

The Role of Education in Reducing the Severity of Poverty in the Sudan

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Abstract: The main objectives of this paper is to establish a link between education and poverty reduction, to clarify the international strategies and policies of education in reducing poverty; and to examine the role of education in poverty reduction in the Sudan. The method adopted is the descriptive, based on a survey of the educational literature review in the field of poverty reduction. The main findings of the study are: there is a link between education and poverty reduction; basic education provides comprehensive skills, applies the concepts values associated with poverty reduction; the policies and strategies are in need of reconsideration in order to serve the poverty stricken, displaced and deprived of education individuals.

1 INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the third millennium has witnessed the redirection of the regional, international and local strategies and policies towards reducing the severity of poverty and its negative impact on the individuals and communities at large.

The development goals of the millennium (2000-2015) and the goals of sustainable development (2015-2030) reflect the following in their first four goals: (1) Eradicating all aspects of poverty all over the world (2) Complete eradication of hunger. (3) Maintaining good health and prosperity. (4) Providing equal good quality education and opportunities of permanent education for all.

Reducing the severity of poverty and maintaining sustainable development represent priorities in the political economic, social, environmental, cultural and security fields, however, the role of education is considered the corner stone in all fields.

Education is promulgated as a primary weapon against poverty prevalence. Investment in education increases the income level as well as the overall standard of living. Moreover, education helps in fulfillment of basic needs (eradicating poverty) and the basic needs include the education availability. Hence provision of education and fulfillment of basic needs both reinforce each other. Education promotes social cohesion which gives rise to the fall of human poverty.

Poverty reduction has become an important goal development agenda in many developing countries. This is also the agenda of several international development organizations including UNDP, World Bank and UNICEF. During the World Education Forum held in Dakar in April 2000, the international community underscored the need to eradicate extreme poverty and gave its collective commitment to work this aim through education.

Due to the importance of education the Director General (UNESCO) confirmed that education is not only confined to the provision of schooling to children, but it also takes into account their preparation for life and obtaining better jobs to enable them to contribute to their communities and making the best use of their abilities. Moreover, all the funds invested on education are expected to procure multiple progress and development to both the individuals bearing in mind that this is the right time for investment. The paper aims at clarifying the international strategies and policies for the exploitation of education in reducing the severity of poverty and providing solutions to its negative impact.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

Descriptive method based on a survey of the educational literature in the field of reducing the

severity of poverty and its relationship with comprehensive development consisting of the following axes:

1. The concept of poverty and its definitions
2. Poverty in the Sudan.
3. The international strategies and policies for utilizing education in reducing poverty.
4. The role of general education curriculum in reducing the severity of poverty in the Sudan.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 The Concept of Poverty

Living in poverty is by all means a great risk since it has many aspects which comprise scarcity of income, lack of the necessary productive resources for securing permanently stable living standards, resisting hunger, malnutrition and disease, illiteracy and ignorance. It also means constant increase in the rates of disease and mortality, homelessness and lack of shelter and accommodation.

Poverty is prevalent all over the world such as public poverty in most of the developing countries and the poverty pockets in the developed countries. In addition to that, poverty may also be caused by natural disasters, tribal disputes and deprivation from the services provided by the social security institutions. Poverty can also be experienced where women are obliged to bear heavy loads and where there are weak children, elderly, refugees and displaced people in need of care and rehabilitation.

To sum up, poverty in all its forms represents an impediment to the human race at large in enjoying the right of leading a happy, secure and dignified life.

Classification of Poverty

Poverty has a number of concepts and definitions which are disputable in most cases. However, generally it is categorized in two types:

Type (1): Absolute poverty

It is marked by complete deprivation from the basic economic, social and cultural necessities. It describes the living situation of the individuals or specific families without any comparisons between them and others and this term is used in poverty stricken developing countries.

Absolute poverty includes:

Primary Poverty: This type is experienced when an individual or family lacks the basic natural needs, or

the lowest living conditions such as food, clothes, healthy drinking water, appropriate environment, accommodation, general health and education.

Secondary Poverty: It refers to deprivation from participation in social life or lacking the lowest level of social and cultural interaction.

Type (2): Relative Poverty

It is the condition in which people lack the minimum amount of income needed in order to maintain the average standard of living in the society in which they live especially when compared with others who enjoy better living conditions.

Poverty Alleviation

The term refers to the process of reducing the number of poverty stricken individuals and improving their living conditions. This term is used in the developed industrial countries in particular.

Reducing the Severity of Poverty

That is eradicating the symptoms of poverty by continuous reduction of the rates of malnutrition and disease and the utilization of effective poverty reduction programs.

