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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to explore the aspect of education as a human right. Education is a pathway towards intellectual enlightenment, capacity development and personal growth. In addition, education opens up human capacity for the pursuit of all other human rights. This underscores the relevance of the idea for education as a human right in developing sufficient understanding on all dynamics that define the human life. The paper also looked into the article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the year 1948 from which 58 countries declared elementary education as a human right. The study established that to date the realization of free and quality education of the human family still faces numerous barriers such as primitive cultures, insecurity and poverty. The global cooperation through UNESCO offers hope in coordinating efforts towards the realization of free and fair education as a right for all global citizens.

Key Words: *Intellectual Enlightenment, Capacity Development, Personal Growth*

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INTRODUCTION

The value of education in the human society has increasingly become a critical element of human advancement that opens up lifelong opportunities for personal development and growth. However, in its foundation education is a process that takes a very long time and resources to scale it to its summit. Understandably the dimensional variables of time and resources have made access to education limited for significant section of the society. This paper sought to explore on the aspect of education as a human right in which every member of the society is guaranteed a fair shot to access it.

Education forms a critical pillar necessary for the facilitation of people in their path towards the realization of their life purpose. This fact stipulates that education contributes significantly to the cumulative outcome of life achievement. As such, just like freedom of speech and expression or access to healthcare and decent shelter, education is equally a human right. To date, in many parts of the world access to education is still viewed as luxury and a preserve of the able few. Apportioning standards that limit equal accessibility to education negatively impacts many people which live them out from realizing their full potential.

The Right to Education

Article 26 on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), declared access to education to be a fundamental human right (United Nations [UN], 1948). Education as a right means that everybody across the globe deserves an equal and fair chance to pursue education to level of their own satisfaction. As already noted, education is a process that takes time to accomplish striding from one stage to the other. Unlike other inalienable rights, like freedom of speech and expression, healthcare and shelter, education requires individual people to pursue it for a long

duration for them to gain its reward. As such, the United Nations acknowledged elementary level education as the threshold for its access, with other levels such as higher education to be easier to access.

Education in its foundation is seen as the route through which the human family is able to gain understanding and courage to pursue other rights. In the reports as captured in the UDHR of 1948 (Article 26i) and submissions by Lee (2013), basic education opens up broader possibilities for humans to gain insight on all other rights. This basis sets education as a key that opens up the door towards greater personal achievement in realizing other rights such as food and shelter. By developing human capacity, attributes of human, social and technical skills are deepened. This gives humans' ability to relate well with others in society, pursue economic empowerment through employment and participate in intellectual discourse and civic responsibilities.

Education is the pathway and the launch pad towards career progression. Having a career, is a humanly desire towards independence and personal development. Achieving independence and personal growth a person is able to offer value to their society. This is a deed towards positive contribution on existence in this life by gaining the ability to tap into opportunities that bring prosperity to the community. Definitely, this underscores the role of education as a right that builds the ability in people to enable them to serve their communities. In addition, education develops human capacities for awareness, tolerance and diversity. These are necessary qualities for societal inter-existence through tolerating opinions and perspectives of others, embracing differences among people in celebrating shared diversity and being aware of human limitations and individual biases. This is the way towards guaranteeing human family lives

in an environment filled with justice, harmony and peaceful coexistence.

Global Efforts on Rights to Education Access

The community of nations under the umbrella of United Nations (UN) established a membership body called the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) whose mandate among others is to promote access to education. This UN agency has served as the platform in which nation states have a united front towards pursuit of education as a right for every human (UNESCO, 2020). Realizing the aspects of resources in the pursuit of fairness to education access, UNESCO offers guidance amongst nation states on the best policies towards utilization of national and international resources to boost free elementary education for all.

Notable resources in education access include; learning facilities and teaching staff. These critical resources require huge financial investments. Also, the state of learning facilities and teaching staff impacts greatly education quality. This has informed the role of UNESCO in supporting structural and academic development across the member countries to not only push for free access to education but rather access to free and quality education for all. To date UNESCO has graced significant milestones such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000 where right to free education was given strong international support with many countries implementing the changes. To date however the effort towards fair and right to education continues with numerous challenges derailing the effort towards ensuring the entirety of human family enjoy the right to free and quality education.

Barriers towards realization of Education as a Right

Numerous challenges have hampered global efforts towards the realization of parity in access to education for all. The aspect of resource limitation has remained a leading barrier towards the realization of level playing-field for education access. In addition, other socio-economic factors notably; cultural practices, obsolete education system, corruption and conflicts have hampered greatly the agenda on education accessibility.

The barriers to education are interconnected to the overall socio-economic status of communities across the globe. Communities that face multi-faceted challenges of conflict, poverty and corruption are more likely to have less accessibility to quality education in comparison to peaceful countries. This highlights the connection between security, integrity and peace with the education system underscoring the width of difficulty in ensuring global parity in education access.

Some cultural practices around the world have significantly hampered the efforts towards community empowerment through access to education. In Kenya for example, communities in pastoral regions still practice early marriages, where girls as young as 14 years old are given for marriage. Other cultures have practices that prohibit girls from accessing education in preference for boys. Further, in nomadic pastoral communities, education is less appreciated in preference to nomadic culture of keeping and trading of livestock.

Corruption, insecurity and conflicts play a huge role in hampering access to education. For communities facing conflicts and insecurity cases such as terrorism, ethnic discrimination the need for survival supersedes desire for education. Also, obsolete education system, which doesn't reward

learners with marketable skills and opportunities for career progress has de-motivated many members of society from pursuing education. The barriers to education need to be solved in pursuit of creating a level playing field for education access to all.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

The study made the following recommendations;

- Enhancing the global efforts through the UNESCO umbrella towards the harmonization of education system and syllabus taught to learners. This will be vital in phasing out obsolete components of academic syllabus are impractical in the modern job sector and technology driven global economy.
- Pushing for the abolishment of primitive cultures across the globe through regulatory and legal interventions. Discriminatory culture such as early marriage should be abolished through legal intervention and policy reforms.
- More investment into the education resources in aspects of increasing the volume of learning facilities and boost training on teachers and increasing their remuneration.

- Radical global cooperation towards rallying nations in advancing right towards education. This global cooperation will be key in tackling challenges such as; insecurity, corruption and poverty in effort to create an ambient and peaceful environment for learning to be possible.

This paper concluded that education is a human right that the entirety of human family is entitled to. Education is the surest mechanism through which human beings can be empowered with broad capacity and abilities to pursue personal growth and prosperity. Global cooperation under the UNESCO umbrella offers the best hope in facilitating efforts towards accessibility to quality, relevant and free education. The study also concluded that, global cooperation in the UN and UNESCO general assembly's wield great powers towards tackling various barriers that are hampering access to quality and free education for communities across different communities in the globe. The idea of education as a human right is long overdue but it can only be realized in a peaceful and well-resourced global community.

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