

THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA: A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

Learning starts early for children in Africa as elsewhere, and more often than not begins at the mother's breast. Fed regularly, weaned when the time is ripe, the African child spends the first five years of his/her life in a close relationship with the mother. During this early stage, the child is reared by the mother, not by the family as a whole. However, African states equally witnessed dimensions of development in the educational development by their encounter with foreign religions and their educational system. Missionary educations of Islam and Christianity have made tremendous impact in the development of African personalities and societies. The purpose of this paper is to show the utility value of the process of education across African States.

Keywords: learning, Family, Africa, Children, Early stage.

Introduction

In a polygamous African family, there may be several "mothers"; they all play a part in caring for the youngest generation but ultimate responsibility for each child lies with the biological mother, who carries him/her on her back wherever she goes, puts him/her to bed, looks after him/her when he/she is ill and teaches him/her to speak. Full of curiosity, the baby watches her every gesture, and learns to interpret her smiles, her frowns and her tears. In a study of the Yoruba of West Africa, M. A. Fadipe has described certain practical aspects of the education of young children. For her, as soon as her daughter is of age, it is the mother's duty to teach her the rules of hygienic and well-mannered behaviour observed by the group. One of the most important of these rules concerns the use of the right and the left hands. Before the whites brought their culture to Africa, the use of forks and spoons was unknown. The right hand was traditionally used for lifting food to the mouth and mainly for this reason it was forbidden to touch unclean objects. A child caught eating before early morning ablutions, which involved at least washing the face and mouth, would be scolded and punished by an adult member of the group. This

'indirect' education received by the child in the community is as important as that received at school.

Little by little, this lively curiosity reaches out beyond the mother's world. Somewhere between the ages of 4 and 6 the grandparents - and sometimes uncles and aunts begin to take part in the children's education, sending them on little errands, teaching them to be obedient and to respect their elders (this is a very important matter in African society), and to observe certain rules of behaviour. The grandparents also teach them the history of their family or of their people.

Traditional education, as far as character-building was concerned, was certainly severe. But this was because of the importance which African society attaches to this aspect of education. The habit of physical exercise, apprenticeship in a trade, religious upbringing, and a respectful attitude towards one's elders and active participation in community life are indispensable conditions for any African wishing to be considered a person of consequence. The lack of more formal education can be forgiven, but a person who does not fulfill these conditions inflicts the worst possible humiliation on both his immediate family and his more distant kinsfolk.

Respect for one's elders, which is an important part of character training, includes respect for all who represent authority: village chiefs, religious leaders, soothsayers, uncles, relatives and neighbours. Styles of greeting play an essential role in the expression of respect. Salutation is a complicated affair in Africa, with different modes of addressing relatives, elders, equals, chiefs, and so on, and special greetings for morning, afternoon and evening.

In certain parts of Africa character training took many forms. Parents encouraged healthy rivalry between children of the same age, sometimes as early as the age of five, by organizing wrestling matches and by setting the children competitive tasks. Fair play was also encouraged; winners and losers alike were congratulated when they played well. The main thing was not winning and losing, but playing the game.

If 'intelligence' means the capacity to assimilate experience, and if 'intellectualization' denotes abstract reasoning, as in the formation of concepts or judgments, then it can be said that traditional African education encourages intellectual development. Observation, imitation and participation are three pillars of the educational process. African children and adolescents learn the geography and history of their community. They know their local hills and valleys at the backs of their hands; they know where the land is fertile and where it is barren. They know when to expect rain and when to expect drought. They know the right times to hunt and fish. In every family the old people are teachers of local history. The songs of praise which often commemorate great events enrich the oral

tradition, creating an experience which it is difficult to forget (Fafunwa 1982). Kanga Kalembu-Vita of Zaire describes indigenous African education in this way: The aim of traditional education is the preparation of the youths, their insertion and complete integration into the life of the community. This major objective implies the definition of the specific goals, among which are in particular ensuring educations in the matrimonial, social, religious and technical domains.; ensuring training in thinking, practical wisdom, aesthetics, etc; ensuring the education of will power through asceticism, self-denial, mortification, physical endurance, self-control, etc.

