

The Current Zimbabwe Education and Development: Is it a Case of Broken Promises or perpetuation of Colonial Mentality

Saziso Mukomana^{1*}, Lincolyn Moyo²

¹Lecturer, Faculty of Arts and Education, Zimbabwe Open University, Zimbabwe

²Lecturer, United College of Education, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

*Corresponding author

Saziso Mukomana

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Abstract: To most, if not all, African countries then just emerged from many decades of colonial discriminatory education policies. Educational expansion was seen as a catalyst for inclusion and leveller of all inequalities. This role and ability of education to bring oppressed people out of their “ignorance and underdevelopment” in the 21st century becomes a potential and controversial issue to warrant contemporary research. What makes the issue even more controversial is that the liberating thought of education itself is a Western alchemist fallacy. Further impetus is given by general criticism and researched evidence that Western centric African education orientation is failing to meet African contemporary developmental expectations haunted by a plethora of challenges. In trying to answer the above controversies, this research utilized qualitative research paradigm approaches. Data was collected from libraries and the internet using purposive sampling of textual data. Collected data was analysed using the ‘constant comparison’ approach through open coding, note-taking and categorising. Given the above skepticism, this research discovered that the current Zimbabwe education system is reactionary in approach, at a time when it ought to be tripartite in nature: reactionary, active and proration. Further synthesis of literature indicated six major disparities hindering the current Zimbabwe education system from being a catalyst of development and change and these are mainly- obsolescence of the curriculum, inconsistent education policies, and imbalances, inequalities to access, poverty and scarcity of resources. In order to overcome these hindrances this research concluded that, despite the mentioned disparities, education though not an end to itself, remains one of the fundamental institutes towards sustainable development, as much as education systems are effectively planned for and efficiently funded. Hence the importance for African countries attempts for improving the existing systems. What became recommended were the following migratory measures which were; revisiting both systematic and sectorial educational planning reformation and all-round adequate educational funding?.

Keywords: Zimbabwe education; Development; Broken Promises; Colonial Mentality.

INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of most African countries’ independences, entering ‘majority’ governments replacing ‘minority’ colonial governments embraced the general alchemist perception of formal schooling as a ‘solution to all developmental challenges’. As a follow up, educational expansion was seen as a catalyst for inclusion and leveller of all inequalities [1-5]. In cognisance to that, new governments reacted to colonial challenges and made promises of free and compulsory education, empowerment to the rural poor, construction of better schools, issuing education grants to tertiary students and other education sectors, social, political and economic promises. The alchemist perception, role and ability of schooling having capacity to bring ‘intellectual and physical’ oppressed people out of their ‘ignorance and underdevelopment’ in the 21st century

becomes a potential and controversial issue to warrant contemporary research. What makes the issue even more controversial is that the liberating thought of education itself is a Western alchemist fallacy that was brought about and perpetuated by missionaries in Africa [43, 36, 13]. Further impetus is given by general criticism that Western Centric African education orientation is failing to meet African contemporary technological invention, sound economic, and democratic political developmental expectations and is haunted by a plethora of challenges [44-46]. Given the alchemist prophecy and independence promises after decades of endured independences the moot predicament is of great research potential as a yardstick instrument on the fulfilment of education developmental promises.

Not only did African countries see development driven by formal schooling as a substantial and sustainable necessity, today schooling has generally become highly recognised worldwide for occupational attainment in modern societies and thus occupies a pivotal place in social, economic and political development. However, the most debated issue about formal schooling education and its role towards economic development is, whether education contributes a direct or an indirect function to national economic growth or national development in general? This paper attempts to assess the alchemist, also known as the schooling or institutional theory and its widely held Western centric notion that ‘formal education, Western education brings people out of their ignorance

and underdevelopment elevating them to a condition of enlightenment, modernisation and civilisation’ [43, 36, 13, 47, 48]. In evaluating the alchemist theory of seeing schooling as a solution to all developmental problems, the current Zimbabwe education orientation history will be retrieved, contemporary Zimbabwe education challenges will be listed for comparison purposes as to give factual judgement if there are any educational changes or perpetuations from colonial to contemporary times. Also of concern to the research question are development theories. Development theories will be resurrected to question the link of education to social, economic and political transformation and thereafter deductively judge educational progress and change.

