BEYOND BASIC EDUCATION: TOWARDS A *PRAGMATARIAN* JUSTIFICATION FOR EDUCATION AS A HUMAN RIGHT

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Abstract
Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) confers on the human person, the right to free education in society. This implies that the human person is morally empowered and therefore justified to demand an access to education. By insisting that education be made free, Article 26 of the UDHR has made access to education a matter of right, since human rights are free conferment of nature. However, the education that Article 26 tried to justify here using the traditional moral rights arguments is the basic or elementary and fundamental stages of education. Post-basic education which includes technical and professional education and other advanced institutional learning, and which contributes more to a person's socio-political, economic and technological development, would according to Article 26 "…be made generally available…and accessible to all on the basis of merit". This caveat, the paper contends, places this level of education in need of further justification, so as to provide a moral basis for the citizens' claim and indeed access to education generally, beyond the level of basic education. To achieve this, the essay deploys arguments from the pragmatic and utilitarian theories to philosophically justify professional and technical education, as well as advanced institutional learning, as a way of validating the citizens' right to education in modern human society, beyond the level of basic education.
Key words: Education, Justification, Right, Pragmatism, Utilitarianism.

Introduction

Education is generally regarded the world over, as one of the fundamental rights of the human person in the modern society. This thinking is founded on Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which documents education as one of the fundamental human rights in the post-war human society. The implication of this documentation is that the human person is morally empowered as well as justified to demand an access to education. However, the UDHR justification for education on the basis of right only supports basic education and this raises the critical problem of how to justify the citizens' claim to education beyond the level of basic education. In other words, how do we morally justify the rights of citizens to technical and professional education as well as advanced institutional learning which on the recommendation of Article 26, should be made generally available and accessible to all [but] on the basis of merit? This has become imperative in view of the fact that this latter component of education is more economically, culturally and socio-politically significant than the former in the life of the human person. It is true that basic education provides the necessary foundation for the development of the human person, but this foundation, without the latter meaningful superstructure of higher education, would not take the human person far, in being economically productive, socio-politically relevant, and technologically aware. In this essay, therefore, we deploy complementary arguments from the pragmatic and utilitarian perspectives to show the imperativeness of technical/professional education and advanced institutional learning [herein after referred to as higher education], to addressing the socio-economic, political, environmental and other developmental crises that confront people in their quest for meaningful existence. This is with a view to providing justification for the citizens' access and indeed right to education at the higher level, beyond that provided by the traditional moral rights argument for basic education.

Education and Human Right: Conceptual Clarifications

Being the concepts of primary focus in the paper, education and human right therefore stand in need of clarification. The word

educate is derived from the Latin word *educare*. According to Reinberg, the Latin words, *Ex* and *Ducere* combined to form *educare*. As he explains it:

> *Ex* was a common preposition used in the Latin language that simply meant "from, out of, from within". As this word was common in every day speech, *ex* was often shortened to e…. *Ducere* is the infinitive form of the Latin verb *Duco*, which means "to lead, conduct, guide, etc". Once the preposition *ex* was prefixed to *ducere*, the ending for the verb changes from – *ere* to – *are*. Hence, we get the construction of the word *educate*.[1]

Therefore, the word educate is literally translated into "to draw out of, lead out of, etc."[2] Furthermore, Reinberg states that the noun, *educatio* derives from the verb *educare*. *Educatio* is a Latin noun meaning the act of educating,[3] which must have translated into the English word education.

However, the claim that education means bringing or drawing out (perhaps of ignorance) has not been generally accepted. For Fenstermacher "the purpose of education is not to lead anyone anywhere, but is rather to help one become aware of where he has been and where he might like to go."[4] Although, the two conceptual understandings of education given above seem dissimilar, they however have one fundamental thing in common, and this is the epistemological content. When someone is made to become aware of his/her present status, the end-point of such self-knowledge is to enable him/her to properly plan his/her present life and direct future steps. And, this understanding is expressive in the etymological account of the concept of education. After all, the self-knowledge no doubt brings or draws out the human person from a prior state of self-ignorance and puts him/her on a pedestal of awareness.

