

Full Length Research Paper

The space of politics in Tanzania's Curriculum

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Accepted 29 March, 2013

Curriculum activity is both a technical and social process which however becomes engrossed with political activities. In order for the process to proceed effectively and efficiently, the context in which it is carried out must be considered. This paper discusses the context of curriculum activity by exploring various examples from Tanzania's political influence on curriculum. The paper is qualitative and is based on a case study of Tanzania. The debate of political activity include factors such as curriculum design, implementation, evaluation to include sources of education goals, financing, infrastructure, access, examinations, language of instruction and education arrangement. Its concluded that curriculum is having a condominium relationship with politics.

Keywords:Curriculum,Politics,Education and Tanzania.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum activity entails the compatibilities of a couple processes employed in the tracking down of certain set goals in an education system. It embeds the whole spectrum of curriculum construction, planning, design and implementation to evaluation and revision.

Literatures on curriculum are explicit with models of curriculum development supporting procedures and strategies that are keystones in the curriculum development. However, the applicability of the curriculum development models is more of contingency rather than static and universal in modern complex societies (Hopkins, 2001).

Dennis Lawton observes that curriculum development is about selecting "the most important aspects of culture for transmission to the next generation. One of the crucial questions to put is the political question: "who makes the selection" (Lawton, 1980:6).

In Tanzania, as elsewhere, politics is omnipotent in the daily affairs of the nation. The political echelon seeks to control and manipulate the polity, either overtly or covertly. Education is normally a covert tool in the stratagem of the political class (Freire, 1972). The role of the government (politics) in curriculum is seen through the structure of the Formal Education and Training System in Tanzania that constitutes 2 years of pre-primary education, 7 years of primary education, 4 years of Junior Secondary (ordinary Level), 2 years of Senior Secondary (Advanced Level) and up to 3 or more years

of Tertiary Education. Specifically, the education system has three levels, namely: Basic, Secondary and Tertiary Levels.

The model explains the way politics influences the curriculum through the curriculum stages of development and in turn influence the community, experts and learners (figure 1). It is observed that at this level, politics is reciprocal the community politics, experts and learners power can as well influence the curriculum. Hence, the model develops a thinking of curriculum to be influenced from the top politics that is state politics and donors' politics as well as the micro-politics of communities, learners and experts' constituencies. The macro and micro politics are both a "blessing and a curse" in the development of a curriculum with a special focus to the role of public policy in education system. Therefore, the model is to create an inquisitive approach to the cross sectioning of macro and micro politics actors in the wider curriculum conceptualization in any society.

Conceptual Framework

Curriculum defined

The conceptual framework highlights some dimensions of the term curriculum. The literature traces the origin of the term curriculum from a Latin word "currere" which means,