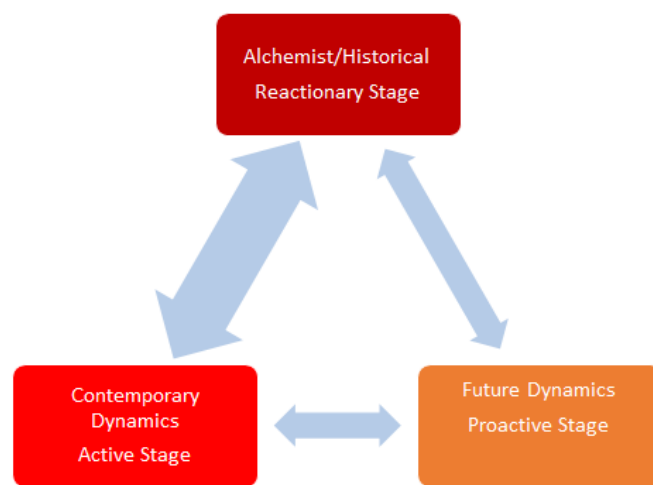


Fig-1: Illustrating the circular Trajectory of Education

Research Focus and Questions

The focus of this research is to question contemporary Africa’s education’s responsibilities? Whether Africa, particularly the current Zimbabwe education system, has fulfilled its postcolonial trajectory? Or they have become what Fanon [6] termed “Black skin, white mask” or what we could term ‘black skin covering a white soul’-Western centric culture in African schools orientated education. In order for current African education systems to be a solution to all developmental challenges, some African scholars have called for Africanisation, Endogenisation or Decolonization of philosophies of education to reverse the alchemist dictum of the ‘Black skin, white mask’ quandary [7-12]. Also of significant relevance to the research’s burden is to question, if contemporary African education systems have contributed to Africa’s physical and metaphysical development? Above all if they meet contemporary and future African power-knowledge dynamics?

Theoretical Framework

Throughout the history of education and human existence, from the Palaeolithic age to

contemporary times, most probably in future times, teaching and learning have always been used for two major developmental ends summarised by Foucault and Apple as ‘power-politics of knowledge’ [13-15]. First end being enculturation, the learning of social values, customs and behaviours (socialisation). The second end being indoctrination. In critical thought one could argue that, basically education in the world has always been used for a single utility given the interrelatedness of first and second end. The latter could be said to be part and parcel of enculturation and socialisation in reality, also education in the world has not yet reached a stage where children like in existentialism decide and have liberal freedom to choose what to learn and how to learn it, above all children or learners are rarely consulted in curriculum planning. Following the Foucault and Apple’s views, education at all times and eras remains perennial, hardly proactive and dynamic in its true essence, but always static, based on enduring truths and basic skills. Even though static in its nature [16], it has implications for today and the future depending on the reflective analysis of its implications. In other words according to Reconstructionism and De-schooling theories, education or schooling is hardly

proactive and futuristic in its trajectory. There is, however, a need today, for African schooling to be considerate of historical developments and challenges for the sake of planning ahead.

Given the historical utilitarian background of education, the 'traditional' theory of schooling is based on the widely held Western view of education from Socrates to the founders of modern schools like Comenius, that Western formal schooling brings people out of their 'ignorance and underdevelopment into a condition of enlightenment and civilisation or simple social, economic, and political development' [17-20]. Particularly, Plato saw schools as a place to prepare students according to intellectual abilities in preparation for all time's social responsibilities including the political and the economic ends. Ancient philosophers' perceptions about schooling utility ideas were furthered by among alchemists like John Amos Comenius in the 17th century. Comenius in his *Magna Didactica* described schools as 'devices to teach everybody everything'. His ideas gave birth to universal knowledge, primary education and formal education focusing on the 3Rs, organised in grades according to age developmental stages. The alchemist/Platonic ideas spread to non-Western parts of the world through colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism and today still spreading through electronic mass media-magazines, textbooks, satellite-television broadcasting and the internet.