In Dewey's own opinion, education is a continuous reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience.[5] This definition of education also affirms our earlier understanding of the concept as ontologically

epistemic, since past experience directly or indirectly provides the human person with the scheme of knowledge that forms the foundation from which to interpret and interact with the present experience in planning for the future. Seen in this light, one could approach the concept of education as relating to all the systematic efforts meant to develop the epistemic potentiality of the human person in order to achieve, at least, three things: (i) to properly interact with his/her environment (ii) to benefit from the interaction with the environment, and (iii) to positively (in the ideal sense) impact on the environment. It must be noted that these efforts may be direct or indirect, formal or informal, or even non-formal in nature.

Apart from the epistemic nature as well as focus of education so far examined, education also has a moral side to it. Education is also meant to normatively structure the mind of the human person on how to behave and how not to behave within the environment.

As with other notions of wide intellectual consideration, the concept of human rights has also been extensively examined in the modern world. Griffin (cited in Tasioulas) traditionally conceptualises human rights as,

> rights that 'a person has, not in virtue of any special status or relation to others, but simply in virtue of being human; [rights that] are grounded in our *status* as human beings, in particular; the *dignity* that attaches to all humans simply in virtue of their humanity.[6]

Fagan corroborates the above conceptualisation by defining human rights as 'basic moral guarantees that people in all countries and cultures allegedly have simply because they are people….[7] In other words, we could state that human rights are meant to apply to all human beings everywhere, regardless of whether or not they have received legal recognition by all countries everywhere.[8] Again, human rights are neither legally nor socially conferred on the human person. Rather, they evolved from what some philosophers have

conceived as natural law. It is this natural law that yields moral rights, which underpin contemporary understanding of human rights.[9] Hence, the plausibility of the universality claim for human rights, a claim that would not be feasible if right were legally granted, since laws differ from one society and culture to another, and since what those laws approve and prohibit equally differ. It is this universality claim of human rights, in contrast to rights granted by positive law that informed the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, whose member countries are signatories. One of the Articles of the UDHR, which is the focus of the present work, is on the right to education of the human person.

Human rights are at the core of values central to the human person, since the human person would hardly be distinguished from lower animals if his/her rights were to be absolutely deprived. As human beings, we are endowed with the capacity to reflect on, to choose, and to pursue what we consider to be a good life. It is the attempt to protect this capacity that we come to terms with the concept of human right, at least, in its normative sense. James Nickel holds this view when he explains that human rights are international norms that help to protect all people everywhere from severe political, legal, and social abuses.[10] However, the foregoing understanding of human rights by Nickel merely satisfies, at least in part, our curiosity about what human right actually does. It does not specifically tell us the ontology of human right, that is, what it is that constitutes human right. In other words, Nickel tells us what right does, but not what right actually is, that is, what enables it to do what it does. In the latter respect, we have to consider Kant's exposition of the concept of right.

According to Immanuel Kant, it is quite easy to state what may be right in particular cases, as being what the laws of a certain place and of a certain time say or may have said; but it is much more difficult to determine whether what they have enacted is right in itself, and to lay down a universal criterion by which right and wrong in general, and what is just and unjust, may be recognised.[11] For Kant, a practical jurist may not know all this until he abandons his empirical principles for a time, and search in the Pure Reason for the sources of such judgments, in order to lay a real foundation for

actual positive legislation.[12] Kant contends further that in the search made by the practical jurist, his empirical laws may indeed furnish him with excellent guidance; but a merely empirical system that is void of rational principles is like the wooden head in the *fable of Phaedrus,* that is fine enough in appearance, but unfortunately, it wants brain.[13] What Kant implies is that an empirical understanding of law (and, of course, right), which is devoid of a basis in reason, is conceptually deficient. Considering this, Kant makes three basic conceptual clarifications in his exposition of what constitutes right.

