

THE NEED FOR A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO EDUCATION IN AFRICA: THE NIGERIAN CASE STUDY

Dorothy Oluwagbemi-Jacob, Ph.D

Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Nigeria

Abstract

The pan-African vision is to have a developed Africa. One of the key tools for realizing this is education. However, Eurasian approaches to education have, in great measure, directed African educational system, resulting in unsustainable development in Africa. This is evident in the level of poverty in different parts of the continent. This paper, therefore, argues that though some of these approaches may contain some kernels of truth, none of them exclusively has what it takes to address the issue of unsustainable development in Africa. It submits that the appropriate educational approach for realizing the pan-African vision in Nigeria should be one that basically involves a whole development of an individual. The paper recommends a curriculum review that places emphasis on humanistic education, African value system, acquisition of relevant skills and transference of developmental skills rather than one that focuses on the transmission of knowledge. It prescribes more investment in the capacity building of the educators in Nigeria. The method of the paper is essentially expository and evaluative.

Keywords: Africa, Nigeria, development, education, holistic, pan-African vision, Eurasian.

Introduction

There have been assorted rough edges in Africa's history. At one point, it was transatlantic slave trade with its massive commerce on human beings and the exportation of Africans as slaves to Europe and the West Indies. At another, it was colonialism occasioned by imperial conquest, perfected at the 1884-85 Berlin Conference, under Belgium's King Leopold. At the end of colonialism, a more insidious variety of exploitation emerged in the garb of neo-colonialism. All these activities were aimed at resource control, be it human beings or natural resources. No wonder Duncan Clarke remarks that "for centuries, Africa has been an imperial battlefield, a terrain for resource control..." (3) Many a scholar has affirmed that neo-colonialism, intertwined with these other preceding phases of exploitation, explains the state of underdevelopment bedeviling contemporary African countries.

Although endowed with rich human and natural resources, the continent has, paradoxically, remained one of the least developed continents in the world. According to Hugh Arnold:

Africa is by far the most underdeveloped of the third world continents...Africa is strikingly behind the other developing continents in literacy....on the very significant physical quality of life index (PQLI). Africa likewise trails the other developing areas by a wide margin....

Africa similarly trails the other third world areas and obviously Europe and North America, on such development indicators as life expectancy, infant mortality, public health expenditure, energy consumption and so on (295)

The impression one gets from the above picture is that Africa's development is bogged in a quandary, a dream yet to be realized. This observation was made by Arnold way back in the 1980s, and if one thought that this depressing state of affairs would alter in subsequent years, the World Bank Report of 2006 disappointed that expectation. According to the report, "Since the beginning of the 1990s, African economies have recorded a low average growth rate of 4.5 percent per annum and a crushing debt burden, which ballooned from \$80 billion in 1982 to \$275 billion in 2004" (World Bank 2005).

The debt burden is Africa's development albatross as available crucial indices on trade and poverty alleviation indicate that while the other regions of the developing world are experiencing economic growth, Africa has now become synonymous with poverty, disease, unemployment and ethnic conflicts.

By 1990, Africa's total debt was \$272 billion. For the sub-Saharan region, debt had risen to \$161 billion. No wonder, in August 1991, the one-time Secretary General of the United Nations Organization (UNO), Javier Perez de Cuellar, said: "It is simply not possible for African countries to develop with their debt burden exceeding \$270 billion" (no pagination).

Thus, anyone familiar with the pan-African vision to develop Africa cannot but concur that this is needful and that without holistic education targeted at the individual's physical, mental and spiritual dimensions, Africa's development, including that of Nigeria, may remain a mirage.

Education is a deliberate process that involves the transmission of what society considers valuable or worthwhile from generation to generation. It is a means to an end and not an end in itself. The aim of education is to create developed human beings who can manage political institutions, the hospitals, nursing services, entrepreneurial demands, research demands, etc. It is the foundation on which the social, economic and technological development of a nation is built. Thus, in fashioning out the educational philosophy of a nation, the needs of that nation must be kept in focus. Any educational philosophy that is opposed to the needs (whether social, economic and technological) of a nation will be stultifying.

The aim of this paper is to evaluate the Eurasian approaches (idealist, realist and pragmatic) to education with a view to ascertaining their effects on development in Africa. It argues that though they contain some kernels of truth, no one approach tells the whole story. It is the position of the paper that a feasible approach to education aimed at Africa's and, specifically, Nigeria's development, should involve an all-round education of the individual spiritually, physically, and mentally.

The paper submits that education is aimed to create developed human beings who can, in turn, transform their society through the proper implementation of policy objectives as

they pertain to capacity and capability building, political stability, better healthcare, research, institutional, cultural, scientific and technological advancement, etc. The paper looks at the educational policy of Nigeria, in the light of pan-African vision. It prescribes curriculum review that places emphasis on acquisition and transferring of skills as opposed to just the transmission of knowledge, capacity building of teachers to improve their teaching quality, entrepreneurship education that will prepare the individual not just for white collar job but for self-reliance and job creation. Further, value education that is concerned with the development of total personality (which is the role of humanities) should be pursued by placing emphasis on Africa's value system.

