

## Antecedents and Substance of Educational Reform in Post-Colonial Cameroon

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### ABSTRACT

Educational reform in post-colonial Africa in general and Africa-south of the Sahara, in particular, has failed to develop desirable attitudes upon which progressive nation-states and regional communities can be built. The failure to restructure education to reflect common national values has been identified with the colonial origins. Yet the different systems (Missionary and colonial) had varying impacts. The inter-relationships between them and the rejection of traditional African educational system invariably affected Africans attitudes and perception of Western Education. What motivated the Missionaries, colonial regimes and the Africans, to establish education are examined to assess the impact of these inter-relationships on post-colonial attitudes. Internalized colonial attitudes and continued post-colonial influence together with persistent neglect of traditional African educational practices are found to be responsible for the non-implementation of appropriate educational reforms. The pattern of education, the motives and the entire colonial policy invariably contributed to the dependent attitude of post-colonial African leaders.

Keywords : Education, reform, missionary, Cameroon

### RESUME

*En Afrique post-coloniale en général et en Afrique sub-saharienne en particulier, la réforme éducative n'a pu développer les attitudes nécessaires sur lesquelles les nations et communautés régionales progressistes s'édifient. L'échec de la restructuration de l'éducation en vue de refléter des valeurs communes est rattaché à des origines coloniales. Cependant, les différents systèmes (Missionnaire et colonial) ont eu divers impacts. La coexistence et les relations entre ces systèmes et le rejet du système éducatif traditionnel Africain ont invariablement affecté les attitudes des Africains et la perception de l'éducation européenne. Ce qui motivait les missionnaires, les régimes coloniaux et les Africains à fonder un système éducatif est examiné pour évaluer l'impact de cette coexistence et de ces relations sur les attitudes post-coloniales. Les attitudes coloniales intériorisées et l'influence post-coloniale continue, associées à une persistante volonté de négliger l'éducation traditionnelle africaine, n'ont pas permis la mise en oeuvre des réformes éducatives appropriées. Le modèle d'éducation, les motivations et la politique coloniale tout entière ont contribué invariablement à l'attitude dépendante des leaders post-coloniaux africains.*

Mot clés: éducation, réforme, missionnaire, Cameroun

**Introduction:**

Since independence, many African states have failed to implement the required reforms necessary to restructure education to respond to national and regional goals. The educational programmes have failed to develop the patriotic spirit necessary for national unity and regional collaboration. As a result most Africans are not patriotic. They are more inclined to ethnic affinity. Attempts to establish regional structures to cope with current trend of globalisation have hardly succeeded. This failure has encouraged the perpetuation of the inherited colonial education systems that remain politically, culturally and economically unsuitable for the African condition. The non-implementation of appropriate reforms has affected not just the peoples' attitudes to economic survival but has had significant political ramifications for the consolidation of national and regional integration and even the development of national identity.

Western education was first introduced in most parts of Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by European Christian Missionary societies, and later on strengthened by colonial governments. Different colonial Governments and Missionary societies applied diverse approaches to the development of education following divergent attitudes, interests and perceptions to education. Africans in themselves had their own interests in accepting Western education. The contradiction and the confusion introduced by these conflicting interests and approaches seem to have imbued Africans with attitudes that today hamper efforts to re-structure education to reflect national and African realities. Some African countries such as Tanzania<sup>1</sup> (1967), Nigeria<sup>2</sup> (1985) and Kenya<sup>3</sup> (1985) attempted to implement educational reforms (Africanisation) to suit national demands by adapting Western education to African conditions. But others have not adapted the educational systems to respond to their needs.

The two dominant colonial powers that bequeathed these legacies to African states were France and Britain. Incidentally Cameroon, through the League of Nations mandate and the U.N.O. trusteeship, suffered the domination of both colonial rule and served as a single example of what was obtainable in most African nations. In Cameroon, the two distinct educational systems inherited from the French and the British colonial regimes persist, albeit there have been many attempts to unify and harmonize them into a single system responsive to national needs. Even within the respective inherited systems, attempts to reform them have failed.

