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A PERSPECTIVE ON THE ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: The new thinking now in the rural development literature is that education has the potentials in transforming the rural areas. Education has been recognized as one of the viable mechanism for rural development in the developing countries. This paper examines the role of education in rural development, the paper adopts the conceptual approach to research, and the source of data was mainly secondary and analysis was analytical. The subject scope of the paper covered poverty, environment, employment, health, gender, democracy, agriculture and off land employment. The analytical analysis found that education has a profound positive effect on rural development in terms of job opportunities and poverty reduction, the paper conclude that education should be adopted as the main tool for rural development as its proven by previous study to have a significant positive relation on rural development.

KEYWORDS: Rural Development, Health, Poverty, Gender,

INTRODUCTION

Rural development as a variant development could be perceived from two perspectives as a means and as an end. As a means it entails the strategies, mechanism, approach, theory, model or tool which is use to achieve rural development, while as an end, it entails the outcome of the rural development effort which its centrality is the improvement of the living condition of the rural people. In general, rural development is totals transformation of the rural areas of a nation from a state of stagnation to an improved state (1).

Over the years a couple of rural development strategies have been initiated and implemented by governments, donor nations, and organizations globally at different times with the aim of transforming and improving the living condition of the rural dwellers.. The strategies that were initiated and implemented at different time around the globe include Agricultural Development Project (ADP), Integrated Rural Development (IRD) and River Basin Development Authority (RDA).These strategies were implemented with the aim of improving living standard of the rural people mostly via agricultural development strategy.

However, recent studies have shown that these strategies failed to achieve the desire objectives as pointed by (3) who asserts that lack of spillover effect of these of strategies were the main bane to achieving the set objectives. Consequently, upon this a new thinking has emerged in rural development literature which is education. Education has been recognized by a couple of studies as the most viable mechanism for rural development (3);(4). Education is a key to enhancing job opportunities, reducing inequality and poverty as well as improving people's awareness pertaining their environment; it is also recognized as the key element in enhancing people's competitiveness and innovative ability individually or as a group (4).

Given the externalities of education as viable tool for rural development this paper seek to examine the role of education in rural development focusing on its role in poverty reduction, employment opportunities, healthcare, inequality and environmental awareness, the paper utilizes secondary source of data and an analytical method of data analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Under the literature review, a conceptual definition of rural development will be provided in order to understanding the subject matter from various perspectives and then the relationship between rural development and education will be explored. The concept of rural development has evolved over the past decade from mere agricultural development to a broader meaning which goes beyond agricultural development. In the 1970s, the concept was conceived by the (5) as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of specific group the “rural poor”. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest, among those who seek a lively hood in the rural areas. The concept was synonymous with agricultural improvement with more emphasis on increase agricultural productivity which stem from industrialized nations quest for raw materials for their industries.

However, recent development has changed the views on rural development from narrow view to a broader view especially from 1980 to 1990. Rural development as a variant form of development can be perceived from two perspectives, firstly, as a means and secondly as an end. As a means it entails the strategies, mechanism, approach, theory, model or tool which is use to achieve rural development, while as an end, it entails the outcome of the rural development effort which centers on improving the living condition of the rural people (2). In the same vein (6) perceived rural development from the means perspective which entails a strategy that aimed at improving the living condition of the rural people through provision of basic infrastructure such as market, schools and road. On the same line of reasoning,(7) conceived rural development from the end perspectives which entails the direct empowerment through the provision of micro-finance loan to the rural people. In contrast to the means and end perspectives, Akpan (8) sees rural development from the institutional perspective which entails changing or transforming the traditional institutions of rural development into a modern one.

In a similar perspective, The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sees rural development as a process of socio-economic change, involving the transformation of agrarian society, in order to reach a common set of development goals based on the capacities and the needs of the people rural. Simultaneously (9) perceived rural development as involving changes in social and economic structure, relationship and attitudes. Given, the variation of the definition of rural development from various scholars all the definitions tend to see rural development as the growth or change of the rural areas so as to create a better society for the benefit of the rural dwellers which is central focal of rural development.

