Review

Educational renaissance. The challenge of Africa in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century

Christian Akani

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Nigeria.

Author email: iafn@yahoo.com

Accepted 19 September, 2012

It is a common knowledge that the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century is a knowledge – driven epoch. This has greatly enhanced and improved the quality of life and exchange of goods and services. This process has also facilitated the rapid movement of persons across borders and continents. In fact we seem to be a borderless environment where territorial limitations no more count in human interaction. All these have also affected the quality and standard of learning and socialization process. This paper, argues that colonial education did not equip its recipients to face and surmount the challenges of nation building, but to facilitate the exploitation of colonial peoples. Unfortunately, this colonial philosophy of education was carried over to the post- colonial era. Therefore, to be relevant in the present epoch, Africa’s educational system must witness a qualitative transformation. This is because education is the pivot of the global transformation. It argues that the continent must of necessity be part of the unfolding reality. This is by completely overhauling its educational foundation, such that it will evoke a renaissance of knowledge and consciousness for creativity, criticality and empowerment. The paper concludes that the challenge before African leaders is to provoke a revolution of knowledge and scientific awakening in the continent. These are the essential tools the continent urgently needs for its social and philosophical rebirth. This will place it on a good stead to appropriate the benefits of the epoch. To do otherwise is to drive the continent to extinction and barbarity.

\textbf{Keywords:} Renaissance, underdevelopment, functionalism

\section*{INTRODUCTION}

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker, can become the head of the mine, that the child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. - Nelson Mandela

The above quotetypify the wholesome implication of education in moulding people for greater height. No civilization can subsist without a painstaking effort to redirect the masses in the comprehension of their roles, knowledge of their environment, self-identity and reproduction of the society. Education, therefore, is the fulcrum that propels both the individual and the community to higher disposition.

It is, therefore, not out of place that that most ancient and modern writers such as Socrates, Plato, Niccolo Machiavelli and J.J. Rousseau place priority on the advancement of high values through a thoroughly supervised educational programme. As Socrates declared, ‘knowledge is virtue’ and for Francis Bacon ‘knowledge is power’ just as ‘knowledge makes man less cruel’. The fact is that any society that deprives its members of the opportunity to learn, and to transfer inherited ideas and knowledge from one epoch to the other will stagnate and be groping in the opaque. This account for the efforts of serious-minded leaders who lay a solid specialization process so that their society will not suffer any development fatigue. It is also important to note that education-friendly societies are always on the path of moral rectitude, innovations and re-awakening.

It is against this backdrop that we shall examine the educational challenge facing Africa in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.

\section*{Education and Renaissance}

The Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus defines education as ‘the process of acquiring knowledge and
Every society, community or state needs some form of education to be relevant, function and fulfill its social obligations. Therefore, it is not a novel phenomenon because it is an essential component of man’s social responsibilities. After all, the philosophical end-point of education is the advancement of the frontiers of man. As Diderot puts it, ‘Man is the only point of departure and the only point of return.’

According to Johnny, ‘education is an instrument of change in society which involves a series of tasks or activities which cannot be accomplished in the short term’ (Johnny, 1999:3). It is an inevitable compass that directs society in its march to development and reproduction. This process draws out the creative potentials and intuitive energy of the people for the benefit of all. Every society has its peculiar system of achieving a dynamic balance and transmission of ideas from generation to another. The organic nature of education accounts for the resilience of culture and other distinctive features in the society.

In pre-colonial Africa, the main guiding principle of education was functionalism. African society regarded education as a means to an end and not as end in life. Education was gradually for an immediate induction into society and a preparation for adulthood (Fafunwa 1991). Since the prevailing mode of production had an inherent communal character, African education equipped its recipients not only to be assimilated into the society, but to liberate themselves from any social, moral, military and spiritual inhibition.

According to the Nigerian National Policy on Education, it is the vehicle for the promotion of socio-cultural and political change in the society (Akubue and Enyi 2001). Education promotes good life, liberty and the rebirth of the society through the constant subjection of old-fashioned ideas to scrutiny. This lies the renaissance of the individual and society through educational enquiry. It was, therefore, not amazing that the European Renaissance movement in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries was hinged on the education of the individual to humanize, evoked public spirit, liberty, freedom and virtue. Duiker declared that,

We call these studies liberal which are worthy of free man, those studies by which we attain and practice virtues and wisdom, that education which calls forth, trains and develops those highest gifts of body and mind which enables and which are rightly judged to rank next to dignity to virtue only (Duiker 1998).

