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**Implications of Herbert Spencer's Concept of Knowledge of Most Worth
to The Achievement of Knowledge Economy Through Research And
Innovations**

Abstract

As Universities, scholars, researchers and related institutions continue in pursuance of knowledge through research and innovations, one key question could be: which or what knowledge is of most worth? In other words, which knowledge should be sought most or prioritized? This paper seeks an account that would yield an understanding that could best inform the choice of priority areas in the pursuance of knowledge for innovation and development.

Keywords: *Knowledge, Research, Worth, Education*

1-Introduction

A survey of literature on education reforms in Kenya shows that the guiding factor has been the need to address school leaver unemployment. The Kenya Education Commission-Ominde Commission (Republic of Kenya, 1964, Republic of Kenya, 1965a, Republic of Kenya, 1965b), The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policy- Gacathi Report (Republic of Kenya 1978), The Presidential Working Party on the Second University-Mackay Report (Republic of Kenya, 1981a), The Presidential Working Party on Education and Man-power -Kamunge Report (Republic of Kenya, 1988) and Commission of Inquiry into the Education system of Kenya- Koech Commission (Republic of Kenya, 1999) and the 2011 Ministry of Education Task Force Report; all emphasized the need to address employment with regard to school leavers. This view of education for employment founds educational reforms in Kenya on an instrumental relationship.

Instrumental view of education, according to Njoroge and Bennaars (1986), pegs education on reward. In the Kenyan scenario, the reward is employment. People appreciate education as long as they find employment, in the absence of a career or a job for that matter, education becomes meaningless. This paper argues that this approach undermines the intrinsic value of education, simply put, that it is good to be educated. Just as it makes a person happy to wear an ornament, so is it to be educated, not only to be educated, but to know. The paper draws its lessons from Herbert Spencer (ibid)'s teaching on the question of what knowledge is of most worth.

2-Overview of Education Reforms in Kenya

A survey of literature on educational reforms in Kenya reveals that such efforts have been initiated with intention of addressing unemployment in the country. Ojiambo (2009) notes the first undertaking by the Kenya government upon the achievement of independence was the drafting of Sessional Paper Number 10 in 1965. This served as an important document for examining immediate needs and goals of post-independence Kenya. The paper saw education much more of an economic than a social service, a key means of alleviating shortage of skilled domestic workforce and of creating equal economic opportunities for all citizens (Republic of Kenya, 1965b). In dealing with education reforms, the Kenya government has in the past established five major inquiries to look into the development of Kenyan education: The Kenya Education Commission-Ominde Commission (Republic of Kenya, 1964, Republic of Kenya, 1965a, Republic of Kenya, 1965b), The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policy- Gacathi Report (Republic of Kenya 1978), The Presidential Working Party on the Second University-Mackay Report (Republic of Kenya, 1981a), The Presidential Working Party on Education and Man-power -Kamunge Report (Republic of Kenya, 1988) and Commission of Inquiry into the Education system of Kenya- Koech Commission (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

Eshiwani (1992), points out that Ominde Commission outlined what education was and had to be during and after independence. It was the blueprint that laid

the foundation of post-independence education. It was mandated to survey existing educational resources and to advise the government on the formation and implementation of the required national policies for education. The commission was strongly influenced by the then existing international opinion, economic and political forces and available publications that underscored the importance of education in accelerating national development. Ojiambo (2009), points out that the organization of education during this period was closely linked to the management of human resources and the labor market. This link led to the growth of enrollments, especially in secondary schools, a growth that continued to be experienced in the 1980s. Although formal education was expanding during this period, it was not directly accompanied by the economic growth. Thus, most school dropouts were soon left out with neither jobs nor training. By 1970, majority of secondary school drop outs began to experience unemployment crisis. Due to increase in demand for higher education and the need for highly qualified manpower, the government made more acts in the 1980s geared towards the improvement of education to enable it spearhead development.

In 1975, the government realized that education was not doing much to achieve its stated objectives. Education curriculum was viewed as being too academic, narrow and examination centered (Republic of Kenya, 1979b; Republic of Kenya 1980). Rate of unemployment grew as school leavers went to urban centers to seek for white-collar jobs. This led to the formation of the third development plan of 1974/78 to address some of these challenges (Republic of Kenya, 1979b). Education system during this period was required among other things: to provide high level skills needed for economic, industrial, vocational and technical training that was essential for employment and development.