At independence, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) requested African leaders to take measures aimed at Africanising education<sup>4</sup>. The Addis Ababa conference

of 1961 questioned the relevance of the inherited colonial educational systems for the development of Africa and their competitiveness at the world stage. It was generally held that African education should produce men and women who should contribute to technological development. From Mweresia G.K. and Afari-Gyan K, we learn that some African nations embarked on the Africanisation of education almost immediately<sup>5</sup>. In Cameroon there was anxiety and great expectation from both the Anglophone and Francophone sectors as they looked forward for changes in school curricula and teaching-learning material to reflect Cameroonian realities. But the reforms that ensued were hardly implemented. What obstructed the achievements of Africanisation of education in Cameroon?

This article examines those inherited legacies and post-colonial issues that have inhibited the attainment of Africanisation of education in Cameroon. It seeks to find out if the opposing interests manifested by the colonial administrators, traders, planters, Missionaries and Africans on colonial education influenced African attitudes to education. Or the political, economic and psychological determinism of the colonial situation might have initiated a dependent attitude in the educated African. Finally, the paper seeks to examine post-colonial attitudes towards education reform. This paper assumes that internalized colonial attitudes and continued post-colonial influence have to some extent been responsible and that external assistance has equally continued to ignore the realities of the African situation. Finally, it is considered that the persistent underrating of traditional African education in the educational system renders the implementation of reforms difficult.

**Genesis of Western Education in Cameroon**

In 1844, Joseph Merick, a West Indian of freed slave descent, serving the English Baptist Missionary Society opened the first formal Western type of educational establishment in Bimbia on the Cameroon coast. In 1845, Alfred Saker, an English Missionary of the same Mission, opened the second school in Douala. This Missionary Society subsequently opened many more schools along the Cameroon coast. In July 1884, Germany annexed Cameroon even though English activities until then had been dominant in the territory. By 1886, the German government replaced the English Baptist Missionary society with the Basel Mission. Other Missionary societies that accepted German terms were allowed subsequently to operate and provide education in the territory. These included the American Presbyterian Mission, the Pallotine Catholic Mission, and the German Baptist Mission. Until 1910, the educational policy was determined by these Missionary societies.

As evangelising Missions their educational objective was aimed at christainising the Africans and by implication introducing them to European values. Their curricula were focussed on Christian education. The educational programme was geared towards enabling the converts to read the Bible, sing hymns and observe the basic rules of hygiene. European business people in the territory were also interested in literate Africans to assist them in their activities. Hence, the educational programme had to provide for their needs. That is why school subjects included Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Religious knowledge. Although the curriculum ignored pre-colonial indigenous education, African culture remained predominant in the society. Isubu, the local language was reduced into writing and used in schools. Meanwhile some Cameroonians manifested a strong desire for the European system as they believed it could enable them to better understand and acquire European technologies. Thus the initial Western education was a joint venture by the Christian Missionaries, European business people and the Africans.

Aspects of the Christian doctrine and European cultures in the educational system contradicted sometimes vehemently with African traditional patterns. Where the European system was unbending, there was resistance. Hence traditional practices such as polygamy, funeral ceremonies etc caused such conflicts with Christian religion that often resulted to African resistance to Western education. It should therefore be noted that Western education was never wholly accepted right from its introduction. The indigenous educational practices resisted and remained the rivalry pattern to Western education.

#### **German Colonial Education Policy (1884-1916)**

The German colonial education policy in Cameroon was slow to come. The Missionary societies operated without significant German colonial Government intervention. This was because the resistance to German rule in Cameroon pre-occupied the administrators for almost two of their three decades rule. During this period the colonial administration was also surveying the economic wealth of the territory and settling frontier limits with the other colonizing powers such as Britain in the West and France in the East and South. As a result, the Missionary societies almost single handedly sponsored education.

In 1887, the first German colonial Government teacher, Theodor Christaller, was employed. He opened the first Government school in February 1887 in Douala and received a financial grant of 2.500marks that year from King William II of Germany<sup>6</sup>. He spent that year studying the Douala language and by 1888, he was able to produce a book of local stories from which he could

teach in the Douala language. He worked in collaboration with two other Germans, Betz and Kobele to produce a common curriculum for Cameroon and Togoland<sup>7</sup>. The curriculum involved a five-year course with special attention given to the teaching of the German language particularly in the Government schools. In addition, Christaller proposed the establishment of a library in Douala to enable graduates continue their education. It is possible that if he did not die in 1896, he could have done more to improve on German colonial education. His death slowed down Government intervention until 1907 when Governor Seitz called for the first ever conference for education in Cameroon. Participants at this conference included representatives of Missionary societies, German colonial administrators and business people. They discussed a range of educational problems including the curriculum, the language of instruction, collaboration between the Missions and the Government, financing of education, school age, school attendance and discipline as well as vocational education.