Education upholds self-development, rekindles self-identity and vivify the environment with sparks of progression and posterity. As Okolo puts it ‘the only philosophy of education that has worth for education is a philosophy rooted in the living experience of a society, its historical struggles and freedom, its conventions and ideals, its tensions generated by the conflict of its institutions, the value-structure of the society’ (Dukor, 2001).

Education, therefore, is a process of socialization that equips members of a society for reproduction and face the high voltage of social challenge. Omoregbe stated that, the primary aim of education is not just to prepare the person for a particular kind of job or profession, but the development of personality which involves the development of both the intellect and the will. Education belongs to the category of values known as intrinsic values as distinct form extrinsic values (Omoregbe, 2001).

The vitality and progression associated with education has been highlighted in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. In the same vein the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) clearly stated that ‘education is a universal right, a prerequisite for democracy, a path out of materials and spiritual poverty’ (McCullum, 1986). African education was rich in its informal structure. Through many organs such as the family, age grades, moonlight plays, folk stories, ceremonies like masquerade dance, Ojiji, Iria, rite of passage (circumcision), the mores of the continent were passed on to the succeeding generation. In this process, education becomes a continuous process; it can only be appreciated with the comprehension of all the stages of socialization.

Sadly, this process was roundly castigated, condemned and mindlessly destroyed by the forces of colonialism. In its place was a totally different mode of education alien to Africa, and consequently set the continent on the path of crises.

Colonial Education

It is self-evident that colonial incursion into Africa was principally motivated by the need to appropriate the abundant mineral resources of the continent. African nationalists were unanimous in this regard, and their aversion to colonial exploitation was demonstrated at every available opportunity. Hence, Nkrumah, one of Africa’s foremost Pan Africanist in his Towards Colonial Freedom (1947) stated that, ‘colonies are thus a source of raw materials and cheap labour, and ‘dumping ground’ for spurious goods to be sold at exorbitant prices, these colonies become avenue for capital investments, not for the benefit and development of the colonial peoples, but for the benefit of the investor (Nkrumah 1973).

The monumental change which preceded the European industrial revolution precipitated a new vista in the European political economy. Colonialism became an inevitable reaction to this phenomenon. Cecil Rhodes had warned that to save Britain form a looming civil war, statesmen must provide employment for the 40 million unemployed British workers through colonialism. We shall not go into the polemics of African subjugation, but suffice it to say that the legacy of that violent encounter is
still plaguing the continent. Ake (1981), Ekekwe (1986), Rodney (1972), Nkrumah and Akani (2010) were unequivocal in articulating the disarticulation and dislocation of pre-capitalist social and political formations throughout Africa by the forces of imperialism. They also pontificated on the forceful exposure of global capitalist economy dominated by a few global elite propped by their countries. The point here is that as the continent continues to play a satellite role in the global division of labour, its weakness and poverty becomes glaring. As Nkrumah argued, it is nonsense to talk of Africa being poor. Africa has a lot of everything, its natural resources make it one of the richest. African poverty is the result of centuries of colonialism (Nkrumah 1977:35).

One of the veritable ways through which Africans were made to imbibe the values and philosophy of colonialism was through education. Colonial education was the ideological apparatus of the colonial stat (Ekekwe 1986). It prepared the recipients for a swept turnaround to the new order. To achieve this ideological objective, Africa was read outside history, knowledge and civilization with ultimate aim of de-Africanizing the recipients. Colonial education was a denial of the humanity, denial of respect and dignity, denial of the Africaness of the African (Shivji, 2003). We can vividly recollect the racist intellectual effusion of Joseph Conrad and Trevor who pointed out that there is only a historical void in the continent. Whatever historical materials that are seen remain the exploits of European adventurers in Africa. According to Sefa Dei, European conquest of Africa was the destruction of indigenous education systems, and their replacement with (an) irrelevant, limited and purposefully imposed programme of European languages and related structures of learning (Sefa et al., 2006).

