

RAPID SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA VIA EDUCATION AND VIABLE INFORMAL ECONOMY

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Abstract

Improvement in quality, value and speedy growth of our informal sectors of goods and services has been one of the greatest problem/challenge facing African countries (Nigeria inclusive). This particular challenge added to bad leadership and corruption had contributed immensely to problem of African under development. Year by year, African leaders borrow loans from foreign countries without proper or with on investment in the informal sector of our economy, Nigerian present leaders are good examples. It is our ultimate purpose in this research to portray the vital roles of education and informal business sectors as far as sustainable economic development is concerned. We do this in Philosophical style, through analysis or using analytical method of inquiry, resolving complex expressions into simpler and more basic ones. We clarify expression by elucidation of its use in a discourse. We analyze concepts, words, ideas, experiences etc, in order to bring deeper meaning and clarity of thought. Here one sees the beneficence of quality education as it is an enlightenment and thus improves informal sectors of business by training and retraining of all the stake holders of the informal sector: the chief executive officers (CEOs), directors/managers and the staffs through seminars, workshops, and conferences to ensure effective or efficient management and increasing production or out -put as far as goods and services are concerned. And with this, sustainable development is assured in the economic sector. Education is capable of achieving this as it is a process as well as an instrument both for social and economic development, as it helps to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, and developmental skills needed most in our informal sector and even beyond. Thus, much improvement or development is drawn to African economy owing to enlightenment through education and improvement or development in country's informal sector. The continent will be drawn out from darkness of underdevelopment towards the light of development through proper investment in its informal sector.

Keywords: Education, Informal Sector, Development, Sustainable Development, Sustainable Developmental Goals.

Introduction

As the current pandemic, Corona virus, known with the code, COVID 19 is still spreading like a wild fire; its impacts on so many sectors of African life were also enormous. Many sectors of the worlds' economy went into lockdown, likewise so many nations or countries in Africa. And with the introduction of COVID 19 sanitary rules or precautionary measures that were aimed at defeating the virus, like social distancing, staying at home, staying alone to stay safe, one instantly sees a serious problem or challenge or even an attack to the fundament or the foundation of African communitarian life or communalism. African communalism as an African way is community oriented life. It is never individualistic. Africans really got help to manage the pandemic, not all that from individual African government but mostly through informal sector of African business economy, thus, the need for African leaders to build a better informal business sector of economy, need to focus on human capital development and invest on people as their own most important assets. This is owing to the rate of poverty in Africa and African countries have not met up with the expected millennium developmental goals.

Describing the real *sitz im leben* (situation or settings of life) of Africa people and which we knew too well has not changed at moment, the fathers African Synod of 1994 holds that Africa is well known for its poverty. Thus, they write:

All over towns and villages are faces of malnourished people, squalid living conditions, diseased with scanty medical facilities, roadside beggars, street children, etc...One common situation without any doubt is that Africa is full of problems. In all the nations, there is abject, tragic mismanagement of available scarce resources, political instability and social disorientation. The result stare us in the face: misery, wars, despair. In the world controlled by rich and powerful nations, Africa has practically become an irrelevant appendix, often forgotten and neglected ¹

Quality education and building a better informal sector of business economy in Africa will be a better option to African poverty, thus providing a veritable terrain for sustainable development in African continent. And before we plunge into deep analysis pertaining to this, we first define the basic concepts in this work, we begin with Africa.

Africa

Having mentioned Africa and its communalism above, add that Africa is the world's second largest and second most populous continent after Asia. At about 30.3 million Km² including adjacent islands. It covers 6% of earth's total surface area and 20% of its land area. With 1.3 billion people as of 2018, it accounts for about 16% of the world's human population. Despite the wide range of natural resources, the continent is the least wealthy per capital in large part due to the legacies of Europeans colonization in Africa. Despite this low concentration of wealth, recent economic expansion and the large and young population make Africa an important economic market in the border global context.