In the 1980s the government changed its policy on education. This was because of the difficulties which were being faced by graduates of its education system at both primary and secondary levels. Most graduates who were matriculating from these levels could not be absorbed into the shrinking labor market. This made the government to reconsider changing its education system and to set up a Presidential Working Party in 1981 (Republic of Kenya, 1981a). The report sought to investigate ways in which education could make graduates from these levels self-sufficient, productive in agriculture, industries and commerce. Education system was expected to ensure that students acquired technical, scientific and practical knowledge vital for self and salaried employment, lifelong skills and nation building.

According to Sifuna (1990), in 1979, the Ministry of Education was changed to the Ministry of Basic Education with an introductory nine-year basic education system program. The rationale was that the previous program was too short and not rigorous enough to give graduates enough practical education. It also recommended that the first six years of primary were to concentrate on numeracy and literacy skills and the last two years on basic education with practical orientation. This represented a shift from a focus on enrollment to restructuring the program as a means to cater to the influx of unemployed.

3-Independence (Kenyatta Era) and 7-4-2-3-System of Education: Education for Manpower Development Ideology

According to Kivuva (2002), Kenya's attainment of independence from Britain in 1963 was a great source of hope to her people, for it marked an end to the stings of long suffering and discrimination. The independent Kenya therefore needed to make changes in different areas in order to reflect the needs of her people. Education was one of such areas that required such changes, given the way it was operated during the colonial regime.

The first changes were achieved through the Ominde Commission Report of 1964 (Republic of Kenya, 1964). The Ominde Commission became the first educational committee in the independent Kenya to look into the educational issues that affected the country and made recommendations for what they considered to be appropriate changes. Among the changes, were the adoption of 7-4-2-3 structure-seven years primary, four years of lower secondary, two years of upper secondary and three years of university education (Republic of Kenya, 1964). Simiyu (1990), observed that other changes include the content of subjects such as history and geography in an attempt to build a national identity and the abolition of technical and vocational education in primary education.

According to (Rharade, 1997), Ominde underscored the need to reform the education system so that it became a way of changing people's attitudes and a means of establishing social equality. Education was seen as a gateway to training the highly-skilled staff that Kenya needed and was viewed as a productive investment, not only to the individual but also to the society as a whole. Rharade, (1997) points out further that the Ominde Commission influenced the view of education as an instrument for development. The organization of education, therefore, was closely linked to the management of human resources and the labor market. This view of education, which was influenced by the human capital theory, led to the growth of enrollments, especially in secondary schools; it was a growth that continued to be experienced even in the 1980s (Kivuva, 2002). Through education, there was a chance for individual mobility and a good life.

3.1- Reforming the 7-4-2-3- System of Education: The Failure of Education for Manpower Development Ideology

Owino (1997) argued that the call for reforms in the 7-4-2-3 system of education in Kenya was widespread and based on the perceived weakness of such educational policy. It was observed that the system lacked the capacity and flexibility to respond to the changing aspirations of individual Kenyans and the labour market needs, in terms of new skills, new technologies and the attitude to work. The deficiencies of this educational ideology manifested itself through the increased number of school leavers who went through primary and secondary education but were unemployed at the end because they either lacked the specific skills required for wage employment/self-employment or because the leavers were selective about the type of jobs they thought they had been prepared for (Owino 1997).

According to Sifuna and Otiende (1992), the Presidential Committee (1982/83) on unemployment noted that one of the factors, which contributed to unemployment, was the type and quality of education, which was being imparted in schools. The Presidential Committee further noted that the subjects, which were taught at both primary and secondary schools, were heavily biased towards intellectualism and lacked the development of adaptive skills and lacked the technical and vocational component and was therefore accused of being highly academic.

Simiyu (2001), observed that the 7-4-2-3 system of education was criticized in two major areas. First was that the system was being too academic and therefore not suitable for direct employment thereby lacking orientation to employment. Second, it was argued that the system encouraged elitist and individualistic attitudes among school leavers, an aspect that was considered incompatible to the African socialist milieu. Unemployment concerns with regard to the 7-4-2-3 system of education were conspicuously mentioned in The Gachathi Report of 1976. The Report noted that:

(...)One of the largest problems confronting the country is that of unemployment. The problem is aggravated by the annual outputs of school leavers whose number continue to swell following the enormous expansion of the education system in the first years of independence (...)Unemployment which was said to have started among primary school leavers had spread to embrace even university graduates (Republic of Kenya, 1976:33-34).

