

## **Altruism and Re-Orientation as Core for the Development of Africa**

Omale, Simeon and Amana, Damian

*Department of philosophy, Kogi State University, Anyigba*  
*Email: omalesimeon@gmail.com)*

*Department of Communication, Kogi State University, Anyigba*

Jan Knippers Black in his book, *Development in Theory and Practice: Paradigm and Paradoxes* had identified theories ranging from Liberal international School; modernization school; cultural weakness; Interdependence School as reasons for the unparalleled development of the world. While often these are used along the like of cultural imperialism and the un-even trade opportunities as reasons for Africa's developmental quagmire, it is the opinion of this paper that Africa's underdevelopment are largely products of our actions and non-actions. It is in this light that we seek to argue for the development of the spirit of Altruism and a reorientation of the national consciousness via investment in the Early Child Education adopting participatory learning and communication approach as necessary panacea for Africa's development. By instilling in the young minds the expediency of a more altruistic *modus vivendi*, the culture of egoistic corruption could be overturned.

*Key Words:* Africa, development, underdevelopment, corruption, altruism, leadership

### **Introduction**

While some scholars and theorists of development have often advanced external reasons and international politics of economy as prime causal agent of the problem of Africa's developmental quagmire (Rodney, 1981) and others have adduced the inappropriateness of policies and lack of resources as reasons for the current state of affairs, this paper locates the actions and inaction of Africans and her leaders as being responsible for her poor state of development. The paper further postulates cognizant of the penetrative range of corruption for a new renaissance of culture through the socialization of young infants through early childhood education.

It is a truism that sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing "absolute declines on virtually all indices of socioeconomic development" (Lubeck, 1992:520). From one region to another, across Africa, millions of people have no access to safe drinking water and food, over 75% of Africans lack proper sanitation, and every year approximately 2 million children die in the 1<sup>st</sup> twelve months of their lives (Schwab, 2001:6). The continent is beset with dysfunctional infrastructure, poorer health prospect, wide spread corruption with more than half of her people living below the poverty line. Despite this avalanche of problems, in some African countries, there is an obvious lack of sense of urgency to seek an end to the pains and suffering of Africans. In spite

of the so many natural resources in various parts of Africa, there is a lack of commitment to both institutional and personal discipline as exemplified by the level of corruption, unaccountable affluence and unrestrained greed as well as insubordination to the rule of law on the part of the elites and the political class (Meredith, 2006: 3).

Over the years, scholars have attempted to advance reasons as to the cause of the present decay and infrastructural collapse in Sub-Saharan Africa. Historical reasons such as slavery and colonialism, geographical reasons such as environmental factors and topography, bad policies and influences as well as evident failure of African leaders after independence to organize and develop their countries have often been adduced as responsible for the African current state of affairs. Advocates of a new Africa and the need to emancipate the continent from the shackle of poverty, underdevelopment and the like, have often advanced reasons and justifications for African's present predicament. However and most often, they have located these reasons majorly from the external perspective. While various theorists have attempted a justification for the Africa's state of poverty, it is worth noting that the post-colonial zeal of the early nationalist never envisaged this. For instance, the numerous agitations by respective nationalist leaders of the various African countries had the ultimate aim of economic development and

physical growth for their respective countries (Ayittey, 2005:57).

From the struggles and agitation of Kwame Nkrumah of the then Gold Coast (Ghana) to Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo of Nigeria; Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia to Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, one vision held them bond- development and economic recovery of their people. Their struggle was namely liberation from a grossly limiting bondage of the colonial rule and to launch their nations to a new era of development. For them, the struggle for development was not to be compromised but was to be given ultimate attention. For instance Kwame Nkrumah upon the independence of Ghana said “we must achieve in a decade what it took others a century” (Nkrumah, 1973: 401). Describing this situation, Ayittey opined that their urgency and haste for development of Africa was more or less seen as “the need to ‘catch-up’ (and this) was understandable, but the impatience led to haste, which made waste” (Ayittey, 2005: 58).