To realize its objective, this paper is divided into three sections. Section one focuses on the general concept of education and culminates in the appraisal of the Eurasian approaches to education. It also highlights the essentials of entrepreneurship education. Section two articulates the pan-African vision and tries to appraise the educational policy of Nigeria in the light of the pan-African vision. Section three looks into holistic education in the context of Africa and shows its relevance to Africa's development in contemporary times. This section also embodies the conclusion and recommendations.

Education: A Theoretical Account

Generally speaking, education, in its formal and informal hue, is a process. It is an ongoing process through which the cultural heritage of a society gets transmitted from generation to generation. In its formal hue, it is done deliberately by society through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions (Ezewu 32). However, restricting this activity to schools, colleges, universities and other institutions excludes traditional societies where there are no schools. But whether formal or informal, the fact remains that education is essentially used to transmit cultural heritage. It contains the necessary moralities and civilities that hold a society together. Thus, when one destroys the educational system of a people, one invariably destroys their cultural heritage. It is in this respect that Africa's colonial experience has remained sore.

For D. J. O'Connor, quoted by Ezewu, the "educational system of any community is a more or less an elaborate mechanism designed by a society to instill in individuals certain skills and attitudes that are judged to be useful and desirable in society" (32). This implies that education is not just book knowledge but embodies life skills for individual survival. It was in this connection that O'Connor also said that the business of education is to develop the individual person and prepare him to function effectively in society.

Education involves developing and learning to use one's mind in the most creative way. It is from this perspective that David Stewart and H. Gene Blocker define the subject and actually criticize educational institutions (schools) as they actually exist because of the emphasis they place on rote memory and repetitive conformity (177).

For Festus C. Okafor, education is that process of acculturation through which the individual is helped to attain the development of his potentialities and their maximum activation when necessary, according to right reason and to achieve thereby his perfect self-fulfillment (16). From what Okafor is saying, education involves the development of

human personality such that the talents and gifts of the individual can be awakened and strengthened. This is exactly what Humanities disciplines aim to achieve.

He further makes the point that it is of essence to the process of education that it be deliberately planned and methodologically applied and that the concept of acculturation should not be limited to one's immediate environment, but should be open-ended. This implies that there is something universal about education that makes it possible for someone not to be dogmatic and narrow-minded.

Recognizing that the potentialities of the individual embody physical, mental and spiritual dimensions, Okafor insists that education should be concerned not only with intellectual development but also with affective development, character development and psychomotor development. What this means is that education should be holistic and should involve the cultivation of the "whole person". The individual human person is like an uncultivated ground that requires in the process of cultivation, intellectual, character and spiritual seeds.

Beyond the individual, education is essentially a social activity because the society provides the enablement that the individual needs for his education. The social agencies that make this to happen include the family, the state and the church. The church belongs to the supernatural order and attends to the individual's spiritual dimension.

Furthermore, education is largely a tool, a means to the achievement of other ends. It is not absolutely an end in itself. In this respect, it has a functional value, which is relative to place, time and circumstance. In the context of this discourse, it is a means to development in Africa.

For Okafor, the education system embodies salient information about the past of a people and possible vision for the future. Specifically, it is a vehicle through which the accomplishments of past civilizations are preserved, the spiritual life of the race or people is propagated, and its social heritage of language, literature, as well as philosophies and institutions are transmitted to the youth. All cultural heritage, whether they be religious, social, aesthetic, political, economic or whatever else, are examined, evaluated, and imparted within the educational framework; that is, the truths, ideals, values, customs, mores, and other elements that are recognized as indispensable to the next generation are passed on from generation to generation through education" (17-18). Thus, if one destroys the educational system of a country, then one has destroyed the soul of that nation along with its potentialities for development. In what follows, an attempt is made to appraise the various approaches to education, as well as their implications for development.

Idealist philosophy of education

A common thread that runs through the idealist's perspectives is that reality is essentially spiritual or mental in nature. Specifically, mind is given a superordinate status in relation to matter.

The idealist philosophy of education urges us to look beyond the outward, the perceptible side of the learner and make the learner's inner being our focal point. This means that the

educator should direct attention to the learner's mind. This flows from the idealist belief that the learner is a spiritual being, a self who should not be viewed merely in terms of flesh and blood, but essentially from the non-material angle. The ultimate objective of idealist education is self-realization.

