

THE CHALLENGES OF QUALITY EDUCATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN DEVELOPING ECONOMY

AMANCHUKWU, Rose N.

Department of Educational Foundations,
Rivers State University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Quality education and good governance are concepts needed to bring about healthy development of a nation. The paper argues that quality indicators should move beyond inputs governments provide in terms of infrastructure, teachers and materials. Greater attention should be given to what goes on in the classroom with special reference to teaching and learning time utilization. This paper is designed to showcase what quality education is and how it relates to good governance; what good governance is all about in relation to infrastructure, provision of security; social amenities in terms of good health services, good roads, model schools; good communication network, water supply, housing etc. Secondary data were used in the discussion and analysis including the USAID 2002.

Keywords: Governance, Education, Social Development

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the discourse on the relationship between good governance and education has attracted huge academic interest. Many of the discussions on good governance are concentrated on the desired objective of nations' political development though the basic issues and principles of good governance, however, are not new. The most prevalent aspect of good governance debate is on anti-corruption which often assesses the capacity of government to be accountable, just, fair, effective, efficient, participatory, transparent, responsive, consensus-oriented, and equitable. These are the major characteristics of good governance as outlined by the United Nations.

According to the World Bank, good governance is "the manner in which public officials and institutions acquire and exercise the authority to shape public policy and provide public goods and services" (cited in Kaufmann and Kraay, 2008). The, UNDP (2004) define it as "the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector." Kofi Annan(former UN Secretary-General) explains that "good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development"(cited in Abdellatif, 2003). The concept of good governance indicates the effort the government has made or is making to turn around the standard of living of the masses; the empowerment of the citizens to be able to cater for themselves through their knowledge and skills acquired at school or after school, the involvement of all citizens in decision making concerning education of the people.

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.

UNICEF recognizes five dimensions of quality as; the learners, the environments, content, processes and outcomes, founded on the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation (UNICEF 2000, in UNESCO, 2005). In the same vein, UNESCO expects quality education to encourage the learners' creative and emotional development, support objectives of peace, citizenship and security, promote equality and seek to pass global and local cultural values down to future generations. Delors (1996) expressed that underpinning UNESCO's quality education frame work is a fourfold principle of learning which are stated as: Learning to know; Learning to do; Learning to live together; and Learning to develop skills.

The concept quality education had been tackled at the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) at the Jomtien conference in 1990. This declares quality as a prerequisite for achieving the fundamental goal of equity. Emphasis on assuring an increase in children's cognitive development by improving the quality of their education, is paramount since these children are the future leaders of the nation. The Dakar forum noted the need to improve all aspects of quality education to achieve recognized and measurable learning outcomes for all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (Dakar Frame Work for Action, Article 7, World Education Forum, 2000).

If the children, who are major beneficiaries of the education system, are properly processed into major outputs, the nation will no doubt get the right people to run her government. The desire for access to school education in order to acquire knowledge and skills, apply them, is one thing and to actually succeed in acquiring them and showing evidence in having acquired them in concrete terms is another thing. The quality of the products of an institution, no doubt, is evidenced in the quality of performance of the products (Amanchukwu, 2005) Barrow; Boyle; Ginsburg; Levi; Pier; Price – Rom and Rocha (2006) in their findings developed what is called "black box", that is, the space in which educators and others think and act in relation to project inputs and consequences for project outputs. These authors analyzed four USAID educational projects in the developing world in relation to the ways in which teachers conceived the concept of quality education. In their comparative analysis of the studies, Barrow and his team concluded that teachers do tend to articulate their conceptions of quality education with terms normally associated with student -centered and actively learning approaches to teaching and learning.

Successive National and State Governments in Nigeria have had to come up with one policy after another to improve on the education of the young ones in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The results of these policies have led to the creation of UPE, 6-3-3-4 system of education, UBE, 9-3-4 system of education etc.

The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between quality education and good governance in Nigeria. The contention that quality education could usher in good governance needs to 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.

Time management is an essential aspect of quality education. The ability to make good use of time allocated to certain tasks to achieve results should not be overlooked. Quality time spent in the classroom will result in achieving success. Ensuring quality in fundamental education is critical because the quality of foundations laid at the basic education level influences the quality

of pupils' learning at the secondary and tertiary education levels. Quality time spent in the classroom increase in enrolment as well as decentralizing decisions does not guarantee quality in education. Activities carried out in the classroom under the supervision and directives of the quality teacher are a surer evidence of quality education. As Owusu-Ansah (2005) put it that time management in basic schools in Kumasi also indicated that, while there was considerable wastage of instructional time in both private and public schools, this problem was compounded within publicly funded sector. Educate the educator so as to instill quality education in children.

2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUALITY EDUCATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

The National policy on education (2004) stated 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, in addition to observable and stable indicators. 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.

