Globalisation and Education Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

The study highlights the effort of African leaders' attempt in educational policy formulation and implementation from independence to globalisation era. It posits that the first twenty years of independence witnessed some continued effort to evolve genuine national systems of education. National consultations led to national policy documents which evolved policies- self-reliance, UPE, new deal, curriculum development centres etc. Policies were geared towards the elimination of illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty. These efforts were cut short by political, social economic etc instabilities and in the new millennium globalisation forces lent weight to the frustration of implementation of and the reframing of educational policies. It recommends restoration of stability in all areas of educational systems policies and life in the region. Globalisation should be made to benefit the South.

Index terms—

1 Introduction

ducation has been accepted across the globe as an effective tool for transformation and development of the individual and society at large. This paper x-rays African leaders' effort at independence and in the era of globalisation in the formulation and implementation of educational policies. The leaders saw education as a most effective tool for the eradication of illiteracy, poverty, ignorance and promotion of human capacity building. Thus they went ahead to build national education systems that would place Africa among the League of Nations through formulation of and implementation of educational policies. The study looks at the attempt by the leaders right from independence and thereafter, how effort was frustrated by both internal and external problems and above all the forces of globalisation which dealt serious blow to education by redefining educational policies especially in the sub-Saharan Africa.

2 II.

3 The Concept of Educational Policy

According to Webster's Dictionary, policy has to do with a selected planned line of conduct in the light of which individual's actions and co-ordination are achieved. The role of policy in the development of education is very crucial. It has great influence on educational systems. Bake and Wiseman (2005) noted the valuable role educational policies play in the development of educational systems. They pointed out that much rests on the decisions, support and most of all resources that policy makers can either give or withhold in any situation. They concluded that educational policy has a wide effect on schooling. Policy acts as spring board from where education development starts. Clearly defined policy makes action focused. People work towards targets and not just do what they think is good. Policy gives direction and guides the people in any organisation. **??**banya (2004:110) noted that in real life situations, the task of policy formulation starts at the moment of systematic analysis. He concluded that by highlighting what needs changing in an existing policy is already a step in giving new directions. Thus policies give direction. They lend way to reforms.

4 III.

5 Attempt to Build National Education Systems

The educational development of the 1960s according to Obanya (2004) brought an unusual change to the continent of Africa. The UNESCO sponsored conferences of African leaders at Addis Ababa in 1961 and Tananarive in 1962 deliberated on the issue and agreement with the UN declaration of 1948 human rights, committed their governments to the implementation of a free and compulsory six-year education by 1980. The leaders met and drew plans on how to take education to the door steps of their people and to raise a workforce that would help man the nation at independence. They drew short and long plans. The plans touched on increase in enrolment, change in school curriculum to conform to the developmental needs and expansion of teacher training facilities especially for elementary and secondary schools. The plan focused on planning educational system to meet manpower needs. The recommendations of the conference gained full acceptance in Africa. Education became a fundamental right of all the people: and the guarantee for such a right is compulsory free primary education, equal opportunities for access to higher education.

6 IV.

Formulation and Implementation of Policies curricula, teacher education etc in order to have a clear break from their colonial experience. Some adopted socialist part to development. Obanya (2004) listed Tanzania, Benin, Guinea, Congo, Brazzaville and Ethiopia in this group and that the revolutionary movements in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique place them under the category. Some of the countries held national conference to get all the stake holders in education to make their input to the proposed curriculum. Nigeria held curriculum conference in 1969. Others were Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. Many countries were revolutionary in their approach, for example Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya; The Gambia restructured their educational systems. Namibia sought a clean break from the past. Segregation and apartheid were overthrown.

In relation to implementation, it was discovered that the first twenty years of independence saw very strong educational systems in sub-Saharan region. There was rapid expansion of educational system in African countries at all levels of education.

Tanzania came up with a well defined national policy-Education for self-reliance. This document made education relevant to rural life, got students interested in agriculture and rural life and down played elitist attitude to schooling. The policy contributed immensely to building a new nation. It led to evolution of a radical curriculum and the use of Kiswahili for basic education. The change had a positive impact on the Tanzanian society. **??**koli (20011) noted that Nigeria's curriculum conference led to the evolution of philosophy of education and consequent production of national policy on education which was gazette in 1977, reviewed in 1981, 1998 and 2004, respectively. The policy adopted the 6-3-3-4 system from 1977 and in 2005 the 9-3-3-4 was adopted. The government floated the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976 which was envisaged to be compulsory. It broke down in 1980 and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched in 1999 in response to the EFA declaration at Jomtien in Thailand in 1999. It stipulated that by 2005 every child of primary school age would be in school by 2005.

Togo had a number of problems to tackle in her educational system at independence. Majority of the populace were illiterates and financially poor. Encyclopedia Americana (1979:808) gave the post independent illiteracy rate at 90% and about 39% of pupils were regular in school. Government had no resources to grapple with the hardship. The nonavailability of higher educational institutions made it difficult for the government to train a workforce. With relative political stability and economic expansion, Eyadema's government introduced the educational policies-' the new deal' the government was able to tackle the problem of 'diploma disease' New deal led to "authenticity campaign" from which educational reforms took off in Togo. In relation to higher education, policies yielded dividend in the first two decades after independence.

