African Universities' Stake in Integration and Knowledge Acquisition of Pan – Africanism in the Diaspora

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ABSTRACT: *Pan Africanism was a movement founded around 1900, to secure equal rights, self-government, independence, and unity for African peoples. The term "Pan Africanism" has usually been applied to the struggle for the political unification of the continent of African. This is due to the fact that knowledge is development and investment in human capital is necessary for African development. Education is therefore a necessary instrument in Pan African movement. To achieve this, Pan African Universities has to be established as an institution of higher learning which can help and contribute to reshape the direction of education in the continent, towards a anti-neo-colonialism. For Pan African University, to have a real impact methodology and techniques for accessing, mythology and cosmology. Hopefully, the paper will discover issues in pedagogy and methodology in Pan Africanism, prospect and challenges of Pan Africanism for African development. After the introduction concepts germane to the topic will be discussed. The paper will also propose measures to make Pan African University respond to provide platform for African renaissance.*

KEYWORDS: African Universities', Integration, Knowledge Acquisition

INTRODUCTION

The agitation to established Pan African University has never been realized despite various attempts that has been made in this direction. The challenge that such a university should not be an ordinary university, but the one that would be tailored toward teaching and research approach and be more fundamental in its strategic concept and its placement at the base of African and human emancipation and liberation (Nabudere 2002). "Being a special university, it has to play the vital role of freeing knowledge production from narrow class, technical and instrumentalist chrominance by a few specialists to a broader area of recognition of other producers of knowledge, which concerns in the lives of African people and which has validity in their cultural contexts. This, according to Nabudere (2002) has made the establishment of such a university more difficult because it would not only undermine existing dominant interests, but also

challenge the citadel of Eurocentric paradigms and western scientist epistemologies of knowledge.

The establishing of African university must be with the speed consistent with careful study and soundness, will nevertheless be like building a cathedral which would be expected to see its completion at the long run (Williams 2002). It was therefore advocated that Africa Study Centre Trust (ASCT) be established in Uganda in order to collaborate with other institution, organizations, and individuals both on the African continent and the African Diaspora that wish to see the fulfillment of this dream in the furtherance of African emancipation and liberation (Kaaprah 2002).

The centre was therefore established in 1994 as a Trust under the Trustees Incorporation Act, (Cap 147). The centre was therefore desire to contribute constructively to the emancipation of African through study and research. The trustees of the centre noted also that this was part of a multifaceted struggle of the African peoples, both on the African continent and in the African Diaspora, who were ceaselessly engaged in the human endeavour of uplifting themselves from centuries of degradation, exploitation, and domination by others who had enslaved and colonized them. Without improving their knowledge of the world around them and their memory of their world of the past, they could not foster their authentic and wholesome development amidst great historical and contemporary odds (Diop 1974). Among broad goals of the centre according to Kaaprah (2001) the following were central to its general vision: sponsoring, promoting, undertaking, establishing and conducting research into recognized subjects and academic study, including African history, African culture, African society, African links with other peoples on other continents now and in the past, problems, of transition of African societies and the role of African tradition and institutions in the world, as well as the dissemination for public benefit the useful results of such research by publishing the same for worldwide distribution and consumption to include educational establishments throughout Africa and the world over.

Broad Goals of the Establishment of Pan African University

The establishment of the Pan African University should have as its overall goal the provision of opportunities for higher and advanced education for students and adults learners in the context of a new African – based epistemology and methodology (Smith 1999). The university when established, will give the African people the opportunities to acquire and produce new knowledge in the context of the African condition and the global environment. It should provide innovative ways of researching, learning, and sharing of knowledge within the communities in which the researchers and learners are engaged in acquiring such knowledge in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

Nabudare (2002) submitted that, the university will serve as a reference point and a response to the cry of the African people for an African Renaissance and rebirth that can reawaken and reactivate their genius and create an atmosphere for self – transformation and development to recover what has been lost and for gotten. For the Pan-African University to set a new path in the search for knowledge and truth, it must first and foremost be built on a sound spiritual basis that

highlight those aspects of African spiritual life that has enabled the African people to survive as a human community throughout the centuries (Masolo 1994).

As William (2002) pinpointed, the aims and objectives of the university should go beyond European classical humanism with its class, socioeconomic and geographical limitations based on Greece and the Athenian city – state, which was based on a system of slavery. According to William, Pan-African humanism must lead to "enlarge humanities" and recapture that original meaning of humanity which western scholars, beginning with Plato, in their hollow and lopsided search for materials progress, abandoned. By privileging "reason" above everything else and abandoning the spiritual aspects of life, including the idea of the immoral soul, western scholarship embarked on a path that is increasingly bringing humanity to the brink of destruction through violence and ecological destruction.