Informal Sector

This refers to those workers who are self-employed or who work for those who are self-employed. People who earn a living through self-employment, in most cases are not on payrolls, and have no regular working hours and thus are not taxed. They are with little or no job security. They have odd working hours and sometimes they find it difficult to make savings due to low wage. Informal sectors include hawkers, marketers, unpaid workers in family business, car washers, agricultural workers, street vendors, artisans, small veranda businesses, cross border traders, casual laborers in construction, to mention but a few. Opposed to this are formal sector or modern industrial sector comprising all jobs with specific working hours, regular wages and the worker's job is assured. But informal sector "is the part of any economy that is neither taxed nor monitored by any form of government"² Some people are in this informal sector because of retrenchments, other may be school leavers or widow seeking to make a living and the likes. Is only when these starter of the society are trained and empowered that African poverty is reduced.

Development

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines development as the process of gradually becoming bigger, stronger or more advanced³. The concept *development* has a very complex nature because it relates to virtually every aspect of man and the physical universe. Hence, it is very difficult to arrive at a universal definition of development. It is really an onerous and herculean and

almost an impossible possibility to arrive at a comprehensive and generally acceptable configuration of the term development as many scholars vary in their individual definitions.

For Walter Rodney, it is *an overall social process which is dependent upon the outcome of man's effort to deal with his natural environment*⁴. He thus sees development from an economic point of view. Development is a process that is on-going. In other words, it is dynamic rather than being static.

According to Pantaleon Iroegbu, development means: the progressive unfolding of inner potentialities of a given reality. It is to de-envelope, that is to bring out to light existential, functional and epistemic, what was enveloped, folded or hidden⁵. Elucidating a little on the etymology which Iroegbu has touched in this his definition, we portray that development comes from French word *developper*, this means to bring out from envelop, something that was enveloped. It is to "de", "un" and "velope" to wrap from this, "to develop" literally means to unwrap. Thus, development entails the unwrapping, unfolding, un-veloping, unveiling, outgrowth or growing out of envelopment, hidden or latent. Development is the unwrapping of potentials. In the same vein, Lebret holds that a development has to do with growth and creativity of all human potentials achieved at the lowest possible cost in human suffering and in sacrificed value⁶.

In United Nations Development Program (UNDP), defines development in its declaration as:

a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process which aims at the constant improvement, of the wellbeing of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in the development and in the fair distribution of the benefit resulting there from. ⁷

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the development that meets the need of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. It is the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs⁸. It is a way of organizing society so that it can exist in the long term, taking into account both the imperatives present and those of the future, such as

the preservation of the environment and natural resources or social and economic equity.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

We have in the past, environmental protection, economic viability and socio-political equity, but nowadays, we talk of sustainable developmental goals which are the blue print to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Sustainable development goals are a global goals or a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all⁹ (by 2030). The 17 SDGs were adapted by all United Nations member states in 2015 general assembly, with 169 targets to reach or to be achieved by 2030. The goals and targets are universal, meaning they apply to all countries around the world, not just poor countries. Here are the 17 sustainable development goals to transform our world:

1. No poverty; 2. Zero Hunger; 3. Good Health and well being; 4. Quality Education;
5. Gender equality; 6. Clean Water and Sanitation; 7. Affordable and clean energy;
8. Decent work and Economic Growth; 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure;
10. Reduced Inequality; 11. Sustainable city and communities; 12. Responsible consumption and production; 13. Climate action; 14. Life below water; 15. Life on land; 16. Peace and justice, strong institution; 17. Partnership to achieve the goal¹⁰

The Purpose of Development

Taking off from the holy writ, we read that God after creating the first species of human beings gave them the injunction to *be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it*¹¹. To conquer the world or the earth means to advance or develop it. And this advancement or development is brought about in informal sector of business sector through education and application of science and technology, but at the end, it will definitely be to solve man's problem. Thus, one sees already that the purpose of informal sector development / technological development is to better the lot of mankind. In line with this therefore, any developmental

process that is aimed at destroying the human person is to be rejected for it is against ethical principles of man's basic right to life.

