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Review

Back to Basics: Integrating African Indigenous Education into the Formal Educational System in Cameroon Schools

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Abstract

The issue of education in Africa as a whole and Cameroon in particular has been central to curriculum development process since independence and reunification to the present. Post-colonial school curricula in Cameroon, which are mostly dominated by western values, knowledge and pedagogies at the expense of indigenous knowledge and epistemologies, remain a major area of concern in education. This condition has been blamed on the influence of the educational system inherited from colonial domination. With the national awakening of the African masses, the variety of political experiences, coupled with the advent of globalisation, certain traits of the colonial administration have become evident. Cameroon (1970) argues that postcolonial educational institutions are still marked by Western modernism and still work within the Eurocentric infrastructure of a society with different values and motives. Educational research draws our attention to the fact that the residues of the colonial era remain at work in several post-colonial educational systems. Fincham and Hooper (1996) observe that "the dismantling of colonialism and the achievement of independence by Europe's ex-colonies has been replaced by a continuing Western influence, located in flexible combinations of the economic, the political, the military, and the ideological". Among other problems inherited from the colonial education system is the issue of ill adapted curriculum to the needs of the Cameroonian people. The inadequacy of the educational system inherited from the colonial era in its inception, orientation, structure, objectives, contents and strategies have been identified by critics of colonial and post-colonial education as the main contributing factor to the problems of education in Cameroon. After decades of debate on the relevance of indigenous knowledge and its suitability for integration in school curricula, there is need for a shift in paradigm towards recognising indigenous ways of knowing and transforming curricula towards using inclusive, contextual and practical content and pedagogies that reflect the changing needs of African society.

Keyword: African Indigenous Education, Cameroon Schools, Curriculum development, Formal Educational System, Indigenous knowledge

INTRODUCTION

There have been robust debates on the integration of indigenous education into national curricula (O'Her and Nozaki, 2014; Breidlid, 2013, 2012) and initial attempts to include indigenous knowledge in the curriculum have sometimes met with resistance from different people who have varied views about the specific knowledge items which should be included (Hodson, 2009). Nevertheless, many developing and developed countries have recently considered the inclusion of indigenous education and indigenous languages in the teaching of science in an attempt to sustain IK and heritage, as well as to create a foundational base in science teaching (McKinley, 2005). While indigenous education has been used, amongst others, to create a foundation base in science teaching (Herbert, 2006; Klos, 2006; McKinley, 2005), it has been argued that it has a place in the academy in its own right,

an argument which is framed in terms of the politics of recognition (Hodson, 2009) and social justice for the marginalized (Dei, 2000).

Higgs (2016) affirm that African education systems mirror colonial education paradigms inherited from former colonial education systems and, as a result, the voices of African indigenous populations are negatedǁ. He also asserts that colonial education was hegemonic and disruptive to African cultural practices, indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowingǁ. Higgs argues that consequently, there is an existential and humane need today to decolonise the curriculum in Africa by means of post-colonial education system that reclaim indigenous African voices through curriculum reforms and the transformation ofeducation discourse in which Msila (2016) refers to as restructuring of African education curriculum to make it relevant to African challenges through consideration of indigenous education in education. Higgs recommends that curriculum planners and developers should consider infusing the curriculum content with the wealth of indigenous education from the local communities and also appropriating such knowledge towards human-centred development. These arguments have led to the current paradigm shift towards valuing and inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the formal education curriculum.