It was, therefore, not too long before Africans started asserting their historical richness, philosophy and personality. In his celebrated novel, Chinua Achebe stated that contrary to imperial fallacy, Africa had a rich and self-sustaining culture and socialization process. But these were wickedly destroyed by the agents of colonialism. Azikiwe, one of Nigeria’s foremost nationalist also argued in his Renascent Africa that Africa has not been in a state of incubula throughout history. Let the African know that he had a glorious past and that he has a glorious future (Iweriebor 1996). On the other hand, European capitalists erroneously reasoned that by extending education to Africa, they were invariably exposing the continent to the light of European civilization. A civilization that has no parallel and cannot be ignored because it is a leeway to all that is good. After all, the ultimate text of civilization is not however, in the exploitation of physical resources. The final text is the civilization of the native people (Jones 2001). Colonial education becomes a tunnel through which Africans could be accepted to become tools of enlightenment. According to Harley, the beginning of education in Africa was laid in an age of which assumed without question the intrinsic value of European civilization (Collins 2007). Since there were paucity of white manpower, clerks, interpreters, church leaders and other subsidiary professions were trained to assist in upholding and expanding the avowed virtue of capitalist mode of production.

Obviously, this type of socialization created a class dichotomy in Africa between the educated-civilized and the non-education-uncivilized. Gradually, the former filled with the bourgeois dogma of possessive individualism started repositioning itself as direct successors of power. This lies the crisis of identity, depersonalization of the African and what Chanaiwa call a self-depreciating, black skinned European (Collins 2007). In his Song of Lawino Okot P’Bitek demonstrated how colonial education separated the recipient from his environment. To him, Africa is Blackness, deep, deep fathomless darkness (P’Bitek 1984). In fact,

Those African, who had access to education were faced with certain quantitative problems. The quality was poor by prevailing European standards. The books, the methods of teaching, and the discipline were all brought to Africa in the nineteenth century; and on the whole, colonial schools remained sublimely indifferently to the twentieth century. New ideas that were incorporated in the capitalist metropolis never reached the colonies. Changes in science did not reach African classroom, for there were few schools were science subjects were taught. Similarly, the evolution of higher technical education did not have any counterpart in colonial Africa (Collins 2007).

This should not perturb any person because colonial education ab initio not geared towards empowerment, liberation, scientific and technological revolution of Africa. Rodney was right when he averred that ‘colonial schooling was education for subordination, exploitation and the creation of mental confusion, and the development of underdevelopment’ (Rodney 1982). While the colonial state was not proactive in the expansion of education because of lean financial resources, it was the missionaries in their competition for more converts that pioneered education in Africa. Education has always been a most, important part of the programmes of the missionaries (Agbodeka 1965). Apart from consolidating evangelism, they gave spiritual cover and validity to colonial distortion in Africa. They were extremely careful not to criticize or expose the pitfalls of colonial dogmatism. Their business was mainly targeted at the production and upbring of ‘upright characters’ that would be obedient, ‘law abiding and become subservient African laborers’.

In achieving their religious objective, they did not hesitate or pretend to glamorize the ‘ignominious backwardness’ and inferiority of the Africa’ (Collins 2007). The recipients of Western education were indoctrinated to accept the status quo as part of the natural order of things. They must trust and obey for there is no other
way, because all things have been made bright and beautiful.

Therefore, to be critical about the ‘bright and beautiful’ order is to kick against a political leviathan. More importantly, the world is a transient abode where moth and all wickedness thrive. The African should disentangle himself from the strings of heathenism and hope for a life of heavenly bliss completely insulated from the contradictions and worries of life. Yatta noted that, 

_Education, whether for the ‘altruistic purposes’ of the missionaries or the naked exploitative strategies of the colonial administration, was used to engineer the production of the minds and souls upon which to erect a new society in Sierra Leone. In the process, Mendé indigenous educational traditions were rendered meaningless_ (Yatta 2007).

This was the colonial pedagogy Africans were taught to memorize and internalize. Paradoxically, it laid the foundation for anti-colonial protest which ultimately shattered the myth of European superiority.