The alchemist lenses of schooling influenced the functionalist/institutional perspective that sees schools for intellectual, political, social and economic structural purposes. The alchemist perception also could be viewed as ethnocentric and political, in their proposal to formalise and universalise education. There are certain deductive thoughts that could be assumed as true, the major one being the thought that informal education was inadequate or there was no formal education before. However, not all scholars, postmodernists, critical education theorists agree to the liberal alchemist schooling view of education, holding society together by shared values and collective agreement alone, rather than the ability of dominant groups to impose their will on subordinated groups through force, co-optation and manipulation or simply through indoctrination. Both perspectives the functionalist/institutional and the postmodernist/conflict theories are relevant to this research and their implications will be used in understanding and measuring the success of the current Zimbabwe education system and the developmental consequences of being either or both influenced by formal and informal education origins.

The Functionalist Views of Schooling, Society and Development

A number of studies [21-23] have argued for formal schooling being an important institution for

transmitting knowledge and cultural values from generation to generation, and for developing human traits that could contribute to economic input and output, social stability and the production of new knowledge. Structural functionalists in agreement with the above perception of education think that, schooling does not only teach the youth basic cognitive skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics but also transmits specific knowledge, for example, in Literature, History, the Sciences and helps students acquire higher-order-thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation and synthesis that could be applied in societal needs depending on the student's intellectual capacity [24, 5, 24]. Modern functionalism like the democratic-liberalists and the institutional functionalists' perspectives view education as a vital institution in a modern capitalist society that differs considerably from all previous societies. From the functionalist perception, schooling performs capitalistic ends in the development and maintenance of a modern 'democratic' society.

Functionalist theories about education rest on a positive view of education, a provider of social mobility, equilibrator of equal opportunity for social and economic advantages, and individual merit and talent, replace inscriptive and class variables as the most essential determinants of status. Education according to most functionalists is thus, a path in ensuring the continual movement toward the meritocratic system. Colonialists, when Africans resisted to provide cheap and forced labour since they were used to self-employment, non-monetary economies, minimal poverty were conned, convinced, and bought to see the functionalist economic picture path of schooling as more organised and systematic compared to indigenous education. Most Africans began to see true and genuine schooling as acquiring a certificate as proof for skills and employability, perceived schooling as the only way of gaining employment skills, learn new technologies, and understanding new economic trends. Parents and pupils alike regarded and still regard schooling as the key to higher incomes and status, a step toward success in a competitive, literacy success-oriented economy.

Functionalism and Development

Classic cyclical, evolutionary, human capital theories summarised in the modernisation theory, even though with a certain element of disagreement, however, agree that historical institutions and transformations are brought by institutional changes through revolution (a dramatic shift from tradition to modern), complex (multiple causes), systematic global (affecting all societies-slave trade, colonialism, imperialism and Globalisation), phased (advance through developmental stages), homogenizing (convergence), irreversible and progressive [3]. Modernisation is an interdisciplinary functionalist theory. The theory has been used by sociologists, psychologists, and political scientists, and economists,

social and cultural anthropologists. Philosophically and in the context of schooling and education which is the focus of this study, modernisation process implications seem to suggest that, the creation of modern values can be the result of human planning and that particular social institutions such as families and schools [26-28], if well organised to know their roles are of extreme importance to structural or systematic development. However, observations have shown that developing countries like Zimbabwe with higher exposure to Western civilisation formal schooling literacy, family structures, media, culture, and education do not manifest higher levels of modern values or indeed social, economic and political development (civilisation). But when it comes to the current Zimbabwe education system, some implications of the modernisation processes have indeed been experienced in the Zimbabwe education system. However, given current challenges, more radical revolutionary, institutional, and structural changes are needed.

To most Afrocentric scholars criticism of modernisation theory concerns the underlying assumption of modernisation. That modern attitudes and values are incompatible with traditional ones leading to the proposal that, modern is best and modernity comes from science, technology and innovation (as if science has no historical and traditional developmental linkages), argued by exceptionalists and triumphalists as of Western origins-sometimes known in the philosophy of science as the unity-of-science thesis [29, 30, 31]. They assume that the West alone and its universalised formal schooling education structures are the only means capable of accurate understandings of regularities of nature and social relations and their underlying causal tendencies. They believe 'there is one world, and it has a single internal order, one and only' Western civilisation [32, 33]. In contrast [4, 8, 9] argue that modernisation and science values are not incompatible with traditional ones, one could also give the example of Japan, China, Iran whose traditional forms of labour commitments seem to have contributed to economic growth, scientific revolution and development while the same commitments were seen to be an impediment of modernisation according to the Western modernisation nexus.

