**Education: A Human Right**

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**Date: 9 December, 2020**

**Introduction**

Around 1980 when I attended my first grade, it was after a long war for Zimbabwe’s independence. People who were unable to attend school for years were now able to do so. At age 7, I could see grade seven students who were over twenty tears of age. Bearded students, mother-like grown up girls were attending school. As the new majority government started their reign, one announcement that excited my family was that education was a human right for all and so every child was supposed to be given an opportunity. Despite that the majority even in my class came from low income families, the fact that education was a right which none could take away was one that lighted a bright light of hope. Before this era, there were bottlenecks in the education systems of most colonized countries. All natives were to do anything so that they prepare to be good subordinates to the superior colonial masters. So, if one could read and write, that could not be regarded as a mean achievement. Such a background will no doubt create a profound appreciation that taking education as a human right is not a mean fact.

**Some Professional Perspectives on Education**

Yes, I fully subscribe to the fact that the free market economy has many advantages as it promotes the idea of competition that must motivate all parties to be efficient in decisions and actions. Ver Eecke, W (1998) identifies education as a merit good in which if the socio-economic dimension is ignored, society will be deprived. It is now a common fact that education is regarded as a merit good. One that is likely to be under-supplied and under-consumed if everything would be left to market forces alone. Biesta, G. (2012) actually brings a deeper perspective to education as he looks at the need to include education as a public good. One may not doubt why such perspectives would be brought into question. One reason for the this could be the innumerable benefits to society when people opt to take education to the public domain fully agree that one reason a market system is deemed to have failures is that it cannot efficiently allocate education as a merit or public good. Jongbloed, B. (2003) actually brings the issue of supply monopolies in education as a market failure. When I was a teenager, I only new of one university in Zimbabwe, the University of Zimbabwe. Obviously if one could imagine the result if such a facility could be privatized, only a few could afford. May deserving potential students would obviously not make it.

**My Personal Experience**

When I completed my Advanced level education through an external examination body (Since Zimbabwe had not yet localized exams by then), I faced stiff competition to make it into a public college. So many young people benefited from the education for all policy such that the literacy level of Zimbabwe was around 98%. The number of Ordinary Level students was so high that only advanced level students could be enrolled in public universities. This was a high standard in the region. I noticed it when I visited and started staying in neighboring Malawi. All my employers admitted that on average, the education standards set by the new independence government were very high. Some colleagues could not take it kindly as they thought it was almost an unfair advantage. Unfortunately, it was not. I remember the pain of rigorous efforts made in college when I trained as a teacher for a diploma in education. One classmate from a neighboring country confessed that the Diploma standards in Zimbabwe by then could match degree standards in their country. A close friend in the Engineering department also said the same. He told me that the equipment in the department at the same college I studied (donated by the US Government) was better than the same equipment at some institutions offering degrees. I am proud to have gone through such exposures. I got the true feel of it when I studied for my degree. I had indeed been overdosed at the diploma level.

**Online and Adult Education Opportunities**

As a zealous student, I have done my degree, my masters degree as an adult. The degree was done in what is called the block-release program where I used my school holidays as a teacher to study for an average of four weeks. It was painful as we had to cover sixteen weeks work in four weeks. But it was worth it. One thing I learnt is that it is never too late to achieve your goals as long as you live. One other advantage I got is that I was not computer literate as computers were not in our school system until I was an adult. Online education forced me to be computer literate. As I struggled some colleagues could be seen admiring as if I was in control. The truth was I was just a zealous student, exercising my right to education.

**Is education a Right?**

There is a sad fact observed by some notable scholars. While in theory, the right to education is often preached in almost any nation on the globe, not enough has been done to realize this for a vast majority of citizens of this planet. McCowan, T. (2010) has this sad observation to make: “The universal **right**to **education**has been enshrined in a range of international rights instruments. Yet despite the considerable secondary literature on the subject, there has been little discussion of the notion of **education**underpinning the **right**.”

In the country I am staying as of now, poverty make even primary school education a challenge even though it is officially free for all. In my research on marketisation of education, I was saddened when one school head told me that the school charges a small development levy of about $0.80 per term but on this one, some struggling parents fail to raise this. I visited the government primary school and saw that the majority of classes have no chairs or desks. Students have to learn while seated on the cold floor. My conclusion was that a mindset change, a paradigm shift must be done since some things that were missing did not need monetary resources.

**Education: A meaningful Right if Modernized**

There is a dire need to modernize the education system. African which make up a significant part of the developing world can learn from developed nations such as the US and the UK if they are to transform education into a meaningful right. Courtney, S. J. (2018) out lines how the UK managed to achieve some milestones in modernizing their education system. There is need for investing time talents and resources to make the right to education a meaningful one. The current generation has many advantages than previous ones. They have the internet, the computers, improved transport systems, televisions, radios just to name some. Again, even if the planners have the best plans, this will not materialize if the beneficiaries are not ready for the ordeal.

**In Conclusion**

Education is indeed a right and we must be thankful for this. However, it does not have to end in sweet talking. This will not help anyone. The right has to be taken to where it is needed most, to the less privileged, the disadvantaged potential talents if our world has to be a better home for all. Indeed, there must be unmined potential that could make this world a better place. Those in authority in developing nations like mine have an uphill task especially where the education index is very low. Even the so-called developing nations have a right to reach levels such as those in Scandinavian countries like Sweden, Finland which boast of high educations indices. Records show that an average child makes it to university while one low income country like Malawi, an average child struggles to complete secondary education. **The right to education can be reached by all.**

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