The task of contemporary African philosophy through the establishment of the African based University is to critique the Eurocentric "idea" and "general philosophy" in its metaphysical belief that European humanism is superior to that of the African people. This falsehood, which Europe perpetuated and still does, in so many ways, is based on the idea that the rest of humanity has to be forced to believe like Europe inorder to be "humanized" into a Singular humanity. This implies the "singularisation of human diversity by being forced onto a singular track of historical 'progress', grounded on an emulation and/or mimicry of European historicity" (Serequeberhan, 2002). According Serequeberhan, this "pretext" that flatters all difference, has to be critically "de-structured" by contemporary African philosophy of "our shared humanity" that is to be realized and critically appropriated. Indeed, the task of contemporary African philosophy – its critical – negative project is the critique of Euro centurism and recognition and de-structuring of its speculative metaphysical underpinnings, which still holds us in bondage".

Odora (2002) reinstated that, the African Renaissance, which should inform the establishment of the Pan African University, must therefore recapture those basic elements of African humanism as the opening of the way to a new humanistic universalism. This according to William (2002) is the spiritual and moral element, actualized in good will among men and women which African itself has preserved and can give to the world. This task has been achieved by the existing African universities, which have failed to generate the kind of knowledge environment required for the social and economic transformation of their societies. They have continued to reproduce dependent Eurocentric knowledge, a knowledge that is dependent on its actualization in centres that exploit the African people and utilize African resources freely. They have failed to transform themselves in centres of learning so as to strengthen African independence and development. They have become satellite universities of other universities outside the African continent serving interest and agendas instead of serving the African people.

These universities and African governments that created them had dismally failed to chart new paths for Africans emancipation and liberation and Africa finds itself in deep, multidimensional crises that require deeply throughout solutions and responses, if the African rebirth is ever to be achieved (Vilakazi 2002). When Pan African University is established, it will be of learning and knowledge that will be based on African origin.

METHODOLOGY BEHIND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PAN AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

For Pan –African University to have a real impact and meaningful and innovative contribution, the university should develop new methodologies and techniques for accessing, utilizing, and storing all knowledge based on an African epistemology and cosmology. This would imply the development of an all-inclusive approval, which recognizes all sources of human knowledge as valid within their own contexts. This requires the adoption of hermeneutic philosophy in its African essence (Nabudere 2002). An African – based epistemological foundation is a prerequisite to the production and development of knowledge. Foucault in his book: The order of things: The Archaeology of the Human sciences, coins the concept "episteme" from its Greek origin to mean the fore-conception of any investigation in the search for knowledge. An episteme is therefore formed before hand through an "inner structure of being", which constitutes its order. It is this order that arranges the world of being through which the "symbolic disclosure" is produced. According Foucault: "order is, at one and the same time, that which is given in things as their inner law, the hidden network that determines the way they has no existence except in the gird created by glance, an examination, a language (Foucault, 1970). The above quotation means that every speaker or investigator acts in accord with the symbolic order of which he/she may at times be unconscious in the activities within the given culture and "discourse framework". To Foucault, "the fundamental structures of a culture of those governing its language, its schemes of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices – establish for every man from the very start, the empirical orders with which he/she will be dealing and within which he/she will" be at home.

Methodology therefore is not only important in defining how the research investigation is to be carried out, it also determines the instruments to be used and how the findings are to be interpreted. Furthermore, methodology determines the questions to be posed as well as the issues to be investigated. It follows that the facts to be found from research are to a great extent determined by the methodology employed, which is also based on an epistemological foundation. The methods, techniques and tools are therefore not neutral instruments to be used by any system of knowledge, although a lot can be learnt from them in a cross – cultural way (Nabudere 2002). It should be open – ended to permit cross – cultural communication and exchange of ideas and opinions to promote understanding between all knowledge systems in their diversities (Habermas 1984). The methodological approach should also be one that uses open and resource based learning techniques available in the actual learning situations. It has therefore to draw on the indigenous knowledge materials available in the locality and make the maximum use of them. For instance, in the area of agriculture, the local practices of inter-cropping and use of shifting cultivation that take account of the ecological conditions have to be drawn upon for purposes of learning since this brings new knowledge that is relevant, if the local communities consider them necessary. The aim is not to counter-pose "scientific" techniques and tools to the local science and knowledge materials. This enables a more legitimate framework for understanding the relation between the two approaches by the learners (Crossman & Devitch, 2002).

The Curriculum Strategy for Pan African University

The need to develop a new curriculum that takes epistemological, cosmological, methodological and pedagogical challenges should be taken into account. Hence the curriculum should be culture – specific and knowledge – sources specific in its orientation. As such, curriculum development should aim at.

- Increasing African knowledge in the general body of global human knowledge.
- Creating linkages between the sources of African knowledge and the centres of learning on the continent.
- Establishing centres of learning in the rural communities and ensure that these communities become "learning societies".
- Linking knowledge to the production needs of African communities.
- Ensuring that science and technology are generated in relevant ways to address problems of the rural communities where majority of African people live and that this is done in African languages.
- Reducing the gap between the African elites and the communities from which they come by ensuring that education is available to all Africans and that such knowledge is drawn from the communities (Liyong 1999).