3.2 Poverty in the Sudan

The Human Development Index Report (2014) on poverty in the Sudan provided indicators about poverty which can be summarized as follows:

1. (46%) of the Sudanese population suffer from poverty.
2. (14%) live in absolute poverty.
3. (19%) represent the unemployment rate.
4. (65%) are deprived of electrical supply.
5. (43%) are deprived from healthy drinking water.
6. (8.5%) suffer from multi-dimensional poverty.

3.3 The Role of Education in Poverty Reduction

Katia Vladimirova and David Le Blanc (2015) study indicates that there is a number of connections between education and poverty reduction and that education reduces poverty by increasing peoples' income. The study confirmed that expanded education typically benefitted worse off groups.

It, furthermore, showed that people are vulnerable to poverty if they are below, or at risk of falling below a certain minimally acceptable threshold of critical choices across several dimensions such as education. Education increases resilience to adverse shocks.

Girls' education, on one hand, prevents an inter generational pass of poverty by breaking the cycle of early marriage and child bearing and health risks associated with these events.

A study by the World Bank (2015) in the Middle East and Africa region indicated that there is a strong link between education and poverty reduction. Education increases household income by facilitating the access to higher paid jobs. Education in the Middle East and North Africa is not yielding high investment in comparison with Asia, Latin America, Caribbean and Sub-Sahara Africa.

Mtey and Sulle (2013) study revealed that education is a significant tool required to be implemented in all programs intended to fight poverty and that it is potentially good for income generation and improvement of persons' self esteem. Quality education in particular gives people appropriate skills and the knowledge they need to address their social problems.

Another study by Awan and Malik (2011) was conducted to estimate the effect of education upon poverty in Pakistan. The study showed that education attainment is a critical determinant of the incidence of poverty and should be considered primarily in implementing poverty alleviation programmes. Poverty according to the study declines with the increase of the educational level.

The study showed that it is quite evident that education can increase the earning potential of the poor and they become productive. The educational attainment of household head is the critical determinant of household poverty in Pakistan.

Many studies highlight a positive relationship between education and poverty reduction (Nassar and Bildagy, 2016, Tystad 2017, Appleton 2001, Hag, R, 2005) have reported a significant positive effect of education on growth. The study findings indicate that education can be an effective investment of social change when it functions as life empowering force by aiming at securing human individuals with essential skills of literacy, numerical, communication, problem-solving and production work.

Khan and Williams (2006) study showed that educated people have higher learning potential and are better able to improve the quality of their lives, and are less likely to be marginalized within society at large. Education empowers a person and it helps them to become more proactive, gain control over their lives and broaden the range of available options.

Fan Nyange and Rao (2005) conducted a study in Tanzania to demonstrate how household survey and linking household human capital and access to infrastructure and technology and public investments

in rural education have very favorable impacts on poverty, raising about 43 poor people above the poverty line per million shilling spent, with an average benefit/ cost ratio of 9.

These impacts were found to be strong statistically significant in all regions of Tanzania. The researchers concluded that increased investments on education should be a priority in all regions of Tanzania.

The study by RagbendraJha, BagalaBiswal and UrvashiBiswal (2001) found that public spending in education helps reduce poverty. It tested whether public expenditures on education, health and other development activities have been effective in reducing poverty in India. The study also revealed that expenditure on higher education as opposed to elementary and secondary education is more effective in poverty reduction.

UNESCO (2002) suggests in one of its studies that literacy helps in improving communication and reasoning skills in children and it helps children to move from impoverished family and break out of poverty. It also suggests that quality basic education for all citizens can help to lift communities out of poverty. Moreover, education helps reduce poverty by increasing the productivity of the poor through fertility reduction health improvement as well as equipping people with the skills they need to contribute to the economy.

3.4 International Strategies and Policies for Reducing the Severity of Poverty

Youth, skills, utilization of education for securing better jobs and poverty reduction international report on Education for All (2012) which was signed by the concerned countries in (2000) stated that the third objective of EDUCATION FOR ALL was securing the needs of children and adults via well-balanced benefits for both adopting appropriate learning and skills acquisition programs.

The above mentioned report also stated that a considerable number of youth leave school without acquiring the necessary skills which enable them to join in the working market and suffer the worst conditions of unemployment in a very early age or end up in doing marginal jobs.

Other individuals who have the lowest academic achievement are represented by the poverty stricken in the urban areas, the rural areas and the war areas have to live under difficult circumstances as they immerse in low rent activities or unemployment. Women on the other hand suffer from discrimination

which keeps them locked up and threaten their access to education and means of poverty avoidance.

