

Intellectual Ability: Main Key for African Sustainable Development Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Development is critical and essential to the sustenance and growth of any nation. A country is classified as developed when is able to provide qualitative life for her citizenry. Africa in the years back has been battling with the problems of development in spite of huge human, material and natural resources in her possession. It is obvious that intellectual ability is the main cogent domain of all (cognitive) that responsible for the development of a nation. This cognitive domain is used to exploit all available natural resources to engender man-made products that are used for development of a nation. The write up emphasizes the ICTs challenges; the problems affecting the suitable development and the roles of intellectual ability to the sustainable development. The study discusses the conclusion and the recommendations for strengthening the development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Intellectual Ability: Africa, Sustainable Development, Strategies and ICTs

INTRODUCTION

Despite the low rate at which Africa is been developed, the present level of the development of Africa cannot be undermined. This study is been carried out to investigate on sustaining the African development through artificial intelligence i.e. intellectual ability. The sub-regions of this continent are blessed with enormous cultural, mineral and natural resources, but largely depend on foreign companies for their exploitation and transformation. Despite this richness, Africa has faced problems due to its inability to embark on a meaningful path to a level of well being deemed satisfactory for a sizable proportion of its population. The more seriously we examine the 'route map', the more closely the discussion on sustainable development comes to resemble a debate on the right concept for structuring national and even global society.

The notion of sustainable development relies on a transparent process of debate and learning involving the whole of society, in a way, largely unknown until now. To look into the solution now will firstly need to understand some concept to be discussed about, this as follows:

INTELLECTUAL ABILITY

Intellectual ability refers to the skills require to think critically, creates connections among multidisciplinary fields and problem solve in new or changing situations. Cognitive Domain is the general concept or an umbrella for all processes that have do with thinking, remembering, evaluating, application, problem solving and others which concern with knowledge or information and intellectual activities are compacted. All intellectual abilities are compacted under an umbrella of cognitive domain in which all the sensory manipulations for an engendered products are been emerged for the benefits of humanity, which are regarded as developments.

Through the application of intellectual ability, we came up with engendered new and invented concrete man made products such as computer that resulted to IT, ICT, Internet and others like electricity, telephone systems that are using for human development globally. Cognitive domain creates problem solving strategies and vocabulary also contributes to the level of an individual's intellectual ability. While scientists differ on one standard definition of intellectual ability, most agree that intellectual ability must includes a high level of abstract reasoning and thinking skills, the ability to acquire knowledge and problem-solving abilities.

Also, intellectual ability is related to the ability to think in an intelligent way and to understand things, especially difficult or complicated ideas and subjects the emotional and intellectual development of young children. Intellectual ability commonly refers to the ability measured by performance on an intelligence test. It is also sometimes used in the context of discussing the performance of someone in an academic or real world setting. Intellectual Abilities are those that are needed to perform mental activities usually involve thinking and reasoning. Mental activities can be measured by intelligent quotient (IQ) tests that are designed to ascertain one's general mental abilities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is a fluid concept that came to the forefront late in the development discourse, especially in the work of Brown L.R. and the Brundtland Report (1987), which defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Though influential, this definition is political and very vague, and industrialized countries have so far only paid lip service to it.

It has been defined differently and can be defined in terms of indicators, or what it specifically seeks to measure. Sustainable development is a planned cultural, economic, social, environmental and political change for the better, which needs cooperation at all the levels by all the stakeholders, geared towards the well-being of the masses, for the masses and by the masses. It is a societal good and every social actor must get involved and stay engaged in its pursuit. It is long termed, fosters inter and intra generational equity and does not foul the air, poison the water, dis-equilibrate forest ecosystems or pollute and degrade lands. In this light, we argue here that sustainable development is not a reality in any society and that all societies are still developing either by scaling up or scaling down their production and consumption patterns. Sound sustainable development strategies for AFRICA must reflect its multi-ethnic and cultural diversity and a reign of peace.

ICTs CHALLENGES IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

African countries are now aware of the benefits derived through adoption and use of ICTs but there are many serious challenges which must be addressed and chief among are listed below:

1. Inadequate communications and power infrastructure
2. Shortage of ICTs facilities and ICTs skills
3. Inadequate institutional arrangements
4. Limited financial resources
5. Inadequate public private partnership
6. Limited data management capacity
7. Inadequate horizontal and vertical communication
8. Inadequate bandwidth nationally and on the Gateway

PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Market failure and unfavourable terms of trade

Between 1997 and 2002, African countries experienced negative terms of trade because of their high commodity dependence with a declining share in world trade C.T. Eyong & I.I. Foy, *Int. J. Sus. Dev. Plann.* ([20], p. 3); *Vol. 1, No. 2 (2006)*. African raw materials are exported at very low prices coupled with trade barriers, but finished goods from the industrialized countries are imported at exorbitant prices.

