

# UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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## **STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.**

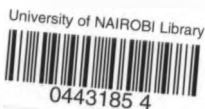
BY

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## DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for another degree in any other university.




A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Wanjira', is written over a horizontal dashed line.

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This dissertation has been submitted with my approval for examination as university supervisor.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerrishon K. Ikiara', is written over a horizontal dashed line.

**MR. IKIARA, GERRISHON K.**

# DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family with love: Linus, my husband for your support, encouragement and inspiration; our children Candy and Nova for being so understanding during the hard times.

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GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

**Structural Adjustment Programmes  
And Provision Of Higher Education  
In Sub - Saharan Africa.**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>WB</b>	-	World Bank
<b>IMF</b>	-	The International Monetary Fund
<b>SAPs</b>	-	Structural Adjustment Programmes
<b>SSA</b>	-	Sub-Saharan Africa
<b>LDCs</b>	-	Less Developed Countries
<b>GNP</b>	-	Gross National Product
<b>GDP</b>	-	Gross Domestic Product
<b>NEPAD</b>	-	New partnership For African Development
<b>DRC</b>	-	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>HELB</b>	-	Higher Education Loans Board
<b>UNESCO</b>	-	United Nations Educational scientific and Cultural Organisation

## **Abstract**

Public spending on education can be a strong instrument for equity – expanding opportunities and raising the living standards for all, and especially for the poorest. This is the rationale behind government subsidizing education for its citizens. Higher education in most countries is therefore heavily dependent on government funding.

The introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has seen a dramatic compression of per student expenditure in higher education from the 1980s. This resulted in a crisis in the higher education sector as most of the SSA countries were least prepared for these changes. Lower spending in the higher education resulted in deterioration of quality of teaching and research. Institutions of higher education also operate under adverse conditions such as overcrowding, deteriorating physical facilities and lack of resources for required materials, laboratory consumables, and maintenance.

Austerity programmes have therefore had serious implications for the region's development. This arises from the fact that illiterate or ill-educated people cannot participate effectively in the development process. Rationalization of public sector spending means increased fees and cost sharing, which many families cannot afford. This has raised uncertainty and discomfort among the SSA populace as concerns quality and access to higher education. SSA governments find it difficult to provide for human resource development to their poor populations, and yet human resources rest at the core of these nations' overall development.

This study looks at the nature of SSA economies in an attempt to find out the impact of SAPs on higher education systems. The study indicates that SSA is riddled with a myriad of economic problems that render the governments unable to subsidize higher education.

While higher education institutions in SSA have increased in number despite the introduction of SAPs in the 1980s and 1990s, the quality of education offered seems to be on the decline, with many higher education graduates in SSA missing job opportunities. Many of these institutions have been blamed for not being in tune with the job market, in that they keep on producing graduates from disciplines that are cheaper to maintain, but not from the needs of the job market.

There are calls for strong partnerships amongst all stakeholders in the education sector in order to diversify avenues for higher education provision.

# Chapter One

## INTRODUCTION

Higher education has been associated with economic growth and development. This has made governments to attach a lot of importance to higher education in many countries of the world. From 1960s, when most SSA countries became independent, to the 1980's many of these countries expanded higher education through highly subsidized and sometimes free systems.

Graduate unemployment in developing countries started to rise sharply in the 1980s and still does. This has resulted from sluggish economic growth and consequently low aggregate demand for skilled labour. African countries therefore embarked on a reorientation of economic policies, during the 1980s, in the form of stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programmes in whose formulation and implementation the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) played key roles through the introduction of reform programmes to developing countries suffering from economic crises caused by external shocks and macroeconomic mismanagement. A decade later, nearly two thirds of the World Bank's clients had instituted reforms in the context of Structural Adjustment programmes (SAPs). These included reforms that had components supporting fiscal reforms.

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There has been a dramatic compression of per student expenditure since the late 1970s. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, expenditure per student went down from an average of US \$6300 in 1980 to US\$

1,500 in 1988. Although this could be viewed as a more efficient way of using available resources, lower spending has led to deterioration of quality teaching and research. In these countries higher education institutions operate under adverse conditions: overcrowding, deteriorating physical facilities and lack of resources for non- salary expenditures like textbooks, educational materials, laboratory consumables and maintenance. (World Bank, 1994)

There are large differences in higher education across and within countries. These differences can be seen in the number of institutions a country has – both public and private. Disparities are also there in terms of each country's support arrangements as concerns higher education institutions and also the student capacities of these institutions. Different institutions have different needs, as some courses require higher per student expenditure than others. This implies that there is no simple prescription for what countries need to do so as to progress towards the long-term goals of universal access to a high quality basic education and the opportunity to acquire advanced skills. However, it is part of many government strategies to expand education opportunities – especially of secondary and tertiary levels, and also technical and vocational training – by encouraging investments by non-profit making groups and entrepreneurs.