In the African conception, education strives to make the individual pass from his status of an absolute individual to that of an integrated member of the society, to make him lose the illusion of happiness in the state of isolation so that he may accede to true happiness by being open to others, not for personal benefit but in order to create with everybody a new reality transcending individuals, namely the community (Nwagwu, 1978). In other words, education aims at making a man an integral entity, indivisible in himself, a distinct entity but not separated from others, an entity in unity not only with other men but also with the whole of nature, that is the ground, water, fire, light, etc. It is, finally, a question of making man pass from the situation of the individual to the social situation aimed at and finally to that of cosmic participation (Kiches, 1962).

This African education centred on communal life is an education acquired for life and through life. Pululu gives its principal characteristics which he considers as a programme of the New Education: Sense of observation, spontaneous activities, exploitation of nature, educative games, co-education of both sexes through games and initiation rituals, learning of the art of oratory, dance, fables, and songs, these are all admirably and very naturally organized in such a way as to make complete and mentally-balanced men who are well adapted to their environment.

Islamic Influence on African Education

The influence of the Islamic religion on African education is considerable. Most students of history are familiar with the Arab North Africa, for instance, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia. In this area of Africa Islam and Islamic education had established firm roots long before the Western intervention, and Islamic schools and universities flourished centuries before the arrival of Christian evangelism and colonialism. From there Islam spread to West Africa. Today, of about forty-five countries in Africa, over Thirty-five have considerable Islamic influence; that is all of the North and West African countries, over half of the East African countries and some of those in Central Africa. Indeed, Islam has played a major role in the shaping of culture and education in most countries of Africa.

Wherever Islam is established rudimentary knowledge of the Quran, the Hadith (traditions of the Prophet) and the Shari'a (canon law of Islam) are taught to its followers. One Islamic tradition states: the best man among you is one who learns the Quran and then cares to teach it. Islamic learning began on this prophetic advice, with the result that teaching religion to others was considered a duty for which a person should expect no reward.

The Qur'anic School System

The system described below is typical of the one most frequently encountered in Black Africa. A Qur'anic school is usually found in or outside the mosque itself. Indeed, the oldest Muslim university, Al-Azhar in Cairo, was established in a mosque. Today thousands of these schools are located in mosques, private houses, or specially built premises. As early as the third year of life Muslim children are expected to start the first stage of Qur'anic education. At this stage the pupils learn the shorter chapter of the Quran by rote. The only pleasure they can derive from the system at this stage lies in the choral recitations, which often follow a sing-song pattern. The pupils seem to enjoy reciting these verses to themselves in their homes and at play.

The Qur'an is divided into sixty parts (or esus), each of which contains a number of chapters (although very long chapters or parts thereof form certain esus). A pupil at what we may call the 'primary' level of the system is expected to memorise one or two of these sixty esus, often beginning with the short chapters. These chapters are usually those he would most require for his daily prayers. From here the pupil moves on to the next stage at which he learns the alphabet of the Arabic language. The Arabic alphabet is composed of twenty-six letters, all of which are consonants. Some teachers divide these letters into three, often in the ratio 5:5:3, and teach the pupil to recognise the letters by writing some of them on his slate and making him repeat the sounds several times over. This stage lasts between six and thirty-six weeks, depending on the rate at which the pupil learns to recognise the individual letters. When the teacher is satisfied that the pupil has attained the standard required for reading Arabic characters, he introduces him to the formation of syllables with 'vowels'. There are only four vowels which are simply four different notations (or signs) written above or below a consonant to indicate what vowel sound should go with it. When he is able to do this competently, the pupil then employs his newly acquired skills in the reading of the first two parts of the Quran all over again.

Some pupils start learning how to write Arabic characters as early as the first stage of the system. Others do not start until much later, for example, when they are learning the alphabet. This is generally a very slow, painstaking and rather tedious process during

which the teacher writes out the model of the verse on the writing board and the pupil copies it out below several times.

Many people think that Qur'anic education ends here, but this is only the end of what may be regarded as the primary level of the system. Although the pupil has committed the first two esus to memory and is now able to read and write in Arabic, he still generally does not know the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, except for a few translations which he picks up unconsciously either at sermons or during other ceremonies. This is the level every Muslim must pass through if he is to be able to pray and perform other religious duties since the prayers, birth, death, marriage and other religious ceremonies are usually performed in Arabic.

