



## **Globalisation and Funding of Higher Education in Africa**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study focuses on the effects of the forces of globalisation on the funding of higher education in Africa. It posits that since the 1960s the human capitalist theory promoted the funding of education especially at the tertiary level both in the developed and developing countries. However at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the forces of globalisation have brought to bear on the nation states (destabilised nation states) especially in Africa that educational policies have been redefined or reframed in such a manner that has negatively affected education. The inequalities created by the scapes and rifts of globalisation are glaring and damaging. The study recommends a rethinking of globalisation in such a way as to carry along every group, especially African nations.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The effects and implication of the humanist capital theory in the 1960s and 70s and the forces of globalisation on higher education in Africa is the central focus of this study. The role of education in the development of nations cannot be over-emphasised. Over the years education was seen as the key to modernisation. The productive capacity of human manpower, the capitalist theory was articulated by the economists. Based on this many developed and developing nations ploughed large percentage of their revenue into education for sustainable development. At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the forces of globalisation brought their effects to bear on the nations and education. This led to the reframing or redefining of educational role and policies globally.

### **Concept Theory and Educational Development of Human Capital**

The theoretical concept for the adoption of education and development policies is known as the Human capital theory. Fagerlind and Saga(1989 : 19) pointed out that the human capital theory postulates that the most efficient path to the national development of any society lies in the improvement of its population, that is human capital. Moreover, Schultz (1961) stated that education is not to be viewed simply as a form of consumption but rather as a productive investment. He pointed out that education does not only improve the individual choices available to men, but that an educated population provides the type of work force necessary for industrial and economic growth. It was based on this theory that nations expended large sums in education. Fagerlind and Saga (1997) pointed out that the theory provided justification for large public expenditure on education both in developed and developing countries. This theory is in line with the ideologies of democracy and liberal progression in most western societies . Economists agree that it is the human resource of a nation, not its capital nor its material resources that ultimately determine the character and pace of its economic development.

Psacharopopoulos and Woodhall (1997: 102) opined, Human resources constitute the ultimate basis of the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organisation and carry forward national development. Smith(1976) pointed out that the role of education in the growth and development process is to view human capital as a critical input for innovations, research and development activities. Thus education is seen as an intentional effort to increase the resources needed for creating new ideas, consequently any increase in education will directly accelerate technological progress.

The implication of the human capital theory is that quality education is necessary for the production of better skilled work force. The poor looked at their children's education as a way out of poverty. Many developing countries saw education as a major instrument for developing human knowledge in the educational system. Consequently, African independent nations met at Addis Ababa to set targets for educational development in the continent. As a follow up of Addis Ababa decisions, the conference on the development of higher education in Africa was convened at Tananarive in 1962. The conference deliberated on areas, form and principles for international cooperation for higher education in the areas of teaching , training and provision of expatriate personnel. African governments strongly supported education. Grants and scholarships were given based on merit that even the poor had the opportunity of going to school. Autonomous African universities had international linkages with the U.K. and U.S.A. Fafunwa (1991:202) pointed out that many international bodies (UNESCO, USAID, Rockefeller, Ford, Carnegie) sponsored education projects all over

Africa. There were interactions in various areas of academics - conferences, staff exchange programmes, fellowships etc. African participation increased and twenty-six other members that included Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, etc were involved.

### **Concept of Globalisation and the reframing or redefinition of education policies in Africa**

Protagonists of globalisation point out the fact that the whole world has been reduced to a global village because of the flow of trade and investments, the ease of travel and with which we hear news and most especially the freedom of tapping limitless store of knowledge from the internet.

Grewal (2008 :1) pointed out that globalisation gives an impression of a globalised world which involves 'networks' which structure our behaviour by requiring that we use particular standard which often emerge intentionally. For instance the English language has become essential at the global level for business, economic and official transaction. Thus there is competition by nations to meet global standards. He further argued that a globalised world is lopsided and serves the benefit of the U.S.A. In supporting this notion Henry et al,(2008:4)retorted, globalisation 'is emergent form of Western imperialism carried through cultural institution such as education'. Waters(1995) added that ... all spheres must establish their position in relation to capitalist West. Thus having a global standard clearly implies that some meet the standards while some do not and that there is a pull to the standard. Gideens in Henry, et al,(2008:21) pointed out that 'globalisation not only pulls upwards but downwards creating new pressures for local autonomy. Saskia(2009:1) explained that a good part of globalisation consists of enormous variety of micro processes that begin to denationalise what has been constructed as national policies, capital, political subjectiveness, urban frames etc. Thus the nation state bows in submission and is destabilised. Some writers (Fisher, 2001, Stiglitz, 2002. Singh, 2001) opined that globalisation is not as global as the developed countries make the rest of the world to believe. It has rather divided the world into the superrich and absolutely poor, 'the haves' and 'have not' The 'have not' are destabilised. They become vulnerable making boundaries porous. This is what Singh(2001) called liberalisation which has contributed to financial crises resulting in pauperisation of multitudes.

Khor(2001:8-9) pointed out that the process of globalisation, investment resources, growth and modern technology are focused in a few countries(mainly in North America, Europe, Japan and East Asian newly industrialising countries, NICs). The Human Development Report (1996) showed that over the past three decades , only 15 countries have enjoyed high growth while 89 countries were worse off economically than they were 10 or more years earlier. Economic gains have benefited a few countries at the expense of many according to the report. The accelerated pace of

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technological development has made access to knowledge a requirement for participation in global knowledge economy. The impact of the new ICT has significantly changed the speed of production, use and distribution of knowledge economy depending on how much it can generate and share knowledge.