Constructivism as a learning theory argues that learners construct knowledge out of their prior experiences and develop their thinking abilities by interacting with other children, adults and the physical world. Many researchers and practitioners concur that effective teaching involves use of learners 'prior knowledge and that it is paramount to take into account the background and the culture of the learner throughout the learning process (Sherman and Sherman, 2004; Holiday, 2000; Hewson and Hewson, 1982). In this regard, indigenous knowledge items as prior knowledge that varies between and within groups needs to be examined so that knowledge that is considered useful and valuable is integrated in the curriculum at the appropriate place and position (Hodson, 2009)

Context of the Study

Cameroon education in the last decade of the twentieth Century was plagued with issues of educational quantity and quality as well as equity and equality arising from debates on school access. Lots of evidence shows that since independence and reunification, access to education in Cameroon, has risen sharply. Sifuna and Sawamura (2010) however argue that access to school is not sufficient to ensure a descent level of basic learning. While the gains of school enrolment has been quite impressive in Cameroon, there are still problems of low quality, and high dropout rates resulting in many children leaving school without obtaining a sustainable level of basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills.

Furthermore, despite the institution of Harmonization as an Education Law to guide teaching and learning in Cameroon schools by the Federal House of Assembly in 1963, Cameroon still operates two different subsystems of education with two school traditions each offering different curricula at the different levels of education with different types of certificates offered. Tosam (1988) argues that undoubtedly, these different systems reflect different values on educational development. Alongside the growing awareness of the need to make sure that students are learning and acquiring the skills needed for life and work,some policyissues have emerged as guidelines for education in Cameroon. These policies that aimed at solving the problems that have plagued the educational system in Cameroooninclude but not limited to Harmonization, Ruralization, Bilingualism, integration of ethnic languages, Science and technological development and inclusive education. In spite of these attempts at providing solutions to the educational problems in Cameroon, there still remain important unresolved questions as to what type of knowledge to be taught in schools and what the nature of curriculum should be like. More so, education is still highly concentrated on the development of cognitive skills as emphasized by the colonial education objectives as opposed to character and physical development and development of practical skills, advocated during the indigenous period. This has resulted to the loss of values and development of the whole person that were focus of education during the pre-colonial period. The challenge is to keep pace with the fast changing world, yet adapting to the contextual realities of the system and to ensure that schools are suitably equipped to prepare children for the complex world they live in.

This article therefore advocates for the re-appropriation of African traditional values in the Eurocentric-typed Cameroon Education system which is largely centred on the propagating the European ideals and culture. The secondary History syllabus for example is for the most part still concentrated in the study of World Affairs and European History with little attention paid to Cameroon History. In the same vein, the Geography syllabus for secondary school highlights more issues of Europe and the world than it concentrates on Cameroon. Therefore if schooling must be made useful and worthy for Cameroon children and youth, then we must go back to the drawing board to have education that will make learners responsible and fully participating citizens in the march towards Nation Building and smooth integration in the post-modern world. In the same line, Agrawal (1995) argues that, fifty years after the Wilsons' observations, there is no big substantive difference between indigenous knowledge and western knowledge on agriculture, agro-forestry and taxonomies. He posits that indigenous knowledge is not only about the livelihood of people; it can consist of abstract and philosophical systems.

Indigenous knowledge can also be prestigious (ex-ministers visiting local traditional healers for treatment). Using a hybrid model of Lev Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism and Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives, this paper analyses issues of indigenous education and the present day curriculum of primary school, while making a case for the integration of both modes of indigenous and present day system of education to produce a relevant curriculum for Cameroon schools.

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Education

Formal education has come to define for the learner and society what knowledge is legitimate or not, or in other words what is valid and invalid knowledge. Education is a double-edged sword that can be used by the dominant class to play a conservative role of control, while it can also be deployed by those who want to change the prevailing social order (Assie-Lumumba, 2016). Education approaches and indigenous views of the world have been jeopardized with the spread of western values, social structures, and institutionalized forms of cultural transmissions (Barnhardt, 2014). In the Cameroon education system, curriculum, both in content and pedagogy continues to teach students a foreign culture and worldview in a foreign language that inhibit learning experiences of students. Shazha,(2013) and Shava, (2016) claim that western education system denies learners space to bring into the educational processes knowledge from their own lived experiences instead their experiences are considered inferior and their accumulated IK as valueless and insignificant.