A simple comparison of Africa’s state of under-development and the zeal of the nationalist leaders announces a gap wide enough to raise the question as to what accounts for our state of affairs. In our effort to advance reasons for this, the paper would undertake a brief excursus of the various theories of development which often have been advanced as reasons and justifications for the continent’s woes. Our presentations is not borne out of conviction that these theories truly assume definitive answers for Africa’s developmental crisis but simply to help in our subsequent discussions. Our position that the Africa’s developmental quagmire is largely product of her actions and inaction would be sufficiently guided by our discussions on the leadership crisis, militarization of the continent, attempts at democracy and electoral mess and as well as the endemic problem of corruption. In this plethora of problems and woes, we advocate the re-orientation and the spirit of altruism at the foundational and formative level of human growth.

### **Development Theories and the African Continent**

In discussing the various theories of development, it is important to understand the term itself. Scholars, social theorists as well as philosophers over the years have not been able to achieve consensus regarding the definition of this term. This lack of unanimity in its definition has led to a situation in which scholars of varied opinion and ideological lining proposing different definitions for this term. While scholars (Oladipo, 2000: 121) have used the Gross National Product (GDP) or per capital income as the indices for development, others who are of the modernist

ideological grouping have tended to use infrastructural expansion and industrialization as yard stick for measuring development. Of interest for us however is the broad definition proffered by the like of Kwasi Wiredu. Wiredu argued for a holistic understanding of development based on its material and moral dimensions. While moral dimension of development involves regulations and improvement of human relations as well as human values such as freedom, equity, justice, equality and cooperation, the material element of development talks of such things as control and exploitation of the physical environment using science and technology as its tools (c/f Oladipo, 2000: 121). While we agree that they exist varied definitions of this term, it is important to remark that the definition given by Wiredu is quite instructive as it gives a broader perspective of the term rather than the narrow and one-sided view as given by most scholars. In other words, an acceptable definition of development should not be narrow minded and self-limiting to issues such as economic growth being measured with indicators such as employment and unemployment rate, productivity and the likes. An acceptable understanding of development should be all encompassing; a summation of economic indices and the social factors.

The paradox of the gap between societies and nations in terms of the haves and have-nots on the one hand and that between individuals in a given context has often created a puzzle. In an attempt to unravel this puzzle, theories have being propagated as explications for the varied gap between nations and the polarization of nations into developed, developing and underdeveloped. These theories plausible as they seem have often located the reasons for the African state of being in factors caused by the other. The human agency which often has being identified by the likes of Cheik Anta Dipo (1991) and Claude Ake (1996) has not always being given a fair share of its natural role in these theories.

When Adam Smith advocated liberalism as reason or factor necessary for development, he opined that a situation of free market system or economy was all that was needed for the development of the underdeveloped nations. He simply thought of a situation where by trade regulations are reduced and that the free flow of wealth between states and nations will further create wealth for the undeveloped. He didn’t consider the fact of comparative advantage that developed and industrialized nations already have over and above the developing and the underdeveloped nations. Equally too the human elements and their roles were not considered by these theory and her theorist.

Modernization which seeks to equate development with modernity thought of the elimination of old traditional values as these are obstructive to development. Thus for modernist thinkers, for a nation to develop, she must identify those traditional values, eliminate them and replace them with the modern values. This theory advocates for a super imposition of external values upon the native and cultural values of a given people so that the natives could develop. Despite the dynamism of culture, the difficult of identifying the yardstick for cultural evaluation poses a grave problem to this modernization theory of development. In other words, establishing standards for evaluation of a culture given that culture is the totality of a people's way of living distinctively theirs is often problematic (Ake, 1996:126).

From the cultural weakness theory to the interdependency theory and the Dependency theory, each often places emphases on the state actors. While cultural weakness emphasizes the primitiveness of the underdeveloped nations in terms of their cultural practices and advocates a scientific democratic and liberal culture as a catalyst for the development of the native cultures, interdependency argues for the interconnectedness of nations and the phenomenon of globalization as a tool for exploration if the third world countries must develop. Dependency theory on the other hand seeks to explain the reason for Africa's underdevelopment within the uneven trade and economic relationship between the industrialized world and the underdeveloped. The fact of their industrialization empowers them to assume the control of the market forces and thus create a situation of dependency. So long as this continues, the underdeveloped nations- Africa can't develop.

