



# The Essential Strategies of Empowering the Youth as an Enterprise of Enhancing National Harmony and Social Cohesion in Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

In the contemporary world, the essence of empowering the youth to embrace the concept of national and global cohesion through education is not optional but mandatory. It is equally noticeable that education has facilitated the exchange of information and knowledge that generates potentialities necessary for the global prosperity. The contrary is that education is also accountable for making the world too porous, fragmented, and alienated which is reflected superficial peace, perplexing pandemonium, and ambiguous inhabitation. In contradistinction, education has brought the world together in an attempt to create global prosperity, but has failed to fulfill aspirations of the youth and bring harmony and cohesion not only in Kenya but also worldwide. It is within this backdrop that there is irrefutable necessity to explore the possible means to empower the youth to appreciate the significance of national harmony, social cohesion and integration in Kenya. It is through teaching and learning that the youth can endorse the principle of national harmony and social cohesion. In this treatise, interviews served as tools of obtaining data from the respondents, while phenomenological theory served as theoretical framework. The outcome is that there is need for a new turn to enhance the youth to endorse the value of harmony and coexistence.

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## 1. Introduction

The tenacity of concocting an all-round person in the society is a collective responsibility that must implicate academic, social, psychological, and spiritual potentiality of an individual. Once these facets are aptly integrated, the person is perceived to uphold not only the individual fulfillment, but also the national aspirations. It is indispensable that national cohesion is a crucial facet and segment of the pronounced national aspirations all the world. Kenya is not exceptional in as far as upholding national cohesion is concerned.

In chapter two of the Kenyan constitution, national harmony and social cohesion features strongly as crucial facets depicted in the supreme law of the land. It implies that in Kenya, the concept of national cohesion is not an optional notion but a requisite national model that must be integrated in the teaching and learning scenario. It is glaring that education in Kenya resides on the peripheral trait of cognitive dimension and as such, it is alienating the youth from national harmony and social cohesion. As such, the essence of pedagogy is to facilitate acquisition of national aspirations as elaborated in the principles of education.

The contrary is that the knowledge available in schools as revealed in this paper abrogates the role of the principles of education such that in Kenya, the educational system fails to produce astute, composed, and fulfilled citizens focused on enhancing a peaceful world through national cohesion. In this case, youths in schools are dissatisfied, educators are discouraged, and the entire public is frustrated because the available education failed to empower the youth to appreciate national harmony and social cohesion.

These failures have been identified by scholars but have not developed the necessary means and strategies to assure its success.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is necessary to reconcile the decisive parts of a specific treatise (Oliver, 2008:22), and as such, a theoretical framework provides the background from which the data is obtained, analysed and interpreted. A treatise that identifies the crucial strategies to empower the youth as an enterprise to enhance national harmony and cohesion requires a relevant theoretical framework to facilitate an effective synchronization of various parts. There are various types of theoretical frameworks in philosophy of education such as logical empiricism, critical rationalism, phenomenology, critical theory, and postmodernism, and each theory determines the nature of a given treatise (Dall'Alba, 2009: 8).

As such, this treatise focuses on assessing the incidents which can be deliberated as concrete and fundamental facets that empowers the youth to enhance national harmony and cohesion through education in Kenya. This paper is shaped by phenomenological theory as the theoretical framework which is philosophical in nature. As such, phenomenological theory underlines that the harmony of human beings is best observed within their natural settings and inhabitants. In this case, phenomenology serves as the apt theoretical framework to reconcile the decisive parts of the experiences in the teaching and learning scenario for the purpose of augmenting national harmony and cohesion.

## 3. Interviews

This treatise adopted interviews to objectify the acquisition of views from the respondents.

The main questions focuses on how education practice intensifies national harmony and social cohesion, and the nature of crucial strategies necessary to facilitate the process of realizing national harmony and social cohesion through education. As a joint procedure of acquiring information, an interview comprises of a reciprocal discourse which is based on mutual dialogue (Creswell, 2007:133; Willis, 2007:245). The outcome of such discourse and dialogue is the provision of facts about people's attitudes and opinions, perspectives and meanings (Hannan, 2007:2). In this case, the interview probing revealed the prospect of understanding the diversity in perceptions and opinions about what counts as crucial strategies to empower the youth in order to endorse national harmony and cohesion in Kenya.