Through the school curriculum, learning institutions exert considerable influence in shaping society (Escrigas, 2016). Education is both a prerequisite to, and a tool for, enhancing the opportunities of learners to exercise their social, cultural, economic and political rights (King and Schielmann, 2004). Culturally responsive education is directed towards culturally knowledgeable students who are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community and are able to understand and demonstrate how their local situation and knowledge relates to other knowledge systems and cultural beliefs (Barnhardt, 2014). Brock-Utne (2006) emphasizes the important role which education can play to counter-act the colonisation of the African mind by the western and European forms of knowledge and urge Africans to question knowledge included in curriculum and the languages spoken and used as medium of instruction.

Blignaut (2017) asserts that an important purpose of education is to bring about autonomous individuals who can think for themselves and are able to make ethical judgements and decisions, and such successful education programmes require a relevant curriculum that can be taught and learnt in a local language and builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners among others (UNESCO, 2000). The depth of IK rooted in the long inhabitation of a particular place offers lessons that can benefit everyone, from educator to scientist, as we search for a more satisfying and sustainable way to live on this planet (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005).

Although society is fast changing, we cannot ignore the role that IK systems play in the life of children, or the fact that knowledge is socially constructed. Before young children join school, they already have some knowledge acquired from home through observation of traditional practices and beliefs, stories, riddles and proverbs, games and play and dailyinteractions with adults (Okoth, 2016). The dominated teacher-centred pedagogy of the present formal education system negates the constructivist theory which beliefs that children actively construct their Knowledge, rather than simply absorbing and memorizing ideas spoken to them by teachers (Lunenburg, 1998). Thus, for the Cameroonian child to learn with meaningful practical applications within his/her communities, there is need to extend teaching in Africa beyond the current practice of transmission and indoctrination'to facilitating subject matter learning through integration of the learner's indigenous knowledge system in order to transform the subject matter knowledge into a comprehensible form that the learner can grab and apply' (Abah et al., 2015).

Assie-Lumumba (2016) states that education defines the whole human being as a member of a given society with its worldview, ethos, and social representation, in all its forms education is the primary instrument of enculturation. It is therefore believed that any change brought about by education is through the structure of the school curriculum and the success of its implementation. This therefore could account for why post-colonial governments in Africa have grappled with developing meaningful and relevant curricula (Nhalevilo, 2013).

Additionally, Critics of education hold the common view that there is no unequivocal meaning of education as the concept can be interpreted differently depending on the purpose for which it is used (Balogun, 2008).These arguments seldom challenge the value of education itself because there is the general support for education for self and others. The disagreement is on the purpose, nature, form and process of education and not on its fundamental virtues (Nelson et al, 2007). Whether education is defined as schooling, acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Good, 1973), a social process by which people develop abilities to adopt to changing environment, the process of transmitting the culture of a society from one generation to the other, the process by which the adult members of a society bring up the younger ones (Adeyinka, 2002), its general purpose is for a better life. It is a lifelong process from womb to tomb, one that includes all the experiences in school, at home, within the community and broader society.

Therefore, education of course is far more than just what goes on in school. It takes place in many ways and in many locations over a lifetime, often without us realizing it is happening. Derived from the above, one can attest that there are several agencies of education which scholars have termed; formal, acquired in school; informal from home; and nonformal from the wider society. Whereas Indigenous African education is considered informal, Western education is considered formal. Educational development in Africa has been categorized under three political Era; Pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-colonial. Each era defined education to suit its political, social and economic interest and circumstance. Therefore the aim and content during each of these eras were geared towards the preservation of culture, transmitting what is worthwhile and producing awareness of their laid down standards (Ndille, 2014).

Gumbo (2016) further argues that curriculum contains packaged knowledge which should embrace indigenous perspectives if it is to benefit indigenous learners and other notions spanning the cultural realities of a given community. Hoppers argue that indigenous technology is not limited to woven baskets and handicrafts for tourists, rather it expands to technologies such as looms, textiles, jewellery and mineral manufacture; and technological knowledge and practices in agriculture, fishing, forestry, resource exploitation, atmospheric management techniques, knowledge transmission systems, architecture, medicine and pharmacy (Odora-Hoppers, 1998). These indigenous ways of knowing produced knowledge and skills that have worked over thousands of years for the survival of the human species (Hewson, 2015) and thus for Msila (2009) representation of IKS in formal education contexts provide an opportunity for inclusive approach to education.

