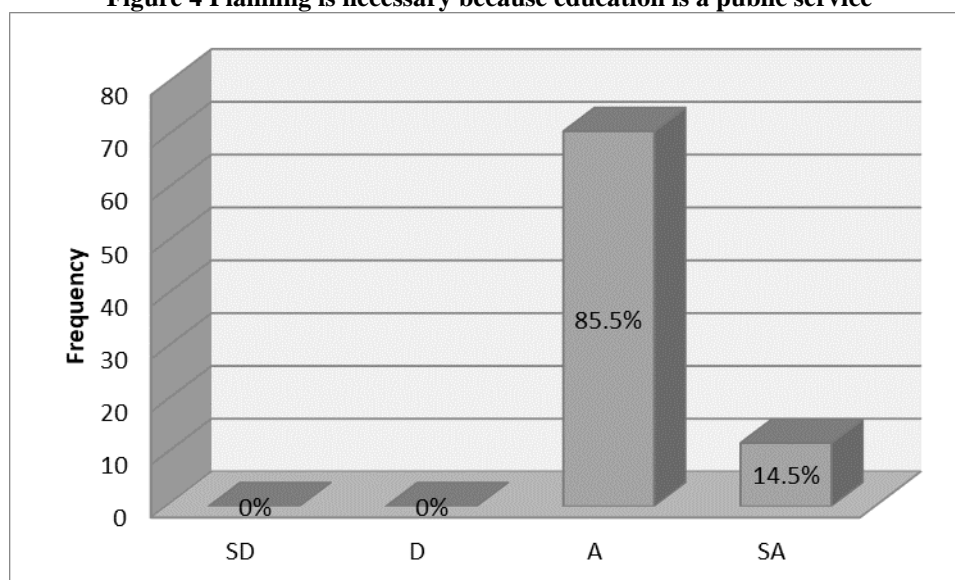
Figure 3 Planning is important because resources are scarce



Source: Field study 2016

The figure 3 above indicates that 52 (63%) of the teachers agreed strongly that planning is important because resources are scarce, so we need to use them very carefully.

Figure 4 Planning is necessary because education is a public service



Source: Field study 2016

Figure 4 indicates that 71 (85.5%) teachers agree that education planning is absolutely necessary because education is a public service. A further 49 (59%) teachers agreed that planning brings and introduces change.

The researchers further interviewed the school board chairpersons on what the responsibilities of the school board are, in order to improve the learning environment in secondary schools. They responded that the school board is responsible for maintaining discipline of the school in general on both the teachers' side and on the students' side. The school board punishes students who behave badly and where necessary, suspends those who commit gross misconduct, to stay home for a specific period of time. The board is also responsible for making sure that the school administration uses and spends school funds accordingly by assisting the school board to choose the school programs and priorities. In addition the board is responsible to making sure that the school is working in a good and conducive environment by finding support from other stakeholders such as the community, parents and the business communities. The board also acts as the coordination unit among the teachers, school administration and parents. In fact teachers including the head of school meet with parents and school board to discuss the education issues of the school. URT (2010) also supports that, the school board is responsible for approving school development plans and budgets and overseeing their implementation, advising the district secondary education officers on schools management, advising district secondary education officers and TSD on how to handle disciplinary cases of teachers, demanding on a regular basis, accountability for students' performance, dealing with disciplinary cases of students and deliberating on quarterly school performance reports (both financial and physical).

Furthermore during interviews, the researcher discovered that many schools did not have adequate furniture for the administrative offices, staff rooms and department offices. Teachers have no office chairs, tables and cabinet to keep their documents safely, sometimes teachers share one small table which brings a lot of challenges to teachers because they are not comfortable and the working environment is not friendly. The researcher also discovered that due to lack of water supply in schools, students are facing challenges on where to get water for daily use such as cleaning of toilets, classrooms, cooking and hygiene in general.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

The secondary school teachers and education officer were aware about the role and effect of planning to improve the learning environment because all of them agreed that planning is important to achieve conducive learning environment and they give out different roles of planning. Through planning teachers are engaged in decision making about education matters. Planning ensures the availability of learning facilities in secondary schools. Planning is very important in initial stages, for it ensures the availability of adequate teaching and learning materials. It improves the learning environment because teachers share their ideas in decision making. Through planning, the learning environment becomes conducive for both teachers and students hence achieving good performance of students. Every school has its own demands and barriers so planning is important to

overcome such challenges. Planning enables teachers and education planners to set education objectives which guide them in decision making. Furthermore all teachers said that planning has the effect of improving the learning environment because planning helps to give guidelines to monitoring and evaluation of education activities. Through planning the government should improve learning environment by engaging teachers, heads of schools, parents and community, because these groups are very important in decision making concerning education matters. It is evident from this study that teachers, heads of schools and community need to cooperate more in decision making concerning education activities, the absence of which leads to poor teaching and learning facilities in schools. Therefore, it is recommended that, education planners should engage teachers, heads of schools and the community at large in decision making concerning education plans in secondary schools in order to get different ideas and views, because schools differ in terms of geographical location as well as the community around them.

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