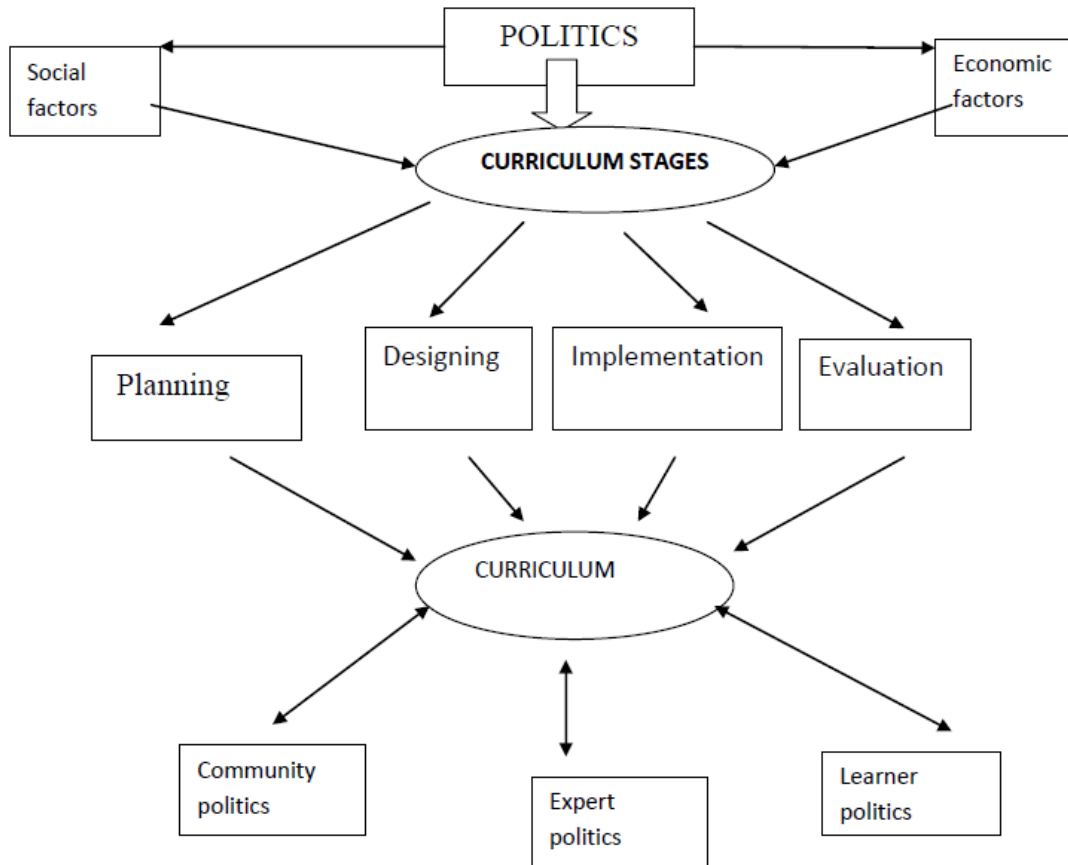


Figure 1. The influence of politics in curriculum planning, designing and implementation as well as evaluation.

race course” (Wiles and Bondi, 1984; Zais, 1976). Wiles and Bondi record that the usage of *currere* evolved later to mean the course of study (p.4). Such a conception has been predominantly orienting and guiding people’s understanding including the individuals with education power house on the essence of curriculum as something that offers a “standardized ground covered by students in their race towards” the completion and competency of a subject matter for a particular award (Zais, p.6). From the above schema of curriculum, the scholasticism of the subject has been widely taken on board as various scholars have developed meanings on the area as devoted under.

Traditionally, curriculum reflected a list of subjects to be studied by students. In the course of time, this view came under attack from a multitude of scholars (Zais, 1976). A wider conception of the term was now being adopted to include all the experiences that students are exposed to in their interaction with the school environment (Tyler, 1949). Doll’s (1964) conceived that curriculum enshrines the unintended and intended consequences. He put it aptly, “the commonly-accepted definition of the curriculum has changed from content of courses of study and lists of subjects and courses to all the experiences

which are offered to learners under the auspices or direction of the school” (cited in Zais, 1976:8).

According to Johnson, (1967:130 cited in Zais, 1976:9) a curriculum constitutes a guide for instruction and must be viewed as “anticipatory, not reportorial.” In other words, curriculum gives the tangible results and it should not incline to the means cascading in the course of learning. Johnson, on the other hand, encircles the meaning of curriculum to refer simply to “a structured series of intended learning outcomes”. The unintended learning outcomes in that regard are redundant.

The crucially of curriculum has resulted to such in congruencies of the meaning of curriculum. However, these differentials among specialists in the field of curriculum on the precise meaning of the term curriculum; it has generally come to be used in two ways. First, it is used as a plan for education of learners. This has partly influenced some scholars to regard curriculum as a *blueprint for education* (Zais, p. 8). The view is presented by Beauchamp, 1968:6 that “a curriculum is a written document which may contain many ingredients, but basically it is a plan for the education of pupils during their enrolment in a given school”. It is imminent to argue that Zais does not count the contribution of unplanned

curriculum as he presents that that “these are more important especially at the evaluation stage of the curriculum for they offer useful data in assessing the quality and effectiveness of the planned curriculum (p.8).