Reform requirements differ considerably across regions and there is no single blueprint appropriate for every country. The implementation of reforms in the education sector depends on each country's special factors such as its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which determines the ability of governments to fund their higher education systems.

Despite the disparities, SSA countries have a lot in common, as most of them are currently rated among the poorest nations in the world.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

Economic crisis in SSA in early 1980s compelled many most governments to lessen interventionist economic policies, which had previously been viewed as a way of breaking the vicious cycle of poverty in many SSA households. This was effected mainly through the introduction of SAPs.

SAPs were initiated to restore growth and stability especially through the reduction of the role of the state in the economy. The higher education sector was thus put under reforms that would reduce government budgets and essentially reduce the governments' budgetary deficits. Though the reform policies aimed at improving economic rationality, they have often had far reaching and sometimes highly controversial political and social consequences. This arises from the fact that austerity programmes have been in favour of market mechanisms, where beneficiaries of the higher education, their families, communities and other stakeholders have to finance a large proportion of education expenses. This has been mainly through the introduction of cost sharing, which critics say has hampered the access of the poor to education.

Higher institutions of learning in SSA present divergent trends in their enrollments showing that expansion in these institutions did not occur at

the same pace. However, in spite of the economic constraints SSA countries experienced in the 1980s, with the introduction of SAPs, university enrollments have been steadily expanding.

In spite of the impressive growth, access to higher education still remains limited in Africa. From available Kenyan Statistics, for example, in the academic year 2001/2002, the number of university students in both public and private universities stood at 60,117. (Republic of Kenya, Statistical Abstract 2003) This represents about 0.2% of the total Kenyan population of about 30 million people. Considering that Kenya has a relatively larger university capacity than most countries in the region, the picture is therefore grim in most SSA countries. This is one of the concerns that drive African efforts to expand the comparatively small human resource base of skilled professionals. However, the rapid rise in enrollments has fostered severe problems, which contribute to the current need for higher education reforms. Among them are unbalanced financing among levels within the education sector, excessive numbers of students in lower cost humanities and social science disciplines, declining education quality and growing graduate unemployment. Efforts to expand tertiary enrollments under conditions of severe budget constraints may aggravate the shortage of specialized skills as deteriorating educational quality leaves graduates poorly prepared for professional employment.

Higher education expenditures as a proportion of education budgets were lower at the end of the 1980s than they had been a decade earlier. At the country level, yearly budgets sometimes fluctuated considerably, especially for capital budgets. (Saint, 1992) From an institutional



planning standpoint, this suggests that higher education became a rather an uncertain sector.

Financial constraints together with rising enrollments have been seen to significantly erode institutional performance from the 1980s. The symptoms of this decline include among others poor performance in university examinations by students, reduced rigor in the recruitment and promotion criteria of staff, reduced levels of research and publications output, and complaints by employers regarding the inability of university graduates to perform. (Kilemi Mwiria, 1991)

While the university budgets get constricted on the application of SAPs, the relevance of their current curricula is under growing scrutiny. With the civil service in most African nations now largely indigenized, the university priority of training of public administrators has been successfully met. The problem that emerges of graduate unemployment and a growing propensity for students to postpone graduation by remaining in the university suggest that, in addition to difficult economic conditions and low private costs of university education, it may be out of tune with today's job market.

While the IMF and the World Bank push for downsizing of the public expenditure, the capacity for the private sector in higher education is still low in SSA. Private higher education institutions are either too few or non-existent in most SSA countries. This is why most SSA countries' governments regard it as their duty to intervene in the provision of higher education.

Despite the relentless fiscal pressures that most developing countries face, few have made significant progress in the area of higher education reform. Yet, the experience of a few developing countries such as Chile indicates that it is possible to achieve a well functioning, diversified and growing higher education system even as public spending per student decreases.

The rise in enrollment figures in the higher education sector both in the SSA and in other developing countries despite cuts in expenditure in this essential sector is proof that a well functioning higher education system is possible even with austerity measures in place. However, in many SSA countries higher education standards have been seen to be compromised as funds available for higher education dwindle as a result of austerity measures. The introduction of fees charging in institutions of higher learning as a means to downsize government expenditure on education to an extent has been seen to affect access to higher education to the poor. Even as some governments assert that austerity programmes increase economic dependence on developed countries, there appears to be some missing links in the way the SSA governments implement the SAPs in their countries that do not augur well with their development policies in the education sector.

## **1.2 Objectives**

This study compares and contrasts higher education provision and performance before and after the introduction of SAPs, and analyses the effect that SAPs have had on higher education in terms of enrollment and expansion of institutions of higher learning. The study

also examines the role of governments in the provision of higher education in SSA. As provision of services by any government is determined by its economic situation, the study also looks at the nature of SSA economies and the economic crises of SSA countries and their effect on access to higher education. This study addresses the paradox that emerges, that despite the cuts in expenditure in education, the higher education sector seems to be the fastest growing education sector in SSA.

Based on the entire study, the paper makes recommendations on how to provide higher education in the context of low education budgets brought about by the implementation of SAPs.