First, conception of right has regard only to the external and practical relation of one person to another, in so far as they can by their actions, have influence upon each other, either mediately or immediately.[14]

Second, conception of right does not indicate the relation of the action of an individual to the *wish* or the mere desire of another, as in acts of benevolence or of unkindness, but only the relation of his free action to the freedom of action of the other.[15]

Third, in this reciprocal relation of voluntary actions, conception of right does not take into consideration the *matter* of the act of Will in so far as the end which any one may have in view in willing it, is concerned. In other words, it is not asked in a question of Right, whether any one on buying goods for his own business, realises a profit by the transaction or not; but only the form of the transaction is taken into account, in considering the relation of the mutual acts of Will. Acts of Will are thus regarded only in so far as they are *free,* and as to whether the action of one can harmonize with the freedom of another, according to a universal Law.[16]

In a simpler language, the Kantian understanding of right tells us that any talk of right only reasonably occurs within the context of extant and actively voluntary connection between *X* and *Y* (the claimant and the other against whom the claim is made), and the connection is such that it imposes correlative influence with respect to the two agents; if there is no relationship of this sort, then the issue of right is out of order. Furthermore, conception of right is concerned with only free and voluntary actions of the agents involved (the claimant and the other against whom the claim is made).

From the foregoing attempts to properly foreground a good understanding of the constituents of right, certain features are now salient. First, the whole idea of human right has a very strong basis in the critical reflections of moral and political philosophers, from the ancient era onwards. These philosophers have always argued that the human person is vested with moral and ontological dignity and worth, independent of the institution of the state, and which the institution of the state must recognise and protect. Immanuel Kant and some Stoic philosophers have grounded human dignity and worth in the power of reason.

Second, human rights express both political and moral norms of human treatment in society. They are political in the sense that they are concerned with how people should be treated as human beings by the governments and the institutions of their states. Furthermore, they are moral norms, which apply to interpersonal conduct among the human persons in society. In the moral sphere, there are rights, such as rights against racial and sexual discrimination that are, according to Susan Okin,[17] primarily concerned with regulating private behaviour.

Third, human rights are also legally based. When human rights are grounded in the promulgated laws of the state, they are according to James Nickel, usually referred to as civil or constitutional rights.[18] However, it must be made clear that what is regarded as civil or constitutional rights are, in the final analysis, grounded in morality.

Fourth, rights are largely human-focused. From the classical era of ancient philosophy, through the medieval and down to the contemporary times, rights are almost always predicated on only rational human persons in society. However, there is presently a growing trend and literature within the disciplinary fold of environmental ethics, where such rights are being extended to non-human sentient beings, such as lower animals, for instance. This trend, it must be noted, could be largely attributed to the influence of the works of some moral philosophers of the environment, such as Peter Singer and Tom Reagan, published some decades back. However, while rights predication made of the rational human person is open to no debate, rights predication made of non-human sentient beings such as lower animals, is subject to a hot

philosophical debate, especially, between those who hold onto anthropocentrism and their counterparts who are supportive of non-anthropocentrism in environmental relations.

Fifth, rights are always correlative with duties. For *X* to have a right against *Y* within a given context is to state that *Y* has a duty to fulfill the prescriptions of the right of *X* within the context. For example, to state that *X* has a right to life against *Y* means that *Y* has a negative duty to refrain from taking any action that could lead to the death of *X*, unless it could strongly be legally and morally justified. We have emphasized both legal and moral justification because it is conceivable to have a situation in which it is legally justifiable to have a person killed; though, the killing is not morally justifiable. In addition to a negative duty, to state that *X* has a right to life against *Y* also means that *Y* has a positive duty to take steps that protect the life of *X*.

Education, Human Rights and the Problem of Justification

The document of the UDHR has thirty (30) Articles, which are expressive of different rights conferred on the human person. Article 26 of this morally significant document expressly states the right of the human person to education:

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children[19]

As one could readily see, each of the three parts of Article 26 of the UDHR is ultimately focused on the education of the human

person in one way or another. The first is concerned with justifying the claim of the human person to be educated; the second refers to the pragmatic purpose of education given to the human person, and the third affirms the influence of the parent on the education of the child. However, it is the first part of Article 26 that mainly concerns the present study; though, some reference may be made to either of the other two in passing.