Idealists urge that education should aim at realizing the self as part of a universal mind and the image of God. Akin to the above objective of idealist education is the development of character. Idealists believe that the child is capable of moral growth. For this reason, education should aim at molding the child's character in accordance with that which is right and good. It should inculcate the values of the society, as well as instill a sense of loyalty and duty towards the society into which one is born. Also, intellectual development forms an important aspect of the idealist philosophy of education. This is aimed at directing the child to the truth.

Herman Horne outlines the objectives of the idealist philosophy of education in their order of importance. At the top of the scale would come worship, as bringing man into conscious relation to the infinite spirit.... Although Horne recognizes skill requisite for one's economic independence, its position in the hierarchy of objectives of the idealist education is an indication that it does not weigh much on the idealist scale. It is not pursued for its practical benefits. Horne allows it in so far as it "is related to personal character and brings man into harmony with the creative spirit of the universe," which is, in fact, the ultimate aim of idealist inspired education (186).

The traditional idealist inclusion of the sciences on the school curriculum was to help the individual get the whole picture of the universe and not for practical ends. One notices this disinclination towards practical benefits in Plato's recommendation of the study of mathematical discipline—arithmetic, planes and solid geometry, astronomy and harmonics. Plato's main emphasis in the *Republic* is on the training of the mind with the vision of the good as its ultimate objective (326-341).

Following this, mathematics is to be studied without any immediate practical or scientific aim in view. For him, only mathematical disciplines can lead the mind to the truth and so must be pursued for the sake of knowledge. One can say in this connection that it seems for Plato that the practical crafts and skills were of no consequence.

Pushed too far, the idealist repudiation of the material world would make the world of science impossible. But is it not the world of science, with the specialization and skill involved therein, that proffers solution to the economic and technological needs of Africa? African countries have remained tied technologically to the West because of the colonial education that inclined more to idealism and downplayed skill and vocational aspects.

Technology is a practical and vocation-oriented endeavor aimed at the transformation of society. It involves high skill and specialization. This runs counter to the idealist philosophy of education, which dwells more on concepts. According to Daniel Denga "idealists are more interested in producing students with broad understanding of the world in which they live than in turning out students with specific skills". (163)

Such an educational philosophy does not equip people for work in factories, on road construction projects and industries. It does not also give anyone ample manipulative skills, develop the spirit of inventiveness or inculcate a healthy attitude toward technical activities. Instead of producing self-reliant individuals, it merely churns out individuals who could quote Shakespearean works and other classics and speak English or Latin fluently, but look upon government for jobs.

Such a system is obviously inappropriate and inadequate for African countries as it cannot equip its products with the technological know-how for mastering their environment and surmounting the problems of underdevelopment. This does not, however, mean that some elements of idealism cannot be appropriated and harmonized with Africa's technological demands in education.

Thus, Africa's policy on education should inculcate national consciousness, the right type of the mind in the world around and the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences, both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to his and contribute to the development of his society.

True, Africa needs to develop. But development will not be feasible if the educational system aims at producing unprincipled robots, individuals who are not worthy in character to take decisions regarding science policy and the course of technological advancement. The need for character moulding and the inculcation of appropriate morals and values has become more pressing in the present-day Africa where it appears rulers no longer aim at achieving social justice for the populace but are satisfying their private and ethnic interests. The Humanities have a huge role to play in this sort of education.

In view of the above, an educational system that unreservedly touts the traditional idealist line can only perpetuate technology stagnation in Africa. At the same time, if it concentrates on the acquisition of vocational and technical skills to the exclusion of social norms and values, it becomes self-defeating. Either way, Africa will be the worse for it.

There is a need for synthesis in which the positive aspects of the idealist philosophy of education are reconciled with the other approaches that emphasize science and technological development.

Realist philosophy of education

As a theory, realism originated from the Greek philosopher, Aristotle. The tenet of realism is that things, the things of human experience, the things in material universe, exist in themselves and these do not depend on whether one knows or apprehends them or not. They have "real" existence meaning that their existence is "true and objective". In other words, their existence is independent of the thinking subject, independent of the person who thinks or does not think about them.

In teaching-learning situations, the realist philosophy of education places great emphasis on environmental influences and on stimulating the senses as opposed to mental discipline achieved through memorization and rote repetition. The emphasis on nature calls for giving learners greater freedom and attention as well as exercise affection for them. It gives premium to freedom of thought and academic freedom as opposed to dogma and

authority on the side of the teacher. The emphasis is more on tests and measurements and other empirical elements in teaching-learning situations particularly in public schools. This approach to education completely ignores the supernatural realm and hardly gives it a place in the curriculum (Okafor, 48-49).

It is in the above connection that the realist philosophy of education has been dismissed as inadequate. Though it embodies some kernel of truth, its elimination of the concerns for the spiritual from the curriculum, leaves much to be desired. How can the human person live in this awesome universe without some touch of the supernatural? Okafor (48) makes the point that such an educational philosophy that eliminates the spiritual dimension, regardless of the fact that humans are also spiritual beings, “will sooner or later become counterproductive”. Both the mundane and the supernatural fall under the purview of the Humanities discipline and make necessary input in the constitution of the total human personality.