Another assumption about modernisation theory and the function of education is the assumption that modern values and behaviour from the West by individuals necessarily lead to socio-economic development at societal level. However, one could disagree that this causal linkage does not necessarily hold, because a society is not simply the sum total of the schooled individuals within it. For example, the most schooled in Zimbabwe have become the 'working poor' and could not be said with any certainty to effectively contribute to structural and economic development through taxation. The modernisation

theory in its assumptions about the end-point of the modernising process is ideologically biased and ethnocentric, because in terms of the criteria used to measure modernisation, for a society to become modern, it must embrace Western systems.

It is most unfortunate that most African education systems still look at the alchemist/functionalist perceptions and the West for education standards or modernisation. According to [8, 34] education on the African continent has mostly been a journey fuelled by an exogenously induced and internalised sense of inadequacy and endowed with the colonial mentality mission of devaluation, or annihilation of African creativity, agency and value systems. Such 'cultural estrangement' [25], termed 'pathological case of xenophilia' by Nyang'Oro [9] has served to reinforce in the African mind, self-devolution, self-hatred and a profound sense of inferiority that in turn compels them to 'lighten their darkness' by physical and metaphysical for Western indulgence perpetuated in the current African education systems. Current Zimbabwe education system from primary to tertiary level teaches western civilisations, philosophies and culture. Zimbabweans are brought to value western things not for their efficacy but simple because of their foreignness and persuaded to consume to death their creativity and dignity, their very own humanity. In other words development or modernisation in the current Zimbabwe education system is not to promote one single knowledge dimension or imperial heritage, postcolonial task of a curriculum is to open the space for diverse ontological narratives not to insist on erasure or a Euro-ethnic mono-discourse. African education systems to develop and contribute to sustainable economic growth should not dismiss the intrinsic value of African culture, languages, customs and practices from their curricula. It is important to ask critical questions about the knowledge included in the current Zimbabwe education system, whether it perpetuates colonial mentality or reforms from further marginalisation?

The Conflict Views of Schooling and Development

Not all schools of thought concur with functionalism/modernism as far as perceptions of formal schooling are concerned, that see society as held together by shared institutional or formal schooling values and collective agreement alone. Contemporary conflict theory, Bourdieu's Weberian central concepts of cultural capital and symbolic violence approaches agree that schooling is part of a symbolic process of cultural and social reproduction [36-38]. Direct evidence of the contribution of education to individual productivity is summarised by a research done by Berg [39], it indicated that, the better educated employees are not generally more productive, and in some cases are less productive, among samples of a wide spectrum of professions. Collins in Sadovnik [5] in a more contemporary research than Berg's, agrees with Berg by

adding that, vocational skills, always have been and are currently valued and thought to be an economic development catalyst, are not learnt in and taught in schools. Most skilled manual workers and renowned scientists Newton, Einstein, Bells and others acquired their skills on the job or casually. Retraining for important technological changes in industry has been carried out largely informally on-the-job. Berg and Collins' researches have proven true in contemporary Zimbabwe education system. Good high school, college and university grades, symbols and distinctions have been criticised not to be in tandem with practical performance in specific professions such as medicine, engineering, scientific research, teaching and other professions.

The main contribution of education to economic productivity, then, appears to occur at the level of the transition to mass literacy and does not significantly go beyond this level. Educational quality has little effect on subsequent productivity. However, in professions such as medicine and law, where education is a legal requisite for admission to practice, a comparison group of non-formally trained practitioners is not available, but in teaching some temporary teachers without teaching qualifications are said to have exceptionally done well and better than those with teaching qualifications. The debate falls under the debate of whether teaching is a 'science or an art'. Descriptions of general, non-vocational education do not support the image of schools as places where skills are widely learnt. The technical-function theory of education according to conflict theory, then, does not give an adequate account of the evidence. The current Zimbabwe economic evidence indicates, the weaknesses of the functionalist perception of schooling, no clear contributions of education-there is high literacy but high unemployment percentage, to economic development, beyond the provisions of mass literacy. This can only lead to a conclusion that economic development is driven by multiple factors and education acts as a contributory auxiliary factor, education or science orientated education (STEM) alone is not the solution to the current Zimbabwe economic development.