What we may regard as the 'secondary level of the system has a much broader and deeper curriculum. The pupil begins by learning the meaning of the verses he has committed to memory. The teacher does his best to explain the Arabic texts. But this is usually far too difficult for young minds and, in many cases, for the teacher as well. Besides knowing the meaning of the verses of the Quran the pupil is also introduced to other writings, such as the Hadith. The translation method is largely used and repetition is still fully exploited.

In the traditional system this level merges imperceptibly into the higher level (which in current usage may be termed the 'post-secondary level). It is at this stage that the pupil begins to learn grammar. The method used capitalises greatly on the mechanical rote-learning of grammatical rules. This, as the linguists often point out, is not the most effective way to teach a language meant for communication.

The course of study at this level includes grammatical inflections, syntax, logic, arithmetic, algebra, rhetoric and versification, jurisprudence, scholastic theology, commentaries on the Quran, treatises on exegesis and the principles and rules of interpretation of the laws of Islam, and the traditions of the Prophet and commentaries thereon. These are regarded as different branches of learning and it is not often that a teacher attains perfection in all of them. A scholar who is good at jurisprudence may be relatively weak at arithmetic. That is why, at this stage, the student of the Qur'anic system is often instructed by more than one mallam.

It is also at this stage that the student decides in which area he wishes to specialise. This marks the beginning of the university level. Having chosen his specialist subject, he proceeds to a university (usually one of the celebrated universities at Fez, Sankore, Timbuktu, or Al-Azhar) or continues at home learning from local specialists. By this time the student has acquired some proficiency in the Arabic language and is able to read, understand and interpret many of the works of earlier scholars in his field. At the end of

his studies he receives a license empowering him to practise as a teacher, an imam, or an alkali, depending on his area of specialisation.

In Quranic schools, unlike formal schools, there are no rigidly codified rules, but there are a few conventionalised ways of behaviour which guide the pupils - and the teachers. The teacher regards himself as the custodian of his pupils, his duty being primarily to train them to be good citizens. The school week starts on Saturday and ends on Wednesday. There is no bell to summon the pupils to school; nor is there a fixed dress.

During the month of Ramadan the older pupils accompany their teacher to his preaching ground - usually a busy and conspicuous part of the street. There it is their duty to get the place lit and the chairs arranged and to treat the audience to melodies songs and poems in praise of the Prophet. On ceremonial occasions - such as the Eid-el-Fitr, Eid-el-Kabir, Maulud Nabiyi (the Prophet's birthday) and the Lailatul Qadr ('The Night of Greatness', a night in the month of Ramadan) - the pupils present plays' based on the life of the Prophet. These are very similar to the Roman liturgical plays and the medieval miracle plays that succeeded them.

It should be noted that while the Christian missions confined their evangelistic and educational activities to the coastal and southern parts of the country, Islam with its Arabic influence was already firmly established in the northern part. Thus, while Western education became the prevalent and dominant type of education in the south, Qur'anic education remained, for many decades, the only kind of formal education in the north and when the Christian missions began to penetrate into the north, they were to limit their activities to the non-Muslim areas. Lord Lugard, the first High Commissioner for the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, declared, in 1902, an education policy which specifically advised the Christian missions to direct their activities to the non-Muslim areas of the north. Consequently, Qur'anic schools, essentially for religious instruction and for the reading of the Qur'an, flourished in the north. In 1913 there were some 19,073 Qur'anic schools with an enrolment of 143,311. By 1913 the school had an enrolment of 300 pupils. By 1922 the Katsina Teachers College was opened. Training centres for elementary school teachers were also opened at Bauchi and Katsina. In 1928 another centre was opened at Toro. By 1931 there were twenty-nine Western education schools in the north run by the native administrations with a total enrolment of 1,931 students, excluding schools run by the voluntary agencies.

