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Quality Education, Good Governance and Human Resource Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Quality is at the heart of education since it determines how much and how well students learn and the extent to which their education achieves a range of personal, social and development goals. Good governance indicates the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. Human Resource Development (HRD) deals with the process of competency development in people and creation of conditions to help people apply these competencies for their own benefit and for that of others. This paper is anchored on the premise that quality education, good governance and HRD although distinct in many ways, are significantly related in no small measure and are in fact, inseparable. The paper pointed out that quality education sets the pace for good governance, which in turn, manifests in the improvement of the capacities of its manpower / citizenry. It was recommended that Nigeria should develop a framework that would promote quality education, good governance and HRD as well as bring them into congruence.

Education is a human right that should be accorded to all human beings solely by reason of being human. The relationship between education and development is well established such that education is a key index of development. Involvement in education improves productivity, health and reduces negative features of life such as

child labour as well as bringing about empowerment. Education opens the door for all citizens to participate in development activities and when citizens are denied education, they are excluded from the development process, which in turn puts them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their compatriots with the benefit of education. This is why there has been a lot of emphasis particularly in recent times for all citizens of the world to have access to basic education of good quality.

Quality education can be viewed from different angles to bring out the meaning to the reader. It revolves around three key features namely: content relevance; access and outcome; and observance of individual rights. Quality education is a prerequisite for good governance and in turn good governance enhances quality education. The hope of every seasoned parent is that the school system will help the child develop his/her potentialities in life. This can only be achieved if the type of education given to the child is of high quality.

Human capital is the most important of all the factors that contribute to fast economic growth, contributing over 64 per cent. Human resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are factors of production; human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else. In other words, no country can make any meaningful economic progress without developing the knowledge, skills and competencies of its citizens to manage available resources.

In this paper an examination of the relationship between quality education, good governance and Human Resource Development in Nigeria is made. The contention that quality education could usher in good governance needs be seriously looked into because a knowledgeable, skilled, well articulated man, has more to offer to the nation than half baked individuals who do not have much to offer to the nation other than to satisfy their selfish interests.

Concept of Quality Education

Although there are many international treaties, conventions and declarations dealing with various aspects of education, many of such are generally silent about how well education systems could and should be expected to perform. In 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All noted that the generally poor quality of education needed to be improved and recommended that education be made both universally available and more relevant. The declaration went further to identify quality as a prerequisite for achieving the fundamental goal of equity. Ten years later in 2000, the

Dakar Framework of Action declared that access to quality education was the right of every child. It affirmed that quality is at the heart of education- a fundamental determinant of enrolment, retention and achievement. Its expanded definition of quality set out the desirable characteristics of learners (healthy, motivated students), processes (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content (relevant curricula) and systems (good governance and equitable resource allocation). As at today, there is consensus on the imperative to improve the quality of education. Although there is no single definition of quality, two principles which can be found in most attempts are cognitive development and education's role in encouraging learners' creative and emotional development, in supporting objectives of peace, citizenship and security, in promoting equality and in passing global and local cultural values down to future generations.

In addition, quality incorporates respect for individual rights, improved equity of access and of learning outcomes. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2005), there are five major factors that affect the quality of education: the Learners, whose diversity must be recognized; the national economic and social context; material and human resources; the teaching and learning process, and the outcomes and benefits of education.

It is important to note that in the last few years, Nigeria and many other countries have put up programmes to improve access to education. Unfortunately, there has not been a concomitant focus on quality, yet, quality is at the heart of education since it determines how much and how well students learn and the extent to which their education achieves a range of personal, social and development goals.

Good Governance

Good governance, as a concept, is applicable to all sections of society such as the government, legislature, judiciary, media, private sector, corporate sector, trade unions, non-government organisations (NGOs) etc. Public accountability and transparency are as relevant for the one as for the other. It is only when all these and various other sections of society conduct their affairs in a socially responsible manner that the objective of achieving larger good of the largest number of people in society can be achieved (Madhav, 2007).

Good governance embodies and promotes effective states, mobilizes civil societies and productive private sectors. Good governance is a commitment and the capability to effectively address the allocation and management of resources to respond to collective problems (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, 1996). major characteristics of good governance makes for easy understanding. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient,

equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making,(UNESCO,2005) What Nigeria has achieved in the last twelve and a half years of democracy is a battery of contradictory description or proposition as to what good governance is. As a matter of fact, the term good is difficult to define in the essential context of the Nigerian condition. In the Nigerian context, situational ethics sets the tone to the effect that have a relative dysfunctionality, what is good in one place may be bad in the other, there must be a given situation, time and space (Dickson, 2011) .