### **1.3 Justification Of The Study**

This study can be justified at both academic and policy perspectives. Majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have experienced sharply worsening economic crises since the implementation of SAPs. The widespread nature of these crises implies that previous development policies have not been sustainable. This has a bearing on the way they had been researched and implemented. In the education sector, African governments have consequently found themselves unable to cope with their higher education demands. The IMF and World Bank have in fact by now gained an unprecedented and pervasive influence over policy making in African countries as part of conditionality to receive financial aid, and has obviously stimulated a heated debate in academic and policy making circles. This study attempts to bring to the fore the issues that have contributed to this situation.

When many SSA countries embarked on SAPs and specifically on cutbacks on social expenditure, the objective was to curb budgetary deficits that characterized many governments in SSA. However, the implementation of SAPs in higher education institutions has attracted heavy criticism. They have been accused of being a burden to the poor segment of SSA populations as well as being blamed for the declining standards in the higher education institutions. This study seeks to address the policy issues that have rendered the implementation of SAPs in the higher education an illusion in many SSA countries.

The World Bank and other research organisations have carried out notable studies on the implementation of SAPs in higher education. However, most studies have taken an economic perspective in cases of failure of SAPs in the education sector. Others have taken a social standpoint in investigating the problems that hamper the implementation of SAPs in education. As much as both approaches are important, an integrated approach to this topic is required which this study offers. This approach integrates economic and social issues that ultimately affect the successful implementation of SAPs in higher education in SSA.

The study indicates that in most Sub-Saharan African countries, at early stages of development, governments make the mistake of cutting expenditures that will eventually prove to be productive, thus achieving the illusion of adjustment. Political disruptions also, which deter many governments from implementing reforms, do not necessarily follow on fiscal reforms. These and more intervening variables lead to successful or unsuccessful adjustments.

Not many attempts have been made to make sure there is some correlation between education training and employment. This means that long term programming has not produced good results as it has been extremely difficult to forecast the situation on the job market in say five or ten years time or even longer. This study most importantly advocates for flexibility and getting the economic operators involved in the drawing up of the curricula, the idea in fact of bringing together education and training of operators, for a successful higher education system.

While this paper does not claim to offer solutions to the existing problems of higher education financing in SSA, it seeks to bring out the missing links to attaining sound policies of providing higher education in SSA. The findings in this study in this study are expected to make an important contribution in the formulation and implementation of the region's future SAPs policy in the higher education sector.

## **1.4 Literature Review**

The literature reviewed mostly focuses on SAPs in SSA and the effects they have had on the provision of higher education in the region. In addition there is literature review focusing on sub-Saharan Africa economic crisis and their efforts to respond to globalization through economic reforms.

Most of the authors cited, including The World Bank, Wandiga(1997), Okekubola(1998), Graham-Brown(1993) and Saint(1992), are in agreement that the higher education sector in Sub-Saharan Africa is in crisis. They also agree that there needs to be rethinking in terms of the

way these institutions need to be restructured. The role of government in provision of higher education has been prominently highlighted in these works. Literature reviewed acknowledges that as much as financial reforms and diversification are necessary, the government has a leading role in providing direction in terms of policy formulation that concerns higher learning institutions.

Structural Adjustment Programmes have significantly impacted on the provision of higher education, in terms of both quality and quantity. In some cases, of failure of the structural adjustment programmes in Africa has been blamed on inappropriate government policies. However, the authors cited in the readings do not acknowledge other problems that face sub-Saharan Africa countries. Civil strifes, natural calamities like flooding and drought and lack of appropriate technologies have all been contributing factors to the poor economic performance of these countries which happen to be primary commodity producers and exporters. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of such countries is therefore small. Since populations in Africa are high, the demand for higher education seems to exceed the financial capacity of the governments to meet the demand.

Shem Wandiga(1997), while looking at the Kenyan case for higher education, argues that SAPs led to a decline in the resource base for Kenyan universities, which previously relied on government funding. This saw many universities opting to offer courses that are cheap to maintain. According to Wandiga, this created a lot of course duplication, leading to provision of low quality education in the higher institutions of learning. He cites the case for the provision of Bachelor of Education (Arts) degree in five out of the six public universities. Wandiga is of the

opinion that the Commission For Higher Education should intervene to alleviate the problem of programme duplication, so as to strengthen a few of these faculties for them to offer quality education. He also argues that economic competitiveness should be let to sort out the programme duplication problem, as has been the case for private universities.

Wandiga concedes that if cost sharing was effectively managed, it would bring about positive results. To him, this would only work out if students are charged realistic market fees and those unable to pay such fees assisted through loans and bursaries. However, he admits that there has been a big problem of default in the past, as between 1974 and 1994, out of the Ksh.6 billion disbursed, only Ksh.240 million had been recovered, necessitating the introduction of direct fees recovery.