Pragmatic philosophy of education

Pragmatism is sometimes called experimentation and, at other times, instrumentation. The avoidance of metaphysical issues is the essence of pragmatism. In this respect, what counts to the pragmatist are the objects of human experience. Consequently, anything which connotes permanence and absolution must be thrown overboard.

Consistent with empiricism, pragmatism views concreteness as the very foundation of its philosophy, urging that the individual concern himself with only the things or events that can be perceived by the senses and not with the abstract and the speculative. The implication of this position is that all reality should be viewed only in terms of the experiential and the verifiable; that is, only in terms of what can be known through human experience. As a consequence, it rejects any postulation regarding ultimate reality, and also sees no need for universal truths or to engage in metaphysical speculation.

Pragmatism and education

For John Dewey and the other pragmatists, education is essentially an interactive process in which the environment acts on the individual and the individual acts on the environment. In the process of this interaction, the individual’s ability is developed to solve the problems of life, since living involves the ability to solve problems.

The pragmatist curriculum is characteristically experiential; and according to Dewey, one of the exponents of this approach to education: growth, is the sole end of education. Growth occurs in the course of the individual acquiring the ability to see the relationships and interconnections among various experiences in the various aspects of the learning process.

Following this, the curriculum will consist of everything that pertains to the experience of living, which youngsters undergo in the school environment. Notably, the pragmatist’s curriculum is not a preparation for adult life; it is life itself. It is not a means to any ‘ultimate’ end.

In the pragmatist's universe of discourse, the traditional content subject matter areas such as history, geography, mathematics and science are criticized for being too compartmentalized and often too abstract in their presentation, to engender growth. The pragmatist insists that such must be broken down in a manner that will make them understandable and meaningful to youngsters. They must be taught or presented in such a way that the pupils must perceive their relevance to their day-to-day living. The learner's participation in the activities of learning must enrich his or her experience in order to engender growth. Precisely, the educational curriculum prescribed by the pragmatist is child-centered, flexible and accommodative of individual differences. It must be inclusive, to say the least.

It is clear that the pragmatist school curriculum is encompassing in scope as it includes all experiences of living, which the pupils undergo under the auspices of the school. What this means is that vocational subjects find a dignified place in it. There is also room for improvement and modification in the school curriculum to align with changing circumstances.

Concerning methodology, the pragmatist maintains that learning must involve action. It must involve doing things. Doing in this respect involves problem-solving. Thus, learning is based on problem-solving. In a class room situation or the teaching-learning situation, the problem-solving method, sometimes called the activity technique, places emphasis not on the activity of the teacher and his authority but on the activity of the pupils. The teacher must no longer assume a dominant position in the classroom situation. He is just a member of the class (albeit a senior member) in a problem-solving setup. His role in this context is that of an adviser or a guide. The problems to be worked on are not selected solely by the teacher. The pupils participate in such selection and it is to be done in response to the "felt needs" of the students.

The students are active both in the selection of the task and the execution. They are active participants in the pursuit of their studies instead of being passive onlookers waiting for some authority (the teacher) to impose items of information upon them. This is an attack on the banking theory of education.

Obviously, the pragmatist approach to education adopts the scientific method of observation and experimentation in its approach to problems. Properly harnessed, such can lead to technological development, which is what makes nations tick.

The most serious attack on the pragmatic approach to education has to do with its rejection of the metaphysical dimension of reality. Its view that experiential reality is the embodiment of all reality that human beings should be concerned about, leaves much to be desired. Consequently, it is not an adequate philosophical approach because experiential reality is only a fraction and not the whole of reality. Any philosopher of Judeo-Christian orientation would find this philosophy unacceptable.

Another serious flaw of this approach to education has to do with its relegation of values in the learning process. Education should have ultimate goals or deferred values. But education that emphasizes just immediate proximate goals at the expense of ultimate goals

may not augur well for society as its products can either be subhuman or superhuman. What makes society habitable are the values inculcated by society from early childhood. This is where traditional African education scores a very high point. Such also prepares the individual for future life. And this is where the pragmatist approach is flawed. One cannot afford to eliminate “learning by instruction” from the educative process. This is the only way one can inculcate in youngsters certain ideals as conceived by the society, or its institutions.

Entrepreneurship education

If there is anything to bemoan, it is the type of educational system African countries, including Nigeria, inherited from the colonial masters. Characteristically, it is certificate-oriented and is not meant to achieve self-reliance on the side of the products of the system. At the end of the process, learners look forward to certification and, thereafter, look on to the government for employment or jobs. Thus, the call for entrepreneurship education has become louder in the face of the army of unemployed youths and underemployed adults. Job creation initiatives, skill building, small and medium scale enterprise development, training and retraining are the essence of entrepreneurship education.