As Kivuva (2002) observes, education, which was regarded by Kenyans as a medium for social mobility and national economic development failed to deliver as the number of unemployed school leavers continued to grow. In a sense the 7-4-2-3 system was regarded as a failing tool for national development. Therefore a change of the system was required. According to Maleche (1976), the Kenya National Assembly's Select Committee on unemployment (1970), made calls for change of education system to address unemployment noting that:

Of fundamental importance to the solution of unemployment problem will be a reform of content and scope of educational curricula in the nation's education system. The present curricula are too exclusively academic. The school-leavers cannot apply their knowledge to farming or to other activities like bookkeeping, masonry, and carpentry and joinery. The school curricula should therefore be revised to give them a more practical bias. Teaching on agriculture and practical skills should be established both at primary and secondary schools (Maleche, 1976:13)

Eshiwani (1992) noted that to address the problem of unemployment, the government proposed an emphasis on technical education so that those who were not able to go on to secondary school could receive training that might lead them to either self-employment or other jobs in the non-formal sector. In 1975, the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policy (NCEOP) was formed and was concerned with the issue of unemployment. Eighty percent of primary

school dropouts were jobless at that time. The committee's task was to review the achievements of the educational objectives after more than a decade since independence. This led to the Gachathi report of 1976, which emphasized the provision of free primary education. The report also noted that there was need to integrate secondary education with the non-formal sector in order to take care of school dropouts. This called for the introduction of more technical subjects in secondary schools. The last grade in higher secondary education (Form 6) was to be a major recruiting stage, since only a few students could be absorbed by Kenya's only university.

According to Kivuva (2002), institutions for vocational training were seen as an answer to the problem of unemployment. Many religious organizations started vocational training institutes, but the enrollment remained low. Still, few people were in favor of blue-collar jobs. There were moves towards vocational education, although such programs remained unpopular with school dropouts at all stages. The 7-4-2-3 system, as the tool of national development was seen as failing.

4- Post Independence Period (Moi Era): Education for Self-Reliance ideology

According to Makori (2005), as early as the 1970s, the International Labour Organization (ILO) report showed that there was a need to make changes to the education system in order to help reduce unemployment. The ILO recommended increasing the technical aspect. The first and second United Nations' (UN) "development decades," the 1960s and 1970s, also influenced the educational plans most third-world countries made after independence. The UN's main aim was to focus on the production of skilled manpower, reducing social inequalities and providing basic education for all.

In 1981, the Presidential Working Party on the establishment of the Second University was commissioned to look at both the possibilities of setting up a second university in Kenya and of reforming the entire education system. The committee recommended that the 7-4-2-3 system be changed to an 8-4-4 system (eight years in primary, four years in secondary, and four years in university education).

4.1- The 8-4-4 System of Education: Education for Self-reliance Ideology

According to Muya (2000), the 8-4-4 system of education, which was pre-vocational in nature, was introduced in January 1985, following the Mackay report of 1982. King and McGrath (2002), report that:

(...) the 8-4-4 policy arose out of the concerns that a basic academic education might lack the necessary content to promote widespread sustainable (self) employment (...) King and McGrath (2002:89).

The 8-4-4 policy emanated from the assumption that it would equip pupils with employable skills thereby enabling school dropouts at all levels to be either self-

employed or secure employment in the informal sector (Eshiwani, 1992). As King and McGrath (2002), observed the new system intended to orient youths towards self-employment. The new policy would improve the student's employment potential and thus make them self-reliant (Amutabi, 2003).

According to the Kenya Ministry of Education (1984) the 8-4-4 policy was designed to encourage students to become more self-reliant and better oriented towards self-employment. It contained a rather broad curriculum at both primary and secondary levels, with a strong emphasis on practical subjects sitting alongside a rather traditional approach to academic subject. Business education was introduced into upper primary as an evident of encouraging self-employment. As well as business education's focus on providing basic knowledge and skills on issues such as record keeping, there was a cross-curricular emphasis on attitudinal orientation towards self-employment.

Eisemon (1988), observed that the task force in charge of assessing the cost of implementation submitted their report in late 1983, urging for caution and gradualism in implementing 8-4-4 system. The task force on curriculum implementation recommended that:

A structure ... should lead to the development of communication skills (literacy) through the teaching of mother tongue, English, and Swahili languages. The development of scientific outlook will be done through the teaching of mathematics, while the development of scientific outlook will be done through the teaching of integrated science. The development and acquisition of social and cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes will be done through the teaching of social studies, religious education, music and physical education, art, craft and home science will provide for practical knowledge and skills. (The Ministry of Education (1984:4).