Declining incomes and crushing poverty

Shortly after independence, most African countries enjoyed an economic boom that was however short-lived. It was estimated that until 2002, 40 of the 44 Africa countries, with 93% of the region's population, grew too slowly. The gross domestic product growth (GDP) in Africa slowed from 3.3% in 2002 to 2.4% in 2003 C.T. Eyong & I.I. Foy, *Int. J. Sus. Dev. Plann.* [26]; *Vol. 1, No. 2 (2006)*. AFRICA faces declining income, massive unemployment and crushing poverty. It is proven that, 20 out of the 53 countries with declining incomes are from AFRICA.

Poverty is the resultant of material deprivation as well as social exclusion from every aspect of human life. Illiteracy, ill health, gender inequality, and environmental degradation are all aspects of being poor. Also, neglect of rural infrastructure as well as the massive drain to urban areas have led to the 'the urbanization of poverty'. While global poverty declined from 40% in 1981 to 21% in 2001 with prospects of falling to 15% in 2015, there was an upward spiral of poverty in Africa from 41% in 1981 to 46% in 2001 C.T. Eyong & I.I. Foy, *Int. J. Sus. Dev. Plann.* ([26], p. 2) *Vol. 1, No. 2 (2006)*. The complex nature of poverty remains a major source of the complexity in understanding and finding sustainable solutions to the heavy debt burden of Africa.

High aid dependence and continuous reliance on colonial masters

Due to the volatile world prices on Africa's primary commodity exports amidst mounting debt stocks and increasing poverty, Africa has a high dependence on external aid inflows. Foreign direct investments inflows decreased in 2002 by 20.6% in the least developed countries of Africa, excluding Chad [22]. In the same year, more than a quarter of the net global aid flows went to Africa, which was equivalent to 32% of the region's gross capital formation [26]. Unfortunately, some countries depend on foreign aid for over 24% of their GDP [29]. Aid dependence leads to loss of identity, lack of participation in decision-making, diminishing sense of responsibility for one's own future, initiative in gaining that future and the accountability of governments to their populations for shaping policies leading toward it [28, 31].

After nearly 100 years of economic exploitation and political repression, Africans had, and are having, little or no say in the political decisions that govern their daily lives. This is agreeable since aid has always been accompanied by political decisions dictated by donors to serve their interest. Former colonial masters, with the intention of protecting the exploitation mechanisms and structures they created and left behind, will stop at nothing to pressurize African stooges to pursue faulty policies that safeguard their interests. Governance structures that were previously centred on kinship ties and on the recognized leadership of people, who care for the needs of the communities, are replaced by centralized states that cannot deliver the goods.

The European Union (EU) and the Bretton Wood Institutions implicitly imply this in the imposition of good governance as loan conditionality. When we look at bilateral aid flows, we see that colonial powers prefer dealing with former colonies, which still maintain the master-servant relationship created during colonialism. Making matters worse, the colonial masters left without adequately training Africans to manage and maintain the economic and political infrastructure. English-speaking Africa seems to be better. The handpicked puppet rulers are merely mimicking, rather than maintaining, the infrastructure left behind for the benefit of the population.

High fertility

Africa's population could soar by more than 1 billion over the next half-century, further straining the food and water supplies and the social services in already struggling areas. This will mean creating millions of jobs and improving health-care facilities and schools. By international standards, the fertility ceiling of 5.5 in countries like Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Namibia and the Central African Republic is disturbingly too high *C.T. Eyong & I.I. Foy, Int. J. Sus. Dev. Plann.* ([32], p. 2) *Vol. 1, No. 2 (2006)*. This young age dependency further worsens the economic situation and the population increase threatens the depleting natural resources in the region.

As the number of people to be provided for grows, resources tend to reduce in relative terms thus making planning and implementation of development programmes difficult. Since population increase trails behind food production and economic growth in Africa, there is severe population pressure on the environment as people try to scratch a living from the soil. However, wars, HIV/AIDS, accidents and other disasters are playing their part to check population growth in the region. Easy access to condoms and other contraceptives are Western-packaged population checks for Africa, which is yet to yield positive results. Population growth is fuelling rapid urbanization in Africa.