The report suggests three types of skills and tracks for reducing the severity of poverty and securing a general framework for developing the necessary skills required for the potential jobs to be adopted and incorporated in the general education strategies and policies which can be summarized as follows:

1. The basic skills associated with reading, writing, arithmetic, understanding basic text and manipulating basic arithmetic calculations which are considered basic to the aptitude required for the accomplishment of jobs as well as market.
2. The skills which are liable to conversion such as solving problems, the ability to convert, competence conditioning and the skills required by the different working conditions contexts. They, moreover, include effective exchange of information, conveying the spirit of leadership, diligence and the ability to organize projects which can be implanted in basic and secondary education and ultimately get enriched and developed in the work areas.
3. Technical and vocational skills associated with specific jobs such as working in agriculture, industry, civil service, computer, sewing, household activities, preparation of food and hotel services.

Routes for Skills Acquisition

The routes shown on (Appendix I) may serve as a tool for understanding the need for developing the skills and the fields to be targeted by the strategies.

It shows all the skills needed by the youth i.e. the basic skills, transferable skills, technical and professional in addition to the contexts in which they can be acquired. On the other hand, it reflects the training on skills opportunities for those who did not have access to systematic education. The opportunities range from the second opportunity programs for acquiring the basic skills and work-based training including vocational practice and training on agriculture.

At the base, there are the individuals who lack the basic skills and are therefore obliged to accept marginal jobs which keep them imprisoned by poverty. On the top, are the ones who have acquired the necessary skills which secure better jobs with opportunities of organizing projects. Despite the importance of the skills for the working market and preparation for a better life, the (UNESCO, 2012) stated that the competencies, values, behavior

patterns and the skills at large enable the individuals to achieve success in many fields including better jobs, civil participation, personal relations and education for life what leads to the belief that life skills and values can never be underestimated with reference to performance skills as the international report (2012) reveals. They are, precisely, necessary for poverty reduction and eradication.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The role of education can be over viewed from two angles: The curriculum contribution via concepts, skills and values which boost the youth potential energy and qualify them for life and work; and the policies legislation's and laws which govern the educational process.

4.1 The Role of Curricula in Reducing the Severity of Poverty in the Sudan

The curricula in the Sudan are undergoing drastic changes. The current curriculum (1994) will be terminated in (2026) and the new curriculum (2014) is now being introduced starting with the first four classes text-books which will be in use until (2026) as the curriculum document (2014) shows.

The curriculum content analysis of poverty reduction includes the following documents:

- The curriculum document (1990) and the text-books which have been reprinted and updated to be in use until (2026).
- The new curriculum document (2013).
- The scope and sequence matrix (2026).

The basic education document (1990) has focused on concepts, values and the skills which help in the reduction of poverty and fighting its causes:

1. Building human-oriented curriculum which focuses on the students and takes into account all the elements of character building.
2. The curriculum sets out to prepare the students for life and work exploiting (150) values which represent the values pattern adopted by the Sudanese in their relationships, beliefs and multi-culture (Appendix 1).
3. Providing the students with the competencies and life skills (Appendix 2) which reform their beliefs and enrich their values and spirit of patriotism which are responsible for their emotional and creative growth.

4. Building a value-based curriculum which derives from Islam and Christianity consolidated by the axes and the relevant general education value-oriented subject matter.
5. The concepts and values included are marked by relevance apart from atheism and any other irrelevant beliefs.
6. The study of human beings and the universe and the relationship between them is approached within the appropriate temporal and spatial dimensions any eliminating eccentric interpretations or atheism-directed ones.
7. The axis of applied art is based on the human basic needs (clothes, housing, security, nutrition and health).

The curriculum guidelines in (1990) document 1-7 reflect the link between education and poverty in many areas including preparation for life and work, developing the skills for job income and wage generation, civic education, communication, long life education and satisfaction of human basic needs.

Moreover, the skills and values in (Appendix 2 and 3) comply with the international strategies and policies discussed in 2.4.

Besides this role, the studies which analyzed the content of basic education curriculum Abu Shanab, El-Tall (1990) and Salim (2014) indicated that the curriculum contains basic concepts, skills and values that help in reducing the severity of poverty and controlling its causes:

1. The levels of security awareness concepts ranged between (21.1%) to (2.4%).
2. The levels economic and psychological security ranged between (21.1%) to (20.5%) respectively.
3. The levels of social, national and health security were at the second rank with these respective percentages(16.8%), (13%) and (11.1%); whereas, the last group represented the least frequency which include environmental security (7.9%), nutritional security (4.5%) and traffic security (4.2%).