Teacher's absenteeism and learner's absenteeism can lower quality education, in the sense that when the teacher is not there to perform his tasks as a teacher and the learner is equally absent in class activity, classroom learning hardly takes place. Teachers and learners are expected to be present in the classroom for effective teaching and learning to take place. When a learner has not learnt, how will he perform creditably if he happens to be a governor, or president or even the local government chairperson? One cannot give what one does not have. Good governance comes from quality learning and interactions during academic travail and beyond. People govern from the wealth of experiences they must have acquired as a pupil/student etc. some students took part in the students government while in school which was a preparatory ground for a more serious political involvement.

Some people are advisers to the authorities in power but where they have nothing to offer they are surely not going to make good advisers; everything boils down to classroom experiences. The Osun state government organized a two-day summit for all stakeholders entitled 'Resolving the Education Crisis in Osun state'. In that workshop a paper entitled 'Enhancing Teacher Quality and capacity building in Nigeria', was presented by Professor Wokocha stating that 'teaching, like other professions, demands that only those who were adequately prepared and regulated should be entrusted with the teaching – learning process in our schools, adding that it was the only way the nation could guarantee a qualitative education system' (THISDAY, Wednesday, February 16, 2011, vol. 16 No 5777). He further stated that if we invest in education and engage competent hands to manage the resources, good quality learning and consequently good quality products will emerge. As earlier stated, good governance is the totality of how people organize and manage their life activities irrespective of pluralistic life patterns of the people. The following should be considered in terms of good governance security of lives and property and adequate infrastructure.

Adequate infrastructure will attract quality education when they are properly made use of. Where the government spent fortune putting up structures and ensures that the classrooms are well equipped for effective teaching and if the teachers were not trained on the use of those

facilities and equipment they become a waste. But where these facilities are in place and the users are very conversant on how to operate them, for example computer/laptops, the teachers will enjoy teaching and proper learning will take place. Coupled with enough social amenities, the teachers will do their work without blinking their eye. Ezewu and Tahir (1997) expressed that lack of social amenities thwarts the effort of the government to retain teachers in rural areas.

Good governance demands that the government of the day ensures that the facilities they supplied are well utilized. Special attention should be given to these areas so that in terms of health, people will walk into the health centres for health care and get treated (THE NATION, FRIDAY, February 11, 2011, Pg. 57). This will lead to better health, long life, and efficiency in all their endeavours. HIV/AIDS and other illnesses would be detected on time and given adequate treatment. Many have died of what is constantly being diagnosed of “malaria” and “typhoid” which if detected on time many lives would have been saved. Good road network will not only make it easier for people to reach the health centres in good time but transportation will be readily available. Good governance is not what is written on the pages of newspapers but what is seen done for the welfare of the masses.

Model schools should be built at various places so as to give the less privileged an opportunity to enjoy good things of life like other children who come from elite homes and live in the cities. In Rivers State the government is able to renovate a good number of schools to modern standards (THE NATION, FRIDAY, February 11, 2011, Pg. 57). People are hoping that the teachers posted to such schools would exercise their duties to argument the effort of the state government. Model schools are also needed in the rural areas, and effort should be made to provide staff quarters with electricity, potable water and communication network to attract teachers to such areas. According to Ezewu and Tahir (1997) there should be some sort of inducements granted by the government to staff posted to the rural areas in Nigeria. Rural areas should be made as attractive as the cities by providing essential social amenities so as to retain the population of both teachers and learners.

Aluede (2005) emphasized that rural areas witnessed lack of establishment of schools. Where schools are available, teachers abhor going there on transfer because of lack of social amenities. Teachers think of the welfare of their children and go all out to resist being transferred to the rural areas. It becomes obvious that teachers who are sent there are just to be disciplined because of their laxity in their former schools. Other government officials might not like to reside there because these facilities and other things that will enhance living are not present. It is very likely that teachers working in such places will not be supervised and many of them will absent themselves from school as they wish. It is likely that their knowledge and skills would be limited and may have little or nothing to offers the learner as many of them might not have gone on in- service training. As government officials rarely show their presence in such areas, there might not be official records about what goes on in the school. It boils down to the fact that the government should renovate schools to modern standards, typical example is massive rehabilitation and construction of school blocks by the Akwa-Ibom state government (THE NATION, Thursday, February 24 2011, Pg. 52) providing housing, good roads, good communication network, health centers, electricity and even recreational centers so as to attract teachers, businesses, industries and government officials who would be the eyes and ears of the government.

Teachers should be encouraged to go for in-science training or seminars to update their knowledge and skills. With this, they can tackle day-to-day affairs of the school. They will be in good stead to give the learner quality education which, in turn, help the learner know what is good for the citizens of the state, and put them in place. Lack of knowledge and skill make

teachers abandon the equipment provided by the government for the running of schools to enhance science and technology. Some of these equipment were left to rotten away in some schools and they become a huge waste to the government, e.g. when computer set was distributed to Federal Government Colleges, many of them were left in the same package as they were delivered without opening them for use; the reason being that the teachers were not conversant with the use of computers at that time.

