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A LITERATURE SIGNIFICANCE OF FORMAL EDUCATION, INFORMAL EDUCATION AND RELIGION AS A GROWTH MECHANISM IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to give a literature view on the importance of religion, formal tertiary education and informal education on the communal growth and human development in Africa. The study shows that different religions in Africa have similar ethical standards and preaches the fundamental principles of good morals. Also, formal and informal education has a pivotal role in the collective development of human minds leading the subsequent national development. Again, if these principles of good morals and good human values are upheld in every human rather than the religious background which these morals came from, it will give a levelled ground for sustainable growth and national development across Africa.

Key Words: Religious Education, Informal Education, Formal Education, Religious Leaders and Religious Believe.

INTRODUCTION

The Africa Development Bank in 2011 in a report said that, since independence for most African countries, the African continent has struggled through an endless array of developmental challenges, from civil war and political instability to epidemic disease, chronic food insecurity and pervasive poverty. It needs to invest far more in its youth and the hard and soft infrastructure required for growth.

Religious education depicts all the guidelines and teachings as regards different religions. Irika (2014) explains this. Ogbonaya (2011) named the three dominant religions in Africa as Christianity, Islam and the Traditional religion. Also, Amy (2014) explained how these predominant religions today in Africa such as Islam and Christianity got to Africa bringing formal education alongside and examples of the downsides and the advantages of these religions on African economy and human growth. Amy (2014) also gave percentage growth of people accepting and practising these religions. Education's impact seems to affect the citizenship along at least three paths. First of all, formal education may affect attitudes and behaviour via a 'positional path' by sorting citizens into different social networks, situations and classes (Nieet al. 1996). Second, formal education may promote democratic citizenship through a 'socialisation path' whereby children are explicitly trained to see democracy as preferable to its alternatives, accept the authority of the democratic state and its officials, and take part in the duties of democratic citizenship. Finally, formal education may facilitate democratic citizenship via a 'cognitive path', increasing people's verbal and cognitive proficiency, as well as their ability to construct individual ideas and critical thoughts. (Lipset 1959; Nieet al. 1996; Norris 1999).

However, Robert and Dangelira (2010) reported that people with formal higher education have better interaction with the macro and microeconomic systems in Africa regarding political information, news media consumption, political participation, articulateness or pro-democratic values and cognitive ability. Thus, schooling not only enables Africans to offer more opinions, but it also allows them to offer more critical opinions.

Peace, Conflict, and Development in Africa is aimed at those involved in building peace in ways that foster human-centred, inclusive development and at those working in the development and economic spheres who want to ensure that their work does no harm but supports and contributes to peace (Erin and Tony, 2011).

FORMAL, INFORMAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION INPUTS IN AFRICA

The informal or traditional education has been an inherent part of the African culture that has been proven to be a veritable tool used in instilling good human values as passed down from one generation to the other.

Okoro, (2010) took a critical look at the early contributions of African education to growth and how it can serve as “a viable alternative to peacebuilding processes in modern Africa”. He further explained that; the African traditional education curriculum, though not documented, was quite elaborate, embracing all aspects of human development. The contents of the curriculum include mental broadening, physical fitness, moral uprightness, religious deference, good social adjustment and interaction.

However, Okoro, (2010) quoted Mara (2006), saying that: “The traditional African system of education –with its curricular content –were and still very effective, that a total rejection of African heritage will leave African societies in a vacuum that can only is most times filled with confusion, loss of identity and a total break in integrating communication”.

Formal education and religion have also significantly increased Africa's global recognition in its human capacity, resources development, social and economic interaction with the rest of the world. Notable individuals have come from the African system, part of which are engineers, athletes, footballers and doctors who practice both nationally and internally in their various fields of study. Religion as we know today bring together many people of different ethnic background and ideology. Despite the differences in their upbringing and cultural values, different sets of people practising the same religion tend to agree with their religious beliefs. These beliefs which can be willed to develop or to destroy depending on fundamentals of the religious leaders.

