

EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON EDUCATION IN AFRICA 1983-2008

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the effects of globalisation on education in Africa in the past twenty-five years. Despite the positive impact, globalisation has divided the world into the superrich and absolutely poor. Africa is the poorest of the poor, marginalized from world economy and education. The disparities created by globalisation pressures on destabilizing the nations (in the use of the internet, per capita income and living standards and ability to produce and diffuse knowledge) are highlighted. The study also points out the socio-economic and educational inequalities and inequities resulting from globalisation flows and rifts. Educational Institutions in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia that took the IMF loan face the same dilemma, of the 'lost decade' of the 1980. A rethinking of globalisation, reversal of education and economic growth fraught with injustice, inequality and degradation of human dignity is recommended. Educational empowerment of women is also recommended.

Keywords: globalisation pressures, education, inequalities, Africa

INTRODUCTION

This study looks at the effects of globalisation on education in Africa in the past twenty-five years in relation to the technologies of the new century that have impacted the whole world seemingly positively, the disparities (in the use of internet, etc) created by pressures and pulls of globalisation in destabilising the nation state. The devastating effects of globalisation pressures and flows on African economy and the consequences on education, the socio-economic and educational inequalities and inequities that constitute injustice, reduction of human dignity, are also highlighted.

Western education in Africa was initiated by the missionaries during the colonial era and shortly after independence and is a victim of circumstance. The struggle by African governments to provide mass education for their people at all levels has met with obstacles, one of which is under review here.

Autonomous African universities at inception in the 1960s expanded as a result of local and international supports. Inter-linkages were forged with United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, Carnegie Corporation and UNESCO and they all made commitments to help African universities. There were interactions in various areas of academics - staff exchange, regular annual conferences and fellowships tenable in the U.K. and U. S for the conduct of research. African participation intensified and twenty-six other members that included Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria Liberia, etc. were involved (Fafunwa, 1991:202). African universities then, were of international repute. The pressures of globalisation brought drastic changes to all this.

Concept of Globalisation and the technologies of the 21st century

Globalisation on the surface looks good given that the technological innovations of the 21st century have seemingly reduced the whole world to a global village, because of the flow of trade and investments, the ease of travel, ease with which we can see and hear news and most extraordinarily, the internet which gives virtually limitless access to store of knowledge. Globalisation has affected every sphere of society and human living and so has been defined by writers in various ways in relation to the aspect being considered. It is the growing integration of economy and society around the world. It has become the concept with which huge economic, political, cultural changes that characterise human society at the turn of the 21st century is interpreted.

It was noted that globalisation gives a picture of a globalised world which involves 'net works' which structure our behaviour by requiring that we use particular standard which often emerge unintentionally³.(Grewal, 2008 : 1) Thus there is a kind of competition by nations to meet the global standard. He further argued that a globalised world is lop-sided because globalisation serves the benefit of the U.S.A. In supporting the notion, it is noted that globalisation 'is emergent form of Western imperialism carried through cultural institution such as education'⁴(Henry *et al.*, 2008:4). It was further explained 'globalisation does not infer that the entire globe has become westernised, but rather all sphere must establish their position in relation to capitalist West'⁵.(Waters,1995, in Henry *et al.*, 2008 p. 21). Thus having a global

standard clearly implies that some meet the standards while others do not and there is a pull to the standard. It was opined that 'globalisation not only pulls upwards, it pushes downwards creating new pressures for local autonomy'(Giddens, 1998, in Henry *et al.*, 2008 p. 21). It was pointed out that a good part of globalisation consists

of an enormous variety of micro processes that begin to denationalise what has been constructed as national policies, capital, political subjectiveness, urban frames⁷ etc. Saskia (2009, p.1). Nation state bows in submission and is destabilised. Some writers are of the opinion 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 the absolutely poor, 'they haves' and 'they have nots'. The 'have nots' are destabilised. They become vulnerable making their boundaries porous.⁸ (Fisher, 2001; Stiglitz, 2002, Singh, 2001). This is what Singh (2001) called liberalisation which has contributed to financial crises resulting in the pauperisation of multitudes.