#### 4. Empowering the Youth

In the recent past, empowerment of the youth focused on providing them with knowledge and skills as necessary facets to respond to the challenges of economic development and the issues of globalisation. In addition, sensitization on positive values and good ethics to facilitate a sense of patriotism was perceived to be indispensable. Further, a crucial aspect of empowering youths to take their role in society as an attempt to foster national cohesion, consistency, identity and nation building remained as a dynamic framework. It also gave further emphasis on the development of an individual's spiritual and moral values to escalate one's personality. It follows necessarily that a diversity of extensive platforms has been initiated, but none has drawn attention on the facet of teaching and learning in schools.

##### 4.1 Education as Universal Enterprise

In Kenya, the principle of national cohesion is elaborated and clarified further in the model of nationalism and patriotism. It is the essence of the process of teaching-learning experiences that the ideal mode of conveying communal unanimity through education is the primary channel which contributes effectively to its achievement. The nature of education overlooks the purpose of national cohesion as part of the principles of education not only in Kenya but all over the world. In this regard, the national solidity emphasizes that the youth requires empowerment which is fundamental for interpersonal relationships, good citizenship, duties to the nation, expected behaviour of citizens, and the consequences for not adhering to the stated principles of pedagogy (UNESCO, 2006:1).

As a universal enterprise, education prepares the youth to appreciate nationalism, such that in the learning institutions it generates an opportunity for the youth from diverse backgrounds to meet, learn, exchange ideas, and enhance nationalistic approach to reality. In Kenya, the nature of education has failed to empower the youth and enhance national harmony and social cohesion because the teaching and learning has lapsed to competitive pedagogy. This desolate and absurdity is perpetuated by the MoEST largely in the realm of evaluation tactic that does not support the familiarity with national coherence, communal unanimity, and social cohesion (Abebe et al., 2006:14; Mwaka et al., 2010:3). It is from this relativity of competitive crux that the youth in Kenya are deprived the commitment of understanding and endorsing the substance of nationalism which is crucial in the principles of education. This divisive approach in pedagogy refutes the essence of empowering the youth to realize the principle of national unity and social cohesion. As such, this deprivation poses a conflict against the feat of the principle of national unity, the epitome of

patriotism, and the reality of obstructing the intensity of social cohesion.

The universality of education and empowerment of the youth resides on the capacity of knowing and the ability to apply such knowledge to improve on the national accord, societal consistency, and perspectives (Achoka, 2007:237; Mareng, 2010:68). It is relatively impossible talk of an education, national harmony, and social cohesion minus human capabilities, personality and character. Therefore, the universality of education focuses on human capacities as crucial basis of thwarting the colossal devastation that confront its relevance for the youth in Kenya.

##### 4.2 Education, Prospects and Youth

In Kenya, learning institutions endorse and ratify pedagogical activities and adopt techniques of delivery that partially focus on realizing technical competencies such as knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes, and values related to escalating careers and objectifying definite functions and processes. An intrinsic obstruction in realizing national unity and social cohesion occurs when the acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities, and values as necessary models of potency are skewed for the discrete advantage that lacks communal factor in terms of progressive trend for the public utility.

A glaring conflict is that Kenyan youth are contented with understanding of the subject matter (Keriga & Bujra, 2009:15), only in terms of its content, but its substance is not parallel to the stipulated concepts of national harmony and social cohesion. In this case, teaching and learning a subject is not intended to fabricate little living libraries on that subject matter as it is in education practice in Kenya, but to empower and facilitate the youth to think, to critique issues, and to be involved in the process of producing knowledge which is pragmatic (Carroll, 2008:7) for purpose of achieving harmony and cohesion.

Accordingly, Sawamura and Sifuna (2008:116) contend that empowering the youth transcends acquisition of meaningless grades and validates concrete realm of synchronization and social consistency. It follows necessarily that content driven knowledge is not enough to empower the youth in the society and particularly in Kenya (Cohen, 2006:6). On the other hand, drawing attention to instrumental propensity that contributes to the transfer of knowledge remains paramount in escalating harmony and social cohesion. An education that is perceived to be purposive, pragmatic, and dynamic must admit the implication of empowering the youngsters to assent to harmony and cohesion. A corollary significance of national harmony and social cohesion in education surpasses cognitive domain. An all-round youth aims at ratifying coherence and consistency whose inference is practical in individual progress, self-fulfillment, and personal actualization.