Education and teaching in Indigenous African Society

MacOjong (2008) refers to the kind of education received in Pre-colonial Africa as indigenous or traditional education. Cameroon`s indigenous education is part of African indigenous education. African indigenous education was a lifelong process of learning whereby a person progressed through predetermined stages of life graduation from cradle to grave (Cameroon and Dodd, 1970). It can be generally defined as the form of learning in African traditional societies in which knowledge, skills and attitudes of the tribe were passed from elders to children by means of oral instruction and practical activities.

It was a practical system of education whereby communities of people participated in order to satisfy their biological needs as individuals on one hand and their social needs as a group on the other hand. Pre-colonial education responded to the economic, social and political conditions of the pre-colonial African society (Mounoumi, 1968). Politically, it stressed good citizenship, good character and emphasized the duty of the individual to his immediate community and a demonstrable sense of responsibility; socially, it taught certain basic etiquettes, religious and cultural dogmas, discipline, respect for elders and hard work; while economically it emphasized vocational training. According to Rodney (1981) pre-colonial education was characterized by its collective nature, it many sidednesses and its progressive development in conformity with the successive stages of the physical, emotional and mental development of the learners concerned.

In responding to Ralph Tyler's four essential questions that could be used to structure knowledge in the educational context? Proponents of indigenous education argue that this educational system addressed the issue of what educational purpose should the school seek to attain? It argued that, African indigenous education did not develop in a vacuum, it had its own philosophical bases on which it was built. These philosophies were implied in their characteristics and served as a screen in selecting the educational objectives that were translated into the teaching activities or educational practices.

Traditional African education was community oriented geared to solving the problems of the society. It was based on communalism whereby the wellbeing of an individual was directly linked to that of the society or clan. The education of the child was the responsibility of all the members of the clan. Educational practices were based on group cohesion, socialisation, and cooperation such that children acquired knowledge through participation in group activities. Mounoumi (1986) argues that traditional African education was effective given its very close relationship with life. It was through social acts of production and social relationships of family life and group activities that the education of the child or adolescent took place so that he or she was instructed and re-educated simultaneously to the extent that he/she learnt everywhere and at all times.

More so, contrary to the modern school where learning was done in circumstances predetermined in advance as to place and time outside the productive social world, learning in traditional education system took place in the real context related to the concrete situation. The child was truly in the school of life. Knowledge of farming was received by children being involved in farming. The curriculum was utilitarian as children learnt and immediately applied in society. Knowledge was adequately transferred. A child who learnt how to cook, cooked, how to build, built. The best way to learn sewing was to sew and the equivalent subjects of the modern day arts and sciences were immediately used in society through applications in solving societal problems.

Moumouni (1986) also contends that the pedagogy of traditional education reveals a profound knowledge of the

physiology of the child and adolescent. This is so because the different age groups generally correspond to the different stages of mental and behavioural development of the child. Pedagogical methods employed in each of these stages show evidence of adapting to the physical and psychological potentials of the child which necessarily require knowledge and understanding of the fundamental characteristics of personality at each stage of the child's growth.The first stage of the child's education begins from birth to six or eight years, and falls within the framework of the family. The infant is breastfed and weaned at the appropriate time, later taught how to use the toilet, eat and behave. This education of the child is more the responsibility of the mother. The father has relatively little to do with the children during this stage.

The second stage is the age between six and ten years old whereby children become separated according to sex with each adopting their different roles. The boys become answerable to the men and the girls to the women. At this stage, the philosophy of preparationism is at work. During which the children are prepared to assume adult roles and functions in the family. The girl child is taught to cook, take care of the house, and siblings, while the boy child follows his father to the farm, fishing, hunting, and takes care of domestic animals.