Christian influence on Education during the Colonial Period

The first general remark on the history of education in colonial Africa is that foreign missions (Christian or Islamic) with interests in Africa pioneered and dominated the

educational sector for many years. This pioneering work in education should be judged in the context of the missions' early recognition of the supreme importance of education in the successful prosecution of their evangelistic assignments. Therefore, education for the propagation of the gospel - to win African souls for Christ - was made a central objective of mission education in colonial Africa. In the later years of colonisation, when the colonial governments began to show interest in education, the general goal of education did not seem to have changed. What seemed to have changed was the shift in emphasis - a shift from a purely religious education to a diluted semi-secular education which emphasised the role of the school in the continued furtherance of colonial interests in Africa. All the countries covered in this work shared this common characteristic in the development of their educational systems.

A third general observation common to Africa's colonial system of education is that there were conscious and obvious attempts, first by the foreign missions and later by the colonial governments, to educate the African away from his culture. This feature was more pronounced in the French colonies where education meant frenchifying the African. This is not to play down Britain's guilt in this attempt. For example, indigenous schools, usually referred to as the bush schools, were reinstituted into 'catechetical' schools (as in Kenya, for instance) and the first village elementary schools. The highly sophisticated POO school system in Liberia and Sierra Leone was almost completely eradicated in the colonial period.

A fourth common characteristic of the colonial system of education in Africa was the lack of co-ordination, particularly in the early years of colonisation when the missions, to the near exclusion of the governments, dominated the provision of education to the people. Indeed, each mission or voluntary agency concentrated on its respective area of operation without much regard for developments outside it (Taiwo, 1980).

Thus far, we have noted the missionary dominance of educational objectives which, in turn, limited the curriculum of the mission schools to the essentials of the Christian or Muslim life. In addition to religion, reading, writing and arithmetic were made the pillars of every school curriculum. The narrowness of the school curriculum remained relatively unchanged even after the increased government involvement in education. Religious education still dominated the curriculum while the entire school system grew increasingly bookish and examination-oriented. This development was common to both the British and French colonies where schools were used basically for preparing the African for the semi-skilled job market. In fact, the volume and quantity of education the colonial administrators were willing to give to the Africans were the barest minimum necessary for such auxiliary positions as clerks, interpreters, preachers, pupil-teachers, and so on.

In terms of quality, structure, curriculum, examinations and certificates, the French colonial schools were almost exactly like their counterparts in France. The curricula were decided by officials in the Ministry of Colonies in Paris. The African schoolchild had to recite French poems, sing French hymns and learn French literature, and was taught French geography and the history of France. He had to contend with French teachers, particularly at the secondary schools (lycées) and, of course, grapple with a foreign language as the medium of instruction. By the time the child qualified for the Baccalauréat he was, in the words of Mumford and Orde-Brown, French in all but the colour of his skin. According to an on-the-spot assessment of the quality of French colonial schools, with the Bamako schools at Mali as reference, Mumford and Orde-Brown wrote: the general impression gained from a visit to the Bamako School was that the institutions were equal in standing and equipment to the best that Europe can produce. Using the term in its biological sense, these schools are the 'growing points' of French civilization in Africa. In general, French colonial education was essentially a means of producing a nucleus of native aristocracy who would eventually propagate French ideals and uphold French ways of life. Britain, on its part, showed some concern for the adaptation of education to the African situation. In fact, the policy statement issued by the British government in 1925 as a result of the Phelps-Stokes Commission on African Education noted: 'Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life. Consequently Britain suggested vocational education in place of the prevalent concentration on academic education. But this preference was not sufficiently backed up in practice since there was no corresponding growth in industry, agriculture and commerce to guarantee recipients of vocational education a place in the job market. Hence, for example, the insistence on the primacy of industrial and manual education in Sierra Leone as far back as 1926 failed to change the people's preference for classics and literary academic work. While Britain made efforts, though somewhat superficial and insincere, at adapting colonial education to African situations, France's colonial duty in the field of education was, according to Governor Roume, to produce native trained staff who must be auxiliaries in every field and assume the status of a carefully chosen elite. The other task of education, Governor Roume added, was to bring the masses through schools nearer to France and to transform the 'native' system of living. Thus, in place of British partnership and adaptation, the French stood for association and assimilation: and the French colonial school system consequently remained wholly French in character, structure, content and methodology.