Rapid Urbanization

Presently, 37% of Africans live in cities *C.T. Eyong & I.I. Foy, Int. J. Sus. Dev. Plann. Vol. 1, No. 2 (2006)*. The high fertility in Africa has engineered a massive rural-urban drain and African cities are a blend of traditional and Western cultures. A total of 187 million people live in the cities in Africa, making up 72% of Africa's urban citizens, representing the world's largest proportion of urban residents living in slums. The average urban growth in the region is 4%, twice as high as that of Latin America and Asia. By 2030, it will rise to 53%, the world's highest rate of urbanization in history, which means that Africa's urban population doubles every 14 years.

Since many people in Africa are unable to make a living in rural areas, they drift to towns with hopes of getting a job and having a better life, which hardly happens – this is referred to as the urban illusion. Hence, rural poverty is perceptibly an urban misery in Africa. Moral decline, malnutrition, high infant mortality and crime and drug abuse, especially among the youth is rife. Increased poverty has fuelled insecurity, vulnerability, displacement, HIV/AIDS, rapidly growing urban slums, lack of basic services, sub-standard housing, hazardous locations, mounting solid wastes, insecurity of tenure and social exclusion.

Only 48% of urban households have a water connection, while in the slums only 19% enjoy this service; only 31% of urban households are connected to the sewerage system compared to only 7% in the informal settlements; just 54% of urban households have electricity in their homes in contrast to 20% in the slums. 15.5% of urban households have telephone lines while only 3% of slum dwellers have this luxury *C.T. Eyong & I.I. Foy, Int. J. Sus. Dev. Plann. Vol. 1, No. 2 (2006)*. These statistics clearly signify an urban divide in Africa. Rapid urban growth is rather a curse than a blessing in Africa, since it makes the realization of political stability, social order and, of course, economic progress less likely.

Little commitment to democracy: civil wars and ethnic strife

The governance structure in Africa before colonization was founded on strong community and cultural roots. Constitutional governments ruled the members of ethnic groups, though laws were undocumented and no one had any formal education. Ever since the 'invention of Africa' violent conflicts became widespread in the continent. Accountability, institutions of democratic participation, public interests, local values, concerns and centralized managements in Africa neglect traditions. The wholesale conversion of public property by public officials into private goods is turning huge exporting companies into the biggest debtors.

Poor management of state funds, coupled with embezzlements and capital flight are creating budget deficits, paving the way to external begging. Realizing just how much bad governance in Africa will cost Western nations, the latter imposed conditionalities on aid, which impinge on the sovereignty of recipient states. These conditionalities ranged from privatization, democratization, environmental protection, trade and other policy reforms. However, African countries are responding to these conditions by evolving paper policy reforms with little results on the ground to qualify for a loan.

Given the complexity in what good governance really means, the European Commission supports country initiatives rather than imposing the one-size-fits-all approach of the World Bank and the IMF. This notwithstanding, there is little hope for any participatory democracy with the stalling of the third democratic wave. For instance, in Cameroon and Togo among others, one-party states have allowed elections, but end up permitting only limited opening for political competition. These 'limited' democracies suffer from shallow political participation; citizens have little trust in their governments and are thus disaffected from politics. While theorists postulate more education for democratic participation, many Africa countries lapsed back into authoritarian rule, with the dominance of single powerful parties or groups despite formal elections. The ultimate crime is political disloyalty to the president.

Contradictions and mutual distrust among the ruling elite

Enormous internal contradictions prevent the ruling elite in Africa from uniting and communicating with one voice. For example, while Libya and Zimbabwe hold a radical position within the African Union (AU) and New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Nigeria and South Africa take a liberal and pro-Western stance. NEPAD's peer review initiative is a good move towards good governance and accountability in Africa, but African leaders are reluctantly signing to it. These divisions are playing to the advantage of Westerners, especially the EU. Internal divisions and the weak bargaining powers of the African states give the advantage to the EU. Formerly, negotiations between the African, Caribbean and the Pacific countries and the EU involved everyone as a group. Today, the EU, being aware of the enormous power of the combined group, has now adopted a policy that splits African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

On the contrary, Latin American countries have understood the interest of the West and therefore unite in many aspects to defend their collective welfare.