The second usage of the term curriculum concerns the field itself. That is to say, the term curriculum is used to identify the field of study known as curriculum (Zais, 1976:4-5). As a field of study it serves two purposes: (i) the range of subject matters with which it is concerned (the substantive structure); and (ii) the procedure of inquiry and practice that it follows (the syntactical structure). Looking at the two usages it seems reasonable to conclude that both have a reciprocal influence. Another renown scholar in the area of curriculum, Hilda Taba, asserts that “[A] curriculum usually contains a statement of aims and of specific objectives; it indicates some selection of and organization of content; it either implies or manifests certain patterns of learning and teaching, whether because the objectives demand them or because the content organization requires them. Finally, it includes a program of evaluation of the outcomes” (Taba, 1962:10)

In his book, *Administering Curriculum Planning*, Edward A Krug, on the other hand, offers a brief but clear conception of the term curriculum. He summarizes the essence of curriculum be it a plan or an area of academic inquiry. It is “the means employed by the school to provide students with opportunities for desirable learning experiences” (Krug, 1956:4 cited in Zais, 1976:8).

The paper considers curriculum to mean the totality of all aspects including the learner and teacher, teaching materials and equipment, the teaching and learning activities and techniques, as well as the specified and/or unspecified outcomes and manner of ascertaining whether those outcomes have been achieved by the teacher and the learner within a given environment. The environment qualifiedly caters on the role of political activity on curriculum development. This approach cumulatively examines the characteristics of curriculum including the political environment that can either facilitate or hinder learning in the educational system.

Types of curriculum

There are many types of curricula as described by a list of scholars at different epochs such as Tyler (1949), Taba (1962), wheeler (1967), Tanner & Tanner (1995), Urevbu (1985:3), and Zais (1976) and the like.

- a) The *formal curriculum* refers to what is laid down as the syllabus or that which is to be learnt by students. It is the officially selected body of knowledge in which the government, through the Ministry of Education or anybody offering education, adopts and adapts for learning experiences.
- b) The *informal curriculum* entails curriculum as the curriculum in use. Teachers or instructors may not adhere to the presented formal curriculum but can

include other aspects of knowledge derived from other sources.

- c) The *actual curriculum* refers to both written and unwritten syllabuses from which students encounter learning experiences (Tanner and Tanner 1975). Learning experiences can be selected from other sources rather than the prescribed, official and formal syllabuses. The actual curriculum is the total sum of what students learn and teachers teach from both formal and informal curricula.
- d) The *hidden curriculum* refers to as the non-academic but educationally significant component of schooling. It is also known as *collateral curriculum*. This is not written or officially recognized, its influence on learning can manifest itself in students’ attitudes and behavior, both during and after completing their studies. What is acquired or learned from hidden curriculum is usually remembered longer than information learned at school. Tanner and Tanner (1975) recommend that positive learning from the hidden curriculum should be acknowledged and treated as an integral part of the planned and guided learning experiences. As already implied, the hidden or collateral curriculum is often responsible for the values students may exhibit later in life and not the opposite.
- e) The *core curriculum* refers to the area of study, courses or subjects that students must understand in order to be recognized as educated in the area. This entails the *heart* of experiences that every learner has to go through. In this regard, the learner has no option but rather to study the prescribed course or subjects.
- f) *Extra – mural curriculum* refers to those learning activities or experiences students are exposed to by their teachers, which are not stipulated in the formal or official curriculum of a school. Teachers deliberately plan and teach these experiences and sometimes even assess their outcomes. Coaching and training in various aspects of school sports are some of the extra-curricular learning experiences available to students. Therefore, these experiences are not stipulated in the formal curriculum.

Sources of Curriculum

Tyler’s first question is what educational purposes should the school seek to attain? In response to this question, Tyler develops three sources of these educational objectives (figure 2).