The contemporary predicament is that an obstacle between education, prospects, and the youth gyrates on the deficit of equilibrium adjacent to the values of cognitive pedagogy and the human determination for excellence, morality and ethical regulations (Ndirangu, 2009:10). In this context, there is the question of constraints in terms of impractical competition, multicultural factor, controversial character formation, dubious conflict resolution, incoherency in critical and creative thinking, and the challenge of society and violence in teaching and learning institutions. The composite of these deprivations tend to exasperate and

contract an endeavour of the youth to strive for harmony and cohesion in Kenya.

#### **4.3 Education and Egalitarianism of Youth**

A fundamental dimension which confronts the efforts to empower the youth to realize national harmony and social cohesion resides the constraints behind the sense of belonging. The sense of belonging is described by the strength of shared experiences, identities and values between those from different backgrounds (Ndirangu, 2009:32). A critical role of education is to abate the stretch of parochial diversities, condense social inequality, and overcome probable traces of partiality in terms of cultural and intellectual servitude, devaluation of cultural ideals not only in Kenya, but worldwide.

An education that defends national coherence and collective consistency is primarily characterized by social egalitarianism, equivalence, objectivity and responsibility. This social egalitarianism has its substance in the youth. An attempt to empower the youth approves the substantive dimension of material conditions such as equality in terms of service, personal and public returns for social solidarity. It follows necessarily that empowering the youth through education envisions the existence of value relationship and a positive approach to social diversity.

The reality of value relationship and the facet of positive slant to social diversity and social equality are necessary to intensify effective learning whose aim is to serve the private and communal needs in an attempt to empower the youth to arrive at national harmony and social cohesion. This is not the case in Kenya because even though social equality is elemental in education, the Kenyan youth is faced with redundancy which plunges them into social crisis including tribal upheavals, low self-esteem, dubious attitudes, ineffective skills, and bad living conditions (Ndirangu, 2009:28). As a result, these critical conditions are contiguous to disparity and tend to preclude access to social opportunities, material circumstances and the future chances in social mobility for the youth. As such, social equality in education is fundamental in empowering the youth, but the contrary is that it is spurned. As a matter of fact, egalitarianism is indispensable since it is estimated to assist the youth to be accountable and repute the worth of I-THOU relationship. This repute translates what is learned to be more relevant and applicable towards the harmony and cohesion in the Kenya and the world.

A further corollary of equality is to intensify the magnitude of knowledge transfer, fortify cultural heritage and respect cultural diversity. Another role of education in Kenya is to intensify what is pragmatically atypical in nature from many different groups, contexts and backgrounds as an attempt to expand the horizons of the youth and provide a common underpinning for individual satisfaction as citizenship (Brightone et al., 2009:527). Accordingly the aspect of refining the horizon and personal prospects of the youth emanates from an extensive interaction with others from diverse origins, and such collaboration transpires towards appreciation of social equality which culminates at the harmony and cohesion of the nation.

#### **4.4 Education, Culture and Youth**

An empowerment of the youth that serves as an enterprise of enhancing national harmony and social cohesion is also founded on the cultural legacy of the society. In Kenya, cultural heritage emanates from rich and varied ethos articulated and conserved by each ethnic group.

The success of educating the youth to embrace national harmony and social cohesion requires a decisive acquaintance and approval of each culture and its integral diversities. An integration of this tenet of cultural heritage provides the platform of crediting education for its ability to shape the youth for the basic factors such as social order, safety and freedom from fear or any form of passive social relationships.

The necessary outcome is that an approval of cultural heritage as acquired through education serves as the source of societal tolerance, peace and security. These are the labelled hallmarks of a stable and harmonious society which is renowned for having many realms of cultural diversity (Brightone et al., 2009:528) but facilitated by a common end result. Today, these hallmarks of a stable and harmonious society are not clearly entrenched in the pedagogical activities. It is fundamental to approve them in the teaching and learning institutions in order to prepare the youth to identify and embrace the reality of cultural pluralism. An attempt to respect cultural diversity in the training of the youth at the national level intensifies its relevance in the global awareness.