Previous studies on the viability of education in rural development has shown that education has a great influence on the improvement of rural people condition of living .A study by (10) has shown that education affects the ability of the household to take advantage of off-farm employment opportunities in rural China by 20%, and that this tendency is rising over time. In other findings by (11) it has indicated that in 2009 and 2010 the off-farm participation rates of those with middle school education or above exceeded that of those with less education by around 50 percent in rural China. (12) found that those individuals with more education have benefited more in terms of poverty reduction and employment opportunities than those with less or no education by 50%. In the same findings, it also indicated that education increases the propensity of individuals to participate in the off-farm labor force, find jobs when they are unemployed, and earn a higher wage.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 HEALTH

Education is one of the most powerful ways of improving people health. It saves lives of millions of mothers and children, help prevent and contain disease and is an essentials element of effort to reduce malnutrition (13). An educated person is better informed about diseases, takes preventive measure, recognizes signs of illness early and tends to use healthcare services more often (Houweling et al 2006). For instance between 1990-2009 2.1 million Children under the age of 5 were saved as result of improved mother’s education (14). Educated mothers are better informed about specific diseases, so they take

preventive measures. Pneumonia is the largest cause of child deaths, accounting for 17% of the total death of children worldwide, one additional education of maternal can lead to a 14% decrease in the pneumonia death rate which equivalent to 160,000 child lives saved every year (15).

Diarrhea is the fourth biggest child killer, accounting for the 9% of deaths. If all women completed primary education the incidence of diarrhea will fall by 8% in low and middle income countries, and with secondary education it will fall by 30% (17). Education was responsible for reduction of maternal mortality rate in Nigeria by 29%. Improving education is a powerful way to help reduce the incidence of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Education helps increase awareness about HIV prevention. For example in South, West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, literate women were as much as 30% points more likely than those who had right to refuse sex or request condom use if they knew that their partner had a sexually transmitted diseases. Malaria is one of the deadliest world disease, killing one person in every one minute, improved access to education is crucial in ensuring the effective of preventive measures such as the use of drugs or bed net treated with insecticide.

In Democratic Republic of Congo, where a fifth of the world's malaria related death occur, the education of household head or the mother increase the probability that the family slept under a bed net such changes result in fewer infections especially in areas of high risk of transmission (18). In these areas the probability of children having malaria parasite is 22% lower if the mother had a primary education, and 36% less if they had secondary education (19).

Educated mothers are more likely to know about appropriate health and hygiene practice at home and have more power to ensure that household resources are allocated so as to meet children nutrition needs. In low and middle income countries providing women with primary education will reduce stunting malnutrition by 4% or 1.7 million children, while providing secondary education will reduce the number by 26% or 11.9 million children (Fuch), (20).

2.2 INFORMAL SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

Education can increase earning from informal work, in urban areas many of the poor are involved in informal sector work; education can help lift them out of the poverty by increasing their earnings and enabling them to benefit more from entrepreneur activities (21). More educated people are more likely to start a business and their business is likely to be more profitable (22). Educated people are more likely to start a business and their business likely to more profitable. In Uganda, owners of household enterprises with a primary education earned 36% more than those with no education, while those with lower secondary education earned 56% more. In eight of Sub-Saharan African countries people who had primary their secondary education are more likely to own household enterprises or micro-enterprises than those with less education (23). In Uganda, owners of household enterprise who had completed primary education earned 36% more than those with no education, and those with lower secondary education earned 56% more (22). In Angola, an additional year of schooling increases profits of small business by 7% to 9% (24). In Viet nam a survey of 1400 new businesses of which 91% were micro or small and 61% household enterprise has shown that having at least secondary education raises profits by 34% (25). In Thailand, a year of education increase return to household assets which tended to invest the profits (26).