Khor (2001 pp. 8-9) pointed out that in 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 greatly benefited a few countries at the expense of many, according to the report. The accelerated pace of technological development has made access to knowledge a requirement for participation in the global economy. The impact of the new information and communication technology (ICT) has significantly changed the speed of production, use and distribution of knowledge economy depending on how much it can generate and share knowledge. These concepts of globalisation and more will be applied in this study accordingly.

Disparity In the Use of Internet Facilities In various Countries of the World

The greatest destabilising influence on the sovereignty of the nation is the global economy. The globalisation pressure has led to the erosion of national sovereignty and nation borders leaving the nation with little political and policy room for action. It struggles to maintain international competitiveness of its nation economy. This destabilisation has given rise to the emergence of few multinational corporations that dominate the use of internet. It is true that countries could benefit from knowledge economy depending on how much they can generate and share knowledge. Yet looking at the involvement of corporations in globalisation of economy, they are located within the boundaries of a handful of developed nations. The International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2001

explained that new technologies can have impact on countries no matter their level of economic development. Transition countries like China, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Singapore and Romania have successfully created, with the help of relative effective education systems, information technology niches that make it possible for them to compete at the global market, since the new micro-economics stress a highly skilled flexible workforce to national success within the new global knowledge economy, yet it has grown digital gap among nations. Disparities in per capita income and standards of living have emerged resulting from the pressures and pulls of globalisation on countries globally. It divides countries

According to their ability to use, adapt, produce and diffuse knowledge. Thus it places the developed world on a class of their own while the Third World countries stand marginalized in the global outfit as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Disparity in the Use of Internet in Various countries in 2000

Country	No. of Personal Computers per 1000 inhabitants	No. of Households connected to the Internet	No. of Internet Users per 5,000 of the Population
Korea	---	3, 000, 000	---
Japan	---	450, 000	---
Burkina Faso	<1	---	---
South Africa	27	---	0.05
Chile	38		
Singapore	172		
Switzerland	348		
Sub- Saharan African Countries			1
Europe & North America			800

Source: Adapted from The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2002.

Table 1 shows that Burkina Faso has less than one computer per 1000 inhabitants compared to one computer to 172 and 348 inhabitants in Singapore and Switzerland respectively. In Sub-Saharan Africa there exists one internet user per 5,000 inhabitants while in Korea and Japan, 3,000,000 and 450,000 households respectively, are connected to internet. Africa is highly marginalized. It reduces their chances of participation in the global knowledge economy

The Effects of Pressures and pulls of Globalization on the African Economy and Consequent Weakening of Education System

The pulls and pressures of globalisation have caused erosion of national sovereignty and national borders through international agreements leading to organisations like World Trade Organisation (WTO), OPEC etc. The group in favour of globalisation argues that it works for the integration of national economies into international economy through trade, foreign direct investments, capital flows, migration and the spread of technology, thus bringing financial liberalisation that leads to

efficiency, economic growth and development. This argument does not hold for many nations, especially in Africa. It was pointed out that financial liberalisation means implementing policies like deregulation of interests' rates, removal of credit controls, privatisation of government-owned banks, liberalisation of the restriction entry of private sectors and foreign institutions into domestic financial markets. It could lead to removal of all restrictions from the movement of capital beyond borders of the country (Singh 2001:1). Singh further pointed out that although developing countries have carried out financial liberalisation, only a handful received the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). According to him, only 14 countries account for over 85% of private flows to the developing countries. In-fact 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 has 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 Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). African countries are in debt and poverty partly due to the policies of international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and WTO. Debt repayment pushed governments to embark on drastic measures like the 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.

It has been pointed out that 'globalisation creates rift within the nations, between what they called globalised and globalising elites, and those who have been adversely affected by globalisation through unemployment, job insecurity and growing inequality'. (Henry *et al.*, 2008, p. 23). Just as pointed out the differences are glaring. For instance in Africa globalisation has given rise to two nations, between political elites of the cities and country dwellers disadvantaged by two levels of education and the decline of commodity prices and the outer suburban working and non-working class affected by sharp decline in the employment capacity of manufacturing industries. Thus with the destabilisation of the state, the society experiences fragmentation and differences, with serious socio-economic and educational inequalities and inequities. Only the rich send their children to private schools and abroad while the poor class cannot. Some children drop out of school to help parents. The females mainly drop out of school to help parents pay fees for the male children. This leads to change in educational policies or what Henry *et al.* (2008) called reframing of educational policies.

