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**EDUCATING THE INDIVIDUAL FOR CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: A FREIREAN
CRITIQUE TO EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE IN KENYA**

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EDUCATING THE INDIVIDUAL FOR CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: A FREIREAN CRITIQUE TO EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE IN KENYA

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of Educating the individual for Critical Consciousness: a Freirean critique To Education Theory and Practice in Kenya

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop literature research design. Desk research is not about collecting data. Instead, is to review previous research findings to gain a broad understanding of the field. Books and journals will be used to collect information. To identify the right journals and books several keywords such as Educating the individual, Critical Consciousness: a Freirean critique, Education Theory and Practice was searched in google.

Results: A critical education overcomes massification by developing critical consciousness in individuals. This form of education is experiential in nature, being born out of an analytic consideration of an individual's existential experiences. It ought to be rooted in the cultural milieu of the learner, that is, one's actual reality and identity. The educated ought to perceive their society and culture as a subject (not an object) with which they enter into a critical dialogue. An education program that continuously produces learners who view themselves as being foreign to their own culture and society fails both its learners as well as the society. Due to its lack of the critical aspect, it undermines the creative potential of its learners. Such citizens, however educated they may claim to be, cannot integrate themselves with their society. They only adapt to situations and circumstances. Hence, they cannot cause any positive change either in their lives or that of the nation.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study recommended that through a proper quality education, a transition to individual freedom always remains inevitable; oppressed people will one day rise and express themselves. It is the central role of education to liberate and empower individuals. This precisely is what an educational program that promotes individual development is meant to effect in the learner; namely, to create a critical consciousness in an individual, a consciousness that ultimately ignites a continuous dialectic transition of both individuals and the society at large.

Keywords: *Critical, Learner, Individual, Consciousness, Education, Policy, Framework*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper has endeavored to carry out an education policy excavation has been done in a manner to unveil both a chronological as well as a genealogical explication of individual development and self-fulfillment as an educational goal in Kenya. Evolutional connections have been made stretching from the colonial educational policies through selected independence education policy developments. The proceeding final sections of this chapter analyze the essential elements of Paulo Freire's "Education for Critical Consciousness" theory and seek to indicate its bearing on the individual development and self-fulfillment of the learner within the broad context of the twenty first century education competences.

2.0 FREIREAN INTERPRETATION OF THE GENERAL COLONIAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

The springboard of the Freire an argument draws attention to the contention that an education program that undermines the development of the individual can partly or even to a large extent be located in the manner in which the western education policies were planted in various colonies. This same challenge is compounded by how independent nations continue to depend on the former for policy guidelines and advice. An education for critical consciousness is meant not merely to develop the individual, but more especially, to overcome some forms of inherited, though often unconscious obstacles to the realization of the liberation of the individual.

In the second chapter of "Education for Critical Consciousness", Freire decries the lack of a democratic cultural experience in the traditional Brazilian society. The chapter describes Brazil as a culturally "closed society" under the colonial overload; a society devoid of any democratic aspiration. Elements of economic exploitation through servitude and peasantry passivity are singled out as examples of this undemocratic culture.

As is often the case in all colonial expeditions, none of the colonial intentions has been to civilize and develop a colony. Instead, colonial exploitation produces and maintains paternalistic approaches to problems that individuals encounter. This orientation is built through habits of protectionism and dependency syndrome. It is on this basis that slavery, not so much as a physical subjugation, but more especially as a mental capture gets to be institutionalized in a colony in the context of a master-slave relationship. To this extent, the development of individual potential and self-fulfillment gets stifled and obstructed. Experiences of colonial mental slavery effectively undermine the essential foundations upon which a democratic mentality that is based on a permeable consciousness can be constructed. Such experiences produce a mental framework that characterizes individuals in what can be likened to a Platonic cave. They depict a "closed society" mentality that quickly produces a closed anti-democratic culture.

People born and raised education-wise within the purview of "closed society" policies develop a form of consciousness which robs an individual's ability to dialogue and actively participate in the determination and ordering of one's destiny. Freire describes this mental orientation as "intransitive consciousness". Those who possess it and come under its influence will ordinarily favour adaptation and adjustment approaches to life's challenges and problem solving as

opposed to integration with reality. As Freire succinctly puts it, “the adapted man, neither dialoguing nor participating, accommodates to conditions imposed upon him and thereby acquires an authoritarian and acritical frame of mind” (Freire, 1974, p.21). Having no self-expression and no voice of one’s own self, individuals are naturally raised bending in total submission and fully adapted to rigid authoritarianism. In the language of Plato’s allegory of the cave, individuals’ necks and feet are tightly chained in the cave of total surrender and submission.