Owing to administrative delay, the resolutions of the meeting took three years to be published in an Ordinance of 25<sup>th</sup> April 1910. Henceforth, government control was established over all Western education in Cameroon. The ordinance became the first legal agreement between Government and Missions for utilizing the institutional structures of Missions to implement Government educational policy in Cameroon. It marked the beginning of Government finances to those Mission schools that satisfied Government regulations. It was the first major Government attempt to interfere with school curricula. It also imposed the German language in all schools receiving government subventions. But more importantly, the Ordinance placed all educational establishments under the authority of the Governor and henceforth ended Mission autonomy in matters of education with the aim of giving the Government a means of policing the dangers of a backlash arising from uncontrolled education. As Memmi observed, this measure confirmed the primacy of political factors in the emergent colonial situation<sup>8</sup>.

The language policy demonstrated the German imperialist intention to occupy a domineering position in the territory. This was aimed at stopping the persistent use of the English language left by the English Baptist Missionary Society and English traders. It also aimed at limiting the use of the Douala and Mungaka local languages that were gaining wider grounds and were seen as an eventual threat to German authority. But it must be noted that the numerous number of local languages in Cameroon reduced the threat of a united action as it was the case in German East African and German S.W. Africa where there were uprisings (Ethiopianism) resulting from the

use of a common language.<sup>9</sup> The Ordinance also paid special attention to school attendance because of the widely fluctuating attendance. This was obviously an indication of African resistance to Western Education. Schools were also used as recruitment ground for plantation labourers and porters. Flogging of the school pupils was also official and most people resisted.

Finally the curriculum orientation of the Ordinance gave the German culture a prime of place. The thrust was on Germanic studies involving a full coverage of language studies. The Geography of Germany and Europe as well as the glorious histories of German conquests were prominent on the curriculum. It also prescribed the teaching and memorization of patriotic German songs and poems with the ultimate aim of exposing young Cameroonians to internalize German exotic cultures.

Effectively, implementation started in 1911 with lots of resistance from both the Cameroonians and the Missionary societies. Unfortunately for the Germans, the First World War could not allow them implement these policies. Following their defeat during the War, all Germans including the Missionaries were expelled from Cameroon and they lost the territory to their enemies. This marked the end of Germans rule in Cameroon. They left behind just four Elementary Government Schools with a total enrolment of 833 pupils as against 624 mission schools with 40,061 pupils in 1913<sup>10</sup>. In all, there were only 57,195 pupils in school at the time, out of an estimated school age population of 529,722<sup>11</sup>. Hence, German colonial education policy did not necessarily bequeath a significant German culture. Undoubtedly therefore, significant traditional education practices prevailed.

#### **French Colonial Policy (1916-1960):**

The French colonial education policy in Cameroon was adapted from policies developed before the First World War for French dependencies in Africa. Apart from economic interest and political domination, the policies aimed principally at establishing the French culture and influence (*mission Civilisatrice*). The policy imposed a prescribed structure to both private (*mission*) and Government schools aimed at imbuing the learners with French cultural values.

However, while the domination lasted longer in other territories, that of Cameroon extended only from 1916 to 1960. It was therefore comparatively shorter. Besides, the French influence was not supposed to be direct because of the League of Nations mandatory and United Nations trusteeship status that prescribed limitations to the French administration. Owing to these limitations,

this section attempts to find out if the French policy alone had such strong effects on Cameroonian post-colonial attitudes towards the implementation of appropriate educational reforms or other factors could be considered? What was the nature of the relationships between the colonial government and the Missionary societies that provided most of the educational establishments? What were the impacts of the French political and economic interests on the development of their colonial education policies and how could such impacts influence Cameroonian attitudes to education? Were there other factors that might have influenced the perceptions and behaviours of post-independent Cameroonians towards the implementation of educational reforms?