Ecological problems

Poverty is the major cause of Africa's declining natural resources. Although too much hunting pressures are putting bush meat under siege in the forests and while rivers, oceans and streams are being over-fished, the continent illusively suffers from a low-protein intake. Also, self-sufficiency of food is a laughable luxury in some countries. Massive clearing of forests for farming and logging to meet the high demand for fuel wood and construction of infrastructure are causing deforestation and desertification in the region. For instance, about 350,000 ha of forests are being cut down annually in Cameroon. The outtake by local residents does not surpass the activities of foreign commercial loggers who clear down forests in very unsustainable ways to satisfy their profit motives. The Yaoundé Forest Declaration of 1999 committed participating governments to the protection of 12 million acres, cooperation across borders to control poaching and the bush meat trade, and the promotion of responsible forest management among logging companies.

Tropical forests help in carbon sequestration, but forest preservation deprives the local people of benefits and resources, while African debts and burden are growing. Also, overgrazing and overcropping put much stress on arable land. Water shortages, air pollution, malnutrition and environmental diseases are the mainstay. Hazards such as floods, draughts and invasion of pests, such as locusts, are worsening the bad food scarcity problem. Women and children walk long distances to fetch water and firewood. Not only do people in this region have to manage a deteriorating environment, but they also suffer from these conditions. Aggravating the environmental crisis in Africa are faulty government policies that lease longer forest concessions to foreign commercial loggers and charge lower exploitation fees. The accelerated unsustainable exploitation of timber by foreign commercial loggers is putting the forest ecosystems under siege. Wetlands, which are gene reserves, are on the verge of disappearing. Land, air and water pollution are no less a problem in urban and rural areas, although no data exists.

THE ROLE OF INTELLECTUAL ABILITY FOR SUSTAINABLE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

Everyone created here on earth is born with a particular and special potential different from others in one aspect or the other and this knowledge or potential must be used begins from sustainment of oneself, his/her environment, state, country and Africa as a continent at large. The problems described above leads to the usefulness of the intellectual ability of an individual in sustaining the development of African as a whole.

Some of the roles of the intellectual ability for the sustainable of African development are numerous and can be categories in many aspect or area; some of the roles are as follows:

- ❖ It enhances the need for educating youth for creativity, adapting and spreading knowledge for technological transformation in the network age.
- ❖ The use of computer-Internet to explore for more knowledge which is the backbone of development
- ❖ Through the use of internet social network connections are made for knowledge enhancement for development
- ❖ The other man-made devices are invented for the development of humanity through the application of intellectual ability
- ❖ Intellectual ability increases the skilled work force for modernization as a matter of personal freedom developing capability and empowerment for the citizens in other to continually sustains the level at which African is been developed.
- ❖ The sustaining development of Africa increases, when there is high independence among the youths.
- ❖ Intellectual ability allows the youths and all citizens in other to make use of their ability to utilize in totality, the enormous cultural, mineral and natural resources the continent is been blessed with, and less depends on foreign companies for their exploitation and transformation.
- ❖ This promotes social cohesion and materials understanding i.e logical and consistent means of articulating resources in the development of the nation. Example includes: creation of alternative power supply (Solar Power).
- ❖ Intellectual ability sustains the development of the continent in the aspect of health and nutrition for the citizens' healthy living of life.
- ❖ Intellectual ability helps to sustain and embark on a meaningful path to a level of well being deemed satisfactory for a sizable proportion of the nation.
- ❖ Intellectual ability improves the quality of life by increasing people's awareness of their environment.
- ❖ Sustainable development is a planned cultural, economic, social, environmental and political change for the better, which needs cooperation at all the levels by all the stakeholders, geared towards the well-being of the masses

CONCLUSION

The ability of the citizens at large to put into use, their potentials in sustaining the widely growth and development of this continent (Africa) in all aspect or areas that makes Africa as a continent, economically, socially, educationally, financially, agriculturally, politically and so many other aspects in maintaining and sustaining the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

RECOMMENDATION

Youth of this age should not rely solely on foreign intelligence rather develop and utilize their intellectual ability (potentials) in solving the challenges confronting the sustenance of African development. Also, our government should create empowerment programmes that will motivate the youths to be self employed. The government should assist the masses by providing conducive and necessary infrastructural amenities to maintain optimal standard of living which will contribute to sustainable development of Africa.

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