2.3 AGRICULTURE

Education increases earnings from agriculture in low and middle income countries where many of the poor depend on farming for their livelihood (27). Education can offer these people a crucial route to a better life. Literacy and numeracy skills increase farmer's ability to interprets and respond to new information. An educated farmer makes better use of fertilizers, seeds varieties and farming technologies to increase productivity of traditional crops. They are also more likely to diversify into higher value crops. Examples from around the world have shown the power of education to boost farmer's productivity in ways that can helps lift them out of poverty. In semi –arid area of china, educated farmers were more likely to use

rainwater harvesting and supplement irrigation technology to alleviate water shortages.(28).In Ethiopia education of household members other than the household head led to increase fertilizer use (29).In Mozambique, literate farmers were 26% points more likely than non-literate ones to cultivate cash crops (30). In Nepal, where a household farmer had completed primary education was about 26% point more likely to adopt to soil conservation and erosion control measures (31).The return to education is larger where farmers are able to make use of technologies. In Nigeria, when the household head had four years of education production of compeas increased by quarter with modern technology but was unchanged where traditional methods were used (32).

2.4 OFF-FARM INCOME

Education enable rural household to diversify their income sources, many of the world poor living in the rural areas have no choice other than to work on small farms. Education allows household to respond flexibly and diversify their income earning opportunities, it improves their chances of obtaining non-farm work which tends to be more lucrative. For example, in rural Indonesia, 15% of men and 17% of women with no education were employed in non-farm work compare with 61% of men and 72% of women with secondary education.

2.5 POVERTY

Education is a key in helping individual to escape poverty and prevent poverty from being passing down through the next generation. It enable those in paid formal employment to earn higher wages and offers better livelihood for those who work in agriculture and in the urban informal sector. (33). EFA Global Monitoring Report (34), assert that if all student in low income countries left school with basic skills 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty which would be equivalent of 12% cut in world poverty. An important way by which education reduces poverty is by increasing people's income. Globally, one year of schooling increases earning by 10% on average. Education can help people escape from working poverty, in Tanzania 80% of workers who had less than primary education were below poverty line, but workers with primary education were 20% less likely to be poor, while secondary education reduces the chances of being poor by 60%. In Pakistan, working women with good literacy skills earn 95% more than women with weaker literacy (35). The persistence of poverty makes it vital for policy maker to take into account the education's power to help reduce it. The proportion of the world's population living on less than \$1.25 a day fell from 47% in 1990 to 22% in 2012 via education (36). However, almost 1 billion are still likely to be living below the poverty line. In Sub-Saharan Africa almost half the population was living below the poverty line, and the number is growing which by 2015 the rate was 40% higher than in 1990 (37).

2.6 DEMOCRACY

Education helps people understand democracy, promote the intolerance and trust that underpin it, and motivate people to participate in politics. (38.) Education improves people understanding of politics and how to participate in it (39). Across 12 Sub-Saharan Countries 63% of individuals without formal education had an understanding of democracy compare with 71% of those with primary education, and 85% of those with secondary education. In Turkey, for example the share of those who said they are interested in politics rose to 40% among those with primary education, and 54% among those with secondary education.(40). Education increases people support for democracy particularly where there have been recent democratic transitions. Across 18 Sub-Saharan Africa Countries those of voting age with primary education were 1.5 times more likely to express support for democracy than those with no education and twice as likely if they had completed secondary education (41). Educated people are more likely to vote in 14 Latin American Countries with turnout of 5% point higher for those with primary education and 9% point higher for individual with secondary education compared to those with no education, the effect was larger in countries where average levels of education were lower such as ElSavado, Guatemala, and Paraguay. Education also

encourages other forms of political participation .In Argentina, China, and Turkey citizen were twice more likely to sign a petition or boycott product if they had secondary education than those with no education (42). Education has an indispensable role in strengthening the bonds that hold communities and society together. In Latin America people with secondary were 47% likely than those with primary education to express intolerance for people of different race (43). In the Arab States, people with secondary education were less likely than those with only primary education to express intolerance toward people of a different religion. In Sub-Saharan Africa people with primary education were 10% less likely to express intolerance to people with HIV and 23% less likely if had a secondary education .In central and Eastern Europe those with secondary education were 16% less likely than those who had not completed secondary education to express intolerance toward immigrant (44);(45).