Post-Colonial education

By the time many African states liberated themselves from colonial domination, they discovered to their chagrin that the colonial education they received was not sufficient and solid. It was completely at variance with the onerous demands of the post-colonial contradictions. Apart from poor infrastructural base, there was glaring short of highly trained manpower that would impel sustainable development. Research and Development (R and D). The result was that most independent African states relied heavily on white officials to perform some strategic functions. For instance, the first Nigerian Development Plan in 1962 was crafted outside the country.

This dilemma made Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania to initiate a programme of Education for Self-Reliance. According to him, _the education provided by the colonial government in the two countries which now form Tanzania had a different purpose. It was not designed to prepare young people for the service of their own country, instead it was motivated by a desire to train individuals for the service of the colonial state (Mutisio and Rotrio 1975)_

_The recognition of this fact necessitated a redirection of education to meet the needs of post-colonial Africa. Many universities were established and scholarship programmes instituted to assist students at all levels of education-primary, post-primary and tertiary. Interestingly, Universities of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, Makerere in Uganda, Ibadan in Nigeria and others distinguished themselves in academic distinction and brilliance. African studies became a prominent area of study and research. Undoubtedly, these centers of learning became the Mecca of intellectuals as they discuss alternative processes of post-colonial African development. In this scenario, books, journals, ideas, seminars and lectures were readily available for a wide dissemination of the values of excellent scholarship._

While, it is a truism that some universities were still tied to the apron-strings of western liberal scholarship, nevertheless African universities triumphed both in the advancement of knowledge and academic freedom. Indeed, this period marked the glorious and glamorous days of African scholarship. Regrettably, this, vibrant tradition nose-dived into regression in the 1980s, and has not recovered till today. Some of the factors that led to its decline included the crises of the 1980s which hinged on the Structural Adjustment Programme, debt overhang and its attendant social instability. It is important to note here that inspite of the academic delivery of most universities in the 1960s and 1970s, much of African education is still following adaptations of this colonial mindset, as well as failing to keep up with modern pedagogy, indigenous learning and teaching resources (McCullum 1985). All these combined to deepen the crisis of African education in the 21st century. The crisis of the 1980s reduced the decade to a lost one. According to Meredith, _By the mid-1980s most Africans were as poor or poorer than they had been at the time of independence. Crippled by debt, mismanagement and collapse in tax revenues, African governments could no longer afford to maintain proper public service. Roads, railways, water, power and telephone system deteriorated, schools, universities and hospitals were starved of funds (Meredith 2005)._ 

The response of African custodians of power was to initiate an adjustment programme that will salvage the economy. Dictated by World Bank and International Monetary Fund (WB/IMF), the policy was anchored on neo-liberal market strategy. It was sententiously implemented as if it had no alternative and cannot be compromised. Within a short period, the whole continent capitulated to the sermon of SAP. In fact, between 1980-1989 241 structural programmes were imposed on 35 of the 43 independent sub-Saharan African states, an average of about seven per country (Akani 2004). The main ingredients of SAP include; devaluation of currency, curtailment of government expenditure on social amenities, withdrawal of subsidies and wage cut to facilitate production in the economy. The implementation of SAP went hand in hand with external borrowing. Within the SAP era, Africa accumulated huge external debt. It exponentially rose to unimaginable level by the end of the 1990s. Most interesting is the fact that some of the debts had a dubious content, and crafted in such a manner that more than fifty percent of the money went to the Bank in form of overhead costs and other inexplicable expenditure. For instance, _In 2006 the NUC of Nigeria rejected a $102m loan. The loan was offered by the World Bank to finance the acquisition of modern information communication technology for Nigerian_
universities... the terms of the loan was that 95 percent of the $102m which is $96.9m would be used to pay consultancy services to be provided by the Bank, while a petty five percent $5.1m would be deployed to acquire infrastructure (Osuka 2008).

By the time the loan spree subsided in the 21st century, the continent found itself in a debt noose, difficult to extricate itself. Ake noted that 'external debt of sub-Saharan Africa some $138b in 1987 about 6% larger than the total GNP grew to over $178b in 1991, nearly a twenty-fold increases since 1970. That of Africa rose form about $116b in 1980 to $315b in 1997'. (Akani 2004).

Again, Africa’s external debt increased significantly between 1970-1992. From just over $11b in 1970, Africa had accumulated over $120b of external debt in the midst of external shocks of the early 1980s. Total external debt then worsened significantly within the period of structural adjustment in the 1980s and early 1990s, reaching a peak of about $340b in 1995 (Akani 2009).