Obviously, these theories examined above, defined development as a state created paradigm and de-emphasized the role of the human agents in wealth creation, utilization and dispensation. These advocates often have used the Gross National Product, industrialization and technology growth as paradigm for development to the detriment of the definitive role of the human agents. Arguing to the contrary, Ake have said that definition of this kind portrays development as a project rather than a process that is all evolving. He said:

*Development is not a project but a process. Development is the process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstance to realize higher levels of civilization in accordance with their own choice and values (Ake, 1996:125).*

Inferring from his definition, we can say that development is not about increased production but more about how this increased production can affect human living condition. It is about concretization of

the increased production in terms of its effects on human life. This being the case, it becomes crystal clear that these theories have not sufficiently been able to explain the Africa's developmental predicament. It is in line with this that we seek to look inward and advance reasons which centers around the human person and the process definition of development as given by Ake (1996) as a justification of the current developmental crisis being experienced by the African continent.

### **Africa: a Product of her actions**

While these various theories of development have often tried to locate the bane of Africa's crisis to more of external factors, our paper is rather of the opinion that our internal structures have contributed more to the dynamics of our problems and issues. In this light, we shall discuss the crisis of leadership, practice of democracy and the democratization process in Africa and the endemic problem of corruption.

### **Corruption and Development**

The fact of the presence of corruption on the continent is no longer news, what perhaps is the news are the new approaches, dimensions and scales it is continually assuming. Its alarming rate has drawn attention of the World Leaders and international organization. For instance in his 1997 address to the Board of Governors, James Wolfensohn, the World Bank President remarked "we have seen how corruption flourishes in the dark, how it prevent growth and social equity, and how it creates the basis for social and political instability". The hydra-headed monster which has often thwarted the path of development is often a product of a failed and unethical leadership system in most African countries.

Factors ranging from the lack of responsible and ethical leadership to the lack of public accountability have served as reinforcing factors for corruption in Africa (Adedeji, 1995). The presence and entrenchment of patrimonial state and its practice in Africa with the ruling elite assuming total and exclusive exercise of power has further entrenched this culture. Within this context, serving government officials' simply appropriate state asserts to themselves as no distinction is made between that which is public and that which is private. The absence of the fundamentals of the rule of law further creates a situation of might is right and in such context, public serving officers are not brought to account for their actions thus creating lawlessness and recklessness.

The thriving culture of nepotism based on socio-cultural norms in the fractionalized African states is also a reason to consider in discussing corruption and development. When professionalism is not used as the basis and justification for who is appointed to perform certain jobs, but family ties, tribe, friendship and party affiliations are paramount in such consideration, development often is hampered. This culture of favoritism is also used even in the choice of projects as project's viability and intrinsic economic worth are not considered but more of opportunities for bribes. When such is done, to make-up often, the syndrome of over-pricing, cost adjustment or even tampering with the quality of the project being executed becomes the case (Tanzi and Davoodi, 1998). As Tanzi and Davoodi (1998) rightly observed such high level corruption in public investment can (and has) reduce growth by decreasing the government revenue needed to finance productive spending.

Clearly therefore, the practice of corruption in Africa has over the years retarded the growth and development of African States. Its effects are noticeable on all spheres of her life especially on her economy, politics and administration. It has increased cost of business in Africa thus driving foreign investors away from investing in the economies of the various countries in the continent. In extreme cases, government is equally forced to either abandoned viable projects or cut corners to keep the projects going often by increased borrowing to meet her obligation. The untold effect of this is always high thus leading to Lower growth and a distortion of the macroeconomic of the affected countries (Frisch, 1996; Mauro 1997a, 1997b).

### **Leadership and Development**

In discussing the crisis of leadership in African and as well as the governance style, the analysis of Lindberg (2006:139-151) in this regard is insightful. By June 2003, 44 of Sub-Saharan Africa's 48 states had conducted what are often referred to as "founding" elections, typically marking a transition from a long period of authoritarian rule to fledgling democratic government. 33 of these countries had gone through a second election cycle, 20 had completed three uninterrupted cycles, and 7 had held four or more consecutive elections.