#### **The French Concept of Colonial Education**

The theoretical framework of the French colonial education policy grew out of the concept of *assimilation* that was pursued until the First World War. Thereafter the policy shifted to the concept of *association* and *paternalism*. The policy of assimilation could be identified with the libertarian views stemming from the French revolution. It emphasized the political and cultural objectives of the French civilizing mission. France considered itself so civilized that it was necessary to move out and civilize primitive societies<sup>12</sup>. Assimilation was encouraged by the award of French citizenship to those who acquired and internalized the French language and culture. Such people became known as the *assimilés* or *évolués*. The people were qualified to participate in French political life. As Cowan L.G. intimates, these *évolués* formed the capitalist representatives in the colonies<sup>13</sup>. Altbach P.G<sup>14</sup> alludes that they were trained to perpetuate exploitation during the colonial period and assure its sustenance in post-colonial period by becoming future neo-colonialist collaborators. Since the concept of assimilation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century did not foresee the granting of independence, the role of other factors might have significantly contributed in shaping the post-colonial attitudes that affect attempts to effect meaningful reforms in the educational system.

Meanwhile the policy of association was closely connected with the authoritarian views that gained currency during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It demonstrated paternalistic tendencies. The concept assumed that most colonized people did not deserve to be treated equally with French citizens. It aimed at fulfilling the civilizing mission purported to bring light into primitive and barbaric cultures. It considered France as an orderly and peaceful society with a structured and powerful Government and a good economic system. Hence, like the assimilation policy, the association policy suggested the recognition of a cultural gap between the colonizers and the colo-

nized.

In Cameroon both policies were applied. The assimilationist policies maintained a demarcation between French citizenship gained by the *évolués* Cameroonians and the vast majority of the society who became known as "*indigènes*" or "*administrés*". The latter were excluded from the French legal system and placed in a separate legal regime known as the *indigénat*. Both policies therefore advocated direct rule and held that France and the colonies were one and indivisible. Hence, although there was an overlap between both concepts (assimilation and association), both sought to serve the same purpose. When the policy of assimilation that preceded that of association faced attacks and criticisms during the First World War and, particularly, during the peace conference ending the war<sup>15</sup>, France quickly produced the concept of association, which appeared more sympathetic to the colonized. Both concepts were ambiguous and none actually admitted the colonized into the French culture. The school system and structures (except at post-primary level never) conformed to the concepts of assimilation or association. Thus the concepts of assimilation and association can be identified as deliberate efforts aimed at entrenching obedience, loyalty and unquestionable service to France. This was strengthened by the development of a highly centralized system of administration where initiatives were only from the central authority. And with the centralized system developed the inevitable corollaries of uniformity and subordination that invariably affected the pattern of education and the attitudes of the pupils. This attitude persisted into the post-colonial era and contrasted with the legacy bequeathed by the British.

A persistent political intervention in educational practices and an attitude of superiority by an elitist class over the masses remain evident as a legacy exercised by those who replaced or now represent the colonizers. Reforms proposed and sponsored by the former colonial masters for the *Francophonie* world became more acceptable than those initiated with the aim of encouraging national integration. Hence technical aid experts from France are considered and given priority over their Cameroon counterparts who may even be more qualified and experienced in reforming Cameroon education.

#### **British Colonial Education Policy (1916-61)**

British colonial education in Cameroon was adopted from policies developed earlier for British dependencies and particularly for Nigeria where British Southern Cameroon was attached for administration. The theoretical basis of the policy was essentially adaptationist. Unlike the French assimilationist policy that was implemented through a centralized administration, the British

policy was implemented indirectly through Missionary Societies and local/indigenous authorities generally referred to as Native Authorities. The adaptationist concept aimed at encouraging mass education but with the desire to relate this education to the indigenous socio-political and economic cultures so that indigenous institutions could be improved upon without such drastic changes that will offset social harmony. Adaptationist policies were also aimed at encouraging local and national socio-political identification and were also supposed to secure the needs of the rural masses and thereby reduce the social gap between the educated elite and the rest of the colonial masses. Above all, the adaptationist policies were generally left to local authorities who controlled the development of curricula, the training of teachers, the supply of resources such as textbooks, and the conduct of examinations. The provision of this system of education inevitably implied the introduction of universal education whilst the curriculum policies encouraged teaching in African languages with focus on local institutions and economic needs so as to encourage inter-relations between school and activities in local communities. Under the adaptationist policies, the content of elite education aimed at relating the local life of the community to education while further or advanced education had to be based partly on social status and partly on ability. Hence by adaptation, mass education could be acquired without much risk of social instability. Adaptationist policies could also encourage a substantial degree of local political self-determination to enforce political stability and boost African cultures.