The third stage corresponds with children from the age of ten to fifteen. At this stage, children of both sexes are increasingly involved in the life of men and women respectively and called to accomplish adult roles. They are allowed to attend public affairs and allowed to dine with the elders. Through apprenticeship, they are expected to learn all activities of the society such as hunting, farming, craftsmanship, fishing, etc without any specialization. The learner learnt multiple skills and mastered them all. This was a holistic approach to indigenous education that taught children to grow as jack of all trades and masters of all (MacOjong,2008). The child is later initiated into adulthood after he/she reaches the age of fifteen or sixteen. The male child is circumcised after which he is allowed to take a wife usually chosen by his parents.

Limitation(s) of the African Indigenous Education

A major short coming of the African indigenous education is that it lacked a social philosophic base that could have introduced a sense of uniformity. There was the absence of common language that could have united all communities that ensuring skills are not confined within one particular community. It focused almost exclusively on a particular society, clan or tribe. Though it readily responded to the needs of the particular tribe in question, it did not prepare learners for outside contact and consequently did not address the issue of all nations at large. This meant that the skills and knowledge possessed by a given ethnic group could not be easily transmitted to another tribe.

Furthermore, African traditional education was totally void of any developmental efforts and attempts toward modernization. Ociti (1973) contends that "tribal education was not an education for change" (p.107). According to him, African education demanded conformity, but not individuality, creativity or uniqueness. It taught strict obedience to the elders rule and authority which were not always founded, so that when the missionaries brought their schools to Africa, it became a 'refuge' for those Africans who wanted to be different from other members of the group(Achebe,1958). Consonant with the above, the modernisation theory states that for a society to develop socially and economically, an appropriate proportion of its population must hold modern attitudes, values and beliefs (McClelland, 1961; Inkeles,1979). Thus formal education is perhaps the most important agent for transforming a traditional society intoa modern one. This also means that schooling has a modernising effect on the ways people think and behave. Therefore western schools in Africa became places to go earn diplomas and degrees as well as social, economic and political powers.

Blending the traditional and Modern Classroom practices

One way of increasing the relevance of education is through an environmentally related curriculum based on community needs and conditions. According to Shava (2016), indigenous knowledge can play an important role in bringing local relevance to education process by bridging the gap between formal education systems and the lived experience within local community contexts. He asserts that its place in educational settings is attainable if efforts are made to identify areas of its possible integration into the existing education curriculum. The strategy of integrating IK into the formal education system requires the adoption of an endogenous approach to education that involves the contextualization of the school curriculum by integrating indigenous knowledge with other relevant and useful knowledge (Owour, 2007). De Beer and Whitelock (2009) state that by including indigenous knowledge in the science classroom, the social identities of learners can be acknowledged, learning might be turned into a positive experience and the attitude of learners towards science might change. In a cultural sense, African renaissance is closely connected with the re-validation of indigenous knowledge (Letsekha, 2013). In whatever form the IK may exist, for Semali and Kincheloe (1999), it has the potential of impacting on the teaching learning situation in significant ways and since this knowledge arises directly out of the children's real life experiences, its incorporation into school-work can serve to motivate students as they begin

to see that recognition is given to what they do and say in their communities.

Though it is quite difficult to find a widely accepted definition of blended learning, and even more challenging to find a core set of literature on blended learning framework (Chew et al, 2008), this paper blends the theories of LevVygotsky to provide a hybrid model for integrating indigenous curriculum in the modern day classroom. The choice of these theories is based on the argument that they are both suited in describing classroom practises. While Vygotsky considers socio cultural factors in cognitive learning and education, Benjamin Blooms made contributions to the classification of educational objectives and to the theory of mastery learning.

The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition (1978). He states that every function in the child's cultural development appears twice; first on the social level, between people (interpsychological) and later on the individual level inside the child (intrapsychological).