As it has been noted, engaging in interdisciplinary and pluridisciplinary approaches will demands a broad African knowledge systems. This will need a redefinition of these disciplines into more conjoined intellectual arenas. Life situations cannot be studied in isolation of related life problems. In European experience, social and human science disciplines appeared because of real problems, which needed to be studied and understood (Fatnowna and Pickett 2002). Africa's problems, challenges and concerns require comprehensive and all – sided approaches that can deal with issues in holistic manner. The curriculum development according to Odora (2002) therefore must take up these methodological challenges.

The existing social and human science disciplines will not be abandoned, these disciplines will now be subjected to interrogation and problematisation in ways that can be synthesized some of the new rated subject matter. The curriculum development will now be required to deep considerations of epistemology and methodology, and it will also be required to develop and subject them to seminars and consultations across the board with other stakeholders in African, the Diaspora, and others globally (Odora 2002). Liyong (1999) advocates that, the curriculum should take cognizance of African centred curriculum for the teaching at the Pan African University, he argued that, each discipline must elaborate and extend its curriculum to embrace the African indigenous world-view, or social practices, or scientific and technological usages and developments.

According to Liyong, past technological developments and achievements of Africa, their techniques, arts and artistries, the products and processes of production and their techniques must be studied with a view to "modernizing them", at the same time technological innovations from Europe and Asia should be married to the native ones to produce a third new and appropriate technology. African rhythm should control the speed of adoption or adaption; African ethos of communal care and spiritual life should determine what to get from outside or keep from the

past. African rhythm should control the process and should not only control the speed, but should be more fundamentally, aim at the content and the quality of the development of the curriculum (Liyong 1999).

The field of curriculum development needs to go beyond the present day approaches and move towards integrated and synthesized knowledge. Privileging African – centred curriculum must go beyond a narrow conception of what is purely African to include such knowledge within the wider synthesized framework of global knowledge. There are several level at which this can take place. There is the level of integrating the traditional African depositories of knowledge with modern science teaching and the application of technology into a holistic knowledge. (Fatnowna and Pickett, 1999).

Adoption of African Based Pedagogy for Instruction in Pan African University
The epistemological foundations and methodology based on the need to develop a new curriculum directly implies a different pedagogy to teaching and learning. This should go in line with the inspiration and materials for learning from real life situations of the African people, especially in the rural areas, there should be the adoption of those pedagogical methods and techniques that inform African philosophy of life, their world view and their lives experiences and practice (Fatnowna and Pickett 2002). The key to developing an Africancenric pedagogy will arise from the fact that the university will be based in the knowledge – specific sites where African experts of different branches of knowledge are to be found. These sites will help to define the content as well as the pedagogy. Initially, the students will, on the basis of existing knowledge, undergo methodological workshops where the African – based pedagogical tools or teaching and passing on knowledge are used in those cultural environments. African systems of communication, learning, entertaining and socializing are based on the spoken word or orature (Odora 2002).

Walter in Williams (1993) has pointed out in his extensive work on morality and literacy that the widespread use of literacy in the west has brought about a cultural mutation in the encoding, storing and transmission of knowledge, which has had profound consequences for the recognition and mobilization of endogenous knowledge. Many scholars have pointed out that cultures based racy for encoding, storages and transmission of knowledge share their knowledge in vary practical community – based, interactive multisensual transactions.

These pedagogical approaches, which are implied inoracy, contain forms of art and techniques to which they give expression, which are essential for adult learning. They create for the scholar cognitive shift in the way new knowledge is accessed and acquired as well as opening up new culture – specific, cognitive horizons such as parody, drama and per formative arts, which they could not access before. This also changes the process of knowledge exchange and negotiation, of roles of power as well as influence, which have been denied these forms of expression as well as their power. By mainstreaming these forms of expression, the agents of these forms of expression gain visibility and recognition in knowledge creation and production (Mugo 1999).

In this way, indigenous tales, stories, proverbs, legends, myths, symbols and epics come back to life. These cultural forms of knowledge incorporate people's philosophies of norms, values, in a kind of "moving" and "living library".

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the discussion above, the paper has been able to itemize those things that Pan African University needs for it proper take off. Concept germane, such as methodology, pedagogy and curriculum strategies that required for the African based university to be established had been itemized. The adoption of approach requires for the university to make provision for self – paced independent study by providing students and learners to study effectively wherever, whenever and whatever pace is appropriate for them has been also spelt out in this paper. The application of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) should be provided for the university to promote the linkage between science and technical research in the university and its link to production units as well as encouraging technological research in rural communities, which are under served by modern technology. It should also encourage applied research relevant to local technologies with which people have some familiarity. Improved connectivity will also enable the removal of hindrances to good higher education such as limited staff resources, poorly prepared students, outdated curricula, declining academic quality and lack of library resources. By providing higher education access to remote rural areas through distance education, the Pan-African University should be able to reach out to a wider students body in line with the principles of lifelong learning.

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