Considering the fact that Africa has paid more than $550b in principal and interest between 1970-2002 and received $540b in loan, the continent has been profoundly ripped off in the guise of paying questionable debt. The effect of these market-oriented programmes is the African universities have found themselves at a dead end; lost their autonomy, academic freedom, no finance to carry out R and D and other knowledge-driven programmes, infrastructural decay, internal frustration, bickering and North bound migration. From 1985-1995 there were about 115 incident by African students against the obnoxious and suffocating state of Africa universities occasioned by WB/IMF dictated SAP in (30) thirty countries, with Nigeria first with more than 14 incidents (Federici 2000). Ihonvbere and Caffentizis are of the opinion that SAP and World Bank Policy documents on Financing, Education in Developing Countries (1986).

Education in sub-Saharan Africa

Policies for Revitalization and European (1981), Education and Adjustment; A Review of the Literature (1991) and African Capacity Initiative (1991) were overtly responsible for the eclipse of the golden age of African universities. Through 'technical assistance' and stringent loan conditionality, African scholarship gradually lost steam and tele-guided to visualize the globe through the prism of Western scholarship. Shizha argued that the decrease in education and advent of user fees suggested by IMF were particularly hard on poor families, because 'the price of schooling increases while income remained stagnant or deprecate (Piper 2006).

The widening imbalance between sky rocking cost of education and declining income of Africa workers predictably led to neglect of education, children abandoning schools, HIV/AIDS and Poverty. For instance, 'the average global spending per child in primary education is $629; in Africa it is $48. Of the 42 million primary-aged children not in school, 62 percent are girls'. http://www.newsfromAfrica.org/html.

43% of children do not have safe, accessible drinking water, (UNICEF) and only 57% African children are enrolled in primary education and one in three of these do not complete school (Africa,2015). It is the WB/IMF policies in African education that is largely responsible for the low performance of African universities. Ihonvbere argued that; Africa is being intellectually re-colonized. This means that conditions are being created whereby Africans cannot produce any intellectual work and much less be present in the world market of ideas, except at the service and under the control of international agencies. Through specifically targeted agencies define what can be studied, written and voiced in the continent, (Ihonvbere 1991).

Federici noted that, the $120 million loan to the Nigerian university system put the control over the importation of books, and journals as well as expatriate staff in the hands of the Bank (Federici 2000).

The pitiable condition of African universities is heightened by the demands of globalization. Globalization is hinged on competition, connectivity and fast movement of ideas. It also involves electronification and trans-nationalization of knowledge, paving way for a universal knowledge and civilization. Therefore, only those who have the intellectual wherewithal and preparedness can reap the gains. Globalization opens access and makes it easier for students and scholars to study and work anywhere but it reinforces many existing inequalities and erects some new barriers (Altbach 2005).

Obviously, since African universities do not have the strong intellectual cartilage to subject the forces of globalization to their needs, the inevitable result is the global marginality of African scholarship. As ‘globalization in higher education exacerbates dramatic inequalities among world universities’ and directs global knowledge towards the western model, African universities are peripheralized, only swimming in the cesspool of outdated dogmatism. Small wonder that of the 200 top universities in the world published by the Time Higher Education Supplement, no mention of the more than 168 universities in Africa. The WB Report in Retaining Teaching Capacity in African Universities (1996), noted that;

Perhaps the most notable change, however, has been a severe decrease in funding for universities, resulting form external economic stagnating on the continent. Overall, the average budget of education dropped, from 16.6 percent of government budget in 1980 to 15.2 percent in 1992. As education was shrinking, average allocation for higher education were also contracting from an average 10.1 percent of education budget in 1980-84 to an average of 17.6 percent, real wages in the region fell by 30 percent. http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/html (3/11/09).
The excruciating social contradictions induced by SAP has reduced the capacity of many African countries to devote the UNESCO approved 26% of their annual budget to education. Instead as high as 40% of the annual budget is devoted to servicing dubious debts with a meager sum for education. (table 1).