4.2- The 8-4-4 Educational Policy Confronted: Gaps in the Education for Self-Reliance ideology

Although the 8-4-4 system curriculum allowed for more options in technical and vocational subjects, Desouza (1987), and Owino (1997) share the view that the crisis of unemployment of primary school leavers remained evident. Vocational subjects and activities were seen as an extra burden both in practical daily activities in schools and in national examination. According to King and McGrath (2002), the 8-4-4 system curriculum for primary school was also claimed to be overcrowded or overstretched. Therefore it was an obstacle to effective learning because the pupils worked under great pressure. Abagi (1997), noted that to cover an extended curriculum in the same period increased pressure to students and staff and thus reduced students performance (lower test scores). The pressure negatively affected the children's motivation to learn resulting in the rise in dropouts (Owino, 1997).

Kenya through the recommendations made by a Task Force set up in January 2011 to realign the education sector to Vision 2030 and the new Constitution. The TF identified a number of challenges, gaps and concerns which led to a pertinent

question: “Is the Kenyan Education System and its institutions and programmes fit for the purpose?” The TF recommended for a new structure of the education system: 2 years of Pre-primary, 6 years of Primary (3 years lower and 3 years upper), 6 years Secondary (3 years junior and 3 years senior), 2 years minimum of Middle level Colleges and 3 years minimum University education. As a whole this structure will have two cycles; Basic Education cycle of 14 years which is free and compulsory, and a Higher Education cycle.

The rationale for the revised structure is to ensure learners acquire competences and skills that will enable them to meet the human resource aspirations of Vision 2030 by offering a choice of subject pathways at the end of the Elementary School phase; ensure the attainment of 100% transition rate from primary to secondary, thereby reducing wastage by introducing automatic progression to the junior secondary phase based on the acquisition of core skills and competences (literacy, numeracy and communication skills).

According to (Nganga 2010), in a bid to link higher education funding to society’s long-term economic goals, the Kenya Government made proposals to review courses offered by the country’s public universities, putting emphasis on science and technology - a shift that could see dozens of popular courses scrapped. The Higher Education Ministry said only science and technology students at public universities would in future be assured of government funding. The Higher Education ministry reckons that priority for funding should be based on the actual cost of mounting the course and how it contributes to the achievement of Vision 2030, Kenya’s long-term economic blueprint. Technocrats say the move is meant to ensure universities churn out adequate and relevant skills for the labour market, which is crucial for Kenya’s attainment of middle-income economy status in the next two decades - a future anchored on science and technology. Going forward, courses will be funded differently depending on how they contribute to creating the human resources required for economic growth.

It seems from this overview of education reforms in Kenya that without the problem of school leaver unemployment, there would be no need for education. Likewise, learners attend school as long as there are prospects of employment, without which, education is irrelevant. Education is not taken to be good in itself. The proposal to fund only courses that contribute to the achievement of Kenya’s economic aspirations is another indicator for how deep the instrumental view of education is entrenched in Kenya. In particular, it seems that science courses have taken center stage because of the perceived practical aspects they are likely to yield. Njoroge (1988) advises that nations have been observed to falter in their development, not because of lack of knowledge and technology, but due to defects in human character. It is in this regard that paper advocates for the intrinsic view of education in which the basic foundation is that is good to be educated. Here the qualities of an educated person, supersedes just the need for employment.

5- An Idea of Educated Person

According to Schofield (1972), in ancient Greece, an educated person was one who was mentally and physically balanced while in Rome an educated person was one who was a good orator and also excelled in military training. In the Middle Ages England, an educated person was either a lord or priest. Aubrey (1999) avers that the educated person (man) is to be discovered by his point of view, by the temper of his mind, by his attitude towards life and his fair of thinking. He can see, he can discriminate, he can combine ideas and see whether they can lead, he has insight and comprehension. He is more apt to contribute light than heat to a discussion and will oftener than not show the power of uniting elements of a difficult subject in a whole view. Peters (1972) held that an educated person is one who posses a considerable body of knowledge together with understanding. He/she has developed capacity to reason to justify his/her beliefs and conduct. The educated person is one who is capable; to certain extend, of doing and knowing things for their own sake.

Mohanan (<http://www.cdctl.nus.edu.sg/publications/educated/intro.htm>) argues that to be considered educated, a person should have undergone a process of learning that results in enhanced mental capability to function effectively in familiar situations in personal and intellectual life, as well as to adapt to novel situations. This way, an educated person should possess knowledge needed for making informed rational decisions and inferences on familiar and novel situations in personal and intellectual life. In addition an educated person should be able to do certain things. When faced with familiar as well as novel situations, an educated person should be able to perform required tasks, make informed decisions and arrive at informed conclusions. An educated person should have the capability to enhance and modify his/her knowledge and thinking abilities on an ongoing basis so as to cope with novel situations and to cope with them in a more successful manner. An educated person should be capable of independent learning that facilitates coping with and adapting to the changing environment and be capable of using language clearly, precisely and effectively for epistemic purposes.