#### **4.5 Education, International Community and Youth**

An education and training of the youth in an attempt to empower them for national harmony and social cohesion within the teaching and learning institutions transcends the geographical boundaries. This mounts towards the concept of transnational, transcultural and global consciousness which demands positive attitudes towards other nations. This is an awareness whereby the youth is empowered to understand that other people exist and their existence demands categorical recognition which must culminate in co-existence. As such, it follows necessarily that the overall objectives of education are destined at improving the universal partnership (Adedoyin & Shangodoyin, 2010:165). In this case, national harmony and social cohesion must be envisaged to achieve global awareness in terms of positive interactions, exchanges, and networks between individuals, communities and nations.

In these interactive connections, an empowerment of the youth establishes the potential resources necessary to supply sufficient support through provision of information, confidence and recognition in various categories. Although there is discrepancy in Kenya, it is fundamental to emphasize that global concession is not optional, but rather it is quite imperative for the future stability of the nation in order that the citizens may live in a harmonious environment. An education which is destined to empower the youth to endorse national harmony and social cohesion must endorse interactive connections as rudimentary facets and as an exit strategy leading towards the world of diversities.

Another role of teaching and learning institutions is to guide the youth to appreciate the historical and global complexity of issues and events, which leads them to expand their prospect. However, an integral dichotomy is the training institutions for the youth have minimized the reality of transnational perception. This means that in the process of teaching and learning, the youth are poorly equipped to foster tolerance as crucial groundwork for voluntary behaviour which is consistent with social norms based on the universal standing. An education that empowers the youth is mandated to this role by transcending the current influence by figures and dominating numbers. Otherwise, the figure-driven curricula in Kenya is erratic gauged within the prospect of empowering the youth to realize national harmony and social cohesion in the local and universal levels.

A figure-driven education does not empower the youth to fit and serve in the society where accountability and responsibility are inevitable. In an expose about measuring education practice for accountability and responsibility (Curren, 2005:272). A current assessment depicts a causal relationship between the scenery of teaching and learning which alien to the global conventions. As such, the substantive pedagogy that empowers the youth to be accountable is also coupled with various values and principles of education (Rothstein & Jacobsen, 2006:268), and such education is deemed facilitate apt decision necessary to distinguish between conflicting realities.

An idea of conflicting realities involves a convoluted interplay between uniformity and diversity as essential aspects for empowering the youth to appreciate harmony and cohesion. It is from this uniformity and diversity that an education which envisaged to empower the youth must realign to be parallel to the principles of education.

### **5. Education and Empowering the Youth**

An attempt to identify the essential strategies of empowering the youth as an enterprise of enhancing national harmony and social cohesion in Kenya and beyond proposes that pedagogical activities must be parallel to the principles of education. The conflict of isolating the individual from the principles of pedagogy demonstrates the crisis daunting the process of empowering the youth to appreciate national harmony and cohesion not only in Kenya, but all over the world. It is within this backdrop that educational curricula must consist of the following facets:

The content of teaching and learning syllabi should change from being exam-oriented which gyrates within the realm of cognitive knowledge to critical and creative thinking. It implies that the outcome of critical and creative thinking is integral to the principle of national harmony and social cohesion. Similarly, this strategy provides the background of eliminating the academic stretch which obstructs any attempt of empowerment and realization of national harmony and social cohesion. This explains why education which is based on overloaded and overstretched subjects lead towards modelling individual's cognitive dimension alone, while in the contrary the national harmony and social cohesion are flouted.

In a similar vein, the teaching-learning resources necessary to empower the youth to appreciate national harmony and social cohesion are revised to articulate such synchronization and consistency. The implication is that the youth internalizes the value of national harmony and social cohesion at all the stages of their growth and development. This strategy is necessary to eliminate the prevailing skewness in the print materials resources and the flawed teaching and learning process. A reaction to empower the youth facilitates the progress of the talents and personality. This is why the principle of national harmony and social cohesion provides the basis of progress in the domain of talents and personality as articulated by Kellner (2005:4) that apt education involves bringing up and rearing young people to attain good manners, decent habits, and to cultivate the qualities of personality and thought. An interplay of a curricula founded on principles of education is necessary to generate a balanced person in terms of behaviour and character formation for universal utility.

Another strategy which is highly recommended accentuates the structure of evaluating the youth after a specified cycle of teaching and learning.