Another feature of British colonial education was the principle of racial segregation perpetuated in Kenya and Tanzania. There was also the 'indirect rule system' in northern

Nigeria with its consequence of an imbalance of educational development between the northern and southern areas of that country. In Kenya and Tanzania different schools were established for the different racial groups: Europeans, Asians, Arabs and Africans. In Nigeria the Qur'anic schools were allowed to flourish in the Muslim north while Christian education flourished in the Christian south. One of the effects of this segregational feature of British colonial education was the lack of uniformity in standards and in facilities amongst the African schools. This became in the later years of colonisation the target of attack by a few educated Africans in those countries. Another effect of this development was the growth of community involvement in education in British colonies.

Apparently in recognition of the need to promote local participation in education, Britain decentralised the control of education and the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, instituted in 1923, gradually shed its controlling powers, first to territorial departments of education and later to regional and local bodies.

Closely associated with this decentralised control of education was the introduction of a new system of administration and supervision of educational development in the whole of British tropical Africa. This new system also became necessary for the implementation of a new financing system introduced in response to the demand of missionary and other voluntary bodies for government financial assistance. The financial assistance system known as grants-in-aid, which was meant to supplement the efforts of the missions and other voluntary agencies, soon developed to permit government's supervision and inspection of non-government schools to determine qualification for recipients and to ensure some uniformity in standards. Schools which did not qualify for government grants were privately run, drawing their finances exclusively from contributions of the missionary bodies, private individuals, local authority and community organisations. In some countries non-government schools began to earn such grants-in-aid as early as 1870, and by 1925 grants-in-aid rules were already laid down in countries such as Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria.

The introduction of the system of grants-in-aid, and the resultant classification of schools into aided and unaided schools in British colonies intensified the Africans' demand for more government involvement in the provision of more and better education for the people. In Tanzania political parties were used to press the agitation for more schools; the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), as it was then called, opened primary schools and turned them over to parents' associations. The role of such political parties, local communities and unions in the development of education during the colonial era is an important landmark in the history of education in British Africa, whereas in French Africa during the same period such laudable development was comparatively non-existent. The French policy of association and assimilation seemed to have drowned the

few nationalist voices in French Africa in this direction. For example, rather than expand higher education facilities in the French colonies, the French Colonial Office in Paris preferred to give scholarships to Africans for higher studies in Paris. Mali had no higher institution of university status but, in the 1959-60 school year, for example, there were 158 Malians receiving higher education on government scholarships.

The school systems varied between the British and French colonies partly because the French were obliged to follow the metropolitan pattern. Nevertheless, in spite of differences of nomenclature and organisation, the conventional division into primary, secondary and higher levels can be discerned in the respective chapters of this book. While higher education in the British colonies was largely the development of academic intellectualism, some measure of professionalisation and vocational education was introduced by the French. Mali, as an example of the French system, had separate specialised institutions to cater for the different professions and vocational trades. In contrast, Britain established single institutions to offer specialisation in a number of professions and trades. In Nigeria, for example, trade centres were opened at the secondary level while at the higher education level the Yaba Higher College offered specialisation in medicine, agriculture, engineering, surveying and teacher training.

This was, in effect, a system comprising eight years of primary and four years of secondary education. This system was regarded unsatisfactory and in 1930 E. R. J. Hussey, the first Director of Education for Nigeria, proposed a 6-6 system comprising six years elementary school with infant classes 1 and 2 and primary standards 1 to 6; and a secondary education comprising middle schools of two years duration and secondary forms 1 to 4. The Hussey school system was not accepted by the mission schools.

The 1947 Memorandum on Education tried to harmonise the school system into junior primary of infant classes 1 and 2 and elementary classes 1 and 2, and senior primary of elementary classes 3 and 4. The Northern Provinces however, retained until 1953 their own system of four years of elementary schools followed by five years of middle consisting of Remove and Middle 1 to 4. With regionalisation of the country in 1951, regional school systems emerged. The Western Region operated a 6-6 system, Eastern Region a 7-5 system, Northern Region

7-6 and Lagos continued the 8-6 system. The school system has since been standardised into a 6-5 system throughout the country (B. Fafunwa and J. U. Asiku (1982) London (pubs) George Allen and Unwin Education in Africa A comparative survey)