Given this analysis, it is clear that Africa has over the years embraced democratic style of leadership even though she is regarded as a "latecomer to democratization" (Bratton and Mattes, 2001: 107-121). The question of interest however is not so much as to the time most of her states embraced democracy, but much of what democratic

rule has brought to her different nations considering the many years of military rule and the attendant culture of judicial impunity. Of equal importance is the process of democratization that these nations adopted in entrenching leadership. The actions and behaviour of these public officials which more often than not offends the sensitivity of the public as well as known and acceptable norms of conduct is of interest for us too. Instructively also, is the fact that by the 1980s, only very few of these 'democratically elected' African presidents voluntarily relinquished power; others had continually manipulated the electoral process to their favour. Even those that relinquished power, this of course is not without spending at least 2 decades in office as the president (Meredith, 2006). Perhaps, some instance might suffice to buttress out point.

Often in the process of democratization, we have seen more of the display of the 'seat-tight' mentality. As these self-perpetuations continue, vision and credibility is lost and the only focus is often the next election. In this process statesmen are lost and all we have left in Africa are politicians who have become jobber for the next election. Felix Houphouet Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire at the age of 84 was still vying for the next election to be the president after being in power for 29 years. He once said "there is no number two, three or four in Cote d'Ivoire, there is only a number one; that's me and I don't share my decisions" (Meredith, 2006: 379). It is on record that upon assumption of office, he had won all the 6 presidential elections of his country with an average of 99.7% of the vote. It might be of interest for us to ascertain what he left behind for the country and how he was able to develop Cote d'Ivoire.

The case of Malawi under President Banda was not different. His dictatorship degenerated into a tyranny when he declared himself as the life president in 1971. At the age of 90, he was still in charge. In Gabon, Omar Bongo was the President for 22 years in the oil rich state and left the state impoverished with himself enriched. From Senegal to Cameroon, Tanzania to Congo, the stories are not different; self-adulation and perpetuation in office of her leaders for over 2 decades. Leaders with no clear vision or direction, leaders who became tyrants and lacked the sense of public accountability and decorum flooded the continent. We have seen in Africa a rat race for political posts and offices all aimed at personal gains and aggrandizement with bogus claims that they want to serve and that their people are demanding for them.

Obviously therefore, leadership has being a major contributing factor to our continental crisis of underdevelopment. Self-interest, private agenda in politics and lack of altruism when it matters have all

taken us down the drain. No nation in history who has developed has been able to achieve that without norms and guides. When attempts are made in Africa in providing these norms and codes, the political will in ensuring that these are followed is often lacking. Thus, we are often left with the situation of political leadership for sale to the highest bidder. When these highest bidders arrive, their first and foremost interest is often to recoup the money spent on their election. With this scenario, the question remains; how can the continent develop?

### **Military and Development**

The long years of military rule in different states of Africa has had its attendant effect on our psyche and mentality. In the first two decades of Independence, Africa witnessed over 40 successful and attempted coups. Each of these military officers upon assumption of office would often remark that their presence is temporal and that their involvement in governance was to clear the mess of the politicians whom they often have accused of mismanagement, corruption, tribalism and nepotism. As Kukah (2011: 201) opined, “one of the most invidious aspects of the legacy of military rules on our society is the role, place, impact and effect of military decrees on our nation’s justice system”. Their reason for intervention is often a rescue mission aimed at making right what civilians have battered. For instance when in 1966 Nigeria experienced her first military coup, Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu speaking about the justification of the coup was of the opinion that it had become necessary as a means of ridding the nation of those he referred to as “ten percenters that make Nigeria look good for nothing” (Agbese: 2000: 2).

Not until very recently, it is common to hear of incessant coup d’états and unending process of democratization in most African countries. While a country announces a return to democracy, another reverts to military dictatorship, while a country begins a national reconstruction after a bitter civil war; another declares the onset of religious war. In the words of Ehusani, “Africa has sort of become a continent of turmoil as coup d’états, that sordid military operation usually accompanied by a massive blood-bath has become too frequent to make use (The Light, 1994). Successive coup plotters have given corruption and the need to rid the nation of it as reasons for their stake. Captain Valentine Strasser of Sierra Leon in justifying the coup on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April, 1992 said: ‘The nation as a whole was in a state of virtual collapse. Corruption, ...mismanagement, tribalism, nepotism, injustice, and thuggery were rampant. Members of government were engaged in the plundering of the

state’s resources to enrich themselves...’ (West Africa, 1992).