In business, an entrepreneur is someone who undertakes to supply a good or service to the market for personal profit, usually investing personal capital in the business and taking in the risks associated with the investment. The current conceptualization of entrepreneurship involves getting things done. This is entrepreneurship function.

According to Schumpeter, “The entrepreneurial function is that of undertaking new and untried business possibilities, producing a new commodity or producing “an old one in a new way,” re-organizing an industry, opening up a new market, developing a new source of supply, or exploiting an invention” (477-478). When one puts everything together, the initiative of entrepreneurs creates a society’s wealth. Even the so much talked about economic growth depends on the assorted entrepreneurial activities of a country. This is why calls on governments to establish conducive economic conditions in which entrepreneurs can thrive make sense. More often than not, the term entrepreneurship is employed to mean small, medium or large firms or organization. This, to some extent, is a misconception. The truth is that though most entrepreneurship starts off as small businesses, there is a behavioural angle to it. This includes creativity and innovation. (Akinseinde, 20-27). This creativity or innovation may not thrive in an unfriendly socio-economic environment, especially where there is high crime rate, general sense of insecurity and high taxation.

In our contemporary world, entrepreneurship education involves the aspect of education that deals with the acquisition of techniques and application of scientific knowledge for the improvement of man’s surrounding (Asebiomo and Sanusi 205-218). The impression one gets from this is that such education is expected to add value to the individual in such a way that the beneficiaries have a chance of being self-reliant, and instead of looking for white collar jobs, they can create job(s) for themselves as well as for others. Thus, entrepreneurship education has positive outcomes. These include:

- i. Increase in the number of employable school leavers
- ii. Increase in the number of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) and employment
- iii. Employment of teachers

All these make for economic growth and development. It leads to self-reliance, creates skilled and creative workforce in capacity building and service delivery.

This will go a long way in transforming natural resources found in the nooks and crannies of Africa into goods and services. It will also affect the economic and social wellbeing of people and their quality of life. Increase in employment rate, decrease in poverty rate and, ultimately, productivity at the national level will be achieved.

Pan-African Vision and Nigeria's Education Policy

In this section of the paper, an effort is made to give insight into the pan-African vision and, subsequently, appraise the educational policies of some selected African countries in the light of this vision. Pan-Africanism as a movement was borne out of the determination on the part of peoples of African descent to unite against the inhuman treatment, degradation, injustice, oppression and alienation they suffered in a predominantly white society (Olusanya 10).

High on its agenda is Africa's independence, unity of Africans, internationalization of Africa, self-reliance and development of Africa for Africans. Indeed, it stands for the redemption of Africans with an eye on self-determination (Martin 35). The pan-African movement as led by Marcus Garvey embodied an unalloyed determination to unite the Negroes of the world, especially in commercial enterprise. It advocated the equality of races, as the basis of human progress.

It further advocates democracy to be the driving force in inter-racial contact. The third pan-African Congress that met in Lisbon in 1923 demanded, among other things, that Africans should have a voice in their own governments, as well as broad training in modern industrial techniques and the development of Africa for the benefit of Africans, and not merely for the profit of Europeans.

One can then say, following the foregoing, that pan-Africanism is an effort at examining the African situation with a view to addressing the challenges Africa is facing as a continent from within. This informed its emphasis on self-reliance. For Garvey, the most important area for exercise of independent effort is economic. He believed that economics was primary. Successful political action could only be founded on an independent economic base. It is in this connection that he said that after a people have established successfully a firm industrial foundation, they naturally turn to politics and society, but not first to society and politics, because the two cannot exist without the former (Padmore 13-27).

The key to this, according to Garvey, is pan-African economic cooperation. For him, when such trading community is developed, it will act as a safeguard in the face of hostility from the rest of the world. Garvey's views can be summed up thus: "Negro producers, Negro distributors, Negro consumers! The world of Negroes can be self-contained. We desire earnestly to deal with the rest of the world, but if the rest of the world desire not,

we seek not” (Padmore 6). Garvey’s position may appear isolationist, but he may be excused on reflection given what neocolonialism stands for the self-reliance of African nations. For Garvey, the quest for self-reliance calls for education. Education should be geared towards independence and should serve as a vehicle for imparting self-reliance and race pride (Padmore 8). It should also emphasize entrepreneurship and teach self-help and self-reliance. Africa needs workers: men and women who are able to create, originate, improve, etc. These are the entrepreneurs. The above aptly captures the stand of pan-Africanism.

It was the search for African economic integration that finally led to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 and its transposition into African Union (AU) in 2002. These two organizations represent Africa’s collective efforts in search of formal integration and development (Adogamhe 2). Pan-African unity is advocated as the catalysts for Africa’s development in terms of transformation of the continent and its people. Such unity supposedly promises to lead to increased capacity of Africans to take full control of their destinies. In other words, it must lead to self-reliance.