However, it has been pointed out by Uya (2012) that to ensure good governance and build a united state ,equity, social justice, peace, fairness, unity, women and youth empowerment, rural development, and security must be regarded as pillars for government .Good governance is an indeterminate term used to describe how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in order to guarantee the realization of human rights .

Human Resource Development (HRD)

Human Resource Development (HRD) is a multifaceted concept. In management terms, HRD refers to the process of increasing the knowledge, skills and competences of the people in the workplace or in a country in general. In economic terms, it is described as the accumulation of human capital and its effective utilization for the development of the economy (de Silva, 1997). In political terms, Human Resources Development prepares people for adult participation in political processes, particularly as citizens in a democracy. From the social and cultural points of view, the development of human resources helps people to lead fuller and richer lives, less bound by tradition. The processes of Human Resources Development unlock the door to modernization.

In other words, human resource development relates to the provision of social services as well as opportunities to put human resources to work, both of which are intrinsically linked with the overarching objective of the development of a nation. This is where a sound HRD policy or strategy at the national level is a necessity.

At the level of the organization, HRD can be described as a planned, continuous effort to improve employee competency levels and organizational performance through training, education and development programmes. At this same level, HRD also incorporates career development and performance appraisal.

Broadly speaking, the concept of HRD extends over several issues including population, education, health, nutrition, employment, sanitation, sports, culture,

housing, communication, etc.(Peters, 2008).Put together, HRD is about ensuring that every individual, family or community has access to the options and opportunities that will ensure full attainment of potential in every area of life. From the above, we can see the symbiotic relationship between population, HRD and national development.

Synergizing Quality Education, Good Governance and Human Resource Development

As stated earlier, this paper argues that quality education, good governance and HRD although distinct in many ways are significantly related in no small measure and are in fact, inseparable. Nigeria as a nation can never stand on firm footings in the midst of unskilled, untrained, and incompetent, manpower. In all spheres of the society, human factor remains very instrumental in determining progressive change.

Education is a basic platform for the building of capacities of the human factor in any work environment. When people are qualitatively educated and schooled, they become highly knowledge driven and therefore stand a chance of becoming agents involved in engendering good governance. In another wise, as soon as good governance is formidably implanted in any polity, it enhances and strengthens the educational system and tries to heighten the standard and quality. When the quality of education is raised, it goes back to ignite the efficient and appropriate training/development of the human resources, who would in turn, pursue the tenets of good governance and nation building.

The interplay between quality education, good governance and human resources development forms a continuum of activity and process that are progressive, continuous and unending. Involvement in one, leads to a concomitant engagement in the other. The process of Human Resources Development involves skill and knowledge acquisition, building competencies and capacities, training, etc. This could take the form of seminars, workshops, symposiums, conferences, and lots more. All of these are embodied under the educational setting.

Similarly, when the human resources are eventually developed, they form the basis for governance. Quality education determines the degree of manpower development which automatically signals the nature and state of governance and democratization anywhere in the world.

Human Resources Development remains so vital particularly when one considers that it is the human element in any economic activity that commands, directs, organizes ,controls and maximizes the factors of production. The quality of people appropriate to the particular level and complexities of the activity determines how well or poorly these tasks are accomplished. Good governance can go a long way to reduce

public misconduct .According to Lewis and Pettersson (2009), good governance can discourage corruption, an outgrowth of poor governance, which directly affects performance of the education sector.

In order to improve the quality of education in Nigeria, transformation is essential. Transformation in education means educating for change by making the classroom a place of active engagement. Transformation in education covers such issues as curriculum review and decentralization, teacher training or re-training, making the content of education more relevant or appropriate to the needs of the learners and their communities, bringing rights into the classroom and freeing education from all forms of discrimination, prejudice and indoctrination, and making it inclusive of all possible learners and exclusive of violence (ActionAid International,2005).

The importance and linkage of education to the development of man and the society is well known. It has been pointed out that: Education satisfies a basic human need for knowledge, provides a means of helping to meet other basic needs and helps sustain and accelerate overall development. Another important role of education lies in the fact that it helps to determine the distribution of employment and income for both present and future generations. Education influences social welfare through its indirect effects on health, fertility and life expectancy (Igbuzo, 2006)

Education is investment in human capital and quality education benefits the individual, society and the world at large. Quite often people keep on asking what education can do for them. It is out of share ignorance that such a question could emanate. Quality education improves the health and nutrition of individuals, increases the productivity and earnings, and reduces inequality.