The conflict theories of change and development unlike functionalism, liberal-educational and institutional theories assume that the process of development do not occur in gradual and institutionalised, systematised and peaceful ways. The evolutionary and structural functionalist theories have tended to overlook the element of conflict in social systems or conversely have regarded it as pathological or abnormal to the system. Indeed one of the most frequent criticisms of these optimistic theories of education is that, they virtually ignore conflict (historical conflicts, social discrimination/inequalities, access to education, affordability of tuition, working poor, shortage of schools, infrastructure, materials and

resources, inadequate funding especially rural schools, the calibre of teachers and other conflicts) as a major dimension in social change meant to be driven by institutes like schooling. Yet a close scrutiny of history and contemporary studies, from the past to present education systems often highlights the importance of conflicts in education and society. Examples of conflict issues in the education system include the internal contradictions of a social system, who controls the education system, who funds and set education standards and for what reason, which epistemologies dominate the education system, knowledge dependency, power-politics in knowledge, struggle to get education/qualification for survival, class and income conflicts? Of much relevance to this study in cognisance of the conflict perception of education is, whether the current Zimbabwe education system is accessible by all? Have colonial discriminatory dual education institutions been totally abolished? Even though schools and universities have been expanded, do majority of people access schooling without sacrifices especially special groups like women and underprivileged, above all, is there quality education that is anti-colonial mentality?

Other Theories of Development and their implications to Education

In contrast to functional, conflict evolutionary and modernisation theories, the dependency theory focuses upon the relationships between and within societies in regards to social, cultural, political and economic structures [5, 40, 13, 41, 30]. The underlying assumption of this theory is that development and underdevelopment as relational concepts within and between societies are inversely related. A further contribution to the intellectual origins of dependency theory came from Lenin's concept of imperialism.

The dependency theory's implications to education and development is summarised by [42, 4] who point out that even in the post-independence period African education have been founded on the coloniser's models, despite the widespread talk of Africanisation since the 1960s most African education systems maintained fundamentally Western curricula and structures. The result of dependency to western perceptions of schooling has been that the type of formal schooling has only allowed scholars on the continent to develop a dependent scholarship which doesn't encourage independent thinking and theory building nor criticism or contextualisation to African situations resulting in the current peripheral and marginalised position. In other words making the current Zimbabwe curricula local, relevant and vocalise indigenous knowledge systems is its postcolonial burden. However, from general observations African teachers in their teaching continue to bring enslavement to the preoccupative benchmarks of the dominant Western scholars and its methodological paradigms. The result is that African intellectual contributions are

not advertised and promoted. Schooling continues to be a source of alienation as it does not speak of the African experiences nor does it reflect the philosophical, social realities of the communities.

In considering the educational dependency relationships between Western and African epistemologies today, it is not necessary that the West physically dominates Africa like in the colonial era, but most literature found today in Zimbabwe libraries and movies broadcasted on television, are written and have a Western centric inclination and flare. It is also true, that the leaders or education planners in Africa hold attitudes, values and beliefs in educational trends and interests consistent with those in the Western countries. However, the goals of complete self-sufficiency and autonomy by a nation are unrealistic and detrimental in the present globalised world conditions. Therefore the important question is, what kind of dependency and what kind of development should be pursued and promoted in the current given African/Zimbabwe context?

Liberation Theory

The liberation schools of thought are built upon the conviction that nothing good of significant value or profitable can be secured for the poor members of an underdeveloped society without a drastic and radical change of the socio-economic, political and cultural world order [43]. In agreement with the conflict perceptions, the liberal theorists basically take a humanistic approach to questions of education and development. Their underlying assumptions are based on the view that members of the underdeveloped societies are oppressed by the power holders of their own societies, who control the relevant economic resources such as land, industry, and wealth. Some liberal theorists like Freire [39] argue that, the main remedy for overcoming all oppression lies in the education of the oppressed to be aware of their condition. The Freirian remedy only becomes applicable to learners at a higher level of education, although, being aware of one's condition does not necessarily mean having the ability and means to liberate one's predicaments.