Political independence was achieved for African states with the help of OAU. One important step taken by same toward solving the economic crises of the continent was adopting the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) in 1980, which was aimed at restructuring the economic foundation of Africa based on the principle of “collective self-reliance”. The LPA linked Africa’s economic crises to the historical injustice suffered by Africa under colonialism and its continued dependence on external forces. As a way out, African leaders were to pursue a self-reliant development by promoting regional and continental integration schemes and the industrialization of the continent.

Furthermore, the Abuja Treaty, launched by OAU in 1991, provided a framework for promoting the gradual establishment of the African Economic Community (AEC). This was to culminate in the free movement of people and goods within the continent. The creation of AU has the ultimate goal of enhancing unity, strengthening cooperation and coordination, as well as equipping the African continent with a legal and institutional framework, which would enable Africa gain its rightful place in the community of nations (Salim 2).

The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) was a new economic initiative that aimed to serve as a blueprint for a fullscale socio-economic development of the continent. Specifically, the African Union/New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AU/NEPAD) aimed at ending poverty and underdevelopment, entrenching democracy and economic governance and, above all, initiating a completely new relationship and partnership with the developed world.

NEPAD highlights the importance of economic linkages within Africa and the need of external trade and aids for economic development. Unlike the Lagos Plan of Action, which was an African initiative that advocates ‘collective self-reliance,’ NEPAD is based on the neo-liberal economic development strategy foisted on Africa from abroad in the name of globalization.

Subsequently, this paper examines Nigeria's education policy in the light of the pan-African vision.

Nigeria's Policy on Education

The overall philosophy of education in Nigeria is:

- (a) Live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation, founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice;
 - (b) Promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding (4)
1. The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competences as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (5)
 2. Acquisition of competences necessary for self-reliance

The number (a) philosophy above embodies the vision of Nigeria as one corporate and indivisible entity. The number (b) philosophy highlights the pan-African vision of cooperation and interdependence. Philosophy number (1) brings out the holistic purpose of education, which is to develop the individual mentally, physically and socially for the personal survival and development of the society. The number (2) philosophy of education targets self-reliance as the end of the educational process. This is to be achieved through the acquisition of skills.

The basic education is of 9-year duration, comprising 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education. At the primary level, the goals include, among other things: (a) permanent literacy and numeracy, and the ability to communicate effectively; (b) lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking; (c) mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child. (11)

The Nigerian educational philosophy combines strands of pragmatism, idealism and entrepreneurship. Under the primary education, it states that teaching shall be practical, exploratory and experimental (12), all of which form part of the pragmatist curriculum. The curriculum includes vocational and non-vocational subjects.

Section 7 of the policy refers to science, technical and vocational education. One of the goals of science education is to produce (1) scientists for national development and (2) service studies in technology and the cause of technological development (22). The policy sees technical and vocational education as a "means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work; an instrument for promoting environmentally-sound sustainable development; a method for alleviating poverty. (22-23). The goals of technical and vocational education include: (a) provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business, particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels; (b) provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; give and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically. (23). At the end of the college

programme, trainees have three options, namely: (1) secure employment (2) set up their own businesses and become self-employed and be able to employ others (3) pursue further education to advance in craft/technical programme (24). The policy is quite elaborate in the variety of trades it outlines.

The goals of tertiary education, which comes after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, etc. are as follows: “to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; promote national and international understanding and interaction (section 8:28).

To this end, the policy stipulates that (a) “a greater proportion of expenditure on university education be devoted to science and technology. (b) “Not less than 60 percent of places shall be allocated to science and science-oriented courses in the conventional universities and not less than 80 percent in the universities of technology” (30).

The policy also provides for the capacity building of teachers through various means of teacher education.

Appraisal

So far, this paper has been able to highlight the educational policy as this pertains to Nigeria. One discernable critical point of the policy is its acknowledgement of education as the veritable tool for national development. According to Walter Rodney:

A society develops economically as its members increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment. This capacity is dependent on the extent to which they understand the law of nature (science), on the extent to which they put that understanding into practice by devising tools (technology), and on the manner in which work is organized (10).

Clearly, the Nigerian policy has given a roadmap to the attainment of Rodney’s indices of economic development. There is an attempt in the policy to lay the foundation for scientific, technical and vocational skills for self-reliance. There is also a provision in the policy to train teachers and build their capacities, especially those in technical and vocational fields. What one sees in theory is that there is a serious effort on the part of the formulators of the policy to capture the pan-African vision, which is to develop Africa. But the problem lies in implementation. The fact that Nigeria is still having issues with poverty alleviation, unemployment and poor economic growth, means that its policy objectives of education are yet to be realized. The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of Nigeria’s educational strategic plan shows that funding is a major issue in Nigeria. It is also a fact that teaching aids by way of tools and facilities required for science, technical and vocational education are in short supply.