The administrative setting in Cameroon reveals that Britain did not develop policies or administrative strategies specifically for the territory. Britain considered Cameroon as part and parcel of Nigeria although the mandatory terms did not allude to this. Hence British Cameroon was treated like all other remote areas in Nigeria. Unlike the French, the British colonial policies in Cameroon were peripheral. Some enlightened Cameroonians realized this and some, through Nazi influence during the inter-war period and the period of nationalism opposed British policies and succeeded finally to secede from Nigeria in 1954.

There was a disagreement between British interest and the determination of Cameroonians to achieve special attention. It is therefore interesting to note that in spite of the peripheral treatment, anglophone Cameroonians also resisted the implementation of post-colonial reforms and held strongly to the inherited British colonial system. Does it mean that the nature of the British colonial policies and the method of implementation had such impacts on the post-independent Cameroonian attitudes that dissuade them from any changes that will make educa-

tion more relevant to contemporary needs? Or is it that the indirect practice in educational provision through the Missionaries and Native Authorities as against the direct approach by the French affected their attitudes and perceptions of education?

It is important to note that the British colonial education policies during the League of Nations Mandate and those during the United Nations Trusteeship were different. During the mandatory period, the policy tolerated the use of local vernacular in the infant and elementary classes. This helped to maintain and improve on the traditional or indigenous educational practices. Educational objectives here were aimed at preparing Cameroonians to assist the colonial masters to better achieve their colonial interest. Meanwhile the socio-political and economic ramifications of the Second World War on both the colonizers and the colonized necessitated a change in the formulation of post-war policies. The thrust of post-war education was to prepare graduates for leadership responsibilities in self-government. But to what extent did the adaptationist policies achieve the projected goals? It is important to note that as educated Africans evolved, they felt that the practicality of the adaptationist policies invariably aimed at maintaining Africans in their perceived primitiveness. The educated elite felt that any limitation of the curricula reduced the hope for scientific and technological training which were the motivating factors for Africans desire to acquire Western education. African perception of education was shaped by the introduction of the relationships between educational achievements and socio-economic advancement. Consequently, any attempt to insist on adaptation was regarded by Africans as a deliberate attempt to delay their development. This reaction was particularly triggered by the fact that African opinions were never sought for the type of education they wanted. Hence there was an obvious conflict between British concept of colonial education and African perceptions.

At the same time, African employment in the colonial administration required the acquisition of a more literary education than that available via an adaptationist system. In the same vein Missionary societies also required well educated Africans to eventually become church officers and to plant Christianity in Africa. Such education could not be limited to the scope offered by the adaptation policy. Since those who acquired more than the adaptationist education enjoyed economic mobility and enhanced social status, most Africans became more attracted to it than the adaptationist schooling. Meanwhile the non-adaptationist education was essentially a replication of the metropolitan practice that could only help to enhance the suitability of its recipients for colonial service and ensure sustenance of a post-colonial depend-

ence on their former colonial masters. Thus it was also assimilationist in practical terms.

### **Post-Colonial Reforms**

The achievement of independence marked an important turning point in the history of Cameroon Education. Cameroonians felt for the first time that they could determine their own form of education. During the period of decolonization, educated Africans had criticised the inadequacies and the irrelevance of colonial education. They blamed Christian Missions and colonial Governments for providing such education that neither integrated the individual in the society nor enhanced political, economic and social advancement. To them, education was the underpinning factor in the slow rate of African development programmes. Colonial education was accused for being used by the capitalist Western powers to exploit the underdeveloped world and subjugate their peoples. Similarly, the Missionaries were seen as the lackeys of imperialism. The new African leaders considered colonial education to have separated the recipient from their societies through its teachings<sup>16</sup>. They held that where colonial education prepared a person for life, it was life outside the mainstream of the African society, life as a servant of the colonial Government, European firms or Missionary societies. Some blamed European education for being too elitist<sup>17</sup> and argued that it was designed to meet the interests and needs of a very small proportion of those who entered the school system.