Based on the premise of the first part of Article 26 of the UDHR, one could generally make a morally justifiable claim that the human person ought to be educated in society, bearing in mind that the bulk of what we now call human rights derives from the traditional conceptual understanding of moral rights. This claim has at least two implications. First, it is a claim of right made against a specific other, be it a responsible parent or a legally constituted authority in society. Second, the claim elicits the idea of moral obligation, which generates a duty on the part of the specific other, to provide for the claimant, the requisite object of the claim.

Though, the opening sentence of Article 26 of the UDHR refers to education generally, however, a critical reading of the first part of Article 26 and the foundational concept of right, in the moral sense, reveals that this part of the Article could only justify what we call basic education in the modern era. If this is granted, then professional and technical education and higher education invariably stand in need of justification within the same understanding of rights. The following explanation from the *Wikipedia* will suffice to prove the point being made here. According to the *Wikipedia*, basic education

> refers to the whole range of educational activities taking place in various settings (formal, non formal and informal), that aim to meet basic learning needs. According to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), basic education comprises primary education (first stage of basic education) and lower secondary education (second stage).[20]

If one looks intently at the wording of the second statement of the first part of Article 26, one could see a replication of it in the conception of basic education above. One just needs to lexically substitute the word "basic" for "elementary" to make the picture of synonymity appear clearer.[21]

Furthermore, one must remember that human right, from its background in the concept of natural law, is ontologically tied to the promotion of the moral worth of the human person, and not to some special/ unique abilities or skills, which distinguish some people from the other. Put in a slightly different way, this moral worth equally applies to all rational human beings, who are otherwise regarded as moral agents. Thus, this human worth is the basis of moral rights in the ontological sense. It is in recognition of this moral worth of all rational human beings or moral agents, that the second statement of the first part of Article 26 of UDHR makes basic education free and compulsory. If it were not free and compulsory, but based on some special abilities that are not evenly distributed among rational human beings or moral agents, then some privileged ones, in terms of their special abilities or skills, or their special ability to pay, regardless of intellectual ability and / or skill, would be given the education, and some unprivileged ones, in terms of their economic or social incapacities, would not in this regard. Therefore, one could inferentially conclude that the second statement of the first part of Article 26 justifies the claim of the human person to demand for an open access to basic education in society, within the framework of the traditional account of human rights.

However, since technical and professional education is to be made generally available but not equally compulsory, then it is based on some other criteria, which do not apply to all on equal basis. It is only those who meet the criteria that would have access to the education. Perhaps, the ability to pay constitutes the fundamental criterion in this respect. Since this is the case, it is not, strictly speaking, based on the moral worth of the human person. Thus, it could not be justified within the framework of the traditional account of right in society.

Moreover, if the accessibility to higher education is based on the criterion of the ability to pay, then only those who have the

ability specified are given eventual access to it. Since these requirements do not ontologically belong to all on the same equal level, it means that advanced institutional learning or higher education is not after all based on the moral worth of the human person, which is native to all moral or rational agents equally. In other words, those who lack the specified abilities are excluded. Therefore, our traditional understanding of human right that derives from natural law would be unable to sufficiently justify higher education or advanced institutional learning in society.

Furthermore, one could also see, critically, that the first conjunct of the conjunctive statement opening the second part of Article 26 could not be consistently held with the contents of the first part of the Article. The point is that if education is to be directed to the full development of the beneficiary, then it has to go beyond the basic level; it must include technical and professional education and advanced institutional learning. The composite of the former and the latter will maximally lead to the full development of the human personality. However, since the UDHR provides that only basic education is to be made free and compulsory, then the question now concerns how moral agents with the intellectual ability but who are unable to meet the set criteria, can justifiably access technical and professional education and advanced institutional learning? It appears therefore that the answer to this question is unclear and that technical and professional education and advanced institutional learning stand in need of justification within our traditional account of human rights. How then could this missing link be morally provided?