Peter Okebukola (1998) writing on the management of higher education in Nigeria, argues that SAPs have led to an increase in the number of available places in the higher institutions of learning through expansion. However, he points out that many qualified students are still unable to secure places. According to his report only less than 15% of such cases are admitted in Nigeria. Okebukola also argues that the expansion has not favoured students from rural areas, considering that 80% of African universities are urban based. To alleviate the problem, he suggests the introduction of open and distance learning which could improve access to education for majority of the population, majority of whom are from rural areas, are poor and are unable to access regular education.

Graham-Brown (1993) posits that states should provide a proper higher education and at the same time allow space and freedom for genuine and active community participation and initiative. He particularly asserts of SSA countries that as economic performance has not been

impressive since the introduction of SAPs as was in the 1970s, provision of higher education needs concerted efforts. He argues that education should contribute to and reinforce democratic practices that ultimately enhance economic performance. He observes that many states deliberately deny sections of their population educational rights and attempt to impose on an education that runs counter to the interests of the recipients. He also observes that some states are prevented from achieving their educational aspirations by poverty, recession, debt, unequal trade relationships, local and regional global conflicts, and the impact of inadequate and inappropriate international development and adjustment policies. He argues against privatisation of education and fee charging that usually result from SAPs, in pointing out that it disadvantages poor people and communities and asserts that it should be avoided unless adequate compensatory measures are in place.

Graham-Brown's sentiments are echoed by the United Nations (1994). The authors consider education to be at the core of any development process, and that in terms of economic adjustment and austerity, services for the poor have to be protected-through empowerment of individuals, mainly by providing learning opportunities. To them education is a key human right and a social responsibility.

Countries need more highly educated and skilled populations in order to effectively compete and thrive in the changing private and public sector roles. This is in response to globalisation, which has brought about rapid spread of democracy, technological innovations and the emergence of new markets.



There is no single prescription for countries to progress towards long-term goals of universal access to education and also to acquire advanced skills. In the case where huge cuts in government's expenditure result from SAPs implementation, the World Bank advocates for partnerships that are strong and productive. Governments also need to encourage investments by not-for profit groups, as education is an important tool for equity. Despite the calls for partnerships and government co-operation, sub-Saharan Africa seems to have its unique problems. With high poverty levels, these countries are also often riddled with other serious problems as civil strifes, high-level corruption, insecurity and lack of capacity to absorb the investments. The investors are therefore driven away as education sectors definitely require a lot of government co-operation. This creates a dependence relationship in that most of these countries seem to rely on charitable organisations and religious institutions to supplement governments' efforts in providing for higher education. (The World Bank: 1999: executive summary).

The World Bank (1997) takes the position that returns to education are especially high at primary school level, with universal basic literacy yielding large externalities to society. According to this report, educating girls, for instance, is linked to better health for women and their children and lowers fertility rates. This report also attributes a good part of the East Asian countries' economic success to public funding for basic education as the cornerstone of economic development. Education is given heavy subsidization benefiting the rich disproportionately and the poor only receiving a small fraction. To this end the report advocates institutional changes, in reform implementation, that would permit

private participation while focusing direct public involvement on collective goods and services. The report also argues that the government can subsidize needy groups' consumption of goods even when the returns are wholly private, as in the case of higher education, where beneficiaries enjoy increased earnings upon employment.

The report, however, cautions that organisational change alone cannot do it all. According to the report, the most important change lies in the incentive environment where users are empowered through localized information. However, given the poverty levels in sub-Saharan African countries, if there was subsidization for the poor's higher education, this implies subsidizing for the biggest proportion of higher education students. Economic situations in sub-Saharan Africa are that countries are usually having balance of payment problems. This when combined with huge international debts create situations that, such countries rely to much on I.M.F loans for development and are therefore not fully in control of what to provide for in terms of public services as they have to abide by conditionalities set by the Brettonwood Institutions. This therefore calls for countries to tailor their own reforms that suit their own situations.

Todaro, Michael P. (1981) in Economics for a Developing World. Complains that provision of higher education in LDCs is much smaller than that of the primary and secondary school levels. The proportion of enrolled students is less than three percent of all students compared with 97 percent in primary and secondary levels. He sees Universities in LDCs particularly maladjusted and out step with the real needs of development, and ultimately require reforms.

According to Todaro, the widening gap between social and private costs provides an even greater stimulus to demand for higher education than it does for lower levels. This is due to the fact most LDCs subsidize higher education heavily. This makes the demand for higher education greater and unmanageable as it soars, consequently diminishing the creation of new jobs by lack of public financial resources, which would have otherwise been invested elsewhere.

William Saint (1992) argues that there is some considerable agreement that the quality of university education is deteriorating across SSA, with the introduction of SAPs constraining the provision of higher education.

High enrollments in the higher education contributed towards unbalanced financing of education among levels within the education sector. Excessive numbers of students have also been enrolled in lower cost social science and humanities disciplines and education quality has considerably declined, as fewer resources are available per student with the SAPS in place since the 1980s. This calls for further higher education reforms.