In Akwa-Ibom State, the Governor has borrowed a leaf of “No Child Left Behind” of President Bush education reform by introducing ‘Free and Compulsory Education’: (THE NATION, Thursday, February 24, 201, p. 52). In which case, any child of school age whether he/she is of Akwa-Ibom origin or not but resident there must be enrolled in school up to secondary level, otherwise, the guardian will face the wrath of law. This will surely prepare the child for good governance. When a country under-invests in the basic scientific research and workforce training that will determine her long term economic prospects and neglect imminent environmental disaster like flood , fire outbreak etc, that country is unlikely to grow in the global market. It all means fewer opportunities for younger Nigerians and a decline in upward mobility. We have the talent and resources to create a better future, a future in which the economy prospers and prosperity is shared. Quality education would correct most of the anomalies in governance.

According to Obama (2006:165) stated that “since Lincoln signed the Morrill Act and created the system of land grant colleges, institutions of higher learning have served as the nation’s primary research and development laboratories. It is through these institutions that we’ve trained innovators of the future, with the federal government providing critical support for the infrastructure –everything from chemistry labs to particle accelerators – and the dollars for research that may not have an immediate commercial application but can ultimately lead to major scientific breakthroughs”. In Nigeria we can afford to do what needs to be done. What is missing is not money, but a national sense of urgency.

Peoples’ lives and property must be protected and it should be the focus point of every government. Where there is law and order, development manifest itself, but where they are lacking there could be chaos, disorder and unruly behaviour takes the upper hand. Kidnapping nearly threw this nation hundred years backward. Inhabitants abandoned their businesses running helter-skelter for dear life. Government officials, individuals were not spared. Kidnapping spread like wild fire and it gave serious concern to both the Federal and State governments, individuals and children were not left out, e.g. the kidnapping of fifteen school children at Aba in Abia State (2010). Once the security of a place is assured people will settle down to work, do business, international communities would be attracted to set up industries which can absorb a lot of work force and development would be faster.

3. THE UTILITY QUALITY EDUCATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

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.

For the society it drives economic competitiveness; has synergistic, poverty -reducing effects; contribute to democratization; provides peace and stability, provides concern for the environment. With regard to girls, quality education reduces women’s fertility rates; lowers maternal mortality rates; protects against HIV/AIDS infection; increases women’s labour force

participation rates and earnings especially in civil service and politics; creates inter-generational education benefits which prove that additional year of formal education completed by a mother translates into her children remaining in school for an additional one-third to one-half (The World Bank Group, 2010) Children of educated mothers in most cases, have no choice other than to be in school and come home with good results.

Since quality education has all there is to offer, it becomes pertinent that good governance should be taken more seriously by the people in power. It is the duty of power-that-be to make provisions to achieve results in our various schools and to ensure that discipline is the order of the day among the officials who supervise projects and activities of various sorts. Good governance requires a lot of discipline on all tiers of government. Its characteristics incorporate participation; rule of law; transparency; responsiveness; Consensus-Oriented, effectiveness and efficiency; equity and inclusiveness and accountability. Though it is a bit difficult to achieve this entirely, effort should be made to give it a serious trial. Increased citizen participation can take a variety of forms to bring about quality education. Parents and community groups can play the following parts; serve as education resource providers, advocate for education reform, monitors of teachers and school performance and school managers (USAID 2002).

A typical example is Uganda's experience with participatory action research (PAR) as one of the possibilities of improving educational equality by engaging the community in a process of inquiry, data gathering, and collective research for solutions (USAID,2005). This exercise was aimed at development activity to support the primary education reform, in other to strengthen the education system, to create opportunities for partnerships and dialogue among Ugandan education policy-makers and practitioners, and to facilitate international linkage between Uganda and international research communities. By the use of PAR the participating Ugandan communities were able to convene meetings, set agenda, widen participation, assess their situation systematically, analyze data and act on the findings in order to improve the quality of schooling. The use of PAR has helped Ugandan communities to achieve results particularly in strengthening democratic practices and at the same time improving educational quality.

4. CONCLUSION

One might as well pause here and ask: why do many of our primary, secondary and tertiary institutions look neglected? Primary education, for instance, is taken as the bedrock of the entire education system (Enueme, 2003), the pre-condition not only to secondary and tertiary education {Aminu, 1999}. The answer is not farfetched. Many people who find themselves in power tend to be carried away by the politics of the day. In the 1950s efforts were made to universalize education of the children. But these earlier attempts could not be maintained due to some glaring problems such as poor planning(Utibe,2001; Ukeje,1966), insufficient and unreliable data and funds, multitude of enrolment, insufficient classrooms, non-availability of facilities and equipment, lack of trained teachers, inadequate supervision(Adewole,2000; Denga, 2000), in the words of Ukeje,(1977) everything was in short supply. For good governance to emerge these problems should be addressed adequately so as to produce men of conscience and knowledge who could take this country to greater heights.