Michigan State University (www.msu.edu/unit/provost/Educated_Person.htm) in asserting that it is committed to graduating an educated person posts that an educated person is someone who has learned how to acquire, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, understand, and communicate knowledge and information. An educated person has to develop skills that respond to changing professional requirements and new challenges in society and the world at large. He or she must be able to take skills previously gained from serious study of one set of problems and apply them to another. He or she must be able to locate, understand, interpret, evaluate, and use information in an appropriate way and ultimately communicate his or her synthesis and understanding of that information in a clear and accurate manner. Harvard University Graduate School of Education (<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news-impact/2012/04/watch-the-askwith-forum-live-defining-the-educated-person/> Defining the Educated Person) posts that to be considered educated students should leave school with a deep understanding of themselves and how they fit into

the world, and have learned what some call “soft skills” – complex problem-solving, creativity, entrepreneurship, the ability to manage themselves, and the ability to be lifelong learners.

According to Balogun (2008) an educated person shows evidence of well-integrated personality; he or she is morally conscious of his or her actions and shows evidence of responsibility in the social welfare of others. He or she is a person of all season, who is cultured and broadminded; socially sensitive of his or her crucial role in the developmental process, and embraces socialism. Such a person is thus related with society and is an evidential embodiment of societal values with his or her physical body, mind and spirit fully developed to the fullest capacity to ensure the survival of his or her society. In this regard, Balogun (2008) maintained that:

(...) the educated person is one who shows evidence of a well integrated personality, meaning being economically prudent, socially and politically competent, morally acceptable and intellectually and culturally sophisticated. Being economically prudent means being economically efficient in the sense of possessing skills and knowledge that earns a means of survival as well as making a contribution to the common good. Hence a socially and politically competent person is one who has the ability to participate and does participate in decisions as affecting his or her life and others in his or her community. And being ethical, is a function of behavioural dispositions in which makes a person act morally in line with cultural values and norms of society, thus intellectual and cultural sophistication are meant to make the person socially aware of not only the developments in the environment, but also to observe the cultural norms of the society. And thus, a synthesis of all these qualities makes for a true understanding of the idea of educated person (Balogun, 2008:9) An educated person according to Akinpelu (1969) can be described as one who combines expertise in some specific economic skills with soundness of character and wisdom in judgement. One who is equipped to handle successfully the problems of living in an immediate and an extended family; who is well versed in the folk-lore and genealogies of the ancestors; who has some skills to handle minor health problems and where to obtain advice and help in major ones; who stands well with the ancestral spirits of the family and knows how to observe their worship; who has the ability to discharge social and political duties; who is wise and shrewd in judgement; who expresses self not in too many words but rather in proverbs and analogies leaving hearers to unravel his or her thought; who is self controlled under provocation, dignified in sorrow and restrained in success; and finally and most importantly, who is of excellent character.

6- Herbert Spencer: Knowledge of Most Worth

According to Herbert Spencer (<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/2249/212791>.) it has been truly remarked that, in order of time, decoration precedes dress. There are people who submit to great physical suffering that they may have themselves handsomely tattooed, or times when extremes of temperature are borne with but little attempt at mitigation. Spencer (ibid) writes that:

(...) an Orinoco Indian, though quite regardless of bodily comfort, will yet labour for

a fortnight to purchase pigment wherewith to make himself admired; and that the same woman who would not hesitate to leave her hut without a fragment of clothing on, would not dare to commit such a breach of decorum as to go out unpainted. (...) And the anecdotes we have of the ways in which, when shirts and coats are given, savages turn them to some ludicrous display, show how completely the idea of ornament predominates over that of use (...). And when we remember that even among ourselves most think more about the fineness of the fabric than its warmth, and more about the cut than the convenience (...) when we see that the function is still in great measure subordinated to the appearance (...) we have further reason for inferring such an origin (Spencer, *ibid*:).