2.7 GENDER

Education also helps overcome gender biases in political behavior to deepen democracy .In India education has help reduce the gender of literacy gab by 40%, and increase the probability of women standing for state assembly election by 16% and the share of vote that they received by 13%. Education can empower women to claim their right and overcome barriers that prevent them from getting a fair share of the fruit of overall progress. Having the freedom to choose one's spouse is one such right. Women in India with at least secondary education were 30% point more likely to have a say over their choice of spouse than their less educated peers (46).

In terms of paid jobs, women are globally paid less for comparable work. Even though this gab has been narrowing in some countries it remains a cause for concern (47).The higher the level of education the lower the gab, education makes a particular difference in the Arab States, where women with secondary education earn 87% of the wages of men compare with 60% for those with primary education (48). In Ghana among those with no education men earn 57% more than women, but the gab shrinks to 24% among those with primary education and 16% with secondary education (49). Education increases women's chances of participating in the labour market, women with more education are in a stronger position to get paid job (50). By enabling women participation in the labour market education contributes to their empowerment and to their country's prosperity (kabeer, 2012). In middle income countries of Latin America such as Argentina, ElSavado, and Mexico, the proportion of women in paid employment increases sharply as women education level rises, in Mexico for instance, 39% of women with primary education are employed, while the proportion rises for those with secondary education (): ().

2.8 ENVIRONMENT

Education's vital role in preventing environmental degradation and limiting the cause of climate change has not been sufficiently acknowledged or exploited ,by improving knowledge, instilling values, fostering beliefs, and shifting attitude, education has considerable power to change life-style and behavior that are harmful to environment (51);(52). There is urgent need to identify the best way to taps this potential as it becomes increasingly clear how much human action led to environmental degradation and climate change especially through the release of greenhouse gases. As well as altering the balance of nature consequences such as extreme weather patterns and loss of biodiversity could reverse progress in improving standard especially for poorer and more vulnerable population even though they are not the ones responsible for environmental degradation (53).

People who are more educated often tend to maintain lifestyles that burden the environment, one reason is that the consequences of climate change are not yet perceptible to the vast of majority of people, and many see it as a distant threat (54). Experience has shown that when populations are confronted by major challenges, overcoming the inertia of past attitude is possible and people with more education respond first (55). Education can promote more environmental-friendly behavior by increasing awareness. Education can people to be concern and encourage them to reduce their impact on the environment, in Netherland for

example people with higher level of education tend to use less energy in the home, even taking account of income (56)

DISCUSSION

From the analysis above it has indicated that education has a positive and significant influence in rural development in terms of poverty reduction, employment empowerment, gender bias reduction, environmental consciousness as well as awareness in political undertaking among the rural people. For instance in terms of poverty reduction education was instrumental in getting rural people out of poverty and from prevent poverty from being passing down through the next generation (33). Similarly, in India education has help reduce the gender of literacy gab by 40%, and increase the probability of women standing for state assembly election by 16% .In political participation education has improves people understanding of politics and how to participate in it (39). In agriculture for example literacy and numeracy skills increase farmer's ability to interprets and respond to new information. According to (5), an educated person is better informed about diseases, takes preventive measure, recognizes signs of illness early and tends to use healthcare services more often.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the role of education in rural development is multi-dimensional as it is a general mechanism for any form of development rural, national, economic, political, social, cultural and technological. Given this importance of education it has become imperative for more effort to be geared toward providing education to the rural people in order to improve their standard of living. Higher educational levels contribute to local economic development in several ways, a well-educated workforce facilitates the adoption of new ways of producing goods or providing services among local businesses. Studies from this paper has enumerated the efficacy of education in facilitating job opportunity as well as reducing poverty, the higher the level of educational attainment, the faster the growth rates in both per capita income and employment. For this reason this paper argue that education is the most viable tool for rural development, as such policy makers should give education priority in their development agenda or programme.

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