

Michael Crowder (Ed.) *Education for Development in Botswana: Proceedings of Symposium held by the Botswana Society in August 1983*, Macmillan (Botswana) Publishing Co. (Pty) Ltd, Gaborone, 1984, pp. 297 (Paperback)

The book "Education for Development in Botswana" is a compilation of the 27 papers that were presented, together with the critical discussions and suggestions that were made at the "Symposium on Education for Development" organized by the Botswana Society in collaboration with the Institute of Adult Education, University of Botswana which was held in Gaborone from 15th - 19th September, 1983.

The proceedings of this important symposium are beautifully bound in an attractive book with yellow covers that has pictures of peoples actively involved in different aspects of learning and working situations clearly depicting the theme of education for development. Papers are included by people from different walks of life viz. Ministers, local politicians, academicians practioners and renowned scholars, thus adding flavour to the symposium and level of discussions.

Development as a concept only entered the academic arena about three and half decades ago. Since then, there has been a shift in emphasis from the purely economic to the contemporary versions of attaching importance to the socio-politico perspectives. The papers presented clearly reflect this change in emphasis and are organized under six themes which will be explored below briefly. The book begins with a foreword by the editor Professor Michael Crowder. There is the opening address of His Excellency, The President of Botswana, Dr. Q.K.J. Masire, followed by the keynote address presented by Dr. Michel Doo Kingué, Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

The first theme provides an overview of Educational and Development. Importance is given to the fact that education is contextual and whilst there may be some overlapping basic issues, the different

contents for education demand different purposes. There is a tendency for papers to focus on the relevance of education to its socio-political-economic landscape. Parsons' paper examines the pre-colonial traditional period and moves on to look at the late colonial pre-independence era, thus providing a back-drop to the discussions of the post-colonial/post-independence educational development in Botswana.

His message from his analysis of the past is very clear - "The underlying strength of Botswana's educational heritage has always been local community initiative" (p.43). He challenges present-day planners and policy makers by asking "how much participation is there at the local level?". Swartland's paper examines education expansion in the 17 years since independence in terms of quantitative and to a certain extent qualitative development whilst Chiepe's paper focusses on the strategies vis-a-vis development plans in the same era. Cliffe provided a left-wing critique of these strategies.

The second theme of Social Justice focusses on how education at all levels can be made more equitable. The extent of inequality in Botswana in terms of wealth, income and access to services is carefully examined. Ulla Kann's paper focusses on primary education beginning with a brief review of trends in the conceptual development of equality of educational opportunity, starting with a conservative conception and leading on to a new or radical conception "Equity as a concept and practice is above all a political fact. It is an ideological construct about distribution," (p. 85).

Simon on the other hand looks at the equity in secondary education in Botswana and tends to agree with Kann that "Botswana's primary educational advance is a success story", but goes on to add that there are a lot of inequalities existing in the junior secondary level (p. 104). Julia Majaha-Jartby discusses educational opportunities for girls in Botswana as compared to boys in terms of participation in formal education. Citing Kann (p.111), she points out that girls in addition to low achievement have lower aspirations.

Koma unlike the previous three writers who look at the problems of education within the education system itself, concentrates primarily

on the structure of society and argues that "serious disparities exist in present day Botswana both social and economic" and that "The underprivileged classes and ethnic communities usually lack the most rudimentary services" (p. 115). He implies that educational opportunity cannot be equal in such an unequal society.

The last paper in this section is a comparative one by Mudariki on Zimbabwe's experience resulting from 90 years of colonial rule and shows clearly how the politico-economic structure influences the inputs and overall organization of education itself. This section ends with a lengthy discussion based on variabilities of equality.

The third theme Education and Rural Development is of tremendous importance to most developing countries where the masses have to make their livelihood "off the land". Taukobong's paper is short and precise, clearly identifying the role of education in a predominantly rural and agricultural context. He says "it is important that future generations should not aspire for white collar jobs alone but be aware that farming can also be an occupation that can bring a rewarding livelihood". (p. 143)

Kwerepe's paper argues that man is part of the ecosystem in which he lives and therefore it is necessary that he understands the inter-relationships of this system. Woto looks at the role of Non-formal Education and says that it is "the tool without which rural development can hardly be realized" (p. 150). It is important to note that rural development has been given a priority in planning as indicated in the National Development Plan V. (NDP V, 1979).

Mpho, a politician, uses the layman's terminology as he claims to further emphasize that education has a definite role to play in the developing context i.e. education must be relevant to the needs of society. Finally, Mlay's presentation is based on the experience of Tanzania and describes how the colonial education system, designed to cater for a small urban elite, has been transformed in order to provide mass basic education geared to rural life, in short "Education for Self Reliance".

The fourth theme focusses on Cultural Identity. It is rather sad that only one paper was presented under this section. This probably affirms the fact that culture had been neglected by policy makers in Botswana and, as Tlou and Youngman rightly point out, even the NDP V has only a brief entry under cultural services (p. 5). Mogapi citation of the recognition by the World Conference on Cultural Policies (Mexico City 1982) that "culture and education are closely linked and for that reason policies in these field should be formulated with due regard to each other", (p. 184) sums up the importance very well. The inter-relationship between the two should be fully recognized and it certainly was because this theme sparked off quite lengthy discussions! (p. 191 - 197).