Effect on Education

The pulls and pressures of globalisation have affected educational policies. Education is universally acclaimed as the key to sustainable development and advancement of human welfare. To African nations, education is the key not only to socio-economic development and political stability, but also the instrument to translate the nations from league of low to those of high level technology nations. Colonial education was not geared towards popular or mass education of the African. After the Second World War Africa's demand for education increased and at independence channelled huge percentage of their budgets to education based on the economist's modernisation theory which focused on the productive capacity of human manpower in the development

process. In so doing, they treated the improvement of the human workforce as a form of capitalist investment. Thus the human capitalist theory postulates that the most efficient path to the national development of any society lies in the improvement of its population, that is, its human capital. Education was not to be viewed simply as a form of consumption but rather as a productive investment. He argued that education does not only improve the individual choices available to men, but an educated population provides the type of labour force necessary for industrial development and economic growth. (Schultz in: Fagerlind and Saha, 1989, p. 19). The humanist theory provided basic justification for large public expenditure on education in both developed and developing countries. The theory was consistent with the ideologies of democracy and liberal progressivism found in most Western societies. The theory's appeal was based on the presumed economic return of investment in

education both at the macro and micro levels. For politicians and decision makers, efforts to promote investment in human capital were seen to result in rapid economic growth for society. For the individuals, such investment was seen to provide returns in form of individual economic success and achievement (Karabel and Halsey, 1977; Blaug, 1976).

Leaders of 33 African nations met in Addis Ababa in 1961. The most widely discussed aspects of the final report were the short- and long-term goals which estimated the future educational targets of the continent. The short-term plan looked into the urgent production of intermediate and high level manpower to man the institution of the states while the long-term was to raise the ratios of the three levels of education.

Table II shows that ratios of elementary schools, secondary schools and universities were to be raised from 40.0:3.0:0.2 in 1961 to 100.0:23.02.0 by 1980. This meant that only 40% of primary school age children in Africa were actually enrolled in 1961 and that by 1980, 100%, that is all children of primary school age would be in school. The conference projected and advocated for universal primary education by 1980 all over Africa.

Table II: Long-Term Plan (1961-80): Enrolment and Equivalent Percentages of the Three Levels of Education

Educational Level	1961-62	1965-66	1970-71	1980-81
		Enrolments	(in thousands)	
Primary	11,586.0	15,586.0	20,378.0	32,808.0
Secondary	903.7	1,833.5	3,900.0	5,905.4
Higher	25.5	30.3	55.0	328.8
	Percentage	Of Level/ Age	Group	Enrolled
Primary	40.0	51.0	71.0	100
Secondary	3.0	9.0	15.0	23.0

Source: Final Report of Conference of African Heads of State on the Development of Education in Africa (UNESCO: 1961)

The universal primary education scheme was floated by many African governments in the middle of the 70s. By 1980s the scheme had broken down and parents started paying school fees for their children. Despite the Jomtien EFA declaration, by 1998 only 42% of African primary children were out of school and by 2000, 39% were still out of school. Africa may never meet the 2015 deadline.

Unfortunately, the pressure and pulls of globalisation brought to bear on the entire education system in Africa. Policies were affected. With the global economic frame work education is now regarded as the policy key to the future prosperity of nations. (Brown *et al.*, 1997 in Henry *et al.*, 2008). The new human capital theory focuses on micro-economics which stress a high skilled and flexible work force to national success within the new global knowledge economy. Education by global standards is seen as a social good which justified increased funding. Students are now asked by institutions to pay all kinds of fees. Only few can pay. Globally education is deemed important for the competitive advantage of nations. The commitment and capacity of governments to fund it has been weakened. Thus education institutions have financial constraints and this has affected the quality, quantity and performance.