While corruption is often advanced as reasons, evidence shows that no sooner had such military administration settled, then corruption is often glorified. The days of the military junta of General Ibrahim Babangidawho was seen as the most massively corrupt ruler in Nigerian History (Meredith, 2006) and Late General Sani Abacha of Nigeria are but instances to justify the claim. These military administrations often get entangled in corrupt practices and its glorification. The rule of law and the constitutions are often abrogated and long term planning as well as constructive democracy and the democratic experience are threatened. Within this context of political instability and militarization of the polity, the culture of responsible and ethical leadership is lost as well as accountability. Rulership by brute force becomes the order of the day, developmental plans are truncated and ad-hoc measures are entrenched.

The coming to power of Gen Joseph Desire Mobutu in 1965 was justified ‘as being to prevent the Congo from sliding into chaos and corruption... The politicians had ruined the country’ (Meredith, 2006). Mobutu’s take off even though brutal, was ‘economically good for his country, inflation was halted, the currency was stabilized, output increased and government’s debt were kept low’ (Meredith, 2006). However, this was not sustained for too long as the crusader of good governance and anticorruption became the most corrupt. ‘In the 1980s, his fortune was estimated to total \$5 billion’. In Meredith words Mobutu has ‘grown from a false messiah to Monster’ (2006). Obviously therefore; our choice of military and actions of not preserving and defending our democracy has had its toll on our developmental effort. Africa can’t and will not develop in a context like this.

### **Altruism and Re-orientation for continental Re-birth Project**

The blame game by Africa leaders in terms of justification for the underdevelopment experienced in different parts of the continent as we have seen is unjustifiable. We have rather argued that Africans have being the problem of Africa. It is a truism that external factors such as our history, uneven trade opportunity have affected and truncated Africa’s developmental process, be that as it may, our actions and non-actions as exemplified by the glorification of corruption, unethical leadership and the blatant disregard for the fundamentals of the rule of law accounts for Africa’s predicament. In this plethora of arguments and reasons advanced, a school of thought

advocated for aid and thus creating a dependency syndrome. Aid to African Countries has equally proved to be opportunities as argued elsewhere to further entrenched corruption thus becoming an unmitigated disaster both economically and politically for the African continent. Thus we Africans must do something anew and in this line we are arguing for altruism which seeks to establish a stronger allegiance to the nation-state.

The fact of this altruism as its being advocated is simply based on our analysis of the crisis of leadership as the bane of Africa's problem. It must however be said that, localizing Africa's development predicament to the problem of leadership is no longer news. Talking about Nigeria in 1983 soon after the 1983 election meant to offer a second term to the incumbent of that time- Shehu Shagari, an election that was reportedly conducted amidst massive rigging and fraud, Chinua Achebe remarked:

*The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge or personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership (Meredith, 2006; 221)*

While people have argued for more stringent punishment for corrupt African leaders, we however seek to argue that entrenching a culture of public accountability and ethical behavior creates a more lasting effect. This will ensure a moral accountability that will ultimately oblige public office holders to demonstrate and make manifest standards of personal integrity, justice and honesty. This view is closely reinforced by the position of Cheikh Anta Diop in his *Civilization or Barbarism*(1991) where he had proposed a reawakening of the national consciousness as way out of Africa's culture of underdevelopment and its culture of corruption.

Perhaps it is important to give an insight into this concept as developed. Consciousness in the first place connotes an awareness of phenomena. An awareness which could either be of the self or the other. Transposing this understanding, national consciousness would imply awareness or knowledge of certain elements that constitute a nation such as her cultural values, national history, languages religion, economy and political system(s). In other words, national consciousness entails the summation of a person's knowledge or awareness of all the features of his nation and a commitment to acting in such manner that will attest to the fact that they possess this knowledge.