- i. Learners themselves
- ii. Society/contemporary life outside the school
- iii. Subject specialists/experts

The selection of the learning objectives is done through filtering them through two screens: the educational and social philosophy of the school and the psychology of learning. The general objectives that pass through the

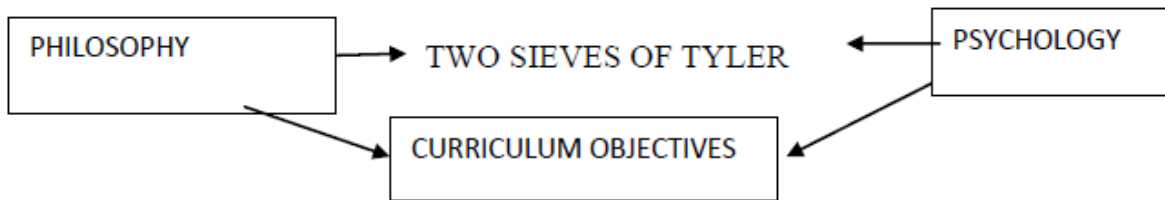


Figure 2. Three sources of these educational objectives

sieve become to be the overall instructional objectives for instance, in geography, Kiswahili, Civics and many others. Tyler referred to educational purposes as “goals”, “educational ends” and behavioural objectives. However, the students themselves involvement in curriculum development in Tanzania leaves much to be desired. It’s observed that, in Tanzania students participation is a myth in setting educational objectives.

Society as source: According to Tyler, the analysed objectives are matters of choice, and they must therefore be the considered values judgements of those responsible for the school. The progressive school looks at the child to determine the interest she has, what problems she encounters and what purposes she has in mind. The progressive see such of information to be vital in selecting objectives.

However, this method is criticised that if you use a contemporary society only you might not be considering the future and longer objectives. However, it has been argued that, there is what we call curriculum change in order to meet the demands of a particular time.

In Tanzania, a variety of institutional needs has been catered for parents through school committee suggesting the learning objectives and thus influencing curriculum development. For instance, parents called for the inclusion of the vocational training skills in the primary school curriculum. This is a landmark of how the society’s need of learning by doing has come to be incorporated the curriculum objectives.

Moreover, religious groups as well have influenced the curriculum through calling for the teaching of religion subject in primary and secondary schools. Christianity and Islamic subjects are taught though, optional but it is a significant influence in the learning process of children. Therefore, at secondary school level, Christian students write an exam on Bible Knowledge and Muslim students do write an exam related to that sect and these exams are under National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA). Therefore, religious institutions are among others a part of society whose contribution to curriculum is noticed. The curriculum worker must be having a sociological element of understanding his/her society problems and needs in order to be able to set educational objectives.

The third source of educational objectives matter

/specialist/experts. Many of the curricula are a product of the experts’ opinion in the area. This covers the market demands. Experts in the subject have wider attributes and knowledge on what labour market requires. In Tanzania, there has been an introduction of entrepreneurship on the curriculum of learning level.

Another best example of experts on the curriculum development in Tanzania is when the politician (Minister of education Mr. Joseph Mungai removed some subjects from the Form IV curriculum while combining physics and chemistry to be studied as single subject. Teachers signed a petition opposing for ministers decision and finally, the minister’s decision was to be revoked. Hence, this has had an influence on the curriculum development. Moreover, these objectives in Tanzania are developed and harmonized by the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) but the organ responsible for the national curriculum (Wiles, J and Bondi, J. 1984) argue that curriculum specialist consider sequence, pre-requisites, academic achievement and mastery.

Politics

The term politics is generally used to refer to those activities that revolve around the decision-making organs of the state and involves the related concepts of power, authority, command and control. Some political scientists extend politics to cover any activity at all levels of human relationships, which involves power and authority. They argue that conflict is an indispensable characteristic of any human relationship and when conflicts are resolved and the solution imposed with power and authority, the activity becomes political. Hence, politics exists in trade unions, families, corporations, schools etc. By far, every person in society seems to engage in politics but some individuals are more directly involved in political activities than others are, hence they are called political actors e.g. politicians etc.