Development is not meant to devalue the human person for the benefit of property. Example could be seen in these countries that invent neutron bomb (America, Iraq, Iran, North Korea and the Likes) which is capable of killing or effacing humankind but sparing their weapons. Thus, such development has no ethical value for it is devoid of the transcendent dimension of mankind. Any development that lacks this aspect of human nature cannot be said to be genuine. Man is both the agent and determinant of development for a particular technological advancement to be confirmed as authentic or genuine development, it must be useful for man. Development is measured by the essential nature of mankind. Pope Paul VI affirms that every programme has service of man as its *raison d'être* and should reduce inequalities, discrimination and freemen from servitude. And development is for social progress and economic growth and man is truly man when he is master of his own advancement as decreed by his creator whose possibilities and exigencies he assumes.¹² Authentic development is more than economic progress as Pope Paul VI in his *Populorum progressio* reminds us it is about the development of people as human beings. True progress allows every individual to grow into the person God intended them to be.

Ruch and Anyanwu portraying enhancement of human dignity and life as first in order of development and somehow contesting with the Western countries in their claims to be developed or advanced nations owing to their advanced technological advancements such as roads, better communication systems, greater industries, hospitals, schools and the likes writes *this is good, but what does it serve? Does it make the human person happier, live longer or improve his\her dignity?* Thus they continued that we do not need motorcars and televisions, civil service and democracy, universities and motorways in order to enhance the dignity of human life. However, they maintain that they are good means but never end in themselves¹³

Education

Etymologically education is derived from the Latin word "educare" which means to lead forth, drag out or to pull out ideas which are believed to be innate from childhood. So, education implies to lead out of darkness, a bringing forth into light. It is enlightenment.

Education has various definitions. Education is defined as the process or means by which the individual is acclimatized to the culture or environment in which he is born in order to advance it.¹⁴ Education here is believed to be process and an instrument both for social and economic development. Again, Education has been defined as a deliberate systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and sensibilities.¹⁵ Here education is seen from the universal sense of its formal and informal contents. All aspects of learning that enables the individual interact fully with his environment is emphasized. Is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.¹⁶ **Educational methods** includes: storytelling, discussion, teaching, training and directed research? Education is the primary vehicle through which children and even adults use to learn the norms, values and skills they needed to function in society

Other writer, Reid holds that “education is a purposive activity towards ends which are rightly or wrongly deemed to be good”¹⁷. While Essien holds that we think of education and educated in terms of the very restrictive labels of engineers, mathematicians, doctors, lawyers, nurses rather than in those of citizens.

Western Education

From the Idealist perspective, the etymology, Latin educare, which is to lead forth, drag out or pull out ideas which are believed to be innate from childhood.¹⁸ For Plato and other idealists, education involves stimulation of innate ideas or abilities in an individual, to grow and blossom into original thought and wisdom. For John Locke and other Realists, the Latin educare means sending in or putting in ideas into the mind of a child which is believed to be blank or empty at birth. Here, it involves forming or training the individual with experiences. Which are acquired through senses and these senses provides the mind with impressions and information.

Now, without going further into the rationalists and empiricists war on the sources of human knowledge, we conclude that knowledge comes from senses as well as from reason or intellect. So, it is both subjectivity/objectivity, materiality/immateriality, and involves interiority/exteriority and knowledge is perfection for the more one knows, the more perfect he or she becomes. We now see types of education.

Informal education: In the basic division of education, we have informal education and this refers to the one that can occur outside a structured curriculum, it can occur through conversation and exploration and enlargement of experience can occur unnoticed. It includes home schooling, auto-didacticism (self-teaching) and youth work.

Formal Education is the one normally delivered by trained teachers in a systematic intentional way, within a school, higher education or school or university. Is on regular basis, formally recognized, program is rigid and credential is gotten.

Non-formal Education includes various structured situations which do not either have the level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation and certification associated with formal learning, but, have more structure than that associated with informal which typically take place naturally and spontaneously as part of other activities. Examples, swimming session for toddlers, community based sports programs, boys scouts and girls guilds programs, community or noncredit adult education courses, professional conference style seminars and continuing professional development.

Giving much insight on education in the great Books of Western world, we are meant to understand that education is not itself so much an idea or a subject matter as it is a theme to which the great ideas and the basic subject matters are relevant. It is one of the perennial practical problems which men cannot discuss without engaging in the deepest speculative considerations. And it is a problem which carries discussion into and across a great many subject matters, namely: The Liberal arts of grammar, rhetoric and a logic, Psychology, Medicine, Metaphysics and theology, ethics politics and economics. Thus: "It is a problem which draws into focus many of the great ideas: Virtue and truth, Knowledge and opinion, art and science, desire, will, sense, memory, mind, habit, change and progress, family and state, man, nature and God."¹⁹

Roles of Education

Education has been a vehicle of sustainable economic development, starting from its etymology which is a continuous process of leading one out of ignorance (educare) and the consequent act of leading one into knowledge (educare). Thus the goal or purpose of education prior to 1960 (in Nigeria) was simple to lead into light or enlightenment/development of the new generation of civil servants and public servants who would take over from the colonial masters from all

facets of the society. we now see other roles obtainable through quality education.