Freire describes such a disposition as “mute” and “silent”, an orientation devoid of criticalness. Its over-bearing paternalism “crushes” an individual’s spirit, it undermines and stifles authentic individual development and hence, the silence. Individuals in circumstances such as these develop a popular consciousness that is receptive to oppression “rather than the free and creative consciousness” (Freire, 1974, p.22). In this way, people actively participate in erecting structures of their own oppression.

These accounts of a societal situation as presented by Freire are synonymous with the general education policy framework in colonial Kenya (1). With specific reference to the policy of racial stratification in education that had been advanced more especially by the Beecher Education Report of 1949, the education of the African was intended to produce a school graduate who would suite the Freirean description of a crushed, mute and silent individual. Thus, Africans’ education standards were expected to correspond to the racially ascribed servitude roles. They were not to develop their individuality as independent subjects. This perhaps explains how the elements of adaptation got planted in Kenya’s education policy prior to independence and has been sustained in subsequent years.

Unfortunately, as Freire would contend, more often than not, those who take over the reigns of political power from colonialism either knowingly or unknowingly exacerbate the oppression of the commoners. Education becomes for them a tool for the advancement of the Europeanization agenda of the native culture. The masses get “educated” for adaptation towards, and an assimilation into an imposed culture.

Arguably, even at independence, people are already found to have perfected their dependence on those they consider to be superior for the solutions to their problems. To this extent, the general orientation is that masses do not need to think critically, they need not be creative; after all those superiors that they depend upon will solve their problems. Consequently, having been locked up in a cave that appears to insulate them from a liberating education, people’s possibility of individual development and consequent transition to criticalness gets threatened. However, such a liberating transition can only be delayed, but cannot be totally restrained. The independent school movements, especially in the final moments of the colonial era present practical demonstrations of an irresistible transition to individual assertiveness and criticalness.

Through a proper quality education, a transition to individual freedom always remains inevitable; oppressed people will one day rise and express themselves. It is the central role of education to liberate and empower individuals. This precisely is what an educational program that promotes individual development is meant to effect in the learner; namely, to create a critical

consciousness in an individual, a consciousness that ultimately ignites a continuous dialectic transition of both individuals and the society at large.

2.1. EDUCATION FOR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

At the heart of an education for critical consciousness is a deliberate affirmation of the nature of humans to determine and direct their individual destiny in the world. Freire argues that “to be human is to engage in relationships with others and the world (it is not merely to be) in the world but with the world” (Freire, 1974, p.3).

Man’s possible action or response in a situation can neither be predestined nor limited to specific patterns. Men by nature ought to “organize themselves, choose the best response, test themselves, act, and change in the very act of responding. They do all this consciously, as one uses a tool to deal with a problem” (Freire, 1974, p.3). However, this transition can only be effected through the process of a critical education.

Critical education sharpens an individual’s consciousness into a pragmatic intelligence that works creatively as tools in a tool box in problem solving. Education should therefore enable the effective gathering of tools, their efficient choice and instrumentation in situations. It ought to be experienced by the learner as a dialectic critical undertaking. This implies that the kind of awareness that punctuates an individual as he leaves a specific experiential continuum into another should be better improved than what was possessed prior to such an experience.

Such awareness should also provide a better and improved encounter with similar and even other experiences. This understanding is the basis of what can be termed as an historical urgency. It also defines the marks of educational experiences which ought to constantly pervade learning environments and pedagogical frameworks. In other words, human beings emerge and exist within the context of time; they partake of the products of the previous time, yet are not bound by it. Instead, they transcend it and dialectically determine history. They become the active creators and determinants of their cultural history as they gradually gain and get equipped with cumulative social competence through a continuous educational process (Sikandar, 2015).

Thus, Freire argues:

The normal role of human beings in and with the world is not a passive one. Because they are not limited to the natural (biological) sphere but participate in the creative dimension as well, men can intervene in reality in order to change it. Inheriting acquired experience, creating and re-creating, integrating themselves into their context, responding to its challenges, objectifying themselves, discerning, transcending, men enter into the domain which is theirs exclusively – that of History and of Culture (Freire, 1974, p.4).

Educating for the full realization of this irreplaceable role demands the cultivation of a conscientious critical freedom which in turn is at the core of an education for individual development and self-fulfillment. Those chained in Platonic caves remain passive and are incapable of being truly human. Plato’s slaves exist and are educated based of policies that

emphasize adaptation as opposed to integration. Their education is aimed at adapting them to the situation in the cave and resists any possible questioning of the same.