According to Alan C. Isaak (1981), political power can be exercised through the Persuasion, the Offering of rewards, the threat of punishment and the use of force and command from those with authority. The subject initiates or discusses a proposal with a victim with a view of convincing him of the correctness of his/her viewpoint. Thus, politics revolves around power and every segment of society engages in politics of curriculum from a wider

perspective. Politics engulf issues of who will get what, how and when. This power dimension is crucial when considering a pathology of curriculum at all stages.

General Factors that influence the curriculum

Making of curriculum has to consider social factors such as religion, culture and view of various groupings in society, including professional associations. The aim is to tape all expectations of the society. Social factors influence the selection and interpretation of resources and influence the hiring of personnel. Some course can't be if are against religious and cultural values of the society. Likewise religious course have been introduced in curriculum like Bible knowledge for Christians and Quran for Muslims.

Economic factors influence on the goals, content and learning experiences for they influence material production, standards of academic attainment. For example, the market forces dictate what should be included in the national curriculum. It also deviously determines the quantity of learners at different levels. The economic demands can be seen on the numbers of classroom supplies such as: textbooks, charts, equipment, and chemicals for science experiments need by teachers. Without these materials, learning is compromised. That is why serious considerations are given to economic demands when designing the curriculum.

Technological factors also influence on the goals, content and learning experiences for they influence material production, standards of academic attainment. The innovation of computer has pressed higher demands for use in education system and society in particular. If one is not computer literate, he/she may feel that is not up-to-date. With this innovation many schools have introduced computing as one of the subjects to equip the learners with the requisite computer skills and knowledge.

Environmental factors exert influence on the goals, content and learning experiences and material production. Over time, people have become insensitive to their surroundings and natural resources. This has affected the sky, the land and the sea. The result is that humanity is being adversely affected by these in-considerations. Industrial wastes have polluted the world. For example, the ozone layer in the atmosphere, which protects us from harmful radiation from the sun, is being depleted. People want this redressed. It is through education that remediation can be effected. Consideration for the environment must be of necessity to influence curriculum design to ensure the survival of future generations.

The political activity is able to influence the curriculum above other factors of economics and socio-cultural factors. The political domain is considered to influence curriculum through the power of public policy on education

and training. Moreover, the state engagement in funding and supporting education system and its capacity to constitute various committees in education sector lubricate the activities of politics in a curriculum. For most of the time, politics has become a factor with a full gear in influencing curriculum from time to time. The reality of such claims will be here examined.

Curriculum is a political function

The right to education is stipulated under Article 11 of the Constitution of Tanzania as one of the fundamental objectives and principles that the State has to endeavour to ensure that every person enjoys

it. The Article provides inter alia that:

- (i) The state authority shall make appropriate provisions for realization of the right to work, to self-education.
- (ii) Every person has the right to self-education and every citizen shall be free to pursue education in a field of his/her choice up to the highest level according to his/her merits and ability.
- (iii) The Government shall endeavour to ensure that there are equal and adequate opportunities to all persons to enable them to acquire education and vocational training at all levels of schools and other institutions of learning".

In Tanzania, apart from the Constitution, the Parliament has enacted the National Education Act to specifically deal with education issues in the country. It has also passed the Education and Training Policy to give directives on how education issues should be handled to facilitate access to education. In addition, there are the dual strategies meant to ensure compulsory primary education and improve secondary education. This is evidenced by the adoption of specific plans for primary and secondary education namely: Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP), MEMKWA and Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) under the 1990s government's Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP).

Under these Plans, it was projected to enrol more than 7.5 million school children in primary school by 2006, and 2 million students in secondary schools by 2010. The Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) and the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) have brought remarkable improvements in the education sector. New classes and schools have been constructed under the programmes and the enrolment level in primary and secondary schools has increased. For instance, primary school enrolment rose from 84.4 percent in 2006 to 112.7 percent in 2007. The number of students passing their primary school examination has also increased. The increase of the number of enrolment in primary and secondary schools is also supported by the opinion survey tool, which indicates that about 47 per cent of the interviewed said they are enjoying the right to

education, 41 percent confirmed moderate enjoyment and only 11 percent said they do not enjoy at all. In areas of managing the education system, politics has become a driving force sidelining professionalism and thus unintentionally have caused some dilemmas as the paper stipulates.