Spencer (*ibid*) argues that among mental as among bodily acquisitions, the ornamental comes before the useful. Not only in times past, but almost as much in our own era, that knowledge which conduces to personal well-being has been postponed to that which brings applause. He (Spencer (*ibid*)) observes that in the Greek schools, music, poetry, rhetoric, and a philosophy which, until Socrates taught, had but little bearing upon action, were the dominant subjects; while knowledge aiding the arts of life had a very subordinate place, even within universities and schools. Spencer (*ibid*) illustrates that:

We are guilty of something like a platitude when we say that throughout his after-career, a boy, in nine cases out of ten, applies his Latin and Greek to no practical purposes. If we inquire what is the real motive for giving boys a classical education, we find it to be simply conformity to public opinion. Men dress their children's minds as they do their bodies, in the prevailing fashion (...) As the Orinoco Indian puts on paint before leaving his hut, not with a view to any direct benefit, but because he would be ashamed to be seen without it; so, a boy's drilling in Latin and Greek is insisted on, not because of their intrinsic value, but that he may not be disgraced by being found ignorant of them--that he may have "the education of a gentleman"—the badge marking a certain social position, and bringing a consequent respect (Spencer, *ibid*:).

Spencer (*ibid*) discusses that in the treatment of both mind and body, the decorative element has continued to predominate in a greater degree among women than among men. Originally, personal adornment occupied the attention of both sexes equally. Spencer (*ibid*) writes that:

In these latter days of civilization, however, (...) we see that in the dress of men the regard for appearance has in a considerable degree yielded to the regard for comfort; while in their education the useful has of late been trenching on the ornamental. In neither direction has this change gone so far with women. The wearing of earrings, finger-rings, bracelets; the elaborate dressings of the hair; the still occasional use of paint; the immense labour bestowed in making habiliments sufficiently attractive; and the great discomfort that will be submitted to for the sake of conformity; show how greatly, in the attiring of women, the desire of approbation overrides the desire for warmth and convenience. And similarly in their education, the immense preponderance of "accomplishments" proves how here, too, use is

subordinated to display (Spencer, *ibid* :).

According to Spencer (*ibid*), “Not what knowledge is of most real worth”, is the consideration; but what will bring most applause, honour or respect: what will most conduce to social position and influence, what will be most imposing. As, throughout life, not what we are, but what we shall be thought, is the question; so in education, the question is, not the intrinsic value of knowledge, so much as its extrinsic effects on others. And this being our dominant idea, direct utility is scarcely more regarded than by the barbarian when filing his teeth and staining his nails. If there requires further evidence of the rude, undeveloped character of our education, we have it in the fact that the comparative worths of different kinds of knowledge have been as yet scarcely even discussed; much less discussed in a methodic way with definite results. Not only is it that no standard of relative values has yet been agreed upon; but the existence of any such standard has not been conceived in a clear manner. And not only is it that the existence of such a standard has not been clearly conceived; but the need for it seems to have been scarcely even felt.

Men read books on this topic, and attend lectures on that; decide that their children shall be instructed in these branches of knowledge, and shall not be instructed in those; and all under the guidance of mere custom, or liking, or prejudice; without ever considering the enormous importance of determining in some rational way what things are really most worth learning (Spencer, *ibid*:).

The question which we contend is of such transcendent moment, is, not whether such or such knowledge is of worth but what is its relative worth is. When they have named certain advantages which a given course of study has secured them, persons are apt to assume that they have justified themselves; quite forgetting that the adequateness of the advantages is the point to be judged. There is, perhaps, not a subject to which men devote attention that has not some value.

Spencer (*ibid*) argues that in education, then, this is the question of questions, which it is high time we discussed in some methodic way. The first in importance, though the last to be considered, is the problem--how to decide among the conflicting claims of various subjects on our attention. Before there can be a rational _curriculum_, we must settle which things it most concerns us to know.

To this end, a measure of value is the first requisite. And happily, respecting the true measure of value, as expressed in general terms, there can be no dispute. Everyone in contending for the worth of any particular order of information does so by showing its bearing upon some part of life. In reply to the question--“Of what use is it?” the mathematician, linguist, naturalist, or philosopher, explains the way in which his learning beneficially influences action--saves from evil or secures good--conduces to happiness. When the teacher of writing has pointed out how great an aid writing is to success in business--that is, to the obtainment of sustenance--that is, to satisfactory living; he is held to have proved his case. And when the collector of dead facts (say a numismatist) fails to make clear any appreciable effects which these facts can produce on human welfare, he is obliged to admit that they are

comparatively valueless. All then, either directly or by implication, appeal to this as the ultimate test (Spencer, *ibid*:).