Another landmark in the history of colonial education in Nigeria was the impact of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies, as it was called when it was established in 1923. One important example of this impact

was the Education Ordinance introduced in 1926. The Ordinance made provisions for a board of education consisting of a director of education, a deputy director, an assistant director and not fewer than ten representatives of the missions and other voluntary agencies working in the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

In 1927 a scheme for the creation of supervisory personnel was created. By this scheme all school agencies were to appoint full-time supervisors of schools. The government was to indemnify the agencies for the salaries of the supervisors and other expenses connected with their work. In the same year (1927) the colonial government made an important addition to its list of schools when it founded Queen's College, Lagos, a secondary school for girls. In 1929 two government training colleges were established, one at Ibadan and the other at Umuahia.

In 1930 a system of visiting teachers was created as another supervisory and controlling device to ensure high standards. These were government teachers who visited schools, particularly unassisted schools, to render some help, though they often failed to help and the visits were more like military inspections than an educational experience.

In the year 1929 the Departments of Education of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria were combined to form one Department of Education for Nigeria. E. R. J. Hussey was appointed the first Director of Education for the country in 1930.

Educational Development during the Post-Independence Era 1960-79

Primary and Secondary Education

The pace of educational expansion set in motion in the mid-1950s by the launching of the UPE scheme in the former Western Region and later, partially, in the former Eastern Region seemed to have lost its momentum in the 1960s. The number of primary schools, for example, declined from 15,703 in 1960 to 14,976 in 1964. The Civil War (May 1967 to January 1970) further aggravated the decline.

Another development which slowed down the pace of primary school expansion in the 1960s was the apparent shift in emphasis from quantity to quality. This shift was manifested in the merging of schools, particularly in the then East-Central State, ostensibly to increase efficiency. However, in the opening years of the 1970s, as a result of the end of the Civil War, the number of primary schools rose again. In 1971, the number of primary schools rose to 15,324 with an enrolment of 3,894,539. In 1973 the corresponding figures were 14,502 schools with 4,662,400 enrolments. On the whole, primary school enrolment increased from 2,912,618 in 1960 to 4,662,400 in 1973 - an increase of 62 per cent in thirteen years. The 1975-80 development plans ushered in a

most profound boom for primary education in the country. The plan explicitly stated that Universal Primary Education is a pre-requisite for equalization of opportunities for education across the country in all its known facets." Hence the federal military government introduced, in September 1976, a system of free universal primary education (UPE) throughout the federation. Under the scheme, primary education will continue to be of six years' duration throughout the country. Children aged 6 or who will be 6 before the end of the calendar year for which admission is sought are qualified for enrolment.

Secondary education consists of the secondary grammar; technical and vocational; commercial; the secondary modern introduced by the government of former Western Region in 1955 and now phased out; and the teacher training colleges. Secondary grammar schools are the most popular (see Table 10.2) and these schools prepare students for higher education, though many of their pupils go on to vocational training and employment. The technical, vocational and commercial secondary schools are expected to prepare students for middle-level job positions while the teacher training colleges prepare teachers for primary schools.

The modern schools existed in the former Western Region (which included what is now Bendel State) but they are now either replaced by other types of secondary schools or closed down. In this first part of the section on secondary education, the focus will be in the grammar type. Secondary grammar school enrolment showed some modest increase during the period 1960-73. In 1960 there were some 325 secondary grammar schools in the country, enrolling altogether some 19,883 students. The number of such institutions increased to 1,327 in 1964 with an enrolment of 205,002. In 1971 the number of schools declined to 1,234, partly as a result of the Civil War and partly because of the merging of some schools in the war-affected areas. Despite the decline in the number of schools, enrolment increased that year to 343,313, and in 1973 the figure rose to 448,908 in some 1,499 schools. Thus, secondary school population rose from 135,364 in 1960 to 448,904 in 1973. This represents a 232 per cent increase in thirteen years. This increase in secondary school enrolment was partly the result of the UPE scheme introduced in the old Western Region and in parts of the Eastern. A sharp increase in primary school enrolment usually has a corresponding impact on secondary school enrolment. An acute bottleneck situation usually created at the secondary school level when primary school enrolment far exceeds available secondary education facilities. This appears to be the case in the Nigerian education system. In 1971, for example, there were altogether 15,324 primary schools in the country compared to 1,234 secondary schools that same year. The 15,324 primary schools had an enrolment of 3,894,539 pupils while the 1,234 secondary schools enrolled some 343,313 students - a primary/ secondary school enrolment difference of 3,551,226.