Taking the results of the study by Salim (2014) into consideration, the claim that the reduction of the severity of poverty and controlling its causes was significantly accounted for and confirmed in the basic education curriculum since the preparation of the students for life and work is one of its priorities.

The National Centre for Curriculum has published curriculum-concomitant books, developed teachers' guides and technical route text-books to be taught in the 7th and 8th forms with the purpose of reducing the

severity of poverty and eliminating its causes which consist of the following:

1. Introducing life skills in the axis of human beings and the universe and applied arts.
2. Traffic safety awareness.
3. Books on HIV/AIDS.
4. Mines risk education.
5. The compressed curriculum of the war affected areas and Taj-el-hafizeen schools.
6. The UNESCO books in the framework of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for the war affected areas which are designed to assist youth in resisting poverty by vocational training and schooling within (10-15) days.

1 to 6 above indicate that the curriculum booklets show the link between education and poverty reduction as reflected in section 2.

Satisfaction of basic human needs returns from education enhances economic, social and environmental sustainability and promotes social cohesion.

The new curriculum document (2014) added new subjects to prepare the students for the 21st century and to equip them with new skills required for globalization and digital era (computer science, life skills, civic education and entrepreneur).

Secondary school curriculum, on the other hand, is based on merging the academic courses into the technical and vocational ones, being a general culture curriculum. It prepares the students for life, work and future studies.

The curriculum consists of (60%) academic subjects and (40%) vocational and technical subjects (computer science, commercial sciences and engineering, animal production, military studies and family studies). Merging academic into vocational and technical sciences parallels the UNESCO suggestion for preparing youth for life and work and fighting poverty.

According to the study by the Ministry of Education and UNESCO (2013), despite the fact that the secondary education is highly important, the enrollment represents (34%) which means that (66%) of the students whose ages range between (16-18) join the work earlier.

Technical education, which represents (2.4%), was established in order to qualify students for the agricultural, industrial, commercial sectors as well as women education has also undergone changes and had its institutions dissolved into academic education and universities despite its importance and potential contribution in reducing poverty if it had received sufficient financing, Ministry of Education Report on Education for All (2015).

4.2 Eradicating Illiteracy and Adults Education

Eradication of illiteracy targets large numbers of illiterates (9.6) million. The Sudan is considered the second country in Africa with reference to the number of children who are not exposed to schooling.

According to Mohammed Hamid's report on the National Campaign for Illiteracy Eradication (2016-2020), it was stated that there were new programs to assist in poverty reduction in the framework of parallel education which can be summarized in the following points:

1. The national strategy in its first year assimilated (5000) of the children whose ages range between (5-9) and are deprived of education into the regular basic education institutions.
2. Children with ages ranging between (11-14) were prepared for taking the basic education examination from the parallel education centers.
3. (500) students benefited from the applied life skills programs which targeted the eradication of nutritional illiteracy in the Red Sea State in addition to (900) in South Darfur State.
4. The Um Sayalah scheme for the micro-funds targeted (6000) families-30000 individuals under the supervision of UNESCO and the National Council for Illiteracy Eradication.

4.3 Policies, Legislation and Laws of General Education

Article (44) of the Sudan Transitional Government Constitution indicates that:

44-(1) education is one of the basic rights of all citizens and that the government is responsible for its provision without any ethnic, gender or disability discrimination.

44-(2) Basic education is compulsory and free for all nationals. The right to have access to international education is also being considered for approval by the Sudanese government.

The currently applied law, however, has laid the responsibility of the administration, financing and implementation on the state governments and localities and the right for free education has not yet been incorporated into the General Education Law (2001). But most of the Sudanese States pay the salaries of the teachers and provide the seating and text-books.

Concerning the national support of education, it was stated in a study by the Ministry of General

Education that the financial contribution of the citizens to education represents (33%) collected by the Educational Councils and that the support was not subject to any financial and accountability regulations applied at the state level.

This disparity between what the constitution states (2005) and the reality of financing general education in the above mentioned states and localities may indicate that poverty should remain uncontrolled, which will ultimately lead to communal poverty and deprivation from education as the World Bank Mission stated (2012).

Despite the government's tremendous efforts, multi dimensional disparities still persist in Sudan. Notably, there exist severe regional, social and structural disparities. A comparative analysis of GERS at various levels across the eighteen states reveals serious social divides and gender inequalities. The distribution of public education spending among people belonging to the same cohort shows that a considerable proportion of educational resources tend to be consumed by only the top 10 percent of the educated within each generation (World Bank, 2012)

To alleviate the severity of poverty, the states with agriculture and grazing dependent economies may extend the schools holidays in the rural areas to enable the students to participate in agriculture and grazing and hence gain performance experiences and skills which support the aims of the general education curriculum.

