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Introduction

This issue is an assortment of articles on education. Three areas are covered, namely, primary education, university education, and education and the labour market.

One of the educational aims of most governments today is not only to provide equal educational opportunity in which every child is given access to education, but to make education qualitative so that those who are receiving it will be able to develop their innate intellectual potentials to the best of their abilities. There are several reasons for this - political, moral and economic.

On political grounds, there has been a growing demand, among parents and their children, for education at all levels. Education has, therefore, become a great political issue and no government dares, even in the face of other pressing national needs, deprive the people of this seemingly indispensable 'consumer good'. In simple political phraseology, educational opportunity has become an inherent and inalienable right of every individual, a phenomenon which Coombs (1968) has described as a 'democratic imperative'.

On moral grounds, it is argued that each child should be given the opportunity to develop fully, and that only by a full use of his/her talents can a child grow into a mentally healthy adult (Musgrave, 1965). And on economic grounds, the stress is on educational development as a condition for overall national development. In the modern world, no country can afford to neglect the greatest of its resources: the native talents of its population (Musgrave, ibid; Bereday, 1969).

However, despite these egalitarian and democratic philosophies, both equality of educational opportunity and qualitative education continue to elude most governments. But it is in the area of quality that the problem has become very acute. For, it is easy to send every child to school without regard to conditions or facilities, but much more difficult to make them useful and functional thereafter through schooling without the necessary ingredients. We call to mind here Illich's (1971) 'Deschooling Society'.

The articles in this issue of UTAFITI are therefore timely. They are essays on quality written by education specialists and seasoned academics, and seek to draw attention to issues that call for special attention in education: issues on standards, issues on ideology, issues on curriculum, and issues relating to education and employment.

The first two articles by S.T. Mahenge and C.E. Okonkwo look at primary education in Tanzania and Nigeria respectively. In the first article: 'Some Educational Cracks in Tanzania Mainland Primary Schools in Terms of Facilities and Instructional Materials: A Case study of Mbeya and Iringa Regions in 1980', Mahenge, working with the hypothesis that the efficacy of any school system depends essentially on the resources available to the schools, examines the facilities and instructional materials in primary schools in two regions of Tanzania. His aim is, using this case study, to find out to what extent the country is able to realise its objectives of Education for Self-Reliance and the universalisation of education, as enunciated in the country's education policies. His findings
are revealing: primary schools in the country are operating in a ‘very critical situation’; ‘some major cracks have developed which are enlarging year after year to the extent that it is now a crisis’; several school buildings are dilapidated or dilapidating; classes are over-crowded and congested; school libraries, workshops and domestic science rooms are non-existent or nearly so; teacher-pupil ratio is widening; and where classrooms are available, tables and chairs are lacking.

In a lamenting tone, the author calls for urgent attention to arrest the situation:

...the teaching as well as learning conditions inside the primary school classrooms are so critical that there is a need to call for national emergency programme to alleviate the situation.

In the second article, Okonkwo, on the basis of a content analysis of some primary school texts on social studies and mathematics in Nigerian schools asks: ‘Primary Education in Nigeria: What is it all about?’ His answer is revealing. It shows, not only, how inappropriate the content of Nigeria’s education is to the Nigerian school child and his/her social environment but, possibly, how ‘mis-educating’ the entire content of school education in the country may be to the learner. Most of the issues discussed in the school texts:

deal with situations outside the imaginative premise of the Nigerian primary school child. Thus, for the Nigerian child, education and life can never become one, since the books he reads extol no ideals of his society and paint no vivid pictures of his home.

Okonkwo calls for an urgent re-appraisal of the nation’s entire education system to reflect the needs and aspirations of the nation, and for the writing of all class and reference texts for use in primary and post-primary levels by only ‘cultural insiders’.

The article by P.M. Biswalo examines the impact of the recent (1974) Party Policy on Education, popularly known as the Musoma Resolution, on student personnel services at the University of Dar es Salaam. Upon this policy, admission into the University has concentrated on adults and mature-age entry candidates, in preference to fresh secondary school leavers, with the resultant preponderance of mature entrants at the institution. In a comparison of these adult and mature-entry male students to their, fewer, direct-entry male counterparts, Biswalo analyses the student’s perceptions of the various student personnel services offered at the university. His findings provide insight into the needs of adult students in universities and into the differentials in perception between adults and young persons of the roles, and functions of higher educational institutions.