Saint argues that efforts to expand tertiary enrollments under conditions of severe budget constraints may actually aggravate the shortage of specialized skills as deteriorating educational quality leaves graduates poorly prepared for professional employment. To support his argument, Saint asserts that higher education expenditures as a proportion of education budgets were lower at the end of the 1980s than they had been a decade earlier; before SAPS were introduced. At the country level, yearly budgets sometimes fluctuated considerably, especially for capital budgets. This suggests that higher education became a rather

an uncertain sector, with a significant erosion of institutional performance.

Another angle to Saint's assessment of education quality is that the relevance of current university curricula is under growing scrutiny. With most African nations largely indigenized, the university priority of training public administrators has been successfully met. Consequently, the emerging problem of graduate employment; in addition to difficult economic conditions and the low private costs of university education, suggest that university education may be out of tune with today's job market.

Saint stresses that despite cuts in government expenditure, universities should restore public confidence by addressing issues of relevance of education offered and also give students value for their money.

In spite of the notable expansion, Saint argues that access to university education remains relatively constrained: as the number of potential students increases faster than the capacity to absorb them. This is largely due to rapid population increase in SSA.

According to Saint, most governments provide the largest share of operating funds to their public universities. To this end, he argues that universities became heavily dependent on governments and are thus vulnerable to changes in the levels of financial support. He attributes this situation to the difficult prevailing situations in universities in SSA due to under funding, largely brought about by cuts in public expenditure in economic reforms implementation.

The way out of this problem, according to Saint, is diversifying education through use of private universities. He however laments that

presently, the private universities in Africa are expensive and do not absorb a significant portion of university enrollments, as public universities continue to offer higher education at little or no cost. Saint also advocates for institutional flexibility and adaptability, in that universities need to produce graduates who are geared towards the globalized job market.

Saint fails to address the role of government in harmonizing the private and public sectors of higher education. Government policies as concerns higher education provision in the wake of SAPs would have been addressed, so as to create a working link between private and public institutions of higher learning.

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Abagi, O and Olweya, J in the IPAR special paper series Number 3

argue that there are many identified socio-economic benefits accruing to education. They cite evidence from other countries that show that education provision accelerates development, since education inculcates and enhances knowledge and skills that shape development attitudes required for social change. The authors explain that the call for adjustment and revitalisation in education in Kenya came at a time when on one side the I.M.F and world Bank pushed for cuts in government spending and on the other hand social sector professionalism called for more resources to be allocated to the education sector so as to make it effective. The authors assert that with SAPs in place, despite the big strides in education in quantitative terms, there has been limited access to education, low completion and progression rates and also low achievement. They also complain that there has been lack of co-ordination of education and training systems between public and private institutions and also within the private

institutions where there are varying standards of education, inspite of the fact that private institutions are aimed at supplementing government's effort to expand higher education.

The authors argue that there is a strong case for decentralization and liberalization of education institutions to promote efficiency and effectiveness for SAPs to be effective. They argue that if stakeholders are involved in decision-making and running of the educational programmes, the sector would run more efficiently and effectively. They suggest that tertiary institutions and especially universities need to be more pragmatic and proactive in their programmes to help them raise funds for survival. They also require to offer only those programmes that are relevant in the job market.

While decentralization and liberalization could enhance effectiveness and efficiency with cuts in government expenditure in place, this would eventually cut off majority of people from accessing education given the high poverty levels that prevail in sub-Saharan Africa. Abagi and Olweya argue that further, due to the high unemployment rates of university graduates, not much incentive seem to be in place to ensure that the institutions of higher learning continue to run in the appropriate capacities if the student would spend funds in their education and end up jobless. This perspective to the cost sharing aspect of refunds poses a problem as to how potential students of higher education perceive the education reforms. This is to imply that a high level integration of government efforts (which is hampered by poor economic performance in Africa), and investors in various fields need to come up with a coherent policy package that caters for training that is job market oriented. The government has a crucial role to play in the harmonisation

of education standards in the private institutions of higher learning to reduce the existing disparities.

What the authors do not seem to acknowledge is the fact that for the government to overhaul education systems to suit what there is in the job markets requires huge sums of capital. If the traditional humanities oriented courses in most universities were to be transformed into science-oriented courses, installation of the facilities would require large amounts of money. This is difficult for most African countries, as their economies do not perform well.

Robert Piccioto, in Lesson of Fiscal Adjustment's foreword posits that fiscal reform has been a crucial component of the World Bank lending. He cites a report of the bank's operations Evaluation Departments (OED)-1997. Piccioto says that according to that report, fiscal adjustments were attained more readily through raising revenue than through cutting public spending and that fiscal difficulties were as a result of economic mismanagement and not necessarily trade shocks or external indebtedness.