Higher Education

The introduction of higher education into Nigeria was initiated by E. R. J. Hussey. In 1930 Hussey in the Nigerian Legislature Council, introduced a three-tier system of education to be made up of an elementary level, a middle level and a third or higher level which he called 'vocational training for the production of qualified assistants in medicine and engineering and teachers for the higher middle schools.

The first institution of the higher level, called the Higher College, was sited at Yaba near Lagos, and admitted its first students in 1932.

It was hoped that the college would develop to a level at which its students would obtain at Yaba external degrees of British universities; and that it would eventually develop into a university college. This goal was realised in 1948 when the students of Yaba moved to Ibadan to form the beginning of the University College, Ibadan.

Initially the Yaba college had the following departments: medicine, agriculture, engineering, surveying and teacher training. Some of the courses lasted for upwards of five years but all led to intermediate manpower qualifications for assistant positions in their various professions.

The Higher College was controlled by the Director of Education. The college was extremely restrictive in both its entrance and graduating requirements. Only a few students, mainly from the government colleges at Ibadan and Umuahia, gained admission, and fewer still managed to go through successfully. For instance, of the 365 students admitted to the college between 1932 and 1944 only 181 managed to scrape through; the remaining 184 failed.

Partly because of the unsatisfactory progress of higher education in West Africa with its production of frustrated middle-level manpower after years of arduous labour, and partly because of the Second World War, the Colonial Office in 1943 appointed a Commission on Higher Education in West Africa under the leadership of the Rt Hon. Walter Elliot with the following terms of reference: To report on the organization and facilities of the existing centres of higher education in British West Africa, and to make recommendations regarding future university development in the area. The commission submitted two reports to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1944. The majority report of nine members, including the chairman and the three African members, recommended as follows:

- (1) There should be a university college in Nigeria, a university college in the Gold Coast, and certain reorganisation of higher education and new developments should be carried out in Sierra Leone in close connection with Fourah Bay College.

- (2) . The university college in Nigeria should include arts and science courses; and professional schools of medicine, agriculture, forestry and veterinary science and teacher training.
- (3) The university college in the Gold Coast should include arts and science courses and an institute of education to specialize in educational research and teacher training.
- (4) The university college in Sierra Leone should include arts and science up to intermediate level and teacher training. Along with these would be associated an arts degree course for theological students to be financed by the Church Missionary Society, the proprietors of the college
- (5) The university colleges should be centres of research in West Africa and the colleges should provide facilities for visiting research workers.

The commission also recommended that the university college for Nigeria should be sited at Ibadan. The minority report was presented by five of the fourteen members.

This group was headed by Arthur Creech Jones and recommended the immediate establishment of only one institution of university rank, as against four by the majority report, to serve the whole of British West Africa. This should be called the West African University College and should be sited at Ibadan in Nigeria. Each of the dependencies - Nigeria, Gold Coast and Sierra Leone - in addition was to have a territorial college to be concerned with:

- 1.provision of courses of intermediate level,
- 2.training of teachers and social welfare workers,
- 3.organisation of adult education and extra-mural activities.

After completing a two-year course at the intermediate institutions, students were to proceed to the West African University College at Ibadan for the completion of the degree course.

54 nos (Fafuwa, A.B and Asiku, J.U, (ed) education in Africa: A comparative survey london: (George Allen and unwin, 1982).

The report of the Elliot Commission was first accepted by the Conservative government in Britain in June 1945. The following Labour government, in which Mr. Creech Jones was Colonial Secretary, preferred the minority report, but the demand for each colony to have its own university college was so strong, particularly from the Gold Coast, that the government was forced to adopt the main report.

Conclusion

It has been established that the process of education in Africa states has resulted in the rapid socio-economic development and co-operation among the Africa States. This mechanism of education has been embraced and supported by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

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