With education above the reach of the majority, deepening poverty, HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis become a common phenomenon in the continent. The World Bank estimates that about 70 million Africans joined the rank of the absolute poor, bringing the number of some 300 million African children their parents on the verge of survival (Africa Recovery, April, 2002). In 2005, there were about 38.6 million people infected with HIV/AIDS globally, and out of this 24.5 million for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), North Africa 1.3 million, and Western Europe 5.8 million. Also there are 13 million AIDS orphans in Africa, 2 million children under 14 years old with HIV. (UNICEF). The HIV/AIDS pandemonium in Africa is one of the fastest killer diseases in the continent. Africa Recovery revealed that,

* African children were beset by two other, largely unanticipated calamities during the 1990s. AIDS and war. Of the 580,000 people under 15 that had AIDS in 2001, a staggering 500,000 nearly nine out of ten were African. Of the 2.7m HIV positive people under age 15 in the world in 2001, 2.4m were Africa. Tuberculosis infection rates closely associated HIV/AIDS have soared from an African incidence rate of 16 percent per 100,000 in 1993 to 52 at the end of 1999. (Africa Recovery, April, 2001).

The cantankerous political situation in many African states as in Somali, Liberia, Rwanda, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast have made teaching and learning difficult. The extreme brutality and killing tactics used by the combatants to achieve their political goals have turned the continent to a bunker of some sorts. Apart from the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), children under the age of 15 are recruited into the war effort. The Coalition to Stop Child Soldiers discovered that there are about 120,000 child soldiers in Africa, out of the global 300,000. According to the Institute of security Studies (ISS) ‘Africa has a history of children in and for war. The impact of the war on the children generates an ever-expanding circle of violence and underdevelopment.’ It further stated that, *On the eve of the New Millennium we are witnessing an abomination directed against children we have seen two million children killed. One million orphaned, six million seriously injured or permanently injured, twelve million made homeless and ten million left with serious psychological trauma* (http://www.iss.co.za).

One wonders how African education can triumphantly blossom when the enabling environment is inclement and the youth running amok because of needless internal conflicts and wars. The immediate reaction of lecturers to the sordid intellectual atmosphere in the continent is to migrate to Europe and North American universities. Today, there is a sizeable African intellectual Diaspora. ‘Many have left and are still planning to leave the system for another greener pastures within and without their countries. The outflow of the tested and experienced personnel is counter productive and its effect will be felt generations after (Nwideedu 2003). Indeed, the brain drain out of Africa has gathered momentum. From 1960-1987, some 100 trained and qualified Africans chose to work abroad, between 1986 and 1996 alone, 5,000 – 60,000 middle and high-level state management left Africa (Meredith 2005). The African Monitor and UNDP also noted that, brain drain cost Africa over $4b in the employment of 150,000 expatriate professionals annually, and since 1990 Africa has been losing 20,000 professionals yearly. (The Africa Monitor, UNDP, April 29, 2007). In its Human Development Report (1992), the United Nations declared that, Africa has been hit particularly hard by (the loss of skilled workers). By 1987, nearly one-third of its skilled people had moved to Europe. Sudan lost a high proportion of professional workers. 17% of doctors and dentists, 20% of university teaching staff, 30% of engineers and 45% of surveyors in 1978. In Ghana, 60% of doctors trained in early 1980s are now abroad, leaving critical shortages in the health service. And Africa as a whole is estimated to have to up to 60,000 middle and high level manager between 1985 and 1990 (UNDP, 1992). The rapidity of migrant African intellectuals led the United Nations Economic commission for Africa (ECA) to aver that ‘the emigration of African professionals to the West is one of the greatest obstacles to Africa’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Social Services %</th>
<th>Debt Repayments %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

development.’ It warned that, ‘in 25 years’ time Africa will be empty of brains’ (ECA).

In Nigeria, university lecturers are facing a hard time largely because of the insensitivity of officialdom to education. This has snowballed to long strike action by ASUU-Academic Staff Union of Universities. In-fighting, selfish bickering, expansion of antisocial and unscholarly etiquette have gradually become a trade mark within the university community. This is the genesis of examination malpractices and secret cult groups in the universities. In a recent study by the Institute of Academic Freedom in Nigeria, a non-government organization, from 1971-2010 more than five hundred students were killed as result of cult related activities and police brutality. Right now, an average lecturer finds the market arena intimidating because of his/her monthly salary. Nigerian University Commission (NUC) revealed that in the 1989/1990 academic session more than 119 academic staff from eleven Nigerian universities left for better offers outside (Nwideeduh 2005).