A Complementary *Pragmatarian* Justification for Higher Education

In this section, we shall evolve complementary arguments from both the pragmatic and the utilitarian theories to show the imperativeness of higher education to the resolution of socio-economic, political, environmental and other developmental crises that confront people in their quest for meaningful existence. This is with the view to providing justification, beyond the traditional moral rights argument for basic education, for the citizens' access and indeed right to education at the higher level. As a philosophical theory of

justification, pragmatism is interested in the practical consequences and meaning of ideas in the real world. In other words, the justification for beliefs, concepts and theories is their application to and impact in the real world. As William James explains, "we think only in order to solve our problems…theories ought to be judged in terms of their success at performing this function".[22] The best theory therefore, according to the pragmatists, is the one that brings about the best consequences in actual life. In fact, its Greek etymology *pragma*, which means 'work', 'act' or deed',[23] substantiates the main claim of pragmatism that ideas are meaningful only if they can be translated into some kind of operation. Ideas are no doubt important, but on pragmatist principles, the consequences of such ideas for the lives of individuals and the future generation are of greater importance than the ideas themselves. The utilitarian theory of justification on the other hand is purely a formal teleological theory, whose criterion of right action is the maximisation of some particular sort of consequences of actions.[24] According to Brock,

> The theory [then] assumes different forms depending on what is singled out for maximization, i.e. how the value variable in the formal utilitarian formula is filled in. Among the features utilitarians have singled out for maximisation are pleasure and the absence of pain, happiness, human welfare, the satisfaction of interests, etc.[25]

Although, Brock acknowledges the complexity of the variety of objects of maximisation in the conception of utilitarianism, one point is still clear: this moral theory is founded on the maximisation of the good consequence(s) of some human experience or the maximisation of the absences of the bad consequence(s) of some human experience in society. Thus, another proper way of describing the utilitarian account of moral assessment is, as a consequentialist account of moral evaluation of human conduct. In this respect, according to Stubbs, right actions are those, which have good consequences while wrong actions are those which have bad consequences.[26] The foundational property of utilitarianism

as a theory of moral assessment is the principle of utility. Bentham (cited in Stubbs), explains this,

> …by the Principle of Utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question…[27]

On this understanding of the principle of utility, one could see that the happiness or welfare that is promoted is central to the utilitarian theory of moral assessment. Furthermore, if one conjugates this with the utilitarian dictum of "the greatest good to the greatest number," the conclusion is that the happiness or welfare promoted goes far beyond that of the act-performer only or any single other; it extends further to embrace the happiness or welfare of the greater other. In other words, if the happiness or welfare promoted is that of the act-performer only, then it implies that the right norm of social conduct is that promotive of the welfare or happiness of the actor. In this case, the happiness or welfare of the other becomes morally insignificant and irrelevant. If, on the other hand, it is only the happiness or welfare of the other that morally matters, then that of the self becomes morally insignificant. However, the conjugated principle of utility and the utilitarian dictum simultaneously promote the happiness or welfare of both the self and the other in the final analysis. When the interest of the greatest number is morally significant or promoted, this invariably positively serves both the self and the other, at least, to an appreciable extent. This conclusion becomes inevitable so long as the theory is socially accepted as the basis of social interaction. In a situation where meaningful existence in terms of being able to afford the bare necessities of life is almost elusive and the ability to compete favourably with others in the constantly changing world is further still more elusive, the need for an approach that is result oriented towards problem solving becomes unquestionable. Given the fact that problems exist, one is therefore confronted with the responsibility of deciding which among the forms or levels of

education is able to achieve success in terms of furnishing an individual with the necessary skills that are required for development or the resolution of life's problems. Put differently, at what level of education are the citizens sufficiently equipped to deliver the greatest good or happiness in terms of the resolution of social, economic, environmental and other developmental problems? The acronym, *pragmatarian,* is our coinage depicting the resulting synthesis of the ideals of pragmatism and utilitarianism.