Education is a vehicle of change and transformation

Education is a veritable means of change or transformation, for human person and his society and environment as well. Education plays an important role as far as holistic development of man is concerned. First, premium is placed on the development of human mind or cultivation of mind and this is seen to be fundamental of all development. And it's from here that development starts and then reaches other sectors (informal sector of economy inclusive).

Man is to be advanced holistically or integrally in both social, religion, political and in other perspective. When we talk of advancement or development, we mean advancement of the whole man, whole facets, institution, segments, practices and values (moral and ethical inclusive). All these are under the roles education plays in formation of human person. And when it is done, change or progress has been made.

Education develops Informal Business Sector

The role of education in the holistic development informal sector must be emphasized. And by this we mean the development of man as we know that it is man that will effect the change or transformation needed. Education is a panacea to Nigerian (African) development. In the face of moderate technological advancement, we Nigerians are still hovering under the shackles of ignorance, colonialism and primitivity. We are not yet with authentic or quality education and political system, Nigerian leaders formulate educational policies without philosophical involvement, and our political and ideological re-orientation of the society is poor. Practical education and experiences are needed in schools. Students not only write assignments, they need interpersonal experiences, both national and international. They can learn more through excursions, practical experiences, essay writings and the likes. Educational methods we recall includes story-telling, discussion, teaching, training and directed research. Pantaleon Iroegbu in his own solution pertaining to ethics and human development in view of technological challenges gave his own proposal which he called Enwisdomization of technology. We now align it to the work quality education does in the informal sector of business economy, by this, he meant the education of technology and all its tools, objects and subjects, personnel and advisers to

operate within the norms of full authentic and integral humanity, balanced care of the universe, and reasonable projection and development of our own world. Enwisdomizing, he said does the work of “*Nkuzi*” (knock aright), that is, forms, informs and reforms technology²⁰. Likewise, education forms, informs and reforms our informal sector of business economy for enormous contribution towards sustainable development and betterment of the lot of mankind. Through quality education in form of conferences at the community squares, seminars, workshops, the young entrepreneurs learn how to be available in their business so as to achieve their vision and mission. They learn how to be amiable, thus promoting public/customer relation and they likewise learn how to be accountable through book keeping and accounting. All these help in protection or security of the business itself.

Education assures Value System re-orientation and Ethical Sanitization

Most Nigerian citizens are self-centered and corrupt. Lack of self-discipline both as individuals and as a society is a major setback to the country. Others includes corruption which is the decline in moral or ethical values, thereby getting into moral anarchy, modernization of values, much recognition and esteem to riches and intellects and conceptual debasement of leadership itself. Owing to the above evils, there is an urgent need for ethical sanitization and re-orientation of our value system. We need to hold esteem, the value of handwork, and inculcate it to our youths for as Franc-Fanon said: work, over and above everything else defines the essence of man, defines the existence of man. Another is value of truth, for truth is now a scarce commodity, the value of respect for the elders and superiors, self-discipline, and finally, respect for life which has mostly violated in our country Nigeria since the presence of Boko Haram insurgency in 2009 and Fulani herdsmen, Kidnappers, Gunmen, and Armed Bandits since 2015.