In this case, evaluation is designed within the precincts of cumulative pattern. An evaluation that is significant must support empowerment of the youth and liberate them from the current distorted anomalies and irregularities in order to achieve critical and creative rationality (Keriga & Bujra, 2009:13). Otherwise, an intrinsic explanation that diverges from national harmony and social cohesion is relatively defective.

There is also another strategy which focuses on the actual teaching and learning processes. The nature and the purpose of evaluation shapes the tactics used in education practice. An education that does not support apt empowerment of the youth to realize national harmony and social cohesion lapses to the teacher-centred methods, and encourages rote learning as the ideal means to facilitate learning experiences. The art of memorizing facts in the teaching and learning events initiates and necessitates the progress of cognitive dimension, but impedes the development of other faculties whose role is inherent in realization of national harmony and social cohesion. As such, memorization of facts is a threat to emotional stability, positive behaviours, mutual rapport, human relationships, and interactions. This is why educators and curricula planners are compelled to re-examine the issue of education practice and align it with the national principles and objectives of national harmony and social cohesion in order to enhance empowerment of the youth in the entire Kenyan society, and worldwide. It follows necessarily that the youth deserves a form of teaching and learning that is farther than cognitive purview.

In this case, diverse realms of teaching such as assignments must facilitate participative learning to prompt the critical and creative thinking of the youth in order to endorse their empowerment as a response to national harmony and social cohesion. In this framework of exhibiting national harmony and social cohesion, Adewuyi (2005:8) concur that apt education must respond to the societal needs and reflect on the realities of the world of work and production. The implication is that an enterprise of bringing up the youth in terms of cognitive capacity is good, but not sufficient when it is deprived of social cohesion.

Finally, an education that supports the youth to achieve national harmony and social cohesion responds to the question of knowledge transfer (Akinbade, 2009:4). In the contrary, these teaching and learning strategies embolden individualism which is a threat to social cohesion. An education practice that empowers the youth to escalate national harmony and social cohesion puts into consideration the essence of the professional placements and the conflict of redundancy in relation to the prospect of knowledge transfer. In this perspective, Makori (2005:16) concurs that the real test for education is not only that its holders can step into an existing job, but whether they can perceive new opportunities and initiate new departures using human and mental resources to actualize a successful conclusion. It implies that education must be practical in nature and purposively transferable as means that can solve societal issues, but not how facts can be wrought to facilitate future decisions.

### **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is logical to argue that the outcome of being a youth is to transform that absolute strength into concrete reality. This period of transition in terms of physique and mentality, society and environment, parochial and universality must be facilitated and empowered by education. An effective pedagogy emanates from the national aspirations

and the principles of education. Otherwise, pedagogy alone is not pragmatic enough without an appeal to the principles of education such as national harmony and social cohesion.

It follows necessarily that pedagogy is remarkable instrument whose realization must be parallel to the principles of education in order to divulge the innate self, strength, natural fitness, and factual being. As such, apt education which is based on the principles of education serves as a factor of change and for the youth, it serves as the ideal means to realize their potentialities. As such, such education for the youth is envisaged as pragmatic in nature and character in order to prepare them to be assets to the Kenyan community and beyond. In this globalized and knowledge-based world, every young person has the opportunity to contribute to the society while fulfilling their potentials. In this regard, education must empower, shape opportunities, and enhance constructive and pertinent settings for the youth to appreciate change in terms of egalitarianism in their way of thinking marshalled by the national harmony and social cohesion.

An empowerment of the youth through education is a means towards mental liberation from narrowmindedness to shape and determine their fate and destiny. This liberating endeavour must appreciate and respect cultural diversity. In this case, an integration of pedagogy and the principle of national harmony and social cohesion shapes the field for analytical precision, estimating future prospects, and facilitating decision-making that are favorable to both local and international community.

The empowerment of the youth using education and the principle of national harmony and social cohesion propels the youngsters to become productive, scientific-oriented, broad-minded, and ideal citizens of the society. The process of empowering the youth in the teaching and learning institutions is directed by an apt review of the syllabi, the content, teaching and learning methods, evaluation process, and the aspect of knowledge transfer. In the current institutional curricula, the substance of knowledge transfer is susceptible to the issue of excessive work load, the problem of rote learning and the methods of evaluation. As a result, this paper recommended that the curricula deserves an immediate amendment to ascertain that what the youth learn at the institutions matches the significance of national harmony and social cohesion.

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