

Education and ghana's development

Economics



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Every Ghanaian wants to live the Ghanaian dream- a dream of economic prosperity and not poverty, a dream of self-worth and dignity and not self-pity and indignity, a dream of quality education and not a watered-down one. This dream is captured in the first line of our National Anthem " God bless our homeland Ghana and make our nation great and strong. " It is disheartening, melancholic, and unimaginable that Ghana, a country which once was the hope on the continent, is still struggling in her developmental efforts. It is worrisome, that after 50 years of independence, we do not have confidence in the faculties of our own people to turn around the fortunes of our country. This attitude of our governments is in sharp contrast to the vision, drive, and motivation of our forefathers who fought assiduously and relentlessly to ensure that we were emancipated from colonial rule. I believe that these heroes and heroines of ours are turning in their graves because of the backward attitudes of our elected leaders. Instead of belittling the potentials and competencies of the citizens, they should bury their heads in shame for failing to execute programs which could have produced productive and functional citizens. I am not against privatization, but it is neither here nor there when the government hides behind the incompetence of the staff of Ghana Telecom in selling our 70% shares to Vodafone. The question is what are our governments doing to develop dynamic, efficient, and functional workforce in the country? Was it not shocking, when a study conducted by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development, which was published on Ghanaweb revealed that 47% of teachers and head teachers in some selected public schools in the country dodge classes? The end result will be the production of lowly qualified skilled workforce. Although, this revelation is not new- it has been with us over the past several years, what

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are our governments doing to avert this ominous problem which has the tendency of bringing our economy on its knees? Thus, the lack of progress in our economic development could be blamed on our governments (past and present) and the stakeholders in our educational sector. This revelation has exposed the present government for not doing much to ensure the proper development of the human resource base of the country. It has failed in ensuring that the Ghana Education Service fulfilled its obligation by effectively monitoring and supervising their employees to be out and about in discharging their duty. What are the circuit supervisors whose job is it to ensure that teachers stay at post and discharge their duties doing? How can we therefore attain middle income status if this perennial stymie continues unchecked? Economic prosperity of a nation solely depends on the economic resources it has. These economic resources are classified as natural, financial, and human resources. Natural resources consist of fertile land, abundant forests, sufficient mineral resources and abundant water supply. Financial resources are made up of the capital needed for the economic activities. Human resources comprise the population, its growth rate, skills, and working ability of the labour force. According to contemporary economists, a country leading in natural resources has more opportunities to develop than a country lacking in such resources. But only abundant availability of natural resources does not translate into economic development of a country; these resources need to be utilized at their optimum. And this is only possible when efficient manpower utilizes these resources. Put differently, economic development only occurs when natural and financial resources are harnessed and maintained properly by efficient human resources. Emerging economies like Tunisia, India, and China have <https://assignbuster.com/education-and-ghanas-development/>

invested immensely in developing their human resources. It is therefore no surprise that most of the western rich countries are investing hugely in these countries. Early in the year, The Economist Magazine reported in one of its issues that the higher rate of skilled workers in Tunisia is one of the reasons why its economy has been inundated by western countries. No wonder its economy is looking good. On the other hand, if human resources fail to maintain natural and financial resources, these resources may be misutilized, underutilized or unutilized and cause economic inefficiency. That is the muddle on our hands- in spite of the abundance of resources at our disposal; we are still wallowing in abject poverty. What a shame!!! I believe that our current leaders were not born yesterday, and as such know the place of education in the economic development and prosperity of a nation. Literacy is the wheel on which economic prosperity thrives. It is the key tool to making the workforce efficient. Due to its essentiality and flagship in transforming countries which were not fortunate to be endowed with natural resources (e. g., Japan), it is thus incumbent on our leaders to ensure that the education of the Ghanaian is placed on the front burner if we want to better the lot of our people. We should not put the cart before the horse in our quest to keying out ways to improve our economic outlook. The problem could not have been due to faulty educational system since we have, since independence changed our educational system no less than three times. I think the snag is the failure of our leaders to pragmatically address the real issue- illiteracy. The word literacy means " a state of being able to read and write". In a broader sense literacy is a phenomenon by which one can enhance his communication, professional and social skills. More recently, international (Anglophone) discourses have contributed to new

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understandings of literacy. Literacy refers to broader learning and the mastery of information 'to work within the knowledge (information) societies that will dominate the 21st century' (OECD, 1997). Going by this view, literacy has an unequivocal functional role within the context of a globalized world. Since the level of literacy in a country is related to her developmental progress, it is therefore discouraging, that, in this day and age, the rate of literacy in the country is only 53% (The Statesman, September, 2006). Yet, we expect the economy to have a quick turnaround without fixing the real problem- illiteracy. The impact of literacy on economic development is positive and can be easily determined by comparing the standard of living, per capita income, GDP, industrialization and development of infrastructure within a country. Literacy enhances the working capabilities of people by providing them with skill development. I think it is time we re-examined the real threat to our economic difficulties. For me, I reckon the real problem is the calibre of the human resource we have. If nothing concrete is done to reverse the high rate of illiteracy in the country, and consciously ensure the development of our human capital base, our desire to achieve economic freedom and prosperity will elude us forever. If we understand that the growth of economies is a function of the quality of its labour force and the knowledge level of its citizens, then it is obligatory for our governments to design prudent and worthwhile policies to make the country an educated one. The fact that the educational standard of the country is still heading south in spite of the continual changing of our education system insinuates that we are zeroing in on symptoms rather than the root cause. When nothing is done to ensure that teachers stay at school to educate our children; when the Ghana Education Service continues to exhibit this level of

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ineptitude by not properly monitoring and supervising teachers; when the government fails to see and fathom that this behavior is unacceptable and it is the main reason why we are not making any meaningful headway in our economic development, I am sorry, folks, we will be retrogressing big-time into economic annihilation. We should not forget that an educated nation is a developed nation and that “ education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten. ” (Skinner, 1964).