Also, formal higher education turned out professionals in various spheres of life who are practising in African and those who ply their trade outside Africa. Many African professionals leave their countries for greener pastures in the UK, France, USA, Asia and even the Arabian regions. These Africans make names for themselves claiming it would have been worse or they would have wasted away had they stayed in their countries. These professionals could have been engaged in their various countries by their governments when encouraged through enabling environment and better enumerations. When African government starts patronizing a made in Africa experts rather than the Chinese or the foreigners, then Africa is in a step exploring the professional human capitals that will consequently lead to the overall development. An example could be seen from Jonas' article (2007) who tagged it “the muscle drain of African football players to Europe; Trade or Trafficking”. Jonas (2007) reported that “the immigration of African football players, seeking employment in Europe has seen increasing interest over the past years and, but the movement of football players seems to be determined by mainly economic incentives. There are of course exceptions, like political crises leading to societal turmoil which pushes players out to earn their living abroad”.

Mazonde, (2001) argued that Africa has seen phenomenal growth in university education during the last 25 years and reported how efforts are made to replace Europeans systems of education. Also, that African university has many outputs indeed, besides trained workforce, in that it provides research, contributes to the cultural and intellectual life of a community, and provides intellectual satisfaction to students.

African universities also incorporate religious studies taught in many secondary schools and university as a discipline and a formal education. These formal and religious educations can also serve as opportunities for the leaders in each region in Africa to incorporate the growth agenda of their nations into these education systems.

Religious education helps to train religious functionaries who discharge religious duties to their members. In this way, they help compliment effort in nation building. Religious education teaches people to be patriotic and committed to building the nation (Onovughe, 2017).

GROWTH AS OBSERVED DUE TO FORMAL/INFORMAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Edward and Michael, (2011) reported the literacy level of Zimbabwe to be 91.4%. They also reported religious input and other major and minor setbacks as regards to Zimbabwe.

Africa-America Institute (AAI), 2015, referenced UNESCO and World Bank, saying that; returns to investments in higher education in Africa are 21 per cent—the highest in the world. They reported that the promising news is that, universities in many African countries are experiencing a surge in their enrollment. Between 2000 and 2010, higher education enrollment more than doubled, increasing from 2.3 million to 5.2 million. These arguments show that investments in tertiary education are reliable tools that can only be overemphasised.

Onovughe, (2017) reported that, religious education is a very potent tool for nation building and that it is observably clear from the study of European history.

However, Greg (2010) reported that Africa's positive economic growth record in the 2000s illustrates that better choices can make better choices. True, African growth has traditionally mirrored the ups and downs of natural resource prices, but Africa's growth in the 2000s has also reflected better governance and more widespread democracy on the continent.

SEEN CONSEQUENCES DUE TO NEGLIGENCE

Despite the personal definitions and aspirations for peace and peaceful environment, it still beats human imaginations that wars and conflicts still dot the contemporary socio-political history, especially Africa (Ademola, 2007).

In the view of Kitause and Achunike's (2012), religious education connotes education that “provides morals, ethics and standards that are normative for life, living and patterns for human existence and relations”.

In Africa today, more people believe in divinity and spiritual miracles for human growth and capacity development. In this light, more people put their faiths in religious houses rather than in human cognitive development and capacity building; this is similar to the report by Wendy (2011).

Gani and Jean (2014) support the idea that places of worship take more glory than teaching people to be innovative and conceiving creative ideas. Although, faith in whichever doctrine is used by the religious sects has been the primary focus of many religions, despite the fact almost all religion has the fundamental teaching of work and faith.

Today, some religious houses have seen that it will not do them too much good if their followers solely rely on miracles rather than working, so they create wealth through training and capital development; John (1969); Parrinder (1976); Ogbonannaya (2011) and Olarinmoye (2011) also support this.

Also, as the poverty line increases, more religious houses spring up from more corners of the ghettos, rural and urban areas replacing business units and factories and the macroeconomics of things. Mpedi (2008), reports people to believe the role of religious values in extending social protection in South African context, and also how ancestors and supreme beings control the affairs of man.

Productivity in Africa will increase if the various religious sects attribute success to hard work and innovation, and teach this fundamental concerning the global trends; this is because most people believe what their religious leaders say more than what their hearts yearn. In 2009, Afrobarometer reported that 90 per cent of Africans surveyed in 19 countries said that religion is “somewhat or very important” in their lives (80 per cent of whom said “very important”), Amy (2014).