The report further observes that at the early stages of adjustment, governments make the mistake of cutting expenditures that eventually prove to be productive. This makes the countries to have an illusion of the adjustments. The report however does not acknowledge the fact, in most instances when countries are in deep problems of balance of payments, technical experts from the Brettonwood institutions are the ones who suggest and sometimes sort of impose the steps to be taken in such situations. The governments in question therefore do not have autonomy in implementing these adjustments. Failure to observe those

procedures would mean inability to secure loans from the I.M.F. and World Bank, which the countries in question badly require.

The report recommended that reforms explicitly consider the state's role. Also there is need to have the appropriate mix of public and private service provision in public expenditure reform where poverty alleviation and equity are considered in the reform programmes.

Blair, R.D.D. in his article, *Financing Higher Education in Africa* in Shaabani, J (ed) 1997, quotes the UNESCO policy paper and defends it's arguments of urging the governments to see expenditure on higher education as a long term national investment for economic competitiveness. He however points out that it is unrealistic to expect African governments to improve higher education funding in real terms. Considering the fact that the implementation of SAPs has necessitated cuts in public spending including that of funding universities. He says that the funding crisis is likely to be exacerbated by the strong evidence that priority for education expenditure should be at the primary and secondary levels rather than at university level in developing countries, as greater social returns and economic growth accrue from such expenditure. In addition, there is considerable evidence that expenditure at lower levels of education (for example polytechnics and other technical institutions) can play a bigger dividend nationally than expenditure at university level.

Blair concludes that the emerging consensus both from within and without Africa, seem to be that there are four broad areas of reform that can achieve desired results without massively increased public funding.



These are:

- a) Development of a variety amongst institutions within the higher education sector including establishing private institutions,
- b) Encouraging public institutions to diversify their sources of funding including cost recovery or cost sharing,
- c) Redefining the role of government in higher education, and linking state expenditure to performance measures, and
- d) Establishing policies that give priority to the creation of quality and greater equity.

Higher education provision means increasing the citizens' competitiveness in the labour market. A country that has a sound higher education policy stands to gain leverage in human resource development and ultimately the global job market.

Blair, (1992) argues that most universities are in period of continuing crisis accentuated by the seemingly insoluble dilemma: They are expected to accept ever-increasing enrollments although their governments are decreasingly able to finance them. The introduction of SAPs in the 1980s in most African countries has led to decreases in levels of finances for the universities.

Inadequately financed, African universities suffer from poor staff morale and steady loss of staff to the private sector or to universities in other countries. Common problems are poor maintenance of buildings, grounds and equipment, outdated and deteriorating library resources, insufficient management, severe disruptions through student action and severed relationships with their governments and especially on financial matters. To alleviate this problem, Blair calls for diversification and

income generation as part of an overall strategy to revitalize African higher education.

Blair reports on a survey commissioned by the Africa Technical Department of the World Bank to assess the progress towards financial diversification between 1988 and 1992, which showed little progress. This poses a problem as with economic reforms, Blair finds the state incapable of bearing the full cost of funding public universities and cannot be expected to do so. To this end Blair advocates that all stakeholders acknowledge this fact as a step toward the solution. To Blair, the thriving private universities in the World and even in Africa reveal that government dependence is not the only way to finance a university.

According to Blair it is naive to expect much improvement in the financial condition of universities until there is a significant improvement of economies of the countries in which they are situated. He further argues that the happenings in African universities from the early 1990s demonstrate that it is necessary for national economies to be reformed before meaningful improvement in the university finances can be achieved. Blair finds the essential pre-requisite for progress towards financial stability for the universities as a compact between the state and each university, which places the state's funding on a rational and predictable basis.

The World Bank (2000), while writing on higher education in developing countries argues that in the past decades, developing countries have witnessed a rapid expansion of higher education. Also evident is the simultaneous differentiation of higher education institutions and the

increasing importance of knowledge of social and economic development.

The setback to this progress has been under-funding as result of reduced public expenditure as a means to economic reforms. This has made most higher education institutions suffer severe deficiencies in areas of high quality faculty, committed and well prepared student and sufficient resources. Teaching methods are also outmoded. In these institutions, rote learning is common, with instructors doing little more in the classrooms than copying their notes onto a blackboard. The students, who are frequently unable to afford a textbook, must transcribe the notes onto a notebook, and those students who regurgitate a credible portion of their rote memory achieve examination success. These passive approaches to teaching have little value in a world where creativity and flexibility are a necessity. Other appalling conditions in these institutions are overcrowded classes, inadequate library and laboratory facilities, distracting living conditions and insufficient services to the students.

SAPs have had an impact on all the sectors of education. There are less funds devoted to the basic and secondary school levels of education. This could result in poor basic and secondary education. Combined with a lack of selection in the education system, it would leave students to start their studies academically unprepared for higher education and consequently perform poorly in university examinations.

Capital and operating budgets are at times poorly coordinated. Often, major new facilities are built but then are left with no funds for operation and maintenance. The developing world is hence littered with deteriorating buildings, inadequate libraries, and computer laboratories

that are rarely open, and scientific equipment that cannot be used for want of supplies and parts. This is a reflection of the impact of reduced public spending of the universities.