Elements of adaptation in education policies, whether directly or indirectly intended, are part of the process of chaining learners in a cave of mental passivity and uncriticalness that objectifies them. to this extent, Freire further observes that:

Integration with one's context, as distinguished from adaptation, is a distinctively human activity. Integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and to transform that reality. To the extent that man loses his ability to make choices and is subjected to the choices of others, to the extent that his decisions are no longer his own because they result from external prescriptions, he is no longer integrated. Rather, he has adapted. He has 'adjusted' ... The integrated person is person as *Subject*. In contrast, the adaptive person is person as *object*, adaptation representing at most a weak form of self-defense. If man is incapable of changing reality, he adjusts himself instead. Adaptation is behavior characteristic of the animal sphere; exhibited by man, it is symptomatic of his dehumanization (Freire, 1974, p.4).

Interpreted in this context, education for individual development and self-fulfillment focuses at transforming the individual learner to perceive oneself and so act as a subject in the world rather than as a dehumanized object that is passively acted upon by the world of situations. It empowers one to participate actively in directing one's destiny. In this context, quality education should therefore be founded on policies that cause "integration" and not "adaptation" in learners. The oppressor's constant and effective tool of domination is through educational policies that constantly rob citizens of their full humanity that would have been realized through integration. Adaptation is promoted instead. For this reason therefore, if there is any form of freedom or independence that people should fight for, then it is the safeguard of educational practice.

Reflections on some of the earliest education policy orientations in Kenya reveal tendencies towards adaptation. For instance, in the name of a society in transition, the Ominde commission had recommended an education policy framework that incline learners to be adaptable to societal change. Nevertheless, within the context of Freire's spirit, such an adaptation was not to include learner passivity (Republic of Kenya, 1964, §17). However, in its fourth recommendation, the Gachathi commission explicitly made a policy call for a framework that would "make general education give increasing emphasis to adaptability" (Republic of Kenya, 1976).

Viewed in the light of the subsequent elements of globalization, such policies would either directly or indirectly imply the production of learners who adapt to situations instead of encountering them in the spirit of integration. These trends are partly responsible for the initial erection of learner passivity and consequent uncriticalness in Kenya's educational theory and practice. In this way, the intrinsic development of the individual learner into a critical and creative problem solver appeared to be gravely compromised. It follows that such educational practices disable learners' ability to identify, and concretize the actual aspirations, concerns, values and obstacles or challenges of their historical times. Only those learners capable of having a critical understanding of their actual life situations can effectively intervene in their own

situations and bring about a positive transformative development that can enable a sense of self-fulfillment.

Freire provides an elaborate description of the individual who either fails to receive and, or get a positive effect of a critical education. He refers to this individual as an “ordinary person”. Such a person: ...is crushed, diminished, converted into a spectator, maneuvered by myths which powerful social forces have created. These myths turn against him; they destroy and annihilate him. Tragically frightened, men fear authentic relationships and even doubt the possibility of their existence ... (they get manipulated) by organized advertising, ideological or otherwise ... Ordinary men do not perceive the tasks of the time; the latter are interpreted by an “elite” and presented in the form of recipes, of prescriptions. And when men try to save themselves by following the prescriptions, they drown in leveling anonymity, without hope and without faith, domesticated and adjusted (Freire, 1974, p.5).

This Freirean description of an ordinary person represents one whose individual development has been arrested. Thus, the central task of education is to raise ordinary men from such captivity. Education ought to develop a flexible critical spirit in learners, one which enables their critical perception of their individual situations. Such is the policy orientation that can bring those who are educated to cause a critical intervention in the world. In this way, they become the drivers of the change around them (Freire, 1974).

Competences born out of a critical educative process must be weighed in the context of how they model, affect and direct what Freire terms as the dialectic contradictions that define the tidal wave of an epochal transition. In this light, a critical education is viewed as the principle driver of history. It perceives and identifies contradictions and critically processes them towards a more advantaged synthesis. For Freire:

Contradictions increase between the ways of being, understanding, behaving, and valuing which belong to yesterday and other ways of perceiving and valuing which announce the future ... This shock between a yesterday which is losing relevance but still seeking to survive, and a tomorrow which is gaining substance, characterizes the phase of transition as a time of announcement and a time of decision. Only, however, to the degree that the choices result from a critical perception of the contradictions are they real and capable of being transformed in action. Choice is illusory to the degree it represents the expectations of others. While all transition involves change, not all change results in transition. Changes can occur within a single historical epoch that do not profoundly affect it in any way (Freire, 1974, p.6).

