REVISITING EASTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS: THE TANZANIA EXPERIENCE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Generally, the educational foundations laid by African traditional or indigenous education systems in the pre-external word contact period tend to be sidelined. Rarely are education values inherited from the pre-colonial education system acknowledged in different levels of education. For example, the craft of oral storytelling as a teaching technique widely used in lower levels of education owes much to the African traditional education (Pence & Schafer, 2006; Anangisye, 2008). In Tanzania, such traditional roots tend to be ignored because the current education system is, a large extent, premised on the formal education system introduced by the German and British colonial powers. Historically, such designed to perpetuate colonial values as well as address and meet colonial demands. This formal colonial education was only provided to a handful of select Africans in Tanganyika and Zanzibar. In the post-Independence periods in 1961 and 1963 for Tanganyika and Zanzibar, respectively, the two nations embarked on concerted efforts to overhaul the education system oriented towards meeting the needs of the colonial powers. These efforts became even more meaningful when the two nations forged the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar on 26 April 1964. Even at this early stage, it was acknowledged that the education push in the country had to acknowledge the beliefs and values of Africans. This became even more pronounced in the aftermath of the 1967 Arusha Declaration that gave birth to the Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) policy. This educational drive geared towards building an *egalitarian society* was premised on the African values of communalism, rather than the Western-derived values of individualism. This educational orientation, much in line with the argument of this chapter, sought to redress the common belief among colonial administrations that Africa's education slate was not tabula rasa by making the African values centre-stage in the promotion of populist education for national development.

This chapter revisits the development and trends of education system in Tanzania. In particular, the chapter draws on different key educational issues under the following sub-sections: introduction; background to education developments; basic structures of education; goals and purposes of education; nature of curriculum; school management; nature of teacher education, recruitment and supply; remunerations; education professionalism; and the conclusion.

2. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUNDS OF EDUCATION

A better grasp of education developments in Tanzania or Africa in general is both retrospective and prospective perspective in character. To begin with, education development in Tanzania has a long standing history, dating to the pre-contact with the external world period for the societies that had later o become part of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, which joined hand in 1964 to forge a United Republic of Tanzania. During this often-ignored period there was non-formal systems of education based on traditional beliefs and values, which were instrumental in shaping and defining the socio-economic dispensation of the pre-colonial societies in the country. Nyerere (1968, p. 45) was alluding to this scenario when he pointed out:

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