The Context of Schooling and Development Theories

All the schooling and development theories discussed here serve as evidence to the origins of what is termed colonial mentality in this research. The conventional perceptions of education today have its roots from the Platoian education functionalism to the technical-capitalist theory and mass schooling institutional theories. These theories have portrayed developmental effects of schooling on the individual, extended to society as a whole and universally. African countries given the historical link to the West became blindfolded to see formal education as an important, not only important, but as the only way to be civilised. Schooling today is seen by most, if not all, as a

liberating, civilising vector and necessary prerequisite for nations to participate with the developed countries in the world project of material advancement. The legitimization of schooling in this way is linked between the economic and social development. The broader picture in analysing these theories is to question, whether contemporary Zimbabwe economy needs employable school graduates like in the colonial era or critical scholars who could be of relevance to situational economic, social and political dynamics. Should contemporary education systems in Africa perpetuate colonial capitalistic labour productivity education underpinned by imperialistic epistemologies like economic and political control of the people by schooling them to be employable and not creators of wealth or any perceived destination? In other words can education, well organised and adequately funded education offset social inequalities or brings forth economic development? Or it is but just a Western alchemist fallacy?

Current Education Challenges in Zimbabwe

As the above theories may have a fair share of their criticism of the current Zimbabwe education system, a number of Zimbabwe scholars have written widely in this area [37]. However, synthesis of these reports indicates self-assurance, optimism and focus on quantitative educational improvements. But the key issue here is to question how postcolonial Zimbabwe education has addressed qualitative colonial discriminatory educational tendencies? The focus of this research is however, not to revisit Zimbabwe educational changes since 1980 like most Zimbabwe education researchers, but to look at current education challenges that need to be addressed for today's and future development. In cognisance of discussed theories and observations there are six major disparities hindering education from playing a critical role to sustainable development, in addition to well-known quantitative challenges like inadequate schools, poor school infrastructure, laboratories, equipment, resources, outdated and underequipped libraries, limited internet facilities and other contemporary teaching technologies, poor remuneration and high student-teacher ratios and other challenges. In synthesising literature Zimbabwe educational challenges could be summarised under six major disparities hindering the current Zimbabwe education system to be a catalyst for development and change mainly-obsolescence of the curriculum, inconsistent education policies, and imbalances, inequalities to access, poverty and scarcity of resources. According to further synthesis of literature there are also three major qualitative challenges closely related to all the six challenges and to education and economic development: the current Zimbabwe education system does not check the relevance of the education to students' contemporary educational needs; it does not create inventive individuals for real-life-skills with social sensitivity and scientific attitudes and culture in almost all levels of schooling and it does not

imbibe enough social responsibility which leads to hazardous fragmentation of the society and other social problems.

To address these challenges, it could be accepted on paper that the effective and non-politicised educational planning, commitment and adequate funding are a necessity. Assuming that organised planning has potential to improve and develop countrywide schooling infrastructures, produce well-all-round educated graduates, retain qualified and adequately paid teachers, establish capacities in diverse essential developmental sectors such as planning, financial management, curriculum development and so forth. In reality this may not be so. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs reports (2011-2016) they say, "Despite encouraging progress in access to education the school completion rate is still lagging" A large number of Zimbabwe children and adolescents continue to drop out of school, without acquiring basic education, knowledge, skills and real-life-skills. In addition, many children and youth remain totally excluded from education due to financial, social, political, cultural or physical barriers. Those who can access schooling also face challenges like access to wide spectrum of science curriculum, textbooks, teacher incompetency, teacher inexperience, demotivated teachers and others. Exclusion of a large number of primary, secondary and tertiary students in Zimbabwe education is worsened by a number of qualitative and quantitative causes that have existed from colonial times to the contemporary era, hampering progress and national development.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following findings were discovered:

In trying to understand the contribution of formal education in economic development, two major opposing theories-functionalism and conflict perspectives were revisited to understand their opinion on the matter. The functionalists think education does indeed bring economic development while the conflict theories reject the functionalist perspective. This research found the conflict's perspective more sound given the implications of the conflict theory found in the current Zimbabwe-lack of fulfilment of independence promises like better education and schools for all, improved working conditions for teachers and many more. However, functionalist perspectives are also true about education playing a catalytic role in development like provision of human capital and professional resources and needed main power for all developmental sectors.