According to Spencer (*ibid*), the general problem which comprehends every special problem is the right ruling of conduct in all directions under all circumstances. In what way to treat the body; in what way to treat the mind; in what way to manage our affairs; in what way to bring up a family; in what way to behave as a citizen; in what way to utilise those sources of happiness which nature supplies, how to use all our faculties to the greatest advantage of ourselves and others.

This being the great thing needful for us to learn, is, by consequence, the great thing which education has to teach. To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge; and the only rational mode of judging of an educational course is, to judge in what degree it discharges such function (Spencer, *ibid*:).

Spencer (*ibid*) proposes that in order to determine knowledge worth having, the first step must obviously be to classify, in the order of their importance, the leading kinds of activity which constitute human life. Spence writes that they may be naturally arranged into:

(...) Those activities which directly minister to self-preservation; (...) those activities which, by securing the necessaries of life, indirectly minister to self-preservation; (...) those activities which have for their end the rearing and discipline of offspring; (...) those activities which are involved in the maintenance of proper social and political relations; (...) those miscellaneous activities which fill up the leisure part of life, devoted to the gratification of the tastes and feelings (Spencer, *ibid*:).

Based on classification of kinds of activity which constitute human life, Spencer (*ibid*) discusses that the actions and precautions by which, from moment to moment, we secure personal safety, must clearly take precedence of all others. Spencer (*ibid*) writes that:

Could there be a man, ignorant as an infant of surrounding objects and movements, or how to guide himself among them, he would pretty certainly lose his life the first time he went into the street; notwithstanding any amount of learning he might have on other matters. And as entire ignorance in all other directions would be less promptly fatal than entire ignorance in this direction, it must be admitted that knowledge immediately conducive to self-preservation is of primary importance (Spencer, *ibid* :).

That next after direct self-preservation comes the indirect self-preservation which consists in acquiring the means of living, none will question. That a man's industrial functions must be considered before his parental ones, is manifest from the fact that, speaking generally, the discharge of the parental functions is made possible only by the previous discharge of the industrial ones.

The power of self-maintenance necessarily preceding the power of maintaining offspring, it follows that knowledge needful for self-maintenance has stronger claims than knowledge needful for family welfare; is second in value to none save knowledge needful for immediate self-preservation (Spencer, *ibid*:).

Spencer (*ibid*) explains that as the family comes before the State in order of time; as the bringing up of children is possible before the State exists, or when it has ceased to be, whereas the State is rendered possible only by the bringing up of children; it follows that the duties of the parent demand closer attention than those of the citizen. Or, to use a further argument--since the goodness of a society ultimately depends on the nature of its citizens; and since the nature of its citizens is more modifiable by early training than by anything else; we must conclude that the welfare of the family underlies the welfare of society. And hence knowledge directly conducing to the first, must take precedence of knowledge directly conducing to the last.

According to Spencer (*ibid*), those various forms of pleasurable occupation which fill up the leisure left by graver occupations, the enjoyments of music, poetry, painting, etc; manifestly imply a pre-existing society. Not only is a considerable development of them impossible without a long-established social union; but their very subject-matter consists in great part of social sentiments and sympathies. Not only does society supply the conditions to their growth; but also the ideas and sentiments they express. And, consequently, that part of human conduct which constitutes good citizenship, is of more moment than that which goes out in accomplishments or exercise of the tastes; and, in education, preparation for the one must rank before preparation for the other. Spencer (*ibid*) writes that:

Of course the ideal of education is--complete preparation in all these divisions. But failing this ideal, as in our phase of civilisation every one must do more or less, the aim should be to maintain _a due proportion_ between the degrees of preparation in each (Spencer, *ibid*:).

Discussing further his classification of activities that constitute human life, Spencer (*ibid*) argues that there is knowledge of intrinsic value; knowledge of quasi-intrinsic value; and knowledge of conventional value. It follows that in a rational estimate, knowledge of intrinsic worth must, other things equal, take precedence of knowledge that is of quasi-intrinsic or conventional worth. Acquirement of every kind has two values: value as knowledge and value as discipline. Besides its use for guiding conduct, the acquisition of each order of facts has also its use as mental exercise; and its effects as a preparative for complete living have to be considered under both these heads. Spencer (*ibid*) points out that:

These, then, are the general ideas with which we must set out in discussing a curriculum: Life as divided into several kinds of activity of successively decreasing importance; the worth of each order of facts as regulating these several kinds of activity, intrinsically, quasi-intrinsically, and conventionally; and their regulative influences estimated both as knowledge and discipline (Spencer;_).