All these have drastically reduced the quality and interest of students in progressive scholarship. Possessions of certificates at all cost have become the enduring slogan. The poor funding of universities cannot match its expanding rate. From two universities in 1960, and 35 in 2000, Nigerian University rapidly grew to 95 universities in 2008 and 117 in 2011. Sadly, the 2007/2009 UNDP Human Development Report declared that out of the top 400 universities in the world, no Nigerian university was mentioned. The Report also stated that Nigeria spends 0.9% of its GDP on education. In this circumstance, it becomes apocryphal to meet the objectives of 2020 vision, the Millennium Development Goals and boldly compete in the global market of knowledge.

What Must Be Done

African universities have succumbed to the lowest ebb of regression. Undoubtedly, they have lost the needed ivory tower vibrancy to become an institution of investment, social service and liberation. They can hardly train skilled manpower in a variety of discipline, and on subjects of immediate moment to the continent (Ebong 2000). This account for the vulnerability of African education, especially that of university to World Bank ‘draconian’ educational policies. Zeleza noted that African universities have been ‘devastated more than most of the ferocious regime of the massive divestment from social sectors and the devaluation of state commitments and interventions’ (Zeleza 2008). All over the continent, it does appear that the shaky educational foundation has correspondingly affected the quality of the leadership. Plato was mindful of this connection when he concluded that the timorous condition of Athens in the fifth century was a precipitate of the porous education propagated by the Sophists. Therefore, the rigorous training of the would-be rulers, Philosopher kings would make them become those that have a philosophic disposition. Africa cannot wish more than this. Chukwuma noted that; Universities and other educational establishments are there in order to produce the most highly qualified individuals that their country needs. They must provide high level training and research so as to ensure that their country’s personnel will be able to master and develop the requisite expertise and technologies (Akubue and Enyi 2001).

African universities must produce competent manpower to enable it confront the global challenge in education and other sectors. It must urgently recast its philosophy of education so that it will stimulate and evoke a ‘new Pan Africanism for higher education that seeks to build on the nationalist project that gave Africa its post colonial universities and continental unification (Zeleza 2005). This is extremely important because the objective of NEPAD, AU and MDGs cannot be realized without a firm educational edifice that would pioneer the success of these laudable projects through the production of skilled men and women.

African education must be focused to the peculiarities of African environment, its historical specificities, challenges, experiences and struggles. The continent’s ‘development depends to a large extent on the level of education, its population, its technical ‘ qualifications and its ability to apply science and technology’ (Akubue and Enyi 2001). Therefore, African Governments, AU and other regional blocs in the continent must rise up to the looming danger. They must devout more than 26% of their annual budget to education and create the enabling environment for education to flourish. Most importantly, African scholars must be assisted to constantly interact with their counterparts, particularly the African intellectuals in Diaspora. This can be done through exchange programmes, sabbaticals, conferences and internship. The benefit of this cannot be overemphasized, as the cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences will go a long way in bridging the educational gap in the continent. In a situation were attendance to international conferences is a luxury to most African scholars, African scholarship will continue to exist at the fringe of global knowledge. This cannot be plausible without a determined effort to reduce the amount on debt-servicing and grand corruption. Corruption has cost the continent more than $148b annually or 25% of GNP (Akani 2007). In a survey conducted by the News magazine, eleven African Heads of states stole more than $15.257b of their country’s wealth. (Table 2).

Nigeria’s General Sani Abacha came first with $4.3b. (See table 1). This fabulous amount that found its way into the private account of corrupt rulers could have been judiciously used to attract relevance, fame, and embolden the state of African education. Therefore, there is the
Table 2. What African leaders stole?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hissame Habre</td>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haile Mariam</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>20m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Biya</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>45m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omar Bongi</td>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>50m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denis Sasson Ngueso</td>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>120m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henri Konan Beadie</td>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>200m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moussa Traore</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>1.8b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobutu Sese Seko</td>
<td>Congo DR</td>
<td>2.2b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahhim Babagida</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>3.0b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felix Houphuet Boigny</td>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>3.5b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sani Abacha</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>4.3b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,257</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Realties in an Unequal World', Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, USA.