Education or schooling as a contributor to national growth or economic development and improvement is particularly important because it is a link between the economic and social structure and the minds of children of the future workforce and political participants, provided the education does not perpetuate

colonial enslavement, discriminatory and indoctrinatory mentality. But taking this straight forward notion of education and development is being unrealistic. The term development has been used in a variety of contexts often clouded with political and ideological overtones. In this research development was seen as a social, political and economic upward movement of the entire social system. In other words as long as there is poverty, unemployment, inequalities, poor remuneration, shortage of schools, unaffordable school tuition, there is no development. Therefore, because of all the present social ills, the current Zimbabwe education has failed to bring development.

Africa is arguably the least developed continent in the world. According to this research Africa's plans to challenge historical mishaps and overcome contemporary uprisings in education is a symptom indicator that the education system is not well organised, at the same time one cannot be in denial of the intertwinedness of developmental issues to other key institutions. Zimbabwe and Africa will not be able to develop without adequate investment in people and effective education. According to the research findings there are a number of challenges that hinder effectiveness of education to national development but those discussed here were mainly focusing on education being unpractical to social, economic and political needs, access challenges, inadequate funding, discrimination and inequalities in the distribution of educational resources, just to mention just a few.

CONCLUSION

Even though education has been recognised as being relevant to national economic development it is, however, not a single most relevant contributor to sustainable economic development. Education significantly contributes more to individual social mobility development than national development. However, it is the alchemist assumption that if development is initiated at individual level it will consequentially spill over or be a basis for national development. In the case of most African countries the alchemist assumption has been proven not to be true at all times. There are many social institutes that contribute to economic development but of much significance is that, all institutions that are tributaries to sustainable development have their basic foundational roots on either formal or informal education. In other words education has three functions to development, the integrative, the egalitarian and developmental. These functions are based on the assumption that access to education is free, universal, well planned, effectively financed, and has an effective curriculum that matches real life skills and other relevant skills and the school system can render the opportunities of self-development and national development. True in theory, but in reality especially with most African education systems, education is not free and compulsory, most do not access adequate education, those who access face a

plethora of challenges that incapacitate them from reaching full potential development.

The liberating thought of formal schooling is a colonial Western alchemist fallacy, not even in the developed countries themselves is formal schooling the sole contributor to national economic development. Western centric African education orientation is failing to meet African contemporary developmental expectations, but if decolonised, effectively planned for, and efficiently funded, education remain one of the fundamental institutes towards sustainable development. This research discovered that the current Zimbabwe education system hinders positive contribution to national development due to lack of self-driven enthusiasm to fulfil independence educational promises, thorough supervision and adequate resource investment to realise those promises. In other words current Zimbabwe education system is reactionary in approach at a time it ought to be reactionary, active and proration. Further synthesis of literature indicated six major challenges hindering the current Zimbabwe education system to be a catalyst of development and change mainly, obsolescence of the curriculum-or perpetuation of colonial mentality especially failing to offer formal colonised science subjects to all learners, inconsistent education policies, imbalances, inequalities, poverty and scarcity of resources.

In order to overcome these challenges this research concluded that, despite mentioned disparities education though not an end to itself, remain one of the fundamental institutions towards sustainable development, as long as education systems are inclusive and adequately planned for.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the research findings and the conclusion of the research, the research recommends the following:

- 10.1 Fulfilment of the independence promises
- 10.2 Decolonisation of African/Zimbabwe education systems
- 10.2 Change the Zimbabwe curriculum from theory to real-life-skills orientation
- 10.3 Revisiting both sectorial and systematic education planning in Zimbabwe
- 10.4 Adequate funding of education

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