

Global Justice in Educational Support: For Whom and Why?

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Abstract

Global justice as a philosophical concept has been narrowly defined by most literature. The global justice referred in literature focuses on mankind acting impartially to another. Man has to act impartially in helping another man when help needed. However, what should be the criteria for helping? Should help be directed to nations whose apolitical and political leaders are corrupt? Who deserves global justice? This paper attempts to answer these questions using analogies. The paper also raises pertinent questions with the purpose of broadening the scope of global justice. That is defining the concept in a broad sense. Finally, the paper attempts to discuss criteria for providing what is perceived as justice; whether, it is justice to support nations without public funds and resources prudence and lastly, it concludes nations with prudence in utilising resources are the ones deserving educational financial support, and that there is need to have a broad view of looking at global justice.

Keywords: Global justice, social contract theory, justice, educational support

Concept of global justice

While scholars have attempted to define this concept, there have been problems in defining it at global level. Global it means without limitation and mobile (Collins, 2014). Global justice can be defined as fairness beyond limits in the world. Nevertheless, the problem of defining the concept partly is attributable to using social contract theory by Thomas Hobbes. The theory appropriately explains the concept of justice at state level. The theory shoulders the responsibility to render justice to individuals in society to the state (Nbeta, 2012). That is to say society surrenders some of its powers/rights to the state. The state or government is supreme. Why is it problematic to define global justice? It is problematic to define global justice, because there is no global government that the global society/community has surrendered some of its rights to it (Risse, n.d). So at global level, the question of who is responsible to render justice cannot be clearly answered; this is despite the existence of international organisations dealing with human rights. In this view then, justice is rendered by an entity with recognised powers to do so. That is to say society has implicitly or explicitly agreed such entity to protect its rights. Providing justice, it is a power relation issue though in its fullest sense it is a natural law bound issue. As Williams (2012) put it “justice is in our DNA,...” Indeed, the entity should be a moral agent. Children, say of three years to nine years old, have some level of conscience on issues related to justice. To make this clear, let us look at the following non-fabricated example:

One day my and neighbor kids were playing a ball by throwing it to each other including kicking it. While most of kids were from seven, one of the kids was about three. This was the youngest among the playing kid group. Therefore, he had very little chances of touching the ball. It was only the older children were able to at least touch the ball; this was despite efforts made by the youngest kid to catch the ball. Then he would shout occasionally, “it’s my turn to throw the ball,” and the older children continued playing the ball without paying attention to his shouting. Then he said, “It’s my turn to throw the ball, give me because I am the youngest.” Despite his raising of the voice the older kids went on playing the ball without paying attention to his shouting. All the time, I was observing them unobtrusively. It then happened that one adult woman, a passer-by who heard his shouting told the oldest children to give the ball to the youngest boy. Immediately, the older children gave the ball to the boy. The boy then said, now I throw the ball to Gilbert first and then to Neema... the list went on. Meaning that, he would throw the ball by turns. This story informs us of the natural law operating inside the youngest boy and the woman, the passer-by. That is to say, it was unjust for the oldest children not to consider fair participation of the youngest boy in the game. And that, they did not render him a ball because he was weak/less strong. Until an entity with power (the woman), ordered them to render him (youngest boy) a chance to play the ball. This woman played the role of the government to ensure that justice was not violated. She protected the right to equal opportunity in playing the game among children, and the older children adhered to the directive. This analogy, which is un-fabricated story, informs us that there must be a supper-body (“trans-nage”) body rendering what is perceived as justice at global level. For example, there must be an agreed world government. However, this cannot go without a challenge, the challenge is that if the older children through natural law they knew what was unjust, yet they did not render the ball to the boy what pertinent message do we get from this? This implies that the “trans-nage” is likely to violate this principle of justice to serve its interest. Indeed, some of global support from developed economies directed to least developed economies may be motivated by the principle of self-preservation. As it is, justice is what is deservedly perceived as a right of an individual from the granting entity (authority). Authority here means any entity with perceived influence over

another. This analogy would also mean that we need global watchdogs to ensure that justice principles are adhered in the globe.