This contention can be exemplified by the situation of corruption in the Kenya. It seems evident that more people are aware of its prevalence and negative consequence to society, and that more laws and institutions have been created to confront it. Nevertheless, not much seems to change in terms of winning the war against it. Critical education needs to heighten citizen’s consciousness to fight corruption. It should for instance, bring people to critique the implications of the theme of corruption in time and space in Kenya? Could the rising levels of corruption be pointing towards the dialectics of extreme capitalistic materialism coming into confrontation with the elements of traditional egalitarian principles? Could it be a manifestation of a dialectic clash between the interests of cultural nationalism and those of the unitary nationhood such that those

in positions of power and opportunities are at once split between the two competing interest? In whichever way then, to what extent can the construction to stringent legal structures become the reasoned synthesis of the problem? Such are some of the inquiries that ought to be critically confronted.

It is arguable that until the policies and practices of education directly invests in the individual development of learners; a development in their individualized critical competences that will raise them from the level of “ordinary men” towards the production of critical and creative problem solvers, will success in this war be envisaged. It is when individual citizens begin to gain a critical perception of the contradictions involved in the theme of corruption that the dialectic critical solutions begin to emerge. In other words, the theory and practice of education ought to experientially lead individual learners towards the identification of specific features of epochal themes and transition. Whereas the society could be in a dire need of transition, only those who discover or identify such themes and possess a critical “educational” power to participate actively in their dialectics will affect the destiny of both themselves and society.

Poor education can therefore be identified as one that enhances the multiplication of “ordinary men” in the place of individual critical development. Such an education can slow down or distort the society’s transition process though it cannot stop it altogether. Any attempt to subdue the actuation of a new idea by insisting on an old one that should be fading away cannot put a permanent halt to a transition. This is the essence of dialectics. A persistent unresolved clash between competing ideas will often result in a society that is dialectically divided into radicals and sectarians, thus setting the final stage for a transition.

Freire’s distinction between the two is based on their response in conflicting situations. Radicalism is a:

...predominantly critical, loving, humble, and communicative, and therefore a positive stance. The man who has made a radical option does not deny another man’s right to choose, nor does he try to impose his own choice. He can discuss their respective positions. He is convinced he is right, but respects another man’s prerogative to judge himself correct. He tries to convince and convert, not to crush his opponent. The radical does, however, have the duty, imposed by love itself, to react against the violence of those who try to silence him – of those who, in the name of freedom, kill his freedom and their own. To be radical does not imply self-flagellation. Radicals cannot passively accept a situation in which the excessive power of a few leads to the dehumanization of all ... (On the other hand) sectarianism is predominantly emotional and uncritical. It is arrogant, antidialogical and thus anticomunicative. It is a reactionary stance ... (and disrespects) the choices of others, he tries to impose his own choice on everyone else. Herein lies the inclination of the sectarian to activism: action without the vigilance of reflection; herein his taste for sloganizing, which generally remains at the level of myth and half-truths and attributes absolute value to the purely relative (Freire, 1974, p.9).

Normally, sectarianism presents itself through the personification of fanaticism marked out with a desire to stop the course of history. It is possible for elements of such fanaticism to manifest themselves through a nation’s educational policies and practices and so undermine the splendor of individual development. For instance, policies such as the quota system of admitting learners

in certain schools have in the past been advanced under the guise of affirmative action. Learners from certain given ethnic locations have tended to crowd in particular schools thus compromising genuine individual development by encouraging the creation of uncritical citizens that often accompanies “closed cultural societies”. Social ills such as negative ethnic entitlement have become a logical outcome.

Educational policies and practices of this nature arise from, and sustain deepened contradictions in society. They divide and brutalize people by creating hatred and dehumanizing them. In the end, they undermine the very purpose of education, which is to encourage a continued dialectic transition (Freire, 1974). Instead, the production of sectarian-minded citizens becomes synonymous with what has been earlier described as “ordinary men”. Sectarianism therefore becomes a suitable ground for the privileged elites who control both political and economic power to “preserve at all costs the social ‘order’ in which they are dominant” (Freire, 1974, p.11).

The elite ordinarily maintain the status quo of oppressing the masses by fighting the radicals through the sectarians. One of the ways through which they achieve this goal is by controlling public education and ensuring that the individual development of the learners in line with the estimates of the twenty first century competences is seriously undermined. Furthermore, they employ what Freire describes as “assistencialism” whose:

...greatest danger ...is the violence of its anti-dialogue, which by imposing silence and passivity denies men conditions likely to develop or to ‘open’ their consciousness. For without an increasingly critical consciousness men are not able to integrate themselves into a transitional society, marked by intense change and contradictions (Freire, 1974, p.12).

Within the context of educational policy and practice, assistencialism views learners as completely helpless objects in need of “assistance”. It cultivates a dependency disposition in the learner. Its end result is the destruction of what the 8-4-4 education policy referred to as “self-reliance”. In the light of the competency based curriculum framework, assistencialism undermines the growth and development of what is referred to as “self-efficacy” (Republic of Kenya, 2017).