## 1.5 Conceptual Framework

Literature on the economic theory of economic development point to the fact that economic development is not an inevitable process but must be created and energetically advanced. It is now widely held that economic development can be induced or even imposed, the goals being determined by governments who can become responsible for the coordination and planning measures deemed necessary to attain them. How then does framework address the issue of higher education under the pressure of SAPs provision in SSA?

The conceptual framework is based on the growing body of literature on the economic theory, which support argument that the development process must aim at reducing absolute poverty and inequality and achieving full realization of the human potential, while improving the social welfare of the poorest segment of the population. (Pourgerami: 1991)

How would SAPs then enhance the development of higher education in SSA? This framework looks at development as a process of long term growth of per capita real income plus a "sustained improvement in the social system". The argument advanced here is that the development process requires institutional reforms and genuine mass participation in the decision making process in an effort to eliminate absolute poverty and inequality, and that autocracy is not required for economic growth.

The introduction of SAPs in many SSA countries required governments to reduce their public expenditures and increase private participation. In the case for higher education, beneficiaries were expected to participate through cost –sharing. On the other hand beneficiaries of higher education also were to receive the benefits of having a wider range of choices of courses offered. This kind of an arrangement ensures equity and quality of opportunity. If education was provided under market conditions, only those who could afford to pay tuition fees could enroll. Not only would there be under investment from the social point of view, but income inequalities would be preserved from one generation to another since education itself is a determinant of life time income.

On the other hand, if all individuals had access to private capital markets, then those who could not afford to pay tuition fees could borrow. If the private rate of return to investments in education was higher than the cost of borrowing, it would still be a profitable private investment. Many imperfections can be found in capital markets, however. Individual students cannot normally borrow to finance their education without providing collateral, and investment in education is risky and uncertain. Therefore governments in many countries provide loans or loan guarantees to help students finance their education.

Proponents of this framework propose that economic development requires a “balance of leverage” among economic and political units, complemented by higher degrees of efficiency in production of output and allocation of resources. They therefore argue for improvements in institutional arrangements to preserve the “balance of leverage”. An education system that gives access to many of a country’s citizens can offer this kind of balance.

The process of development, according to this framework, must improve the standard of living, individual self-esteem and freedom to choose for the entire population. In this respect economic development refers to a process of generating equal opportunities to prosper for all members. It consists of a long-term growth of the per capita real income plus a continuous improvement in the distribution of income and economic goods. Investment in human capital via improvement in education (formal and technical) result in higher levels of labour productivity and income. (Todaro: 1989) The introduction of SAPs in the higher education sector aims at improving its quality and access. This would definitely enhance equity to the population with more educational opportunities in higher learning institutions for citizens in place.

Another perspective of this conceptual framework looks at improvement in distribution of income and availability of economic goods as enabling the poorest segments of the population to increase their purchasing power and consumption. In view of this, distribution policies require private incentives and public policies to alter factor price distortions modify the size distribution of income and assets and improve the access to education and its associated income earning opportunities. Education being an economic good that is essential to an individual's capacity to advance financially is therefore worth considering in terms of its provision.

Adjustment definitely affects the access to higher education by the largest segment of the population in SSA. According to this framework growth and equality need not be incompatible objectives. A growth – plus-trickle- down strategy improves the quality of human life for the largest segment of the population. Well-managed SAPs would generate

more opportunities for citizens in the higher education institutions, enhancing growth and equality in SSA.

## **1.6 Hypotheses**

- (a) Structural Adjustment Programmes have led to the contraction of higher education sector in SSA.
- (b) Government financing facilitated the growth of higher education.
- (c) Structural Adjustment Programmes have led to less access to higher education by the poor in SSA.
- (d) Structural Adjustment programmes have negatively affected the quality of higher education in Sub-Sahara Africa.

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

The study is primarily based on library research. Extensive use has been made of relevant literature and statistics as available sources of information for the study. The data was mainly gathered from: The World Bank Library, Research papers by the African Economic Research Consortium Nairobi, the Ministry of Planning and National Development, The Ministry of Education library, and The institute of Policy Analysis, the Commission for Higher Education and Research Papers. Relevant journals and magazines were also used. Interviews were also conducted on Commission for Higher Education personnel. Some figures in the tables were manually calculated by the researcher using a pocket calculator.

# Chapter Two

## THE NATURE OF SSA ECONOMIES AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

### 2.1 Introduction

Sub Saharan Africa enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century accounting for many of the world's poorest countries. The region's average per capita income was by 2000 lower than at the end of the 1960s. Incomes, assets and access to essential services are unequally distributed. The region also contains a growing share of the worlds' absolute poor, who have little power to influence the allocation of resources. Many development problems have become largely confined to Africa. These include declining primary school enrollments, high child mortality and endemic diseases – including malaria and HIV/AIDS – that impose cost on Africa at least twice those in any developing region. Africa's place in the global economy has been eroded, with declining export shares in traditional primary products, little diversification into new lines of business, and massive capital flight and loss of skills to other regions. (World Bank, 2000)

The countries of SSA are small, poor and with open economies. A major share of the African population lives and works in the rural sector where production, is severely affected by an array of human, physical, infrastructural and technological constraints, and is largely in the primary sector. The production base is narrow in terms of both size and



the range of goods produced. Intra – regional trade remains insignificant.