The colonial education system that informed educational policies at the advent of independence was the banking type and did not respond to the concrete realities of

Nigeria. It was not intended to help Nigeria develop. That educational system had no room for vocational and technical skills. The beneficiaries at the end of the process were given certificates but fell back on government for employment. It also had no agenda for industrialization. Specifically, it had no relevance to the local needs of Nigerians. It suffered from what Paulo Freire calls narration sickness and merely filled the students with contents, which were alienated from their concrete existential realities. It was more of rote learning, lacking in transforming power and does not encourage creativity. Not much has changed even with several years after independence. The educational policy already highlighted appears to have filled the gap in the sense that it embodies sections on science, technology and vocational skills but in practical terms, contradictions abound. These include inadequate provision of fund, lack of adequate training for the users of the curriculum, inadequate instructional materials, facilities and equipment, and lack of adequate skilled instructors (Asebiomo and Sanusi 215).

One is aware that Nigeria at a point resorted to “transfer of technology” from industrialized countries. Consequently, research breakthroughs and prototype of inventions remained abandoned and were completely ignored. One of the costs of technology transfer is the deflecting effect on policies away from a sound development of local technological capabilities. Further, in spite of science policy, it seems there is lack of conformity to the United Nations recommendation that, at least, five percent of the national budget of developing countries be set aside for science and technology and Lagos Plan of Action recommendation that member states of African Union commit, at least, 1 percent of GDP to science and technology (Usen et.al 14). Not paying attention to this rule explains the low level of research and development in Nigeria. It would then seem that the real problem is not because Nigeria’s educational policy does not contain a roadmap for development. The real problem appears to be undedicated implementation of policy decisions.

Holistic Education in Nigeria

Every society has its own process of training and educating its young and Nigeria is no exception. As already noted, education is a means to an end and so its purpose is relative and differs from place to place, nation to nation and people to people. Thus, when evaluating any educational system, one must determine the extent to which it is meeting the needs of a particular society at a given time (Fafunwa 4). Ask an average Nigerian, Egyptian, Ghanaian or Kenyan why there is so much poverty in his country and the person will point accusing fingers at the narrow ruling elite that has organized their countries for their own benefit at the expense of the vast majority of the people. Political power has been narrowly concentrated and has been used to create great wealth for those who possess it. This is the general explanation the ordinary people give for why their country is poor. This contrasts with such banalities as world economic recession, drought, high population growth and poor economic performance. Thus, any education aimed at developing Africa and Nigeria in particular, must address the issue of poverty and tackle barriers to development including corruption.

In highlighting the Eurasian approaches (idealist, realist, and pragmatist), the point has been made that each of these approaches contains a kernel of truth but none has the whole

truth. Consequently, each, taken by itself, is inadequate. For instance, the idealist approach tends towards certification and does not equip the learner with skills for self-reliance. This was the type of education Africa, including Nigeria, inherited from the colonial masters. Its target was to produce men and women who would be of service to the colonial system as clerks, messengers and interpreters. It was not tailored to Africa's local needs nor was it intended to industrialize the continent. The colonial masters had no interest in promoting Africa's prosperity. However, with the overthrow of colonialism, the elite that took over from them were as disinterested as the colonial overlords. If Africa is poor and underdeveloped today, that has a lot to do with this scenario.

The realist and the pragmatist approaches more or less focus on the world of the mundane, the world of here and now and denude the curricula of everything spiritual or metaphysical. They focus on the world of science. But should education not be directed to the whole human person? Should the product of education, not be found worthy in character and learning? It is expected that the products of the educational process should emerge to manage the resources of the continent and contribute to its development. But where they lack the sense of accountability and responsiveness to citizens and create conditions where the great mass of people could take advantage of economic activities, they will make shipwreck of this responsibility. The educational curricula should embody instructions on moral and spiritual values, otherwise, the society will be driven by men and women who can create and recreate technological artifacts but lack what it takes to sustain human existence, as well as lacking in morals. Non-adherence to ethical standards explains the level of corruption in public institutions. Thus, in as much as Africa, including Nigeria, wishes to develop in economic terms, efforts must be made to ensure that all aspects of the individual, his emotive, intellectual, physical and spiritual dimensions are developed also; otherwise, they will work against the development itself. This is what holistic education does.

In articulating holistic education in Africa, one's guiding principle is functionalism. Such an education is meant to work in a way as to prepare the individual for adulthood and immediate induction into society. It embodies the pragmatic approach to the extent that children will learn by doing and engaging in problem-solving. This educational approach will give its products a sense of direction and adequate tutoring on the needs of the continent in the now. It is also idealistic in so far as it emphasizes social responsibility and moral values. The agents of this education are the family members, the church and the school system. In the traditional African society, proverbs and folktales were used to teach some moral lessons. In the contemporary Africa, the media that can be used include child stories and children literature and morally directed computer games. These can be employed to teach them obedience to the law and respect for constituted authority, respect for human lives and dignity, as well as other assorted codes of behavior. The whole exercise at the early stage of childhood is aimed at character building.