Assistencialism can be traced in Kenya’s education policy and practice in various forms. Pedagogical approaches that are popularly referred to as “spoon feeding” exemplifies assistencialism. Learners in such instructional environments are thought of as delicate passive objects incapable of any form of inherent active learning and without any deliberative and comprehension ability. They are supposed to be provided with answers to their problems, answers which they ought to memorize, master and replicate with precision. Teaching and learning operations bear every mark of cognitive processes specifically identified by rote memorization, cramming, verbal narration and its subsequent reproduction. Freire has identified this ill-fated instructional approach in the “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” as a banking concept of education. Its main focus is to sustain an oppressive society by raising up a passive “object-like” learner. He dramatically describes this pedagogical framework as one in which:

- (a) The teacher teaches and the students are taught;

- (b) The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- (c) The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- (d) The teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;
- (e) The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- (f) The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- (g) The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- (h) The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- (i) The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- (j) The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.

It is not surprising that the banking concept of education regards men as adaptable, manageable beings. The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them. The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed (Freire, 1970, p.73).

The banking pedagogical approaches are anti-education. The principle focus of education is not to provide people with answers or solutions to their problems and challenges. After all the solutions to today's problems may not apply to tomorrow's problems. In a liberal education whose main agendum is to emancipate the learner by rising up a "subject-consciousness" disposition, learners cannot be viewed as empty tabula rasa containers in which pieces of knowledge deposits are banked. Ideally, education ought to occupy itself with helping:

...men (and nations) help themselves, to place them in consciously critical confrontation with their problems, to make them the agents of their own recuperation. In contrast, assistencialism robs men of a fundamental human necessity—responsibility ... (it) offers no responsibility, no opportunity to make decisions, but only gestures and attitudes which encourage passivity" (Freire, 1974, p.12-13).

A conscious critical confrontation with one's own world of challenges necessarily demands for an experiential education and not a mere intellectualization. A chained prisoner in Plato's cave has to be freed, turned round and led out of the cave. Thereafter he becomes responsible. Such responsibility cannot be gained by simply having the prisoners lectured to while in the cave. They must be empowered to participate actively in their own emancipation.

Education ought to empower people to take full charge of their destiny "responsibly". In order to achieve this, Freire opines that a need will arise:

...to go to the people and help them to enter ... (their) historical process critically. The prerequisite for this task ... (is) a form of education enabling the people to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities, and their role in the new cultural climate – indeed to reflect on their very power of reflection. The resulting development of this power would mean an increased capacity for choice (Freire, 1974, p.13).

This development not only enhances choice but also an individuated responsible action. It is what defines individual development and self-fulfillment as a functional capacity of criticalness, creativity and problem solving. Individuals who attain this educational goal will triumph over the imprisonment of history by asserting themselves.

On the contrary, Freire uses the term “submerged in the historical process” to signify a form of passivity which is characteristic of an inactive participation and control over one’s destiny. Such a person possesses what Freire refers to as a “semi-intransitive consciousness”; a consciousness by which an individual can neither express oneself nor engage in the historical process (Freire, 1974, p.13).

People with “semi-intransitive consciousness” mirror the Platonic prisoners in the cave. They “confuse their perceptions of the objects and challenges of the environment, and fall prey to magical explanations because they cannot apprehend true causality” (Freire, 1974, p.13). Thus, they entertain a magical ontology on the basis of which they perceive their life with its challenges as very ordinary and predestined. They seem to entertain the view that they cannot affect the direction of history, since either fate or the gods have already determined it. This is described as a state of magical consciousness. Its conception of reality contravenes the essential nature of human beings as “beings of praxis” (Freire, 1974, p.93). In other words, every human action ought to be born out of a reflection. It is by virtue of this reflective action that human beings transform the world. “By acting they transform; by transforming they create a reality which conditions their manner of acting. (Freire, 1974, p.94).

As opposed to “semi-intransitive consciousness”, “transitive consciousness” confers on an individual the capacity to enter and engage actively with one’s world. It is at this latter level of consciousness that one begins to exist, for “existence”, Freire argues, is an “eternal dialogue between man and man, between man and the world, between man and his Creator. Through this dialogue man becomes an historical being” (Freire, 1974, p.14).

As an active engagement or participation in one’s world, dialogue finally transforms man into a project that can be described as an impossible possibility through the dialectics of history. This project is entirely dependent on the gradual development of transitive consciousness from the naïve to the critical stage. Naïve transitivity (consciousness) is possessed by people who can be said to be schooled but not educated. Such people could be armed with good school certificates but essentially remain unaffected by the processes of critical education. According to Freire, naïve consciousness describes a world view that partly exhibits elements of magical consciousness. It describes “men who are still almost part of a mass, in whom the developing capacity for dialogue is still fragile and capable of distortion” (Freire, 1974, p.14).