Language is inextricably bound up with education and learning. And in a multi-lingual context, the situation could be complex; for example, issues such as what language should be the medium of instructions in schools and at what level of the education system; what should be the relationship between the language of instructions in school and the other languages, how should ‘balance’ be achieved between them; how are these other languages to be taught, if they are to be taught at all, etc? are often problematic. Witness, for instance, what is happening in Nigeria’s education system, with Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba as
indigenous languages and English as a ‘foreign’ or ‘second’ language in schools; or indeed, in other multi-lingual countries of Africa like Malawi, Zambia, Zaire, Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Ghana, etc. In Tanzania, despite the ‘rise’ of Kiswahili as the lingua franca, English has remained the medium of instruction in secondary schools and post-secondary institutions. This means that the Tanzanian students at these levels of education must have a certain degree of competence in it to be able to follow the lectures in class, take notes, write essays, and read advanced texts, especially in specialist subjects.

In the fourth and fifth articles, S. North and H.R. Trappes-Lomax look at two aspects of the language situation in Tanzania, the former on language dexterity and academic success and the latter on ‘language management’. On the first, it has been established that there is a correlation between language ability and intellectual development at the lower levels of education. Is this true also at the tertiary level? Sarah North tries to answer this question in her article ‘Language Proficiency and First-Year University Achievement’. Using a sample of first-year students of medicine and dentistry at the University of Dar es Salaam, she critically examines the hypothesis that proficiency in English language enhances a student’s academic performance at the university, or precisely, that “a student’s command of English (which to many Tanzanians is a second language and to others a third or even fourth language) and the ability to use it effectively as a tool for academic study is a crucial factor in his/her success at the University”. Her conclusion is that language ability is a good predictor of academic success.

Trappes-Lomax’s article derives from a Colloquium organised by the Institute of Education of the University of Dar es Salaam on language management in Tanzania, and the teaching of English at the primary level. Here, the two major questions are: First, given the present functions of English in Tanzania vis-a-vis those of Kiswahili (the country’s lingua franca), at what stage in the primary school curriculum should English teaching begin? Second, given also that English is no more the medium of instructions in primary schools and bearing in mind the future roles primary school leavers are likely to play in the country, what sort or quality of English should be taught in these schools?

These two articles are interesting in view of the controversies the language problem has generated and will continue to generate in education in Tanzania and in most other African countries where, in addition to their multi-lingual nature, English is often not a first language for most children in schools.

The last article, by J.C. Galabawa, on ‘Schooling and the Labour Market...’ looks at the school curriculum and unemployment problem in Tanzania. It is often claimed that unemployment among school leavers arises, primarily, from wrong curriculum in schools. Galabawa says ‘no’ to this; at least not in Tanzania. Unemployment among school leavers, he asserts, should not be viewed as a problem resulting from the curriculum, but rather in what goes on outside the school, notably in the political economy of the country and the employment trends in the labour market. For example, firstly, despite the stress on agriculture and technical curricula in the country’s schools, wage employment trends in the country do not appear to favour the rural sector or manufacturing. Secondly, the government’s policy of creating job opportunities for young people appears to be concentrated in the unproductive sectors of the economy, particularly, in the rapidly expanding central state bureaucracy. The effect of this is: first, the increase of wage incomes without a corresponding increase in

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production. In the long run, this depresses surplus and investment which would, otherwise, have combined with more labour and therefore an increase in job creation. Secondly, the concentration of jobs in the service sector implies that the skills in greatest demand in the labour market are law, teaching, administration, sales, clerical and office work. In such a situation, the low credentials of primary school leavers means that they are left out.

Therefore, he concludes, it would not be convincing to argue that the reason why so many primary school leavers do not find employment is because they have received the wrong sort of education.


In the review of Z.E. Lawu's book, *Education and Social Change in a Rural Community*, A.G.M. Ishumi makes an analytical commentary on the colonial advent in the 'Chagga country' and the aftermath.

Although there is little dispute concerning the role of education in modern society, the problems of education have become an endless jutabow, particularly among educationists. The search for quality continues. One of the main objectives of journals is to make available the results of research and of people's thoughts. The articles in UTAFITI, to re-iterate the editorial policy of the journal, are dedicated to events and development. Therefore, as the search for quality in education continues, as the panacea and solutions to the numerous problems of education are prescribed and propounded, we welcome comments and additions to articles in this issue.