The *pragmatarian* justification for higher education is apposite for two interrelated reasons. First is because the functionality of education in contemporary time is very central to its acquisition. As Akinpelu rightly observes, "…our age is one in which people are interested more in the material benefits or practical usefulness of any activity that is undertaken [including education].[28] This is the point advanced also by Ukpokolo, who insisted, while arguing for Educational Functionalism, that beliefs and points of view, as well as knowledge are rational in the light of the extent to which such beliefs and knowledge aid a people in engaging their environment, encountering their world and confronting their problems.[29] For education to be functional in the sense just described, it must involve an extensive array of competence-building measures, which basic education cannot adequately provide. We are not here saying that basic education is not important, because, it is at this level of education that children are exposed to simple basic principles of life. But as the child grows up in life and these principles increase in details and complexities, the training they received at the level of basic education becomes inadequate for them to synergise these principles with life experiences. Basic education therefore becomes inadequate in furnishing the individual with the necessary skills required for effectively negotiating and engaging the challenges of the modern world. Virtually every sector of modern society is reordered regularly to meet the growing needs of the modern world, and to this extent, the tools, gadgets and modes of conducting activities keep changing and drifting continually from the competence of individuals with only basic education. The training received at the level of basic education then becomes for the individual, what Whitehead described as "little bits of knowledge

from which nothing follows".[30] Harald Gorst puts it more eloquently elsewhere:

> The product of the public elementary school is utterly useless, and generally wanting in intelligence. But these facts are only discovered by the victims themselves after years of bitter experience. Totally unfitted for any station in life, many of them leave school full of self-confidence in the belief that their superior education will secure them a good opening. Despising all manual labour, they seek positions as clerks, shop-assistants, and such-like. The result is, of course, an over-supply of candidates for employment of this kind. In consequence, the girls have to fall back upon domestic service; while the boys swell the ranks of unskilled labourers and unemployed loafers, or, worse still, betake themselves to a life of dishonesty.[31]

Many societies today are indeed replete with proofs of Gorst's observation. The modern man therefore needs specialized knowledge and proficiency which higher education inculcates, to be able to solve the problems that confront today's world. In other words, it is at the level of professional/technical education and other forms of advanced institutional learning that the benefactors are equipped with the necessary skills preparatory for a future adult life. If according to Dewey, education is the "continuous reconstruction or reorganisation of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience",[32] and if man is to succeed in his quest for the development of ways and means of improving his capacity for survival and for improving his society, then the foundation provided by basic education would need to be complemented by professional/technical education and other forms of advanced institutional learning. In this way, basic education becomes the foundation while professional/technical education and other forms of

advanced institutional learning becomes the superstructure. It is at the level of the superstructure that education would build in the citizens, the necessary competences for reorganising their experience and engaging their reality. Higher education is able to achieve this through high level performance training in researches and as agent for manpower and moral development.

One of the approaches for dealing with societal challenges is through high level research. Research, according to Nwana, "is a process of finding out the solution to a problem…It is the 'searching for' something….But this 'finding out' or 'searching for' is not a blind and purposeless activity. It is an activity with clear purposes in mind, namely, an activity, the result of which will contribute to, or constitute the solution of a real problem".[33] This means that research is not an end in itself, it is rather a means to an end, a means to the realisation of desired goals. Understood in this sense, research then becomes a tool for discovering the proper approach to the resolution of basic problems. Indeed, it is a way of exploiting reality and obtaining information and knowledge that would help us to survive in the world. Since research is an endeavour associated mainly with higher level education, it therefore follows that higher level education is very central to the determination of the fate and the resolution of problems afflicting societies. And as Yoshihisa rightly notes, since higher education makes possible the research that is necessary to provide society with the requisite skills and competences for resolving problems, it is not too much to say that the desired future will not come over without the advancement of higher education.[34]

Furthermore, it is at the level of higher education that the manpower needed for the engagement of modern life's challenges is developed. The report of the 1959 Ashby Commission set up in Nigeria corroborates this fact. The Commission was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria to assess the state of the nation's high-level manpower development and to recommend ways forward. The report of the commission led to the establishment of the National Manpower Board, which was vested with the authority to forecast how the nation's manpower needs could be met. To accelerate the training of high level manpower, the commission also

recommended the expansion and establishment of more higher institutions, especially universities.[35] The commission so recommended because of its unwavering conviction that higher level education is capable of inculcating in people, the necessary skills and learning with which to master and perfectly fit into their society. So, another goal of higher level education, besides research, is to advance a beneficial and sustainable community through manpower development.