The second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential children engage in social behaviour. He considers socio-cultural factors in cognitive learning and education. He believes that knowledge is developmentally constructed in social or cultural interactions with learners.These interactions include those with educators, parents, classmates, family members and friends. They involve relationships with significant objects such as books or toys, and culturally specified practices that learners engage in the school, at home and in the community. The range of skills that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone. Vygostky believes strongly that community plays a central role in the process of making meaning. He holds that the origin of knowledge construction should not be sought in the mind but in the interaction constructed between a more and a less knowledgeable individual (Lantolf, 2008). The construction of knowledge is a socio culturally mediated process affected by the physical and psychological tools and artifacts. He holds that social interaction is the basis of learning and development. Learning is a process of apprenticeship and internalization in which skills and knowledge are transferred from the social into the cognitive plane.

A teacher or more experienced peer is able to provide the learner with 'scaffolding' to support the student's evolving understanding of knowledge domains or development of complex skills. Collaborative learning, discourse, modelling and scaffolding are strategies for supporting the intellectual knowledge and skills of learners and facilitating intentional learning. Vygotsky points out that cognitive and human development is a result of a dynamic interaction between the individual and the society. This dynamic relationship denotes a relationship of mutuality between the two. Just as society has an impact on the individual, the individual also has an impact on the society.

In line with the indigenous philosophy, Vygotsky avers that children are unable to learn and develop if they are removed from the society, or are forbidden to interact with it. Take a look at the typical development of children; their first teachers are their parents who teach them their first words and guide them as they take their first steps and went to toilet. They learn how to play with other kids their age and slowly build a bond with them. Thus, the indigenous curriculum provided the kind of education advocated by Vygotsky;education that is community based and emphasises character training through the assistance of the Zone of Proximal Development.

Developed by Benjamin Bloom in the 1950s the taxonomy of educational objectives is a classification of educational objectives used for developing higher level thinking skills. It is a process-oriented model that allows teachers to present ideas and concepts at many different levels to meet the needs of a variety of learners. Bloom's taxonomy provides a structure that allows teachers to present a lesson to a group of students who have varied needs and abilities. Elliot (2000) holds that this model supports the need to differentiate the curriculum so all students are able to participate in the same content area during a lesson. Bloom argues that education as a process is an effort to realize human potential, an exercise in optimum. Like Ralph Tyler, Bloom recognizes that what is important in Education is not that students should be compared but that they should be helped to achieve the goals of the curriculum they are studying. Goal attainment rather than student comparison is what is important. The process of teaching needs to be geared towards the design of tasks that would progressively lead to the realization of objectives that define the goals of the curriculum (Elliot, 2000).

Bloom's categories of the taxonomy at the cognitive domain did not only serve as a means through which evaluation tasks could be formulated, but also provide a framework for the formulation of the objectives themselves. As practised by the indigenous education system, Bloom's taxonomy is congruent with the mental processes of the learners. He believed that the environment highly influenced the performances of individuals and that the first four years of the child's life was a critical time to promote cognitive development. This is equivalent to the first stage of the child's education in the indigenous system and the responsibility of educating them is left in the hands of the parents.Bloom furthercontends that there are individual differences among learners and it is very important to accommodate these differences in order to promote learning. Rather than expect all learners to take the same time to achieve the same objectives, they should be allowed to evolve according to their abilities. Therefore, education should be focused on the target attainment and

not on “a horse-race model” of schooling that has as it major aim the identification of those who are swiftest. This he argues is because “speed is not the issue, achievement or mastery is” (Elliot, 2000).

In an attempt at integrating the indigenous and western education systems, blooms taxonomy becomes a powerful tool for teachers to meticulously plan their lessons. It is a way to describe the degree to which teachers want their students to understand and use concepts, to demonstrate particular skills and have their values, attitude, and interest affected. It is applied while course goals are being determined. It can also be used to identify which classroom assessment techniques are most appropriate for measuring these goals. Learning only becomes concrete if the teacher has carefully woven the taxonomy in their instructional goal.