Informal sector and Sustainable Development

In a clearer elucidation of the 17 sustainable development goals expected to transform our worlds as mentioned above, one sees that informal sector of business economy is very close to attainment of these goals and informal sector contributes in greater percentage than the formal sector in meeting these expectations in so many countries especially in African countries where poverty is at the peak. In informal sector, one sees also the unionization of workers and these unions of informal sector of economy have also higher goals as their vision

and mission. And the primary goal or the vision of workers in the informal sector is always geared towards decent living (no poverty), stable economy and mostly transformation of his or her informal business into viable corporate establishments. These goals are similar to vision 2030 sustainable development goals (SDGs), and through education and hard work, many of workers in the informal sector struggle and meet up with these expectations, even without any support from the government. Sometimes, instead of getting support from the government, such challenges like insecurity and harassment by government agents and public officials are seen. And it is with the help of informal sector that greater percentage of these SDGs will be realized. It is worthwhile to mention that in Africa, more than 70 percent of the population are employed or are under in informal sector of business economy, for the ability of formalizing the informal sector by the government is always crippled by bad leadership, corruption, lack of creativity or originality, mono based economy and the likes. In Nigeria for instance, Mimiko captures the situation very well. Writing on Nigerian bad leaders, he writes:

These leaders on assumption of power quickly turned up the repressive machinery of the Colonial state, rather than dismantling it, significantly, they have no vision of development to accompany the efficient instrument of repression they inherited. All they were interested in was access to power and privileges and development.²¹

Akin to bad leadership in Africa is also bad followership, where the citizens are not responsible citizens and thus do not demand much accountability from her leaders in federal, state, and in local government levels of governance, and not to think of demanding accountability from their religious leaders. Informal sector is a veritable avenue for poverty alleviation and African/Nigerian development.

The sole reason why informal sector is very significant or valuable in any country, especially African countries, Nigeria for example is they provide employments, (more than government), also livelihoods and income to millions of workers and business owners. And more than government influence in the society, Informal sector has vital roles towards growth and poverty reduction in a country. A glaring example is during 2020 COVID 19 lockdown in many African countries, Nigeria inclusive, it is quite obvious that millions of citizens are saved not by government palliatives, but mostly by the efforts, struggles and resilience of the informal sector of the country's business economy.

Critical Evaluation

Thus far, we have been elucidating various ways in which education and informal sector of country's economy contribute immensely to sustainable economic development. And we appraise quality education, be it informal, formal or non-formal as it contributes to development and transformation not only by itself but especially as it serves as a gadfly to the informal sector by stinging it, and stimulating it through professional conferences, seminars, workshops, professional development talks, and other strategic planning that are aimed at business expansion and self-improvement. Through education the entrepreneurs in the informal sector are able to sustain their businesses as well as their creative potentials. They become more resourceful as they make meaningful efforts in their business production and in their entrepreneurial ventures. It helps them for proper evaluation and management of their own businesses, making them to be conscious of such good qualities that help in business promotion and progress like:

Availability- This helps to achieve one's own dream or vision and mission.

Amiability - This quality points to public relation, customers' relation/care, customer contact and promotion and the likes.

Accountability - This entails book keeping and accounting, regular stock taking, financial prudence and the likes. And with these quality educational insights, entrepreneurs in the informal sector of economy are protected from business failure and are sure of progressiveness in business which contributes immensely to the progress and development of the society, thus reducing hunger and poverty as well.

We noted that the development or cultivation of human mind/mentality is the fundamental to all development, thus, the need for African man/Nigerian value system re orientation and ethical sanitization, and this will go far in achieving sustainable cities and communities, Responsible consumption and production, climate action, respect for life below the water, life on the land and acquiring peace, justice and strong institution as stipulated by vision 2030 sustainable development goals to transform our world²².

Finally, as we appraise informal sector, we also through philosophical critique recommend re building or reformation of our formal sector for greater productivity, because we know that many of these formal sector are products of formalization of informal sector, but nowadays, they no longer deliver what is expected of them, owing to the same problem of bad leadership and corruption.

Example can be seen in road construction, building construction, electricity distribution and the likes.

Conclusion

As informal sector is opposed to modern industrial sector of economy and most often is not included in country's gross domestic product (GDP) or gross National Product (GNP), we conclude, that it is very necessary for African leaders and indeed every citizen to help to build better informal economy in Africa and in Nigeria, as it is the back bone upon which a country can have recourse to, when faced with some deadly challenges like COVID 19, Ebola and the likes. This is crucial as it is evident that some formal sectors of African/Nigerian economy are mismanaged, on account of bad leadership, corruption and selfishness. Finally, quality education and a better informal sector in Nigeria will assure a reliable economy and help in quicker attainment of universal sustainable developmental goals,

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