Also, religious leaders are important dignitaries that serve as links between the spiritual realm and the physical within most African communities. For example, while most Africans accept biomedical explanations for disease and use Western medicines, they may still assert that troubled relationships or evil spirits contribute to disease, and they may combine Western therapies with prayer. Religious leaders and institutions mediate between these two realms, a process that increases their power and legitimacy among their followers and within the broader society. While such power and

legitimacy may be used for a variety of outcomes (not all of which may benefit socioeconomic development or foster inclusive politics), religious adherents view this legitimacy and power as positive because their religious leader may intercede for them in the spiritual realm (Stephen and Gerrie, 2004).

In the area of formal and informal education, Africa has a curriculum that has been designed to produce experts that are not that confident to ply their trades outside the shores of their country. There is an argument that African's are doing well outside their nations yet most big projects like roads, dams and installation of heavy machines even in the design and development of large projects are still given to outside experts by governments as if there is a shortage of experts in these African countries.

Informal education as of today does not look like what it was some hundred years ago. Historically, an African child holds dear his family's name, what his community stands for and what role he is expected to play. Fast forward to today, mediocre standards have been put down such that most areas in Africa have been witnessing numerous unrests. From Northeast Nigeria to Central Republic of Africa, Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Chad to the current Xenophobic attack in South Africa, which has destabilised the socio-economic activities in those regions (Wikipedia, 2018).

Mpedi (2008) reported that black African values guide black Africans and there is a close relation between this value and the general concern for the welfare of weaker members of the family or the community. Also, Mpedi (2008) reported how these values affect the social security of Africans.

Africa has to retrace her step to understand that the cultural values that have been sold out for the Europeans' cannot work for us. From the inception of many religious practices aside from Africans and cultural adoption from the colonial masters, Africa has lost focus of her human value to integrate what we call modern. Why can't African parents and communities emulate the better part of their culture and hold firmly to their cultural values? Although some argue that these values are here still, the question remains, are African's cultural values still entirely or profoundly held?

One can interpret development in Africa in two ways: from the preview of underdevelopment which emphasis African's material poverty in comparison to developed world economies; and secondly from the viewpoint of Africa being part of the developing world. In case of the former, African underdevelopment reveals that the continent is almost synonymous with poverty, disease, malnutrition, political instability, violence, dependence by corruption and injustice. Part of which makes it difficult for Africa to compete profitably in the global market; and has led to greater dependence on food importation. Thus there is an unequal relationship regarding trade, debt and aid from developed countries (Gotan, 2015).

SEEN IMPROVEMENTS

Gotan (2015) cited that despite decades of overall continental stagnation, growth exceeded 5 per cent in 24 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2003; and everywhere now there are signs that there is going to be a real momentum change.

As the Financial Post (Canada) reports of sub-Saharan Africa "The region is shaking off economic chaos to become one of the most incredible success stories of the global economy. This investment is replacing aid in Africa. For instance, Foreign Direct Investment increased from the US\$9-billion in 2000 to US\$62billion in 2008. According to the International Monetary Fund, real GDP in Sub-Saharan Africa increased 5.7% annually between 2000 and 2008, one of the fastest paces anywhere in the world. Also, the Economic Commission for Africa (2010) and Mckinsey (2010) reported growth rate in African economy that supported these claims.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Since the introduction of Christianity and Islam to Africa, the number of adherents across the continent has grown immensely. For example, in 1900, there were roughly 8.7 million African Christians, but by 2010 that number was 517

million. The number is estimated to reach 595 million by 2025. In 2010, 24 per cent of the world's Christians lived in Africa. In 2010, the Pew Forum reported that 57 per cent of Africans were Christian, 29 per cent were Muslim, and 13 per cent practice traditional religion (Pew Forum, 2010).

From this citation, it is clear that these statistics hold a compelling change potential in human capacity if adequately harnessed and correctly harvested through good values for the future growth and development of the African nations. In this regards, world leaders can liaise with religious leaders to use the opportunity therein to improve security, increase the standard of living and better people's life through religious education.

Also, policymakers should look for a way to integrate informal education with the formal education to increase the human values systems and not relegate informal education to households alone. As such, the quality of professionals produced from Africa will be such that take ethics and human values in high esteem. A balance between good and evil will improve or close the gap of someone expecting something in return before giving out a job that could have been issued out on the grounds of merit.

Governments should place policies that will ensure that quality formal education should not be voided of relevant knowledge to allow experts like engineers, technologist, educationist and doctors to practice in their countries instead of neglecting them to bring experts from developed countries to do the same jobs that the locally trained expert can do. Rather than celebrating mediocrity, formal education should be made creative from childhood.

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