Access to education is political activity.

Due to the country's motive of meeting the MDGs goals translated in MKUKUTA and Tanzania Vision 2025 made the government embark on PEDP and SEDP. These two plans have increased enrolment of learners. For instance, on average, the student-teacher ratio presently stands at 1:88. The study by Tamasha shows that in eight out of 13 secondary schools the student-teacher ratio was higher than 50. It was higher than 100 in four of the 13 schools. In Musoma and Temeke the ratios are so high it is difficult to see how learning can take place.

However, the setbacks are acute shortage of qualified teachers, teaching and learning materials coupled with poor learning environments. This has led the government to make a rapid decision of training teachers under a crash program of 2 months. These teachers are called *Licence teachers* unlike the teachers who sailed through a normal training system. Hence, politics influences parents through showing the public that they are endeavouring to increase quality education while the contrary would be true.

Budgetary allocations to education sector are political activity

Politics has the dimension of allocating public resources when defined as "*who gets what when and how?*" The resource allocation function is done through the budgetary processes submitted by the government to the parliament. The experience in Tanzania has been that financial allocation to education sector seemed to have had a lion's share in the budget. In 2008/09, education received 19.7 per cent of the total budget, while in 2009/10 it received 18.3 per cent, both proportions which near the international best practice of allocating 20 per cent of national budgets to education. Likewise, the vast majority of that expenditure is typically directed toward children, with primary education receiving 90 per cent of total education expenditures in the 2008 financial year.

There are, however, several allocation problems. For example, while the education budget increased from Sh1.1 trillion in 2007/08 to Sh1.4 trillion in 2008/09, the capitation grant the primary fund for procuring textbooks, notebooks, pens, and chalk among other things was cut from Sh53.5 million to Sh45.5 million. Similarly, despite a growing budget for the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP), actual development funds under PEDP are smaller and smaller each year. Development funds money used for the construction of classrooms, teachers

houses, toilets and more averaged Sh109 billion per year during PEDP I (2002-2006) but are only averaging Sh14 billion during PEDP II (2007-2011), meaning PEDP development funds are only 13 per cent of what they used to be. For example, whereas 10,771 classrooms were built in 2003, only 1,263 were built in 2008 even though the overall PEDP budget in 2008 was higher than that of 2003, in real terms. It is not that new classrooms were not needed; the classroom pupil ratio in 2008 was 1:78, almost twice the national target of 1:40. Rather, due to ineffective budget allocations, PEDP II has become a "development programme" without development.

Moreover, according to the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) for Primary and Secondary Education in Mainland Tanzania, a survey commissioned in part by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) and released earlier this year, Sh28.9 billion of education sector grants transferred to councils was spent in other non-education sectors in 2007/08. In the 32 councils that were doing this, it meant that almost a quarter of the funds they received for education were not spent on education.

Meanwhile, another Sh11.8 billion in education grants was not spent at all by councils. That's a total of Sh40.7 billion in education funds that never even reached the education sector. The problem here is such political arrangement, which does not consider local politics and capacity to effectively disburse allocated resources.

Quality of curriculum implementation as a function of politics

Perhaps the greatest factor in the quality of education of our children is the quality of their teachers, but due to skyrocketing enrolment and shortened pre-service training, teachers are having a harder time than ever. To address this, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training introduced the Teacher Development and Management Strategy (TDMS) in 2008 to ensure the adequate recruitment and training of teachers in all levels of education. This affected much the implementation of curriculum at the classroom level, as those shortly trained individuals have no adequate knowledge on the foundations of curriculum principles and education psychology of learners. The net result of such politics has been the subsequent failure in national form IV examination results with a special mention of 2010 results. Hence, curriculum holistically remains a function of political activity in that realm.