Secondary general education in Khartoum State classifies the schools into: Class (A) Model Schools and Class (B) Model Schools and geographical ones, in addition to (43%) of the students who are admitted into private schools, Khartoum State Government Council (2014). However, it is clear that this law represents a breach of the constitution (2005) which calls for quality education for all, leaving the poor students, the displaced and disabled ones vulnerable to all aspects of poverty.

Besides that, the monthly examinations and half monthly examinations lead to wasting (25%) of the time allotted for studying, and these results in depriving the students of gaining the necessary skills which help in poverty reduction.

4.4 Quality of Education in the Sudan

It is the quality of education that matters for poverty reduction. It gives people appropriate skills and knowledge they need to address the social problems.

Education quality in the Sudan is a priority in all educational reports. It includes the input and the output. Input includes human, physical and financial

resources.

The output includes the educational, economic and social returns. In the Sudan, however, assessment is confined to academic achievement. The success percentage in basic education exams was (76.5%), (75%) in secondary education in 2016-2017 (Ministry of Education Statistics).

The analysis of Sudan secondary school certificate results indicate that the chances of the rich group in obtaining good results are better compared with the poor ones which qualifies them for attractive faculties in tertiary education such as medicine, engineering and advanced computer studies. Their opportunities are 15 times better than the poverty stricken individuals, the displaced and the groups affected by war.

Concerning the human resources, the teachers represent (85%) in basic education and (80%) in secondary education.

Following the education reform of (1994), the Sudan adopted the policy of appointing university graduates instead of secondary school graduates. This policy led to upgrading 140000 of the diploma holders to the bachelor degree in education.

Until 2017, the indicators show that BEd and BSc holders were granted a post graduate diploma in education-(50%) in percentage; whereas, (35%) in basic education have no educational qualification.

The remaining (15%) are educational institute diploma holders. If the factors that affect teachers' performance such as salaries, incentives, accommodation, deployment and teacher student ratio are not considered, the qualifications of the teachers in basic and secondary education will negatively affect the academic performance of the poor students even in the urban areas boundaries.

With reference to the school environment, most of the old schools comprised four classes which were increased to six classes in 1971. In 1994, two more classes were added to the expense of the recreation, entertainment and activities playgrounds. Physical education facilities had deteriorated to the extent that many buildings were in a poor condition with furnishing and teaching material supply awfully inadequate.

The above analysis clearly demonstrates that the quality of education in the Sudan is very poor, a situation that may seriously affect the role of education in reducing poverty and ultimately pave the road for privatization and deprive the poor of the proper education and increase the number of drop-outs.

5 CONCLUSIONS

1. There is a close relationship between education and poverty reduction and education represents the corner stone in the achievement of sustainable development goals.
2. Education in the Sudan follows the international routes taking into account the basic skills, transferable skills, technical and vocational skills.
3. The curriculum and textbooks in use include the concepts, competencies and skills necessary for reducing the severity of poverty as determined by the reviewed literature.
4. The strategies, policies and legislation's need to be reconsidered to account for the poverty stricken, deprived, displaced people especially the children in the war affected areas.
5. There is an urgent need for revising the strategies and policies in all the human resources sectors at all levels-economic, social, environmental and technological in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development until 2030.
6. The eradication of all aspects of poverty can never be achieved, but efforts to reduce it have to be sustained.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The strategies and policies of general education and the requirements of sustainable development should be adopted in combination to alleviate the severity of poverty and fighting its causes until 2030.
2. The new curriculum should be developed until (2026) to provide the students and adults with the values, skills, life and performance skills which help in poverty reduction.
3. The Sudanese government should sign up the right of access to international education.
4. The constitution which is expected to be approved in future should confirm the right of free compulsory education until the secondary level to achieve the fourth goal of sustainable development in (2050).
5. Reconsidering the federal, state government and localities education laws in order to achieve compulsory education.
6. Enriching the tendency towards the creation of projects to sustain education in war affected areas, displacement and rural areas through

- federal financing and call for help from the specialized international organizations
7. Increasing the federal government support for the states with limited resources, especially the war affected areas, and displaced people to reduce the severity of poverty.
 8. Utilizing the facilities of Sudan Open University in adult education programs and youngsters as well as supporting the national campaign for eradicating illiteracy
 9. Bridging the gap between states in enrolment and thereby raising the average enrolment with special focus on those areas that are particularly affected by civil strife, drought and desertification.
 10. Providing social protection services in a manner that strengthens the capacity of the poor for self-reliance.

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