The proposal as made is simply an attempt to establish a link between the rhetoric of academics and the existential conditions of our being in Africa, a point which the likes of Olusegun Oladipo and Tseney Serequeberhan had made separately. In Oladipo's view Africa's 'participation in a universal cultural dialogue can be significant only if it is based on a firm foundation of concrete theories and ideas we have developed by ourselves in the attempt to come to term with the African reality in its various interlocking dimension' (Oladipo, 1992: 100). For Serequeberhan, 'the concrete resurrection of Africa beyond the tutelage of Europe requires in all spheres of life- a rethinking of the contemporary state of affairs in terms that are conducive and congenial to the emancipation and growth of Africa and its diverse peoples' (Serequeberhan, 1991: 23). It is in line with these views that our paper emphasizes the reawakening of national consciousness in the practice of altruism as the way out.

In making this proposal, it is a known fact that in Africa, the present situation of things favors some people and these categories of persons would do all things to prevent and thwart the desired change. This thus creates further gap in our recommendation and as such, the question of the possibility of this re-awakening remains paramount. In line with this, a close examination of the role and effort of the human agents as drivers of the socio-economic advancement of Africa is inevitable. The inevitability of the human agents as drivers of the economic and social development comes to the fore when we consider the failure of the many African developmental plans and policies; plans and policies that have often been adjudged theoretically sound and with antecedents of results other places. Thus calls for a comprehensive re-orientation of the lives and values of the human agents in the African nations so as to imbibe the courage to underplay 'greed, self-centeredness, inefficiency and tribal sentiments while inculcating the spirit of honesty, national pride over and above tribal inclinations' (Okolo, 1993: 77). This will entrench responsible moral leadership in Africa and in this way the ills so identified can be overcome.

Achieving this re-awaking of the national consciousness could be in varied ways. This could be achieved through legitimate national awareness campaigns aimed at making public the negative effects of corruption, bad leadership and instability. Yes in the past, successful administrations and governments have attempted this like the case of 'War Against Indiscipline and Corruption' (WAIC) in Nigeria during the military regime of General M. Buhari. However, government must go beyond brute force in entrenching these values. It is in line with view that we propose the option of inculcating these

values through the Early Childhood Education option (ECE).

### **Early childhood Education through participative communication**

The concept of early childhood education (ECE) or early childhood care and education (ECCE) defines a growing vibrant and profitable arena of research and investment in developed countries like America and the Britain. While societies in Africa have developed schemes and patterns for the education of the child after the sixth year, there is nothing or very little researched and packaged material for the education and preparation of the child at this most precarious and pliable age. By a preparatory implication, the early formative years even before the primary school have great economic importance for the nation as a whole. Both the “Carolina Abecedarian project and Perry preschool project” (Currie, 2001:217) researches reveal that in a comparative research between children who had some form of educational intervention before the age of 6 and those who don’t till after the age of 6, there was a significant and marked difference on test score sheets and general academic performance. In a replicated research by Reynolds, A.J *et al* (2010) Sianesi & Goodman (2005), to determine the long-term effect of ECE, they came to the conclusion that “Participation in an established early childhood intervention for low income children was associated with better educational and social outcomes up to age 20 years.”

MacEwans, (2013) from his research in the Great Britain has established a link between early childhood education and the potency of their contribution to the common social wheel in later life. It is a proven datum of growth that pre-kindergarten years are period of great malleability of the child’s formation. These pre-kindergarten years “are very important in affecting their long-term cognitive and social development. Children’s development, in turn, affects not only their personal well-being but also their capacity to contribute to the well-being of society in general” (MacEwans, 2013). The period from birth to about five years of age are specially significant moments in the life of a child when ‘foundational capabilities’ on which later growth process and pattern are dependent. Reiterating the aforementioned views, Barnette (2012) likewise has proven that any form of public investment in early childhood care and education (ECCE) is capable of producing not just momentary benefits but ‘long-term improvements in the intellectual and social development of disadvantaged children’.