Curriculum objectives evaluation is a function of political activity

Evaluation of learning objectives is centralized. According to Marsh (1995), the teaching is done by teachers in schools but the assessment is done by the ministry of

education and the results announced by the politician (Minister responsible for Education) The politics here can be seen in areas of two screening examinations for example. This exam has been abolished in early 1990s and later it was reinstated. This was done without the consultation of teachers who are experts. Hence, curriculum is being placed at the heart of politics. In the same light of argument, the teachers who are experts are not given enough room to underscore the reasons for failure in the national examinations such as Primary School Leaving Examination and Secondary School Leaving Certificate as politicians take a toll of the debate and tend to politicize. The testimonial given by Professor Njabili in TBC One weekly programme-This Week in Perspective was catching the heart and minds of experts as she looked at the massive Form four failures as a result of political upper hand in the designing and evaluation of curriculum.

Curriculum planning and subjects choice as a function of politics

There are group politics of whose dominant views should be registered in the curriculum that is the contents of various subjects. Above all, the politicians would as well assume the higher responsibility of influencing curriculum like it was in Tanzania, that Chemistry was combined with biology by a politician in 2000s. This led to a serious implementation of the curriculum at the classroom level. Moreover, there was also the abolition of some subjects from the curriculum such as commerce and agriculture by the politicians. The reason put forth was that, learners would meet those abolished subjects at the college level in order to make learners concentrate with few subjects. Thanks to the experts as teachers signed a petition that if the subjects were not going to be restored as used to be they would have rioted and protested. Hence, the good work of teachers` union (Chama cha Walimu Tanzania) and experts in general helped to rescue the situation and the minister`s decision was revoked. Hence, it goes without saying that curriculum is a function of political activity in Tanzania.

Moreover, the recent failed move of restructuring the education system at the primary level from 7 to 6 years is another empirical evidence of how politicians would like to elongate their hands in curriculum. If the move would have been successful, it means there would have been a change in the current arrangement of primary school arrangement but without considering the experts views regarding the new set up. Such examples portray how curriculum is a product of political activity.

Politics define an ideology, which shape the curriculum

This is very evident that for instance in Tanzania during 1960s most parts of our curriculum had elements of

socialism and self-reliance. However, with the marketization of the economy and increased influence of globalization the curriculum now inclines to the agendas of politics, which is to cherish the market model. Under the market model, we have the survival of the fittest, which is an order of politics of the day. The one who is able to influence others gets his/her agenda registered. This has made the donors dictate the nature of subjects to be added in primary schools and one of those is Reproductive Health, which has been, received ambivalently by most parents. The problem here is power relations because the donors play their politics to recipient countries and thus no choice rather than accommodating those pressures in their curriculum. Hence, here curriculum is an activity of international politics. Our local politicians would not be interested, due to under-funding; this programme is struggling to be implemented.

Curriculum language of Instruction as a function of politics

The political logic helps shape the curriculum through the language of instruction. The socialist ideology was designed to steer the country towards the construction of an egalitarian society (Nyerere, 1967). The government nationalized schools and abolished racially and religiously segregated schools at all levels through the enactment of the Education Act 50 of 1969. Two major reforms in education under the socialist ideology occurred: the introduction of Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) and the adoption of Swahili as the sole Language of Instruction of primary education. ESR was a philosophy designed to produce primary school graduates equipped with an education suitable for integration into the predominantly rural Tanzanian society. It was argued that such education was best delivered in Swahili, the national and most widely spoken language. Use of Swahili would make primary education accessible to all children and prepare school graduates for a productive life in rural areas and communal villages, where it was envisioned the majority would live.

A few English-medium international primary schools catering to expatriate children were maintained, but were not permitted to enrol Tanzanians. Education for Self-Reliance emphasized practical skills and adapted the curriculum to the needs of the country as defined by the new socialist politics, abandoning the colonial curriculum. The adoption of Swahili as the LoI contributed significantly to the implementation of Universal Primary Education in 1974.