Critical consciousness on the other hand, Freire says is distinguished from naïve consciousness by way of its:

...depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations; by the testing of one’s ‘findings’ and by openness to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them; by refusing to transfer responsibility; by rejecting passive positions; by soundness of

argumentation; by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics; by receptivity to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty and by the good sense not to reject the old just because it is old – by accepting what is valid in both old and new. Critical transitivity...corresponds to highly permeable, interrogative, restless and dialogical forms of life – in contrast to silence and inaction ... (Freire, 1974, p.14).

This implies that critical consciousness exhibits competences that contribute directly to individual development and self-fulfillment. A critically conscious person possesses a sensitivity to problems in one's existential milieu and is capable of engaging scientifically reasoned means of addressing them. Furthermore, he/she holds truth about solutions to such problems as only tentative. Such truth beliefs immediately change when they encounter more convincing higher convictions. A critical person does not entertain dogmatic fixations about truth claims. Thus, critical consciousness is the springboard of critical and creative thinking and problem solving.

Now, applying these conceptions to elements of education policy in Kenya, it is arguable that school leavers from the Ominde and Gachathi commissions' policies could have mirrored naïve transitivity in one way or another. Greater focus seemed to have been placed at what can be termed as education for the societal good at the expense of the central focus on the individual. Learners were mainly educated for employability and national development goals. This explains why many of them generally waited upon government to provide employment. It is not lost in this argument that in the initial independence years, an academic certificate in whatever field of study would easily lead to an employment in any sector, even if not directly related to the field of study. School leavers developed a mentality of entitlement to government employment. They became passive conformist citizens, simply trained to take instructions without questioning situations, after all the main underlying silent objective for their "education" had been to fill the places left behind by the colonial expatriates. It is in this context that when the employment opportunities in government were no longer forthcoming, the 8-4-4 education policy of self reliance and self employment presented itself as a summon to move from a naïve to a critical consciousness.

Yet again the unrealized aspiration of the 8-4-4 policy explains the policy struggles in the Koech Commission to approximate the development of critical awareness in the learner through a totally integrated quality education and training. This latter was to link the policy and practice of education to the learner's existential environment. To date, the general orientation of public education in Kenya seems to promote the mass production of passive learners who exhibit mass naïve transitivity. The proposed competence based learning (Republic of Kenya, 2017) is an attempt towards an education policy framework that will ensure the development of critical consciousness in the learner.

Freire opines that more often than not the movement from intransitive (or even semi-transitive consciousness) to naïve transitivity can be paralleled to the general developments and transformations in the economic life of a society. In other words, the dawn of urbanization with its complex and challenging patterns of life may naturally bring about an enhanced transitivity in people (Freire, 1974). As already indicated this is apparently what defined the general

educational policy and practice in the period after independence and especially leading to the 8-4-4 policy. It is also likely to define the consciousness of people around the country as they encounter the initial urbanization trends for the first time.

However, the awakening and development of critical consciousness from naïve to critical transitivity through a process that Freire refers to as “*conscientizacao*” (*conscientization*) is not an obvious or automatic natural process. Instead, it must grow out of a deliberate “critical educational effort based on favorable historical conditions” (Freire, 1974, p.15). By nature, education ought to be a process of conscientization, not only in theory (policy) but also in practice. Critical education occurs and manifests itself at the point at which policy meets practice, or knowledge of the good meets experience. In other words, people do not become critical, creative and problem solvers in abstraction of experience but within experience. Put differently, the movement from naïve to critical consciousness is not a mere logical journey in the mind; it must also exhibit a firm foundation in existential reality.

Thus, away from the seemingly opposing philosophical positions of whether education ought to be viewed as being “life itself” or as a “preparation for life”, education for critical consciousness unites the two. It arises from existential contexts, it is about existential contexts, yet it concerns the role of education in determining and directing an individual’s subsequent (future) existential encounters. The educative action that spurs the movement from naïve to critical consciousness is an existentially empirical engagement.