The fifth theme is concerned with Education and Employment. In his concluding remarks, Doo Kingué (p. 16) spoke of the situation of the African continent as most disturbing with regard to employment. His projection in terms of only half the total African population finding employment by the year 2000 is quite frightful. But as Kedikilwe points out, for Botswana despite the rapid growth of educational outputs there will be a shortage of skilled manpower for several years to come (p. 205). He outlines the continuing problem of localization with great shortages especially in science-based occupations. Lack of planned localization and training programmes is cited as one strong reason for retarded localization (p. 216).

Turner's paper points out that the University of Botswana is the major tertiary educational institution of the country (p. 225) and that the University is attempting to ensure its graduates meet developmental needs e.g. through Advisory Committees on which employers are represented.

Rantao (p. 237) queries whether the educated outputs are really trained to meet the ever changing demands of the workplace. The needs of the small producer have been neglected according to Mbaakanye and these can be met through extension services and training. (p. 242) Van Rensburg's paper on 'Education with Production: the Key to Development' argues that developing countries

have inherited irrelevant systems of education as colonial legacies and therefore calls for an overhauling of the present education system that will equip the school leaver with both academic and professional skills. Brigades, which were founded by Van Rensburg, are unique to Botswana and offer an extremely useful alternative model that could be the answer to the school leaver problem. The last paper in this section is by Colclough and his main argument is that "the extent to which the existing school-university system in African countries can solve the major employment problem facing them is very limited". (p. 254).

The final and sixth theme Education for Development in the 1980's only has one paper, presented by Ramatebele, who chooses to consider teacher training, teaching styles, curriculum reform, language, knowledge and control (p. 265). Using a sociological stance, he argues the need to have small scale research within the classrooms which in turn will reflect what is going on in society (p. 271). The message he imparts is "The wisest course in education is not to dwell on the phenomena, but rather, to turn our attention to the organizational practices that produce those phenomenon". (p. 273) Finally, there is an appendix of important educational statistics (1968-81) that has been compiled by Lesetedi and shows data on primary schools and post primary institutions including pupils, classrooms, number of schools, etc.

Crowder makes a statement in his foreword that, "The Symposium... considered education as a long-life process and not something that just takes place in school or university. Just as development involves every aspect of people's life, so too does education, and the former cannot take place effectively without the latter" (p. V). This provides a useful overview of all the presentations that were made. The concepts of development and education together with their links were well explored. There is a lot of food for thought; a lot of issues have been raised; questions have been asked. But not too many answers have been provided. The symposium seems to have carefully examined the status quo but has neglected to say "quo vadis?". Was this deliberate? It is worth mentioning at this juncture that there is somewhat a lack of the futuristic element which is also

depicted by the kinds of pictures used on the covers of the book - even the 'modern school' on the back cover seems outdated by today's standards!

The book "Education for Development in Botswana" is probably the next best thing that people of all walks of life concerned with education need to obtain after the 1977 report of the National Education Commission "Education for Kagiso", which for so long now has been used as a blue-print for almost all policy making and planning related to education.

Simmons (1980) in a World Bank reappraisal of educational policies in developing countries mentions Botswana among very few countries which are emerging with 'education programmes that benefit the poor'. Despite this it is probably a little too soon to concur with Simon and Kann, who consider Botswana's primary education "a success story". The section on Education and Social Justice has only scraped the surface and lacks a critical approach to the unequal inputs and outcomes of the primary system. What about the different hierarchical levels? (Campbell and Abott, 1977). The papers do not look at the differences in the Setswana medium and English schools or the self-help junior secondary schools compared to other types. One does not have to look too hard to see how unequal the school system is by being associated with exclusiveness and privilege. There may be a nearness to achieving equality in terms of access but not in quality.

The theme of Cultural Identity, as mentioned earlier, lacks enough emphasis. Zimbabwe, just across the border has only recently reviewed the role of culture in her educational development and has held a seminar to which Ngugi wa Thiongo, the famous writer and one of the founders of the Africanization movement, was invited. One need not mention the importance that contemporary African philosophers such as Mwalimu Nyerere have attributed to culture to emphasize the point any longer.

Interestingly enough, the manpower approach in the theme of Employment and Education has not been challenged. In choosing manpower

planning as the organizing principle for educational provision, this careful and deliberate econometric approach to the allocation of priorities involves the subordination of other pressure acting upon the education system e.g. manpower planning is often necessarily set against mass participation in education because it involves the allocation of resources unequally and primarily to the 'elite' sectors of the system. The problem of certification, "The Diploma Disease", is hardly examined given the unequal inputs at the basic level of education (Dore, 1980). Finally, a few papers, especially by some politicians, were not really addressing the issues very academically and make one wonder if some individuals were not using the symposium as a venue to provide political viewpoints!

In summary, it can be said that the book contains a great deal of information vividly presented. There is a lot of food for thought. It is an essential book for all people interested in education and development and will serve as a text for students in this subject. It is beautifully turned out, clearly printed, well bound and good value for money!

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