In Cameroon the desire for reforms was very high. Attempts to reform took place at three levels; at the level of the Federal Government and at the level of the two Federated State Governments. At independence, East Cameroon State Government signed bilateral treaties with France for economic, military and cultural cooperation. The French presence, influence and interest could therefore not be avoided during any reform attempts<sup>18</sup>. Meanwhile, the British ceased to have any direct relations with West Cameroon except through the Federal Government<sup>19</sup>. These relationships signaled the pattern of future support and influence of the respective former metropolis.

### **Federal Educational Reforms**

By presidential decree of 12 March 1962, the Federal Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture was established. The structure and attributions remained what had been inherited from the French colonial administration. There was no innovation to reflect the new reality of the nation. A Federal Ministry Officer (Cultural Delegate) was appointed to represent the Minister in all matters relating to secondary education, technical education, youths, sports, mass education, after-school and out-of-school centres in West Cameroon with resident in Buea.

The Federated state education was controlled by the Secretary of State for Education who was responsible to the Federal Government. Although the functions of the Federal Ministry were meant to be different from those of the Secretary of State at the regional level, there were overlaps that often led to confrontation or suspicion of one system or tradition being afraid of being absorbed by the other. In order to avoid conflicts of authority, the Federal Government took measures to unify the two inherited colonial educational systems. Law No. 63/COE/13 of 19 June 1963 organised Secondary and Technical education while law No. 64/CE/11 of 26<sup>th</sup> June 1964 reformed secondary and technical education<sup>20</sup>. In essence Secondary education was organised into a first cycle of five years and a second cycle of two years as obtainable in the Anglophone system. Technical and Commercial education was adjusted to take the Francophone system which was alleged then to be more advanced. Meanwhile, Law No. 63/COR/5 of 1963 organised primary education making it uniform by dropping the period from eight years in the Anglophone zone to six years as in the Francophone zone.

Another Federal measure that was quite significant and reflected the Bilingual option of Cameroon was the creation of a bilingual secondary school in Man O' War Bay in 1963. It was later on transferred to Buea. Here, 35 students from Francophone Cameroon were brought annually to live and study alongside 35 students from the Anglophone Cameroon. The curriculum was unified and these students were grounded to be absolutely bilingual in English and French. Although there are many bilingual secondary schools today, none of them has copied that original curriculum. Hence the products of these schools today are hardly bilingual.

Other Federal reforms were focused on higher education that was absolutely necessary for the training of new leaders for independent Cameroon. UNESCO cooperated very well with Cameroon and helped to establish the first university and professional institutions such as Ecole Normale Supérieure. The non-implementation of these Federal reforms may be attributed to the reforms that were undertaken by the Federated States.

#### **Reforms in East Cameroon (Francophones)**

The Federated State of East Cameroon focussed attention more on mass education, female education and the extension of education in regions with poor literary standards such as the North and East. To attain mass education, the state government was determined to establish schools in all localities so that all children of school age may have access to schooling. Besides encouraging female education, there was an urgent need for establish-

ing primary schools in the northern region. Until 1956, most of the schools in the north remained at the level of "bush schools"<sup>21</sup>. A pilot school was established at Pitoa with the hope of preparing leaders and teachers for the region.

#### **Reforms in West Cameroon (Anglophone)**

The West Cameroon Government considered itself a full state preparing for inter-state institutional integration with Francophone Cameroon. It also expected that the situation of Nigeria where each Regional Government reformed its own educational system was going to be the case in Cameroon. Hence a more comprehensive reform was undertaken, comprising the primary, secondary and tertiary education. The state Government embarked on a blue print on education in 1963<sup>22</sup>. Primary education aimed at universal primary education by 1970. Since the duration of primary education was reduced to six years, a proposal was made for the diversification of post-primary education to cater for vocational and general education in order to make education beneficial to the individual and the society. Hence the government requested UNESCO to advise on a three years junior secondary school programme to be followed by a two years vocational education. The programme aimed at giving opportunities to primary school graduates who were found to be academically gifted to continue in secondary schools while those found to be technically inclined had to enroll in professional schools.