Again, it is at the level of higher education that the relationship between knowledge and conduct is effectively cemented. According to Anthony Cortese, higher level education "provides the broad knowledge and skills for all professionals to create and sustain the necessary change in mindset."[36] The moment learning starts impacting on the conducts or actions of individuals, there will be a concomitant increase in moral growth, thereby making higher education an agency for moral and character development.

In view of the centrality of education to research, as well as moral and manpower development, it is important therefore that in considering the right course of action to take in the resolution of social, economic and environmental crises confronting societies, one should think about which form of education is most capable of impacting individuals with the skills, manpower and moral rectitude that is required to meet the challenges of modern times. From the pragmatic and utilitarian points of view, the questions to ask would be: which form of education - basic or tertiary- works or works better with reference to problem solving. And which of these forms of education if made accessible to everyone would produce the greatest happiness? Also, since there is a constant revaluation of values occasioned by the interaction among world cultures, one ought to ask which level of education will better equip the individual with the intellectual resources needed to inculcate those norms and values that are cross-culturally sensitive and tolerant.

For most scholars, higher education constitutes significant resources for the ascension of the majority to complete social power [37] by offering the skills for continuous learning and relearning in order to be up to date with events as they affect the individual and the world. As Homer opined, "to be content with the education

received at the basic level is to shut our ears against conviction; since, from the very gradual character of our education, we must continually forget, and emancipate ourselves from knowledge previously acquired; we must set aside old notions and embrace fresh ones; and, as we learn, we must be daily unlearning something which it has cost us no small labour and anxiety to acquire." [38] This opportunity for emancipating ourselves; for setting aside old notions and embracing fresh ones is only provided by higher level education.

Besides the pragmatarian justification for higher education as the batson of research, manpower and moral development, citizens' access to higher education could also be justified on some other utilitarian grounds. As a consequentialist theory of moral assessment, utilitarianism is centrally concerned with the social consequences of the professional and technical education of the human person. However, in most societies, there are individuals who lack the financial power to pay for higher education, but have a demonstrable intellectual ability to perform, if given technical and professional education or exposed to training at the advanced institutional level. The only way one can make such category of people contribute positively to the society is to expose them to education at the professional/technical or advanced level, where they will consolidate on the principles learned at the basic level, by acquiring suitable skills and techniques that will enable them develop the higher faculties, and indeed, the various capacities of the mind. This level of education would provide the beneficiaries with the requisite access and expose them to the outcomes of advanced research.

If such knowledge is properly utilized, then its beneficiaries would most probably turn out to become dynamic inventors, producers and job creators and this would have a multiplier socio-economic effect on the society at large. Besides, such beneficiaries would not only be building upon their professional and technical awareness, but would by so doing, also be building the epistemological base needed for the advancement and flourishing of the society as a whole.

Following from the foregoing, one could arguably contend that the right of citizens of nations to access professional and

technical education and other forms of advanced institutional learning finds a suitable justification within the frameworks of pragmatism and utilitarianism, as such opportunity would not only provide the beneficiaries of such education with the necessary competences that would enable them " to live in balance with their environment",[39] but would in the long run improve the socio-economic conditions as well as the epistemological base needed for the advancement and flourishing of the society as a whole.

Conclusion

This essay has attempted to critically examine the challenge of how access to education, beyond the level of basic education as provided for by article 26 of the UDHR, can be philosophically justified. The essay argued that the traditional moral rights argument could only justify the claim of the human person to basic education as contained in article 26 of the UDHR. This leaves professional and technical education as well as other forms of advanced institutional learning that actually equip their beneficiaries with the necessary competences to contribute to society, in need of justification within the framework of the citizens' moral claims on the state. This justification finds a place within the pragmatic and utilitarian theories of moral assessment. Among the consequences of encouraging citizens' access to education beyond the basic education level are that this would improve the socio-economic conditions as well as the epistemological base needed for the advancement and flourishing of the society. Seen in this light, the pragmatic and utilitarian theories of moral assessment and justification of human conduct provides a complementary argument to that of the traditional account of human rights, in justifying the claim of a human person to education in the general sense.

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