### **Globalisation and Educational policies in Africa**

The pulls and pressures of globalisation have caused erosion of national sovereignty and borders through international agreements leading to organisations like World Trade Organisation (WTO), Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), etc. Those in favour of globalisation argue that it works for the integration of national economies into international through trade, foreign direct investments, capital flows, migration and the spread of technology, bringing financial liberalisation that leads to efficiency, economic growth and development. This argument does not hold for many nations, especially in Africa. Singh(2001:1) pointed out that financial liberalisation means implementing policies like deregulation of interests rates, removal of credit controls, privatisation of government-owned banks, liberalisation of restriction entries of private sectors and foreign institutions into domestic financial markets. It could lead to removal of all restrictions from movement of capital beyond borders of the country. He further pointed out that although developing countries have carried out financial liberalisation only a handful received the Foreign Direct Investment( FDI) . He pointed out that only 14 countries account for over 85% of private flows to the developing countries. For Sub-Saharan Africa growing liberalisation has contributed to financial crises in various nations, states and regions which are beaten into submission with little control over such crises resulting in the pauperisation of many. It created social, economic, political and educational inequality in the entire continent. All over Africa the main focus of the process of globalisation that was implemented since the 1980s was the SAP. African countries are in debt and poverty partly owing to the policies of international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and 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) were neglected. The 'Lost Decade ' of the 1980s is in effect still continuing for hundreds of millions of people in many countries of Asia, Africa, The Caribbean and Latin America. In some cases people are poorer than 30 years ago with little hope of rapid improvement.

The pulls and pressures of globalisation have affected educational policies. Political and social instabilities set in. The international Linkages were severed. Expatriates fled in the face of such chaos. The governments no longer budgeted substantial funds to education. Scholarships and subsidies were withdrawn and the response from academic community is prolonged strike actions which is now a feature of African educational system. The

blank academic year which Obanya (2004:7) called 'annee blanche' has come to stay and Central African Republic schools were closed for three years(1991-94) while in Mali, Kenya, Niger, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Congo, Cameroon, Senegal, Chad, the school year was interrupted intermittently from 1989- 1990. Even as this work is being carried out Nigerian universities are emerging from three months total strike action.

Appadurai (1996) in Okoli (2009: 3)pointed out that African Universities have lost many of their talented brains as a result of globalisation flows and scapes(ethnos capes, mediascape techno capes) the greatest destabilising influence of globalisation on the nation state is the global knowledge economy. African governments no longer trained staff overseas. Thus African graduates and other third world countries seek jobs overseas. Glanz in World Bank (2002) pointed out that as of 2002 an estimated 30,000 Africans holding PhD were working in various countries of the world and that the U.S.A. introduced an amendment to its immigration and 600,000 new visa for scientists and engineers. Loveland (2007) said that the U.K. has initiated action to attract 100,000 students to U.K. By 2011. They feel that this is the right thing for the global economy

That globalisation involves 'networking' and makes it that all spheres of life must be established by capitalist West is best demonstrated by the activities of international bodies such as the North America Free Trade Group, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, European Union (E.U.), OPEC, Organisation of Economic Cooperation Development (OECD), The World Bank etc. These groups are coming together for a common purpose, mainly economic. Since the new human capital focusing on micro-economics stresses highly skilled and flexible workforce to national success within the new global economy, research development become necessary for organisations to maintain business at the global market in this arrangement nations participate in the on-going research and development while non members stand marginalised. World Bank(2002) reported that member countries of OECD account for 85% of total investment in research and development. China, India, Brazil and newly industrial countries of East Asia(Malaysia, Singapore etc ) account for 11%, while the rest of Africa account for 4%. That Africa is marginalised in the global competition is clear from the above figures

### **Inequalities**

The human capitalist theory encouraged governments to expend much of their funds in education. Thus scholarships and grants were awarded to deserving (merit) candidates irrespective of tribe and socio-economic status. In this way the children of the poor and rich had access to higher education. The children of aristocrats and the children of poor farmers from the remotest villages sat in the same class-room. Today the situation is no longer the same. The inequalities created by the force of globalisation are rather glaring both at the international, national and regional levels. Henry et al(2008:23)point to

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the fact that 'globalisation creates rifts within the nations. It has given rise to globalised and globalising elites, and those who have been adversely affected by globalisation through unemployment, job insecurity and growing inequality'. African globalisation has given rise to two nations, between political elites of the cities and country dwellers who are unemployed. With these rifts and fragmentations the society experiences socio-economic and educational inequalities and inequities. Only the rich send their children to private schools and abroad while the poor class have no hope of attaining such educational levels. The available scholarships today are more or less given on the basis of tribe and 'man know man'. The children and relations of those in government and from selected tribes now have access to these privileges. It is very sad because the majority of youths are wasting away. They roam the streets without job and proper education. The civil servants spend all their life savings to send their children abroad for further studies.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper recommends a rethinking of globalisation to be repositioned in a way it should benefit everyone. African governments should find ways of funding their universities and making way for gifted citizens to be trained to form a strong work -force for sustainable development. Discrimination, ethnic sentiments and 'god-fatherism' should be discouraged and scholarships should be awarded based on merit. African governments must do something drastic to tackle the issue of brain drain otherwise she would be deprived of her talented citizens.

### **CONCLUSION**

Globalisation has become both the context and the condition of all education today all over the world. But many do not benefit from it. It has widened the social divide and pulled nations into submission that keeping global standard is what matters. African universities have been subdued into charging exorbitant fees to African students. New fees policies are being introduced- development tuition, hostel, registration and there are upward reviews regularly. African universities face the hard truth of governments no longer having interest in funding university education, African graduates are admitted into universities in the developed countries because it is the right thing in view of global knowledge economy yet foreign students are made 'to pay through their noses' in the universities abroad. Africa does not benefit or does not have a say even in the things that affects her as a continent. She does not gain anything because the African staff and students leave Africa never to come back.

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