Shava (2000) recommended that educational approaches should be contextual and should encourage the learners to bring in and share their experiences in the learning situation. He agrees with Ramose (1998) who states that Africanisation embraces the understanding that the African experience is not only the foundation‘of all forms but also the ‗source‘for the construction of that knowledge. Africanisation is often described as a renewed focus onAfrica and entails salvaging what has been stripped from the continent i.e. a call to adopt curriculum and syllabuses to ensure that teaching and learning are adapted to African realities and conditions (Letsekha, 2013).

The task for indigenous academics has been to affirm and activate the holistic paradigm of IK to reveal the wealth and richness of indigenous languages, world views, teachings, and experiences, all of which have been systematically excluded from contemporary educational institutions and from Eurocentric knowledge systems (Basttiste, 2002). School knowledge has to express the social desires, anxieties and socio-cultural needs for socio-economic development. It should align itself with learners‘experiences that are characterised by their socio-cultural worldviews. Thus, the question on defining and validating curriculum knowledge for African schools is pertinent (Shizha, 2013). According to Louw, (2009), it is clear the time has come to rethink the local content of subject areas, and by changing the curriculum in accordance with societal needs, we will change the way in which teaching and learning are constructed. Pedagogy should be approached from diverse perspectives that allow pedagogical process to be culturally sensitive, accepting cultural variations that may exist within the classroom (Shizha, 2013).

Horsthemke (2004) asserts that while the African experience is non-transferable, it is indeed communicable, but only by the African. Semali and Kincheloe (1999) emphasizes that by acknowledging students as knowers and by letting students bring to school their indigenous literacy skills which they already know, the classroom becomes an interactive environment of knowledge production which engages both the student and the teacher. Integrating African IK and ways of teaching and learning has been perceived as necessary in de-emphasising the current curriculum that has been viewed to be too abstract, not relevant, and more examination oriented (Owour, 2007).

Changach and Muricho (2013) argue that there is need to reform the education curriculum, to make it relevant and suit the needs of the Kenyan society and Suttner (2006) appeals for an inclusive South African curriculum that realizes the suppressed creativity of African people. For many South Africans, education has to serve the purpose of social justice as it addresses social issues. Botha (2010) concludes that Western science dominates the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and that the world views of indigenous people of South Africa in education continues to be relegated to the margins and calls for a curriculum that is inclusive of and responsive to African traditions and culture where IK and western science are combined. Community values, culture and other society factors should however also be considered in shaping the curriculum and building the knowledge base at higher education institution (Msila, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Curriculum integration can be accomplished by a pervasive view of the content of schooling as an instrument in the service of the larger society. Education is thus to be made relevant by making its instrumental values dominant. As in other countries around the world, Cameroon’s attempt at curriculumreform programmes during the last thirty years or so have been intended to adjust the content of the general education curriculum to suit the changing social, economic and cultural context and to meet the demands brought about by global development. The study recommends that one way of achieving such reform in the Cameroon Education system is adjusting the school curricula to meet the needs and interest of the learners. The approaches to curriculum development, instructional methodologies, evaluation and teacher education that were designed and considered appropriate for a world that was relatively stable are no longer valid. Hence education should be re-oriented towards future developments, giving due regard to issues such as knowledge versus learning and problem-solving skills, a national versus a global outlook, and the maintenance of values and cultural identity amidst the impact of socioeconomic and technological changes. In this regard, while still using English and French as languages of instructions in Schools, Cameroon education can be made more relevant by integrating local languages into the school curriculum to be used as language of instruction to facilitate the transition of native language to language of instruction.

More so, the curriculum of school should be decentralized at each point so that at the regional, divisional and sub-divisional levels, schools should adapt the curriculum to their environment as they find it. In the Study of Geography for instance, agricultural activities in the Northwest and west regions might be focused on farming while in the Northen Regions cattle raring may be aspect of the curriculum.

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