Flight of Talents (Brain-drain)

African educational institutions face the loss of many of her talented brains as a result of globalisation flows and scapes (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, ideascapes) in all areas of

national endeavour. Cultural scapes in particular 'embrace the flows of people e.g. migrants, refugees, tourists, students, politicians, intellectuals and other players in the educational policy community reduce the distance between elites...' (Appadurai in: Henry *et al.*, 2008 p. 24). With the flow of people, students, intellectuals, African talented brains migrated to other places where brains are attracted to education, research and development, information communication technology and new technologies and innovations for their global market and workforce (Glanz in World Bank, 2002).

The greatest destabilising influence of globalisation on the nation state is the global knowledge economy. Australia, Canada, and European Union members open recruitment offices in countries, including Africa. On the other hand graduates from Africa, India, Korea etc seek employment abroad. As of 2002 estimated 30,000 Africans holding PhD were working outside the continent while 130,000 then were studying abroad, in various countries of the world and in October 2002 the U.S. introduced an amendment to its immigration and 600,000 new visa for scientists and engineers. (World Bank, 2002, p. 18). It was noted that the U.K. has initiated action to attract 100,000 international students to U.K. by 2011. Kinnock pointed out that there is consideration that it is the right thing for the global knowledge economy (Loveland, 2007). Brain-drain took a toll on the talented experts who would have developed Africa. Education institutions in Africa suffer a reverse in the recruitment of staff today. The first and second class upper graduates rush to the private sector for lucrative jobs while the second class lower candidates now flock the universities for post-graduate studies and employment.

Research Output vis-à-vis Publication

Globalisation involves 'networking' and 'makes it that all spheres of life must be established by capitalist West'. This is demonstrated by the activities of international organisations such as the North America Free trade Group, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, European Union (E. U.), Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), The World Bank etc. These are nations 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 knowledge economy, research and development become necessary for the organisations to maintain business at the global market. Their main aim is not education or research. In this arrangement only member nations participate in the on-going research and development while non-members stand marginalised. In the organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), member nations invest in the things that make up knowledge base, research and development, education, computer software etc. It was reported that member countries of the OECD account for 85% of total investment in research and development. China, India, Brazil and the newly industrial countries of East Asia (Malaysia, Singapore etc) account for 11%, while the rest of Africa account for 4%. (World Bank, 2002). That Africa is marginalized in the global competition is clear from the above figures.

Access

It has already been said that globalisation pressures produce fragmentation and differences. These translate into unemployment, job insecurity and growing inequalities in access to education in Africa. Globalisation breeds segregation and thus social inequality. The children from both the rich and the working class and even from poor background face serious competition to gain access into the universities. The government's criteria have some element of discrimination in admissions resulting in a situation in which those who score highly are dropped while those with low score are admitted. It was pointed out that the clamour for access to university education is rather intense and has given rise to various facets of examinations malpractice which are damaging to education (Okoli, 2008). It has been lamented that the future of Uganda is in a vicious circle. Economic underdevelopment of government as a result of IMF causes more youths to remain uneducated. Schools have traditionally been under-funded, teachers making less than \$100 (Wadri, 2004). Education is for the rich class. This is the same trend all over Africa.

CONCLUSION

Globalisation is both the context and the condition of all education today, all over the world. But many do not share in the benefits and have no say in its design. Everywhere it has widened the social divide. It is not working for many of the world's poor. It is working for the stability of the global economy. Africa is at the bottom of the EFA. The emphasis on EFA is such that anything that restricts access to education is reinforcing social injustice which corollaries are segregation, inequality, marginalisation, and pauperisation. Millions of Africans (most especially the females) cannot go to school because they are living in abject poverty while a few have the opportunity. Globalisation as a phenomenon promotes education and economic growth but its pulls and pressures have created injustice, inequality and inequities that reduce human dignity to the barest minimum. The study recommends a rethinking of globalisation. It should be made to serve all the people both in the developing and developed countries. Aggressive pursuit of educational empowerment of the females is recommended also.

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