Freire asserts that whoever fails to make this transition collapses into “fanaticized consciousness”, a term descriptive of a state of massification (Freire, 1974). In this state, an individual loses the government of reason over one’s existential experiences. He “acts more on the basis of emotionality than of reason, his behavior occurs adaptively and cannot result in commitment, for committed behavior has its roots in critical consciousness and capacity for genuine choice (Freire, 1974, p.15). The important role of critical consciousness in individual development can perhaps be illustrated from the compounding phenomenon of corruption in the Kenyan society. It is arguable that a corrupt individual could be rationally aware of moral oughts. However, one fails to rise to critical consciousness within the purview of one’s existential and experiential order. He falls into “fanaticized consciousness”, a world view within which he divorces reason from existential experiences and so acts uncritically by joining the masses (massification). Individuals in this state, Freire says:

...are defeated and dominated, though they do not know it; they fear freedom, though they believe themselves to be free. They follow general formulas and prescriptions as if by their own choice. They are directed; they do not direct themselves. Their creative power is impaired. They are objects, not Subjects. For men to overcome their state of massification, they must be enabled to reflect about that very condition. But since authentic reflection cannot exist apart from action, men must also act to transform the concrete reality which has determined their massification (Freire, 1974, p.15).

Hence, it can be contended that one sure way through which education can help fight corruption is to develop individuals. This can be done by freeing them from fanaticized consciousness and

thus deflect them to be rationally and individually present in the world as acting subjects in existential situations. In other words, education for individual development is synonymous with education for individual liberation. It involves a process of pushing learners individually to the frontiers of critical consciousness and causing them to protect themselves against “fanaticized consciousness” that often arrests them in the cave of massification. The educational realization of individual learner development fosters the good of society; and that the latter cannot be realized without the former. On the overall, the process of education needs to be protected from tendencies towards being overturned into processes of massification. It is when education constructs and assembles individuals who are critically conscientised – but not naively massified, that the envisaged national development can be realized. We now analyze Freire’s conception of how this can be realized.

3.0.THE DILEMMA OF MASSIFICATION VERSUS INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENTIZATION AND THE GOOD OF SOCIETY (NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

Education can be described as the power of popular emergence. It enables individuals to emerge from the masses and overcome the elite’s attempt to silence and domesticate them. Although individuals can naturally emerge simply due to economic changes in society, they, without a critical education, remain captives of naïveté. They possess a transitivity that is essentially constituted of emotional positions that are devoid of critical attitudes and rationality. It would take the deliberate effort of an education with a critical orientation to move an individual from this cave of naïve transitivity and successfully overcome massification. Freire describes such an education framework as one that:

...would enable men to discuss courageously the problems of their context – and to intervene in that context; it would warn men of the dangers of the time and offer them the confidence and the strength to confront those dangers instead of surrendering their sense of self through submission to the decisions of others. By predisposing men to reevaluate constantly, to analyze ‘findings,’ to adopt scientific methods and processes, and to perceive themselves in dialectical relationship with their social reality, that education could help men to assume an increasingly critical attitude toward the world and so to transform it (Freire, 1974, p.30).

This form of education liberates, develops and empowers an individual to overcome massification. On the contrary, an educational approach which obstructs the learner from experiencing a direct confrontation with one’s existential problems and challenges simply makes the individual to fall into the comfort ditch of massification. Such education policies invites and cultivates an attitude of passivity, dependency and helplessness in the learner and only serves to produce what has been described as an ordinary person. These people can neither help themselves nor the society to which they belong. Thus, the urgency of a critical education policy cannot be gainsaid. Freire emphasizes this importunateness by exemplifying the conduct of a massified person as one who is:

...maneuvered by the mass media to the point where he believes nothing he has not heard on the radio, seen on television, or read in the newspapers. He comes to accept mythical explanations of his reality. Like a man who has lost his address, he is ‘uprooted’ (Freire, 1974, p.31).

Massification domesticates and dehumanizes an individual by killing his critical attitude. It compresses and confines man's window of possibilities and opportunities. A massified person has no identity of one's own in terms of what to uphold with probable epistemic certitude. He acts in and through the action of others, yet believes to be acting in his own self. In the name of exaggerated specialization, massification completely distorts one's critical capacity (Freire, 1974). Thus, he lacks criticalness, creative disposition and ability to solve one's own problems. In this way, he becomes a static and passive object, incapable of self determination. A massified person therefore, can hardly rise to individual development, and by extension, cannot realize self-fulfillment since his potential remains not only untapped, but also dwarfed.

Reflections on the evolution of Kenya's education policy, reveals not a few indications of massification elements. In fact, it is these elements which define and invite every major attempted educational reform and review. Indeed, the climax points of colonial, independence and even the 8-4-4 education policies represents a societal struggle to overcome massification forces along the path of Kenya's education policy. Freire provides litmus indications of such forces when he asserts that an education becomes a process of massification once its practices get:

...disconnected from life, (and instead get) centered on words emptied of the reality they are meant to represent, lacking in concrete activity ...and (develops a) tendency toward abstractness ... (and) lack of faith in the student and his power to discuss, to work, (and) to create... (Freire, 1974, p.33).