Autonomous African universities expanded as a result of local and international supports. Inter-linkages with USAID, Rockefeller, Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation pledged contributions to African universities. The foreign bodies supplied Peace Corps or trained teachers to Kenya. Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria and other African countries universities. The Staff development policy was very strong. The Afro-Anglo American Teacher Education Programme was financed by the Carnegie Corporation in the existing English speaking universities. There were interactions in various areas of academics-regular annual conferences among teachers' colleges in Africa, the U.K. and the U. S. A. There was exchange of staff between Teachers' Colleges of Colombia, The London University Institute of Education, in English speaking African nations. Fafunwa cited in Okoli (2007: 2) pointed out that, there were fellowship programmes tenable in the U.S. and conduct of research. African participation intensified and twentysix other members were Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia etc. From the foregoing it could be seen that efforts at the formulation and implementation of policies led to educational reforms in many African nations at the period.

These nations put in motion various policies from staff development to giving of grants/ bursaries to students in the higher institutions. The staff development and fellowship programmes gave opportunity to many African academics to study abroad. The grants and bursaries made it possible for many indigent students to attain university education and to secure good jobs based on their educational qualifications. Some of them, while

in school, had the opportunity of interacting with children of heads of states and top governmental officials. Children of illiterates from the remotest rural areas had the opportunity of going to school.

V.

7 Internal and External Problems that Frustrated Policy Implementation

African leaders, in a bid to expand their educational systems, triggered off some problems. The pressure was for more education rather than better education. They were not concerned whether it was qualitative education, or not.

Governments implemented policies that led to expansion of education at the three levels. There was adult, vocational, technical, education etc. The consequences were terrible. Rapid growth of the educational systems created situation whereby massive unemployment, underemployment, drop-out, gender disparity were the case etc. Unfortunately, decay set in as a result of internal and external problems. Internally there were political, social economic etc instability. Coups and counter coups became the order of the day. In Nigeria, for instance, there were eight governments within thirty years of military rule. Each government came with its own policies. Policies were prematurely terminated. It was an era of decrees and rules were dished out without consultations and deliberations. Education suffered the most. Universities were closed and opened at will. The military removed all the grant/bursaries, subsidies. Strike actions became the order of the day. Nigerian universities suffered from open and close syndrome. Today Nigerian universities do not have uniform opening and closing dates.

Globalisation gave a final blow to educational policies in the region as a result of its forces and pressures. The popular notion that globalisation has turned the world into a global village, meant financial liberalisation for Africa. For Sub-Saharan Africa growing liberalisation has contributed to financial crises in various nations, states and regions which are beaten into submission with little or no control over such crises resulting in the pauperisation of many. It created political, economic, social and educational inequalities in the entire continent. Africans are indebted and are poor because of the policies of international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organisation (WTO). Debt repayment pushed governments to evolve new educational policies. They embarked on drastic measures like retrenchment of workers. Other crucial aspects of life -education, health, social welfare, environmental sanitation, agriculture etc and development were neglected. Nations struggled to meet global standards. All that characterised education during the first twenty years of independence was all wiped out by the military. The international monetary fund threw African nations into debt repayment. The weight of the debt burden on Africa has become unbearable as a result of overriding increase of the debt. Karky in Nweze (2009: 109) noted that in 1970, the total debt of Sub-Saharan African countries was $3.7billion. Thirteen years later in 1983 it had risen to $38.7billion. By 1990 it had reached a staggering sum of $161billion. Karky further noted that the cost of servicing debt takes a great deal of toll on the ability of governments to provide the basic human and social services necessary for survival and development. According to UN Human Development Report (1997), Africa alone could have saved the lives of 21 million children by year 2000 if the countries have kept the money devoted to servicing foreign debts. Tanzania for instance spent $189.2 million between 1997-1998, in contrast to $65.4million on healthcare. Mauritania spent $87.8million in 1998 0n debt servicing which amounted to five times more than $17.4million spent on health care. Mozambique spent $159million on debt servicing compared $4omillion spent on health care. **??**enry et al (2008) noted that globalisation led to reframing of educational policies, especially at the higher education level. The suggestion according to Knight (2006) by WTO to liberalise trade in education services through the Garth Agreement Trade is one of the effects of globalization on African Education. Enrolment was affected. Universities were brought under pressure and so doubled and even tripled their enrolments for increased access. Governments instead of funding education at all levels began to emphasize privatization and market economy. The tendency was to think that education especially at the higher level is a private good and that graduates benefit personally by improving their employment ability.

It is the recommendation of this paper that governments should allow effective, good and workable policies to stay no matter who evolved them. They should be implemented to the letter. Premature termination of policies should be avoided. Finally, globalisation should be made to benefit the South, especially the sub-Saharan region.

8 VI.

9 Conclusion

Education has been an effective tool for development, transformation and modernisation. Modern education is a western import to Africa and so African nations should promote the kind of atmosphere and the machinery that have made education to work in all other countries. Consistent implementation of policies is part and parcel of educational systems in the developed countries. They operate stable governments which make implementation of policies possible. It is hoped that African nations would mature and come to a stage where things are done the way they should.

9   CONCLUSION

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