The goals of primary, secondary and tertiary education joined together summarily shows that learners are to be empowered right from the primary schools, prepared them for good citizenship and lastly great leaders of this country.

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. Knowledge is power and as Obama (2006:249) succinctly put it; "That knowledge gives us something to build on. It tells us that more progress can be made." Authorities in power should be well read, well exposed to perform the task creditably. Where he is lacking in knowledge and experience, he is likely to be a failure in his area of authority. He can only be advised by people of his like and nothing works out well. There is an adage which says that one cannot give what he does not have. Where schools are well equipped with suitable teaching aids, facilities and quality teachers, the products of such schools are expected to serve well in whatever capacity they find themselves. At the same time, it is the government that will make it possible for effective teaching and learning to take place if they equip their schools properly and supervise school activities. It is obvious that the two concepts, quality education and good governance, complement each other.

REFERENCES

- Abdellatif, Adel M. (2003) Good Governance and Its Relationship to Democracy and Economic Development, Global Forum III on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity Seoul 20-31 May 2003
- Adewole, A. (2000). Towards effective implementation of universal basic education. Paper presented at the national conference on Universal Basic Education programme, organized by Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Plateau state. August 2000.
- Aluede, R.O.A. (2005) Trips Report Unpublished Reports from Field Trips to Kano, Kaduna, Calabar, Yenegoa and Benin City.
- Amanchukwu, R.N. (2005) Classroom experiences in relation to project CHILD (computers helping instruction and learning development). Journal of Education in developing Areas (JEDA) Vol.14
- Aminu, J. (1999). First thing first: the primary task in improving the quality of primary education in Nigeria. Abeokuta: Balogun printers Ltd.
- Barrow, k., Boyle H., Ginsburg M., Leu E., Pier D., Price-Rom A: And Rocha v. (2006) Cross-National synthesis on Education Quality Report No 2: Professional Development and Teachers Conceptions of Educational Quality. US Agency for International Development, Washington DC.
- Dakar Frame work For Action, Article 7, World Education Forum, 2000.
- Delors J., Singh k. and Amagi I, (1996) Learning: The treasure within UNESCO, Paris.
- Denga, D.I. (2000), Evolving a new educational culture: the universal basic education focus. International Journal of Research in Basic Lifelong Education, I (1&2) 1-6.
- Enueme, C.P. (2003). Child-friendly educational system: A panacea for maintaining standards in Nigerian primary schools In C.C. Nwagwu & A.D. Imogie (Eds) Educational Standards in the 21st century in Nigeria: Proceedings of National Conference. September 17th-20th.
- Ezewu, E.E and Tahir,G.(Eds) (1997) Ecology and Education in Nigeria. Onitsha: Tabansi Publishers Limited.
- Federal Ministry of Education (2004) National Policy on Education Lagos: NERC press.

- Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., (2008) *Governance Indicators: Where are we, Where should we be going?* The Global Governance Group, World Bank Institute and the Macroeconomics and Growth Team, Development Research Group.
- Obama, B. (2006) *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on reclaiming the American Dream.* Published in United States by Three Rivers Press, New York.
- Owusu – Ansah E. (2005). *A comparative study of teachers’ management of Instructional time in public and private basic schools in Kumasi.* M. Phil Thesis, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
- The NATION, ‘In Rivers State, Governor Amaechi’s blazing achievements’. Friday, February 11, 2011. Pg. 57.
- The NATION, Governor Akpabio’s Free and Compulsory Education, Thursday, February 24, 2011. Pg. 52
- Ukeje, B.O. (1996) *Education for social Reconstruction: London, Macmillan Education Ltd.*
- Ukeje, B.O. (1997) “Everything is in Short Supply” – A conference paper delivered at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Campus.
- UNDP (2004), *Governance Indicators: A user’s Guide*, New York
- UNESCO (2005) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005*, UNESCO, Paris.
- United State Agency (USAID, 2002) for international development, UnitedStates Basic Education.”Basic Building the Foundation for People and Nations”.
- USAID (2002) *Approaching Education from a Good Governance Perspective: USAID Resource Guide for Joint DG/Education programme.*
- Utibe, O. (2001). *Issues and problems in the effective implementation of the UBE in Uyo LGA of Akwa Ibom State; (Unpublished) B.Ed Project, University of Uyo*
- Wokocha, A.M. (2011) ‘Enhancing Teacher Quality and Capacity Building in Nigeria’. Registrar / Chief Executive Officer of the Teachers’ Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), Abuja.
- World Bank Group, 2010.