I AM IN SCHOOL BUT I CANNOT READ AND WRITE!

Education is very basic to national development therefore; no nation can afford to toil with it. Education is one of the potent instruments for change and transformation in the socio-political, scientific and technological spheres of every nation. Hence, the need for quality in education and this cannot be overemphasized.

Primary education is the foundation of all intellectual development in future; it is the key to healthy development and success in their future schooling, it is therefore, important to begin developing literacy skills in the early years of schooling. It is good for a child to go to school but it is not enough to just go to school without gaining the basics of formal education; primary and secondary school aged children are still leaving school without basic math and reading skills and this is because of a faulty primary education system. A faulty primary education system can thwart the attainment of the intended outcome of the system; this explains why it is not surprising to see a student of higher institution unable to construct an intelligent sentence.

Some contributing factors to the poor state of the primary education system are; lack of political commitment, poor infrastructural facilities, lack of competent teachers and inadequate funding.

Qualitatively, the type of education being imparted to majority of school children is ill-suited to the development need of Nigerians, therefore, we need to act fast and ensure that qualified teachers are employed in our schools. Teachers should be trained and retrained so that reading and writing can be improved in early years of school. Necessary infrastructure should be provided so that learning can take place in a more hygienic and comfortable environment. The classrooms are congested, there are no chairs and tables in our classrooms, the children sit on the bare floor, learning cannot take place in such environments. There is need for increased annual budget in the education system; the minimum benchmark according to UNESCO is that 26% of a nation’s annual budget should be allocated to education; presently Nigeria allocates only 7% of her annual budget on education which is very pathetic.

I will end this with a Chinese proverb which says; “If you are planning for a year, plant rice; if you are planning for a decade plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people”. It is time to make quality education a priority.

Hauwa’u Hudu
Hudu is a Malala Advocate with
Girls Campaign for Quality Education
A project under Centre for Girls Education (CGE)
Zaria with support from Malala Fund