It must be made known to all that, no nation can arise above the quality of its citizens. The type of education given to the people of a nation determines the type of government that might exist in that country. If poor quality education is given to the citizens, there is the likelihood that the products would have little or nothing to offer the nation. For quality education to take place in a nation, teachers' preparation should receive a big boost and attention.

For quality teaching to take place in the classroom, teachers must receive adequate training that would help them deliver the goods effectively. It also depends on the teachers healthy interactions with the learners. The potential indicators that could be seriously considered in terms of effective teaching are as follows; academic qualifications, pre-service and in-service training, years of service/experience, ability or aptitude and pedagogical content knowledge (Amanchukwu , 2011) .

Nevertheless, the talk of good governance in and for Nigeria, past, present and future is idle, not lending itself to any objective and precise analysis and this is why our leaders take us for a ride ,they promise bridges where there are no rivers. Good governance within the confines of a popular democracy should be anchored on two things, one, a constitution suited to the special needs and circumstances of Nigeria as multi-dimensional ethno-religious and political economic structure: and two, a leadership suited not only to the exigent needs of Nigeria, but the exactitudes of the people.

Nigeria, needs to stop glossing and know that by and large good governance that can bring about quality education which could eventually breed the development of human resource requires no ordinary type of leadership. Tolerance, breadth of outlook, intellectual comprehension, hardwork, selfless devotion, statesmanship, a burning sense of mission are some of the virtues that are needed to engender transformation. Unfortunately past administrations have lacked these virtues or at best have possessed one at the expense of the other and as such led them to groping in the dark on how to deliver good governance.

Nigeria has refused to cultivate leadership that has shown a knack to develop a mental magnitude. As clear as the problems of Nigeria are, there seem to be a lack of ability in appreciating and grasping the salient details as well as most of the temporal and practical implications of a given situation. The only minus and indeed the major constraint is that all that have been enumerated as a recipe for good governance is what is lacking in Nigeria.

Nigeria is abundantly blessed with enormous human and physical resources that should translate to economic prosperity for the nation and her citizens. The country can boast of a population of over 140 million, ample natural resources, large expanse of arable land, abundant water resources among other things. These natural endowments notwithstanding, the country remains largely “underdeveloped”. Without any doubt, the only way out is for the country to translate her enormous potential into reality through a sustained programme of human resource development. The Nigeria Vision 20:2020 plan recognises the need for human development and focuses on issues such as education, health and poverty reduction. The vision rightly places people at the centre of the development process and recognises the need to build human capacity to achieve greater productivity and enhance national competitiveness.

HRD should be treated as an integrated concept. It deals with the development of all people and is not limited to any one section or sector. It is important and equally

critical for all sectors wherever people are involved and are required to make things happen. It is needed for all groups, but particularly the underprivileged; it is needed for the unemployed, underemployed, the employed and the self-employed; it is needed by the politicians, bureaucrats and intellectuals to play their roles better and more effectively; it is needed for running the governments effectively, for improving the effectiveness of various agencies and their services; it is needed for NGOs to be effective and play strategic roles; it is needed for mobilizing resources, community participation and involvement; it is needed for ensuring economic, scientific and technological development of nations; it is needed to ensure that people bequeath a healthy place of living for future generations.

Conclusion

Education for all cannot be achieved without improving quality. There is therefore the need for policies that assure decent learning conditions and opportunities. Quality education is a sure way to prepare individuals to render quality services to the nation since individuals must have acquired skills, knowledge and wherewithal to live in a pluralistic society such as ours. Good governance can be achieved by providing for the welfare of the people; recognizing the feelings of the people and using the knowledge and skills acquired to serve as a good citizen and representative of a community. It should be noted that investment in education and training is the main key to progress from one level of economic development to another. It conveys the message that societies which do not develop learning attitude will find it difficult to progress beyond their present level of economic and social development

Recommendations

Resulting from the argument put forward in this paper, the following recommendations are made.

1. The Nigerian government and others should embrace the responsibility of making education functional: there is the need to tailor education in the country towards the needs of the country and what citizens require to develop as patriotic, participatory and contributory members of the society.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to go for in-service training or seminars to update their knowledge and skills. They will be in good stead to give the learner quality education which, in turn, helps the learner know what is good for the citizens of the state, and put them in place. Lack of knowledge and skill makes teachers and the Nigerian workforce perform below average
3. The government should be proactive in organizing human resources development programmes and also create awareness on the need for improvement of capacities and competencies.

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