Global justice and educational support

Globally, there has been a practice of providing support to those in need or to those who deserve it. For instance, developed economies provide support to developing economies. The support given can range from material, financial, professional, technological, the list may continue for some time. Of these, this paper strives to discuss the quest of educational financial support to developing economies. The term education here is conceptualised as all education intending to produce a fully functioning individual in society. A fully functioning individual is someone who is well-equipped with knowledge, skills and values necessary for individual and society survival. As it is, education has enabled all forms of development we witness today in the world. While education is a causative of development in the world, it is interesting to see that some parts of the world still lag behind in terms of economic and technological development despite having abundant resources as compared to developed countries counterparts. Resources in this context, it means human and natural resources. This failure in economic and technological development in these countries is not independent from the failure of education system in respective countries. It is because of this failure that they need support from other countries or charity organisations to promote quality education and thus producing educated people in given countries. The challenge in most of these countries there is rampant corruption. It is as if the elites were trained to become corrupt individuals in society and their workplaces. Corruption is their “noble career.” Corruption has turned to be part and parcel of social and economic life. Corruption is a critical setback to an individual and any national development mission.

Indeed, it is unlikely for countries whose apolitical and political leaders are corrupt to grow successfully in all spheres of life, namely political, economic, cultural, social and technological aspects. This is because whatever development one would need in any of the spheres cannot be independent from financial resource investment, which needs to be used with prudence to achieve the life spheres development (in our case here social development, specifically educational development). Though it may be hard to define development and remain immune from criticism, it is however, safer to define it as a change of an individual from low to a high level of civilization in life spheres. Indeed, the question again comes what is low? How much low is low? Similar questions can be raised for high level. How do we measure it? However one can use time as a determinant of level of development attained. Similarly development in terms of education can be measure based on number of students enrolled, issues of equity, performance of learners, infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, process, products to mention just a few while comparing these criteria over time or years. The comparing helps to see some improvements made over a certain period of time. So progress made in development based on the criteria listed in low economies is very gradual particularly because education provided is either of poor quality, irrelevant and/or it does not respond to social needs. Given these weaknesses in some countries financial support is of paramount. The next section covers on criteria to be used to support these countries.

Criteria for educational support

In the previous section, we have seen how corruption of apolitical and political leaders can act as a setback to socio-economic development in a country. This means it can act as hindrance because there are a few individuals who have power to decide for other people, and they abuse offices at different levels and degree, which in a holistic sense they cause a nation to be dependent economically and in other life spheres of life. The negligence practiced by the bureaucracy and political leaders, who are the minority, but powerful (have knowledge power) makes the populace suffer. The sufferings may range from poor quality of education, and other social services provided. The question here is; should charity organisations and/or development partners continue to support education in (corrupt) governments simply because the populace is suffering? How to help people in such governments? Utilitarianism principle would suggest that it is better to continue supporting to make the suffering populace happier. Moreover, a utilitarian would even recommend that whoever is corrupt making the populace suffer for personal ends it is better to liquidate him/her to make the populace not to continue suffering. This is because he/she makes the supporting entity and the benefiting entity all alike suffer for no reason. It is important to have institutional structures with zero tolerance to corruption first before support is rendered. For without this, the populace will continue to suffer despite huge amount of monies for educational support directed to poor countries. The worst poverty developing economies have is the poverty of integrity, honest, transparency, hardworking spirit, faithfulness, tolerance, moral values and thinking skills. Though it is always hard to measure the values and thinking ability, it is always possible to notice the absence of these values in society. A society that totally lacks these values does not deserve educational financial support from development partners and/or charity organisations. This is because such society will always side to a perpetrator; thus making it hard to remedy the situation. Therefore before the support is provided it is important to inculcate these values in a

particular society or it may result in wastage of precious scarce resources (time and money).