Spencer (ibid) maintains that to the question of what knowledge is of most worth. The uniform reply is--Science. This is the verdict on all the counts. Spencer (ibid) writes:

For direct self-preservation, or the maintenance of life and health, the all-important knowledge is--Science. For that indirect self-preservation which we call gaining a livelihood, the knowledge of greatest value is 'Science'. For the due discharge of parental functions, the proper guidance is to be found only in 'Science'. For that interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen cannot rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key is 'Science'. Alike for the most perfect production and highest enjoyment of art in all its forms, the needful preparation is still 'Science'. And for purposes of discipline intellectual, moral, religious the most efficient study is, once more 'Science' (Spencer;_).

7- Education as Ornament: The Knowledge most worth

Whereas Spencer (ibid) finds science to be knowledge of most worth, his does not necessarily imply that science subjects are to be of the most worth, but rather he calls for a science that grounds an all round person, in whom education has superseded utility need. From Spencer we learn that for direct self-preservation or the maintenance of life and health and for that indirect self-preservation which we call gaining a livelihood, the knowledge of greatest value is--Science. For the due discharge of parental functions, the proper guidance, interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen cannot rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key and alike for the most perfect production and highest enjoyment of art in all its forms, the needful preparation is still-Science. And for purposes of discipline--intellectual, moral, religious-the most efficient study is, once more-Science. This way, Spencer (ibid) calls for the possession of knowledge that makes a person all rounded. This would inform the Kenyan Government endeavours in reforming the country's education system.

It is reported by Ng'ang'a (2013), that the Kenya Government proposed to fund only science courses because they contribute to the economic needs of the country. This way, the Kenya Government is focusing only on one aspect of a science that Spencer (ibid) discusses as gaining a livelihood. Widely still, the Kenya Government has its educational practice pegged on the need of for employable skills or addressing unemployment among school leavers, hence evidently making the gaining a livelihood to be the greatest desire for education in Kenya. The other aspects of knowledge of most worth emphasized by Spencer (ibid) are left to the periphery, a situation that denies the development of an all round person.

This paper argues that when all aspects of knowledge of most worth are underscored in the practice of education, namely; direct self-preservation, or the maintenance of life and health and for that indirect self-preservation (gaining a livelihood), the due discharge of parental functions, the proper guidance, interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen cannot rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key and alike for the most perfect production and highest enjoyment

of art in all its forms, the needful preparation and for purposes of discipline--intellectual, moral, religious education becomes a decorum. Education becomes a lifestyle and a celebrity worth having. Education becomes an ornament, beauty worth of, or simply put, it is honourable to be educated. This way, a new orientation and understanding of education emerges.

Even if we do not know the definition and role of education, will all concur that education is 'good', whatever it is. Even if there were jobs and the need for employable skills rendered redundant, education remains good on the basis of other aspects that are outside the gaining of a livelihood. Education as a lifelong process has for long been erroneously associated largely with mere survival skills. The element of education as an ornament has not been articulated and therefore the failure for the Kenyan masses to seek education without employment promises. Life has become a continuous process that begins at conception with caring and moves through learning, working, earning, saving and ends at death when sharing. All the practices and activities involved are educational. The current search for new educational funnels as opposed to the traditional survival orientation must seek for institutional inverse, that is, intentional creation of educational webs which heighten the opportunity for one to transform each moment of his/her living into one that takes care of the new definition of education which involves caring, learning, working, earning, saving and sharing. Therefore, education is a natural community function that occurs inevitably and emphasis on unemployment is just one reasonable auxiliary of the inevitable process that requires no emphasis to those who do wish and have the capacity to multitask.

8- Conclusion

In the writings of Spencer (*ibid*), this paper has its conclusion: and when we remember that even among ourselves most think more about the fineness of the fabric than its warmth, and more about the cut than the convenience (...) when we see that the function is still in great measure subordinated to the appearance (...) we have further reason for inferring such an origin. As the Orinoco Indian puts on paint before leaving his hut, not with a view to any direct benefit, but because he would be ashamed to be seen without it; so, the wearing of earrings, finger-rings, bracelets; the elaborate dressings of the hair; the still occasional use of paint; the immense labour bestowed in making habiliments sufficiently attractive; and the great discomfort that will be submitted to for the sake of conformity; show how greatly, in the attiring of women, the desire of approbation overrides the desire for warmth and convenience. And similarly in their education, the immense preponderance of "accomplishments" proves how here, too, use is subordinated to display. This is the orientation of education as an ornamental decorum, the highest good from education, a good most worth.

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