

Education System In Tanzania

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TANZANIA is a republic (official name: United Republic of Tanzania) located in Eastern Africa, bordering the Indian Ocean, between Kenya and Mozambique. Shortly after achieving independence from Britain in the early 1960s, Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged to form the nation of Tanzania in 1964. One-party rule came to an end in 1995 with the first democratic elections held in the country.

The total area of Tanzania is 947,300 sq km (over six times larger than Bangladesh) and it harbors about 41 million (41,048,532; July 2009 est.) people (about a quarter of Bangladesh population). Population growth rate is 2.04% that is roughly equal to Bangladesh's 2%. The per capita income in Tanzania is about US \$ 1,300. The literacy rate is about 69.4% (male: 77.5%, female: 62.2%). Tanzania spends about 3.7% of its GDP in education, which is about 1.5 times more than Bangladesh's educational spending (2.3%).

Education is the known way to enrich people with required knowledge, skills and attitude in any nation. Requirement for these qualities changes with time and curriculum requires time to time revision. During the independent existence of Bangladesh, the curriculum underwent two full revisions and the primary stage alone experienced this for the third time that needs to be followed scrupulously by upper grades. We can have a look into the education system of this African country influenced by the European system. The description follows the usual format having Education Policy & Administration, the Structure, Program of Study, Assessment System and lastly Lessons for Bangladesh.

I- Education Policy & Administration

Education in Tanzania is managed by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT). Education policies are in line with the larger national or macro policy which

emphasizes increased role of private sector in education, introduction of cost sharing measures, and decentralization of education and training management. The overall goal of education sector is to ensure quality, access and equity at all levels of education.

II- The Structure

Tanzania follows the universal basic structure of primary, secondary and higher education with a simple exception in having about 2 years preprimary (that is usually not formalized in most countries). Primary education is a 7-year study. Secondary education lasts for 6 years, divided into two unequal parts: 4 years of Ordinary (O) level and 2 years of Advanced (A) level. The usual Bachelor course in universities lasts at least for 3 years and the Masters for 1 year. Therefore, the structure becomes 7+ (4 + 2) + (3+1).

Higher Education

Tanzania has both non-university (technical) and university level higher education. The first phase of university education leads to a Bachelor's Degree. It usually lasts for three years, except in Pharmacy, Nursing, Veterinary Science and Engineering, which take four years, and Medicine, which takes five years. A further one to three years' study leading to a Master's Degree is the second phase. Postgraduate Diplomas require a Bachelor's Degree for admission and, generally, one year of study. The third phase is doctoral research and a minimum of a further two years' original research and submission of a thesis leads to a PhD.

Teacher Education

There are two types of training requirement for primary teachers. The Grade C teacher education certificate entitles the holders to teach in the first two grades of primary. The Grade B certificate is obtained by promotion or by successfully completing a four-year course at a teacher training college after grade-7. The Grade A Certificate is obtained on successful completion of a two-year course for students who have passed the

CGE "O" levels at division II level and entitles the holder to teach in all seven grades of primary education. A two-year Diploma of Education at a Teacher Training College after passing the ACSE is required to teach at lower secondary level. Teachers for upper secondary level should hold a Bachelor of Education or a Postgraduate Diploma in Education. Opportunities for in-service training have increased with the creation of village-based teacher training programmes.

III- Program of Study

The primary curriculum includes the subjects- language, math and science. The lower secondary course leading to O level examination provides for studying languages (English and Kiswahili), Mathematics, Physics with Chemistry, Biology, History, Geography, Civics and Religion. The optional subjects are under Agriculture, Commerce, Technical Skills and Home Economics streams. A level course (grades 12-13) is fully diversified; students can choose one of science and arts groups.

IV- Assessment Systems

In Tanzania, there are three public examinations held before entering the universities. The first one is on completion of the primary education at grade-7. This is Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) Examination. The second one is in completion of O level at grade-11 and is termed Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) or GCE O Level. The third one is held in completion of A level at grade-13 and is termed Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education (ACSE).

Grading system

Tanzania follows a simple letter grading system. The scale is A to E for principal passes. There is an S (subsidiary) grade that is the minimum for passing and the grade F stands for fail.

V- Lessons for Bangladesh

The major characters of the education system in Tanzania that Bangladesh can follow or adapt can be as follows:

Tanzania is not a rich country; yet she spends 3.7% of her GDP in education. Bangladesh can increase her educational spend-

ing first to the Tanzanian standard, and later should try to gradually reach the UNESCO standard of 7%.

The duration of primary education is 7 years in Tanzania. We have a long-standing (since 1974) plan of 8-year long primary education. This was, reasonably, not implemented during this long 35 years. I think, even if we can realize an 8-year long primary education, the standard of education would go further down because of long monotonous years with low-grade teachers in primary schools. The proposal of renaming lower secondary (grades 6-8) as upper primary would also fail to contain our systemic problems. Better we can elevate primary education by one grade (up to 6) so that can help defer drop out at least by a year.

In Tanzania, basic and integrated education is up to grade-7, lower secondary grades 8-11 in secondary schools has provisions for diversity; and A level is fully diversified. In Bangladesh, we can better follow the most prevalent world education structure: 6+3+3 declaring education of primary 6 plus secondary 3 (i.e., up to grade-9) basic and integrated.

Tanzania has provision for three pre-university public examinations. These are at grade-7, grade-11 and grade-13. We arrange the first public examination after long 10 years of study and then two secondary examinations very close to each other. This arrangement has been depriving the students of proper learning; primary education being unaccountable, and higher secondary students virtually running after examination just on enrolment. We should arrange three public examinations before higher education placing those logically at a distance. I propose to arrange public examination in completion of primary, lower secondary and higher secondary at grade-6, grade-9 and grade-12 respectively.

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