Meanwhile, the changes in politics from socialism to neo-liberalism saw privatisation being extended to education in the 1990s, when private primary schools were legalized by passing the Education Amendment Act No. 10 of 1995. The government had already legalized the use of English as LoI in private primary schools in

1992, although Swahili remained the Lol in government primary schools. "The medium of instruction in primary schools shall be Swahili, and English shall be a compulsory subject" (United Republic of Tanzania, 1995: 39). "English shall be a compulsory subject in pre-primary, primary and secondary education levels and shall be encouraged in higher education. In addition the teaching of English shall be strengthened" (United Republic of Tanzania, 1997: 2).

Hiring of teachers who implement the curriculum is a function of politics

The employment of teachers in Tanzania is governed by different ministries. A primary school teacher is responsible to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local government. Such kind of political arrangement increases difficulties when it becomes to the implementation of curriculum. These arrangements are politically motivated for they have an implication on power. The bigger the unit of command the more victims of power, thus increase the potential of professionalizing experts and elevate the image of politicians in the curriculum processes.

Meanwhile, the argument presented here is that short-term political considerations are having harmful educational effects. School committees, teachers and parents were particularly bitter about what they see as political interference in schools.

All those involved with schools know that politicians may allow any building containing a large number of children or young people, without teachers, books or desks, to be called a school, but provision of education in such circumstances is sorely compromised.

School inspectorate is a curriculum activity that is affected by politics

School inspection is a vital means for monitoring the delivery of education according to stipulated curriculum and set standards. It also ensures efficiency and quality delivery in education. The efficiency and effective delivery of education under the decentralized and liberalized education system as stipulated in the education and Training policy document requires closer monitoring of schools as well as adequate feed-back mechanisms between school inspectors and education agencies, managers and administrators at zonal, regional and district levels. However, the major setback of this inspectorate function of the curriculum is affected by politics as the appointment of inspectorate officers is full of patronage and above all, these inspectorate department is under funded. Therefore, schools go without inspection which retard the curriculum implementation at the classroom level as teachers may not deliver as per set standards and there is no that

check and balance. Moreover, due to the appointment of inspectorate officers being imbued with patronage, those officers would be incompetent to undertake the task. Hence, curriculum is thus being influenced adversely by the political activity.

Conclusions

It has been taken for granted for too long that schooling is a function of political arrangements inimically placing the control of politics on learners, community and experts. The time has come to put aside political considerations, set, and maintain standards of education that ensure that our young people benefit from attending school. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training sets criteria that private schools have to meet before they can be registered and if they then fail to meet them at a later stage, a school can be deregistered. One wonders why no action is taken to ensure similar standards in government schools. Unless these schools are upgraded, students and parents as well as experts are being victims of macro and micro politics.

In this respect, politicians and government officials need to look at schools and the provision of education in the same way that private sector actors look at their products. In order to be successful, they concentrate on increasing demand by improving and marketing the product. Otherwise, they will not sell it. If education was regarded in the same way, maybe politicians and government officials would understand why a school with a student-teacher ratio of 100 or more, with few desks and fewer books, is not an attractive or even acceptable proposition for any parent or student. Then, maybe, serious efforts will be made to improve the quality of the schools to the point where learning is taking place.

Recommendations

- If the medium of instruction is changed to Kiswahili, there would be an immediate improvement in the level of learning in our schools. As many books are produced in Kiswahili pupils would be able to access and assimilate knowledge that is important to them without having to pass through a language that they do not understand.
- The government has to disburse the requested grants and timely by schools to promote schools learning environment.
- School leadership has to ensure regular financial reporting to the parents/community in order to maximize their faith on the value of their contributions and avoid politics.
- District council leadership has to strengthen the budgetary processes for the sector of education in the district.

- Schools libraries should be constructed and those in existence should be equipped to cater the status of a library rather than playing politics
- There should be special social benefits (higher salaries, reliable means of transport and communication, etc) for teachers working in the hinterland and countryside to encourage real qualified persons to go to work there.

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