Educational support in corruption prone nations

In corrupt societies, where corruption is part of their culture, it is hard to achieve set objectives of intended educational support. This is because such societies are likely to introduce a development project with a sinister motive. They have myriad educational problems which they use as instruments to acquisition of financial support. As such, the problems are never solved to the fullest level. This is because they request for financial support to solve real educational problems, but in the end they solve part of a problem and leave part of it simply because they misallocate or misuse the financial resources deliberately. Interestingly, the same educational problem will be used to seek for financial support from another country or charity organisation. Analogously, these countries are like two beggars with big soars on their legs and sit along a road where there are passers-by to show them their soars to seek for financial support for medication, one beggar receives the money from passers-by and goes for medication and another one uses his soar as an instrument to get money for other purposes. Which beggar would you be willing to provide him with financial support, the latter or the former? Now that we have seen the analogy, let us see the typical example of the same; “in Kenya, in recent years, schools received only some two thirds (*of funds*) of what they should, while in Lesotho the full amount reached all schools” (*italics added*) (De Grauwe, 2013, p. 28). Which one of the two countries would you be willing to give your funds for educational support?

Global justice: for whom?

Charity organizations and governments in high income countries need to support countries whose governments are serious with solving education problems in respective countries. Think of this analogy:

John has a brother who is an employee in well-paying organization. John’s brother receives a salary which is four times higher than his young brother’s income per month; however, he always calls John to provide financial support to go to hospital. Once he receives the money he takes all of it to the bar; the next days he call his young brother to support him. John’s brother habit makes him (John) fail to achieve personal objectives of taking his kids to school because all the money he saves is spend to sustain his brother’s life. One question one would ask here is; should John continue supporting his brother or let him die of diseases?

The analogy represents similar situation in some low income countries. The countries would always claim to be poor and thus seek educational support from high income countries and/or charity organisations, but once they receive educational financial support they never prudently spent to solve the problems at hand. They rather misuse the funds and use the same problem to seek for financial support from other high income countries. For instance, in one study in Tanzania, records of capitation grants disbursed to secondary schools were one thousand less per student than the actual money received by respective schools (Kabuka, 2014; Hallak & Poison, 2005; Marquet, 2011). Should high income countries continue to support financially such countries? In my view, such countries need a different support before they are given financial educational support.

As it is, whenever we talk about global justice in education we cannot ignore the issues of qualification of teachers, are criteria for recruiting teachers in Finland similar to those used in Tanzania? Think of teaching and learning environment; is teaching and learning environment in American schools similar to those in Tanzania? What about infrastructure? Are school infrastructures in Uganda similar to those in the UK? Are student support services in the UK similar to those in Mozambique? What about curriculum development process rigour is it similar across all peoples in the world? To achieve global justice in education, we need to answer these questions as well.

Going beyond global justice in education

Nonetheless, whenever we discuss about the concept of global justice, we should not ignore the question of environment, for instance, does mining industry do justice to environment? Does a lion do justice to sustain its life by feeding on a giraffe? Does man do justice to slaughter a cow to make it his meal? These questions are raised to make you think in a broader perspective about the issue of global justice and its complexity. Indeed, if we want to keep on looking at global justice in a narrow view we need to have a justification for that, that is to say, we need to explain why we should exclude non-human objects or creatures from the concept of global justice?

Conclusions

It is reasonable to provide educational financial support to low income countries which have financial and other resources prudence. This is because the support is likely to be effectively used to improve human being life. Nonetheless, this does not mean that high income countries are immune from corruption in education. This is absolutely not the case the quest of corruption in education is a global issue; however, its unpopular effects are more far reaching in low income countries than in high income countries. This is because the former need to

create foundations of sustainable development in all spheres of life; nevertheless, this view does not in any way justify corruption in high income countries. More importantly, the financial resources misused are from charity organisations which also use a few committed good wishers financial resources thus misusing funds cause more sufferings, which have no tangible benefits to target groups. Indeed, one would conclude that:

Global justice = A (supporting entity justice) + B (supported entity justice), of-course, based on a narrow view of global justice. Considering a narrow view of justice, it would mean that life (animal and plant kingdoms) is unjustifiable. This is because the narrow view of justice excludes plants and animals, creatures other than human beings (non-human creatures) which are in fact in the globe, and in a way they deserve justice.

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