Putting this contention into context, it is for instance arguable that the deliberate intent of the general colonial education policy, especially the Beecher's stratification model, relegated an African's education to that of massification (see section 5.3.1). On the other hand, the independence education framework as marked out in both Ominde and Gachathi policies aimed at producing graduates who basically could be "employable". Products of these policies whether by intent or default, perceived education process as a ticket to join the rural-urban migration caravan in search for government employment. Mwalimu Nyerere lamented against this form of education that uproots the learners from the society that educated them and whose problems they were meant to solve (see section 5.4.2). When these school graduates could not secure a government employment, they could not become job-creators, but instead simply blamed the government. Unfortunately, government in the Gachathi report advanced this approach by seeking to create employment in rural areas so as to stem the rural-urban migration (see section 5.4.4). Thus, by failing to develop learners into individuals imbued with critical, creative and problem-solving competences, the independence education framework lost the opportunity of producing job-creators, but instead produced job-seekers. Interpreted in Freire's perspective, these school graduates failed to experience genuine individual development. None realized his unique potential by which one could exploit opportunities and possibilities in his existential situations. They simply got massified.

Meanwhile, the intent of the 8-4-4 education policy to empower learners with knowledge and skills for self-employment and subsequent self-reliance had emerged as an antithesis to the

independence education policy. Yet again, the societal forces of massification triumphed by insisting on defining success and failure in life on the basis of summative terminal examinations. Though it would have appeared that whoever excelled in these examinations would succeed in life, fundamentally both those who failed or passed, simply got massified.

By and large, many of these learners could hardly manifest an individuated outcome that could surpass the pedagogical framework through which they had emerged. They had proceeded from a process of rote memorization and abstract academicization, away from the daily existential experiences. This kind of approach objectifies the learner. It defines an exploitative policy tradition of which Freire says:

...has not been to exchange ideas, but to dictate them; not to debate or discuss themes, but to give lectures; not to work with the student, but to work on him, imposing an order to which he has had to accommodate. By giving the student formulas to receive and store, we have not offered him the means for authentic thought; assimilation results from search, from the effort to re-create and re-invent (Freire, 1974, p.33-34).

Basically, the 8-4-4 policy approached its point of collapse when paper certification of what an individual knows appeared to receive more accolades over life's competences of what an individual can do. This presents another oscillation swing in the pendulum of Kenya's education policy that occasions the contemplated competency-based learning.

On the overall, the dialectics of educational policy in Kenya seems to revolve around a struggle between the "oughts" of education and the populist appeals of the masses. The former offers a path to the development and empowerment of the individual learner. However, the latter often tends to receive the favour of the elite and is used as a weapon of control to advance the massification program of those who join schooling. Thus, the masses who graduate from schooling to form the bulk of the citizen folk can hardly engage in critical and creative citizenship. They may as well be described as "educated illiterates". They become alienated from their real experiences and so constitute a society that depicts passivity, naïveté and lack of any democratic convictions. This is principally a mis-education program which imprisons the "educated" in a cave of massification. Indeed, the quality of any society will always have its roots in its educational practice.

A critical education program must deliberately avoid the practice of importing alienated models into its framework. These could include, though not limited to curricular and pedagogical models. Instead, it ought to seek the transformation of societal and cultural reality on the basis of a true understanding of that society. Thus, integration is not an option but an educational demand. True learning must of necessity be obtained through an active participatory involvement with what is learnt as opposed to a cognition that can merely be transferred verbally or through the memorization of texts. Freire avers that this kind of learning:

...lead(s) men to take a new stance toward their problems – that of intimacy with those problems, one oriented toward research instead of repeating irrelevant principles. An education of 'I wonder,' instead of merely, 'I do.' Vitality, instead of insistence on the transmission of ...ideas

that are merely received into the mind without being utilised, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations (Freire, 1974, p.32-33).

In other words, a critical education develops the individual by heightening the growth of critical consciousness and in turn encourages the development of a critical, creative and problem solving mind.

4.0 CONCLUSION

A critical education overcomes massification by developing critical consciousness in individuals. This form of education is experiential in nature, being born out of an analytic consideration of an individual's existential experiences. It ought to be rooted in the cultural milieu of the learner, that is, one's actual reality and identity. The educated ought to perceive their society and culture as a subject (not an object) with which they enter into a critical dialogue. An education program that continuously produces learners who view themselves as being foreign to their own culture and society fails both its learners as well as the society. Due to its lack of the critical aspect, it undermines the creative potential of its learners. Such citizens, however educated they may claim to be, cannot integrate themselves with their society. They only adapt to situations and circumstances. Hence, they cannot cause any positive change either in their lives or that of the nation.

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