

Higher Educational Policies in Anglophone Africa: Opportunities and Challenges

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Higher Education is a training ground for research based professional and career future. It is a potential instrument of ensuring success of democracy and bringing social transformation in the new environment of knowledge and information technology. Theodore Schultz and Mary Backer have termed the role of higher education as transformation of human beings into human capital. Globalized economy understands the strategic importance of removing barriers. Anglophone African countries in the twenty first century face number of such challenges in the field of Higher education.

Higher Education is crucial in order to take complete advantage of creativity and energy so as to prepare for challenges of the present world. Research and Development of appropriate occupations in various universities have to be emphasized so as to catalyse this process. A cohesive functioning and planning at the Higher Education level will extend visibility and decision making capacity for participation.

Higher Education for Cultural and Scientific Progress

Higher Education has assumed responsibility for transmitting accumulated knowledge both cultural and scientific. The effect of innovation and technological progress will increasingly demand competencies and pose challenges requiring more dynamism in the course content which could help them in gaining entrepreneurial and leadership roles.

Higher Education for Empowerment

Mass motivation and mobilization in order to disseminate information through newsletters and other social agencies are being promoted. Universities are promoting a Network Culture so as to monitor activities related to women's studies and women's movements and recommend better implementation. Preparation of data based information and transference of matter into technological display has become a major policy initiative which offers information and technological inputs.

The process of globalization has effected changes in a number of industries leading them to adopt ideas and technologies which were unconventional for their procedural development. Educational system similarly, owing to the introduction and exercise of technological and communication developments has posed number of challenges. Twenty-first century Anglophone African countries are facing a number of challenges in the field of education. Higher Education is finding it difficult to meet the challenges of a knowledge explosion, uneven growth and inequities in policies. Adjustment to social demands for new options in Higher Education and for removal of gender barriers is creating pressures on educational leaders.

Higher Education and Research Work in Anglophone African countries

Higher education in Anglophone African countries need to offer management training and research work in order to promote advancement and empowerment. There has been a major paradigm shift from pure industrialization to an information based society in Anglophone African countries. This paradigm shift has necessitated importance of looking at the possibilities of curriculum content promoting research and gender equality. It has necessitated the learning environment so as to foster assertiveness and empowerment.

Challenges of Higher Education in Anglophone African Countries

There is also a need for the education system to foster sensitization of members towards Higher Education and empowerment. An extremely limited participation in humanities and social sciences has less chances of helping society. The broader question revolves around the whole issue of emancipation to empowerment and the possibilities of higher education helping in such a transition.

Higher Education and Self-Employment for Women

In order to develop the potential of women workforce so as to serve the society with dignity, various self employment opportunities for women, counseling courses, exhibitions,

seminars and career fairs are organized to disseminate information, cultivate the required skills.

Women are developing self-confidence, self-esteem and a sense of financial security by way of skill cultivation to be entrepreneurs.


Changes in Higher Educational Policies

A recent shift to provide more options better suited is visible in Anglophone African countries Higher Education. Courses such as Computer Science, Electronics, Information Technology, Home Science, Law and Governance, Molecular Medicine are significant inclusions in the curriculum. Courses in Fashion Designing, Clinical Nutrients and Dietetics, Nursing and Business Administration are also present. Personality development and spoken English classes, commercial and secretarial practice, Media careers, Public Relations, Advertising, Garment Technology, Hotel and Catering studies are offered as certified courses.

Possibilities of Higher Education

Any research activities entail processes of asking critical questions, and designing inquiry methods and tools for gathering relevant and necessary information to critically analyse and understand the phenomena under study. Research is crucial in any serious and comprehensive development agenda of contemporary nation-states within the global context. In spite of the assumed and commonly agreed scientific impartiality in scientific inquiry and the applications of the rules of methods, the respective life journeys, experiential trajectories, and perspectives of the researchers inform their choices of what they consider the most appropriate data, and the methods for data collection and analysis.

Most of the research in developing countries, especially in Africa takes place in universities. Thus, they constitute sites of concentration knowledge as it is dispensed, acquired, and produced. Intellectual articulation through critical thinking and research findings constitute the framework and practical reference for policy design. Thus, women's productive visibility is crucial in such a space of concentration of power that defines reference and direction of policy and social reproduction. Their limited participation can constitute a major hindrance to any effort of achieving substantive and structural gender parity.

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Submitted: 27 Sep 2022, Revised: 09 Oct 2022, Accepted: 18 Nov 2022, Published: December 2022

Issues raised, in studies such as in Kenya where, according to Kanake (1997) women in the academic profession tend to leave academia, considered less attractive, for NGOs that are more financially rewarding, have several implications. This is the result of unwelcoming institutional settings of higher education institutions, their discriminatory policies and especially practices.

Gender Equality in Higher Education

The limited presence of women in the universities leads to the absence of their perspectives and lost opportunities for contributing significantly to shape the broader intellectual framework. Unlike industrialized countries where significant research takes place in various types of institutions, in Anglophone African countries, the university constitutes the space where most of the research is conducted.

Role of Higher Education in Society and Political Participation

Byrne (1996) has argued that those who do not conform to these stereotypes constitute a conundrum and a challenge in the demobilization. In fact, in addition to other sociological factors that explain women's invisibility, their actual real work in combat has been questioned and led to literal disappearance after demobilization (Turshen and Twagiramariya, 1998).

Kwesiga (2002), among others, argues that to eradicate poverty it is necessary for Africa to promote educational opportunity for women. She contends that while there is more research to be undertaken and more policies to be analysed to have a broad understanding, there is enough knowledge already available to guide policies (Kwesiga, 2002).

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