The policy relating to secondary education proposed the creation of 14 more Secondary schools by 1965. Cameroon withdrew from the West African school Examination Council (WAEC) and registered with the University of London General Certificate of Education Board as from June 1964. This decision was taken because of a poor relationship between Cameroon and Nigeria following Anglophone Cameroon reunification with Francophone Cameroon as against integration with Nigeria.

The policy proposed the urgent establishment of more teachers Training colleges and the expansion of existing ones. Five years Grade Two teachers training was established to enforce the general education content for the first three years followed by two years fully focussed on pedagogy and practice. Finally, the policy proposed a combined Grade Two and Grade One certificate course that hitherto had been obtained only from Nigeria and Britain. For higher education the curriculum of the newly created College of Arts and Science was to be improved upon like similar colleges in Nigeria in order to train secondary school teachers and technicians. The U.S. government was invited to assist the government towards improving on this college for the training of skillful profes-

sionals.

### **Implementation of the reforms:**

From the foregoing it is clearly discernible that meaningful reform policies were undertaken at the beginning of independence in Cameroon. But why were the policies not implemented? Both federated states focussed their attention more on their respective needs and failed to consider the wider implications of the union. There was no national curriculum policy and no consideration for the production of didactic materials. Hence education had to continue to depend on foreign assistance in the production of teaching materials.

While the bilingual secondary school in Buea, that embraced the cultures of Francophones and Anglophones, served as a valuable nucleus for national integration and a model for curriculum development to respond to national pattern of education, the experiment failed because of a lack of follow up. The policy did not provide any mechanisms to motivate those who became interested in the bilingual culture hence the students tended to revert and re-focus on the original education systems thereby posing a problem of harmonizing both systems. As a result, all the bilingual schools in the country today have become more or less two schools representing the two systems on the same campus.

The reform policies failed to make provision for funding. The policy makers relied on foreign aid for the financial and expertise assistance. But as Altbach rightly argues, "foreign aid particularly intellectual assistance cannot be separated from the policy goals of the donor country or government"<sup>23</sup>. Another deterrent factor to implementation of the reforms resulted from the post-colonial relations with the former colonial metropolis. The specific relations with France that has had both cultural and economic ramifications have helped to forestall the reforms. Since independence, France has actively been very influential in all educational institutions in Francophone Cameroon. Their regular assistance through expatriate educationists and the supply of educational materials including a wide range of scholarship for Cameroonians to study in France continue to perpetuate French influence and give Cameroonians the feeling that what is French is better. Similarly, cooperation with other French speaking African states also affected reforms in Cameroon education. For example, the curriculum conference of African French speaking ministers of education in 1966 at Dakar-Senegal proposed a uniform educational programme and structure that contradicted the 1963 laws reforming education in Cameroon. The Dakar structure was implemented in Francophone Cameroon. In reaction the Anglophones ceased implementing the laws and that explains why the

primary school duration remained at seven years instead of six years.

The dilemma of educational reform in Cameroon is a common problem in most African countries. Even where some degree of success had earlier been achieved such as Ghana and Tanzania other factors including political instability resulting from the absence of national unity and true patriotism have affected the implementation of the necessary reforms. Unfavourable world economic order that has been accentuated in Africa by the lack of regional grouping and collaboration equally account for the failure. Hence the failing economies rendered the Governments unable to fulfil the financial obligations to education. During the 1990s pressures from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to downsize the civil service that largely employed teachers also affected any effective educational reforms.

### **Conclusion:**

This article set out to examine those factors that have inhibited the realization of suitable African education system to enhance socio-economic and political advancement. It was assumed that post-colonial African education has failed to develop desirable attitudes upon which progressive nation-states and regional communities can be built. The inherited colonial education systems were examined to find out if their differences have had individual or collective contributions to the attitudes of post-colonial leaders and also to assess the extent to which these differences have resulted to the non-implementation of post-colonial education reforms.

It was found that Cameroon inherited three colonial education systems (German, French and British) and that policy conception and implementation unavoidably affected/influenced African attitudes. African interest in western education was centered on the enhancement of their socio-economic status rather than the relevance to national advancement. Unfortunately, those who went through the system internalized the exotic benefits that became inseparable to their beings even after independence and therefore built in such a person, resistance to reforms. Continued post-independent relations with the former colonial powers especially in the supply of technical aid and assistance were found to perpetuate the dependency syndrome that has rendered the Africans unable to implement reforms that can channel the educational system to solve their problems.



**Footnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Nyerere J. K., *Education for Self - Reliance* Government Press, Dar es Salaam, 1967.
- <sup>2</sup> Ukwu, I.U., "Education for Self-Reliance and National Development" in *Education for Self-Reliance*, Enugu, 1989.
- <sup>3</sup> A.A.Mazuri and L.T. Wago in Ajayi, J.F.A., (ed) *The Education Process and Historiography in Contemporary Africa*, UNESCO, Paris, 1985.
- <sup>4</sup> O.A.U. "Outline of a plan for educational development: Conference of African States on the development of education in Africa", Addis Ababa, 15-25 May, 1961.
- <sup>5</sup> Afari-Gyan, K., "Nkrumah's Ideology" in Arhin, K., (ed) *The Life and Works of Kwame Nkrumah*, African World Press, New Jersey, 1993. See Mwereria, G.K., *Re-Africanisation of Knowledge: The Roots of the African Politics of Education.*, Kenyatta University Press, Nairobi, 1987. Pioneer independent African leaders like Nkrumah and Nyerere were very determined to Africanise the educational systems in their countries.
- <sup>6</sup> Madiba, E., *Colonisation et Évangélisation en Afrique: L' Héritage Scolaire du Cameroun.*, Bern, Editions Peter Lang, 1980. p. 31.
- <sup>7</sup> Shu, S.N., "The Collaboration Policy in Cameroon Education, 1910-31, A Study of the Policy of Collaboration between Government and Voluntary Agencies", Ph D. London, 1972. p.4.
- <sup>8</sup> Memmi, A., *Portrait du Colonisateur et du Colonisé*, Paris, Souvenir Press; 1974.
- <sup>9</sup> Wolfgang, H., "Education Policy" in Stoecker H., (ed) *German Imperialism in Africa: From the beginning until the second World War*, New Jersey, Hurst and Company; 1986.p. 225.
- <sup>10</sup> Shu, S.N., op. cit. p.53.
- <sup>11</sup> Gwanfogbe, M. B., "Changing Regimes and the Development of Education in Cameroon 1886-1966" Ph D. London, 1995, p.73.
- <sup>12</sup> Priollaud, N., *La France colonisatrice*, Paris, Edition Levi-Messenger; 1983 P49.
- <sup>13</sup> Cowan, L.G., "British and French Education in Africa: A Critical Appraisal" in Piper D.C. et al (eds), *Post-primary Education and Political and Economic Development*, London, Cambridge University Press; 1964 p. 182
- <sup>14</sup> Altbach, P.G., "Education and Neocolonialism: A Note;" in *Comparative Education Review*, 15, 1.1971 p.237
- <sup>15</sup> Lakowski, R., "The Second World War" in Stoecker H., (ed) op. cit. pp. 379-418.
- <sup>16</sup> Ukwu, I.U; "Education for Self-Reliance and National Development" in *Education for Self-reliance*, Enugu, 1989. P.142.
- <sup>17</sup> Nyerere, J.K., *Education for Self-reliance.*, Government Press, Dar es Salaam, 1987, p.22.
- <sup>18</sup> An English administrator observed that the French were very protective of the new leaders of Francophone Cameroon. See Public Record Office file No. PRO.CO 554/1745., Movement for unification of Cameroon under trusteeship of United Kingdom and France.
- <sup>19</sup> The British were reluctant to have further involvement with Cameroon affairs. See PRO.CO 554/1661; Report on the separation of Southern Cameroon from Nigeria.
- <sup>20</sup> These laws were the fundamental basis for harmonising the two inherited structures of education but they have never been applied.
- <sup>21</sup> An expression used for schools that did not meet up with the required standard. See *Journal Officiel*; 1956, p.245.
- <sup>22</sup> Ministry of Education and Social Welfare; *West Cameroon Policy: Investment in Education*; Government Press, Buea; p.1.

<sup>23</sup> Altbach, P.G.; "The distribution of knowledge in the Third World: A case study in neocolonialisation" in *Education and the Colonial Experience*; New Brunswick; 1984, p.273.

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