Arguing for the exploitation of the potentials of ECE for inculcating altruism might sound strange to

the African mind. Some question readily comes to mind, are mothers no longer capable to offer pre-kindergarten education to their children? The answer to such a question extends beyond the demand of just yes or no. Whatever shade of opinion one may subscribe to, more often than not, as the Latin quote says *nemodat quod non habet*- one does not give what he does not have, mothers may have the ability but not having the focus, the aim, the training, such viable opportunity for honing the future of the nation and of mankind generally is wasted. Heckman (2001:32) argues that “Parents need help and their children will suffer if they don’t get it. Society will pay the price in higher social costs and declining economic fortunes.” In an ever demanding economic scenario, in a capitalist free world where the game of making ends meet is daily becoming difficult, the expulsion of the woman from the home either by the demand of economy, the drive of self-actualization or the feminist push, homes are gradually becoming emptied of the mothers and woman. If that is not the case, other times, mothers hardly have that wholesome time to dedicate to the welfare and education of the child at the most tender age as it ought to be or the parents lack the knowhow as Heckman has argued. Even in instances where professional ECE teachers are employed since it is equally difficult for ECE teacher to remain permanent with the little child, it is expedient therefore for the mothers and fathers to equally receive training in ECE basics, hence the necessity of a participatory communication. An integral ECE is hardly possible without a participatory communication either in the praxis of ECE and the holistic demand of ECE.

### **ECE as participatory communication**

Popular educational training especially in the formal school program tends towards an education that is linear: from the teacher to the student. Such linear mode of communication has the tendency to undermine the potential creative expression of the receiver of the education: in that the teacher teaches what he desires to teach not minding the predilection of the learner or the predisposition of the student. In such instance of learning as Gert Biesta criticizes, the learner is formed and reformed in the context of the formator not in the coming to presence of the learner: an education to sameness.

A participatory education modality demands in the first instance that the formed be recognised as person with his or her full rights of being aided into ‘presence’. A participatory education takes the focus away from the teacher and the syllables to the student and the vicissitudes of his or her potentials and

predilections. In order to understand fully a participatory education, a brief excursus on participatory communication is essential.

Participatory communication recognises the other as a rational agent with full rights. It presumes the equality on the ground of human nature that is common to all the participants in the communicative endeavour. It is dialogical not monological in nature. It is interactive in character. It emphasizes the collective processes. Describing the communal nature of participatory communication, Mefabulos and Tufte (2000) in their World Bank manual for participatory communication held that:

*To be genuinely participatory and truly effective, communication should occur among all parties affected, ensuring all have similar opportunities to influence the outcome of the initiative. Optimally participatory communication would be part of the whole project process, from beginning to end.*

Applying participatory character to the ECE practice for effectiveness, it is paramount that all the human agents involved in the process be trained to apply ECE: the parents, the State for sponsorship of research, programs and supply of teachers, media producers for the production of ECE reach programs, toy makers for the provision of ECE play toys for children. A supervisory agency and an interactive forum for all the agents involved in the ECE for purpose of evaluations, researcher's continuous research and production of data on the impact, effectiveness and future trends. Programs of ECE meant to promote altruism must be built with the logic of positive reinforcement of altruistic acts and gestures while tendencies of egoism ought to be responded to with negative reinforcement.

## Conclusion

Appreciating our predicament, we need to be more contextual in our assessment of our continent. Continuous and continual reference to the past and failures or experiences of African states would move the nation nowhere. We must set assail in the task of rebuilding and re-investing in African anew. In this light we propose a conscious programme of re-orientation of the psyche and a new commitment to growth of the nation. The task of re-orientation is premised on the development of a spirit of altruism. Altruism entails acting in a way and manner that we seek no personal and inordinate interest or reward but rather for the sake of duty to one's nation. Entrenching this spirit, the key proposed is investment in the Early Child Education and during which the core values of development, nation building and altruism can be inculcated in the child.

Our position is anchored on the premise that leadership has been the bane of the continent's woes. The continent is obviously endowed with rich land, climate and natural resources. However, the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the occasion to the challenge of personal example as envisioned by altruism has negatively impacted on her developmental opportunities. Africa and her people must invest in patriotism articulated as an emotion of love directed by a critical intelligence (Achebe, 1984:15) in the cognizance of her collective interdependence.

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