Holistic education comprises practical skills relevant to the modern technological world such as ICT and other vocational skills as baking, painting, tiling, furniture making and designing, fashion designing, farming, fishing, cookery and so on. It also embodies

recreational subjects as well as assorted sports activities and intellectual training that cover the study of African history, legends, the environment (local geography, plants and animals) poetry, reasoning, riddles, storytelling and story relays. However, this should avoid the banking theory and rather allow the participants to explore and discover things for themselves. So much has been said concerning the banking concept of education. Knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing and hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world and with one another (Freire 46). In contrast to the banking concept, authentic education is the one that sees students as co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for consideration, and re-examines his earlier consideration as the students express their own. This is what the pragmatist calls problem-solving; but Freire calls it problem-posing education. Nevertheless, the method is the same. This, according to Freire, involves a constant unveiling of reality and strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality (64). As students are increasingly faced with problems relating to them in the world and with the world, they will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to those challenges.

In relating this method to the African world, the guiding principle is that “the unexamined life is not worth living”. The African child should be made to appreciate the problems of the continent early enough; he or she should be made to apprehend where the rain started beating the continent and the roles external and internal factors have played. His critical faculties get developed as he continually probes, interrogates and tries to find answers to certain contradictions in his immediate environment. The ultimate outcome of such inquiring disposition is conscientization. With this the individual will begin to query the debilitating realities around him, understand the implication of corruption for his individual wellbeing and for national development. He will discover from reflecting on the issues involved that one cannot separate poverty, disease and underdevelopment from ineffective and corrupt state where people cannot use their talent, ambition, ingenuity and what education they can get.

What this paper is saying is that “education for Africa’s development (Nigeria’s inclusive) is supposed to be an integrated experience and should combine physical training with character building and manual activity with intellectual training” (Fafunwa 3). The Humanities in their variegated forms are vital in this process.

Holistic education in Africa will enable the child or young adult to develop skills, abilities, for self-reliance, attitudes and other forms of behavior for the good of the society. Since it targets the totality of the human person, the good of the individual and that of the society are its outcomes. Ultimately, it produces an individual who is honest, respectable, skilled, and co-operative and conforms to the social order of the day. That is a fully-integrated person. This was the kind of individual the traditional African value system and education aimed to produce.

In summary, holistic education for Africa’s development aims to develop the child’s latent physical skill, to develop the child’s character, to inculcate respect for elders and

those in positions of authority, to develop intellectual skills, spanning the scientific and technological, to acquire specific vocational training for self-reliance, as well as job creation and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour, to develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs, to understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large (Fafunwa 7).

Conclusion

This paper set out to reflect on the need for holistic education in Africa: the Nigerian case study in the light of the pan-African vision for Africa to develop. To be able to accomplish this, the paper highlighted the prevailing situation in the African continent, characterized by economic crises and underdevelopment. It examined the concept of education with a view to exposing the various Eurasian approaches and to show that each, by itself, will not help in the development of the whole human person. Having done that, the paper also articulated the pan-African vision. It, subsequently, surveyed the educational policy of Nigeria, with a view to showing how it promotes or fails to promote the pan-African vision. The discourse brought to the fore problems of implementation and some contradictions acting as barriers to the roadmap.

Holistic education as advocated in this paper harmonizes the positive aspects of the Eurasian approaches, as well as draws inspiration from the African traditional values. It rejects the banking concept of education and rather maintains that education should involve dialogue, problem-posing and problem-solving, so that the beneficiaries of the system can be conscientized enough to confront the contradictions of their immediate environment. The development of vocational and entrepreneurial skills, which it advocates is the key to job creation and self reliance. Implicitly, the paper alludes further that the searchlight should also be focused on the political. The problem of lack of accountability and corruption should be attended to. A link exists between value education and national development as values such as honesty, accountability, cooperation, industry, discipline, self-confidence, moral courage and respect for human lives and dignity need to be inculcated to produce virtue of patriotism and true national identity in the minds of citizens, who are the vanguard of national development. This, in no small way, has made the difference between the rich and the poor nations.

Conclusively, it is the position of this paper that the problem of Africa's development (Nigeria's inclusive) is multifaceted. It is educational as well as political; it has external as well as internal roots. However, the best way to begin solving the problem is by overhauling the educational policies that have become moribund and formulate and implement seriously policies that address the local needs and realities of the continent. This also calls for a review of our Humanities' education for proper alignment with the realities of things in the African continent.

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