Commercial activities are considerably dependent on imported factor inputs, and exports are based on only a few, mainly primary export commodities. Savings are limited and a continuous inflow of external financial resources is required to create domestic absorption, including a low rate of capital formation. SSA economies are also seriously fragmented as well as inflexible and dualistic in nature.

Since 1980s, SSA countries have undertaken reforms in an attempt to revive their ailing economies in the short and long term. Policy statements focused on endorsing different pricing and market forces and to the responsibilities of the public sector agencies. This however, differed considerably from country to country. The structural adjustment measures were designed to address a wide range of obstacles to growth. The measures included reduction of the government's role in commercial and productive activities and increased private sector involvement in development. The provision of higher education was not spared in this operation, which required governments to spend less on their education budgets.

## **2.2 The Debt Problem And Higher Education In SSA**

Nowhere were the problems of debt and recession more acute than Africa south of the Sahara. The countries of this region displayed on

most indicators a steadily worsening economic and development picture through the 1980's.

It is notable that the period just after the independence of most SSA countries saw an inflow of foreign aid, meant to stimulate growth and development in the region. As happened in western World after the Second World War, SSA was expected to industrialize through this aid. SSA countries took too long to stand on their feet.

Africa entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the midst of intense debate on aid and dependence and debt relief, two closely related issues. Past borrowing, accumulated into a huge stock of debt, discourages private investments and circumscribes the effectiveness of current and future aid. On the other hand most African countries will continue to need significant aid to achieve the International Development Goals by the year 2015. The composition of aid flows has been shifting towards humanitarian assistance and peace building from project assistance and structural adjustment. (World Bank: 2000: 235-236) The World Bank reckons that external debts of non-oil exporting countries of SSA stood at 106% of their GDP as at 1997.

Africa remains the world's most aid dependent and indebted region. Concessional assistance is essential if Africa is to grow rapidly while also increasing consumption to reduce poverty. However, aid, particularly when delivered in a weak institutional environment by large numbers of donors with fragmented projects and requirements, can weaken institutional capacity and undermine accountability. High debt and debt service add to the problem, deterring private investments and absorbing core budget resources, making governments ever more "cash

poor” but “project rich” with a development agenda increasingly perceived as being shaped by donors. Implications of rising indebtedness of SSA countries include considerable loss or compromise in the independence of running a country’s economy, rising debt-servicing charges, which in turn reduce available resources for development; increased pressure on balance –of – payments position and economic instabilities.

The higher education sector in Africa to a large extent depends on donor funding in areas such as research, technological advancement, and capital installations. This has increased SSA countries aid dependence on the western world.

The World Bank and the IMF together with other multilateral and bilateral donors could not continue providing for aid ceaselessly hence the introduction of structural adjustment lending and conditionalities.

The policy conditionality associated with most of these loans had implications that public sector recurrent and capital spending was to be constrained to reduce budget deficits. Wage restraints were required of public services. Reductions in public subsidies and the recovery of costs were encouraged. As the provision of higher education was a domain of many SSA governments the conditionalities had far reaching effects in the sector, which primarily relied on government funding.

Higher education institutions are not spared either. The introduction of SAPs allowed donor agencies to suggest which areas of the education system needed to be reformed. The balance shifted in favour of adjustment loans targeted on particular sectors. Donors were generally unwilling to commit themselves in recurrent support since it seems to

represent a potentially open ended commitment with a lower level of accountability than does capital and project aid. Where the basic costs of financing education are capable of domestic financing, this is probably a sound policy. In low-income countries, especially those with high population growth rates, low economic growth, and considerable unsatisfied demand for education amongst the poorest groups, the situation is far more complex. Excessive emphasis on capital projects had sometimes built up recurrent burdens that could not be sustainable, compromising the effectiveness of assistance that was given. Project aid with a very large capital element may therefore exacerbate deficits in recurrent finance, which will not resolve themselves. With the above measures in place in the areas of recurrent expenditure, public higher educational institutions were left quite underfunded.

## **2.3 Widespread Poverty In SSA And Its Effects On Higher Education**

Due to the fore mentioned reasons, the economic performance in many SSA countries has not been impressive. Between 1965 and 1973, SSA enjoyed a 5.9 percent average annual growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This rate fell to 2.7 percent between 1973 and 1980, a period that was associated with two major global oil shocks. The worst performance was in the 1980-1986 period when the region recorded a dismal growth rate of 0.3 percent. The economic decline just ended in the late 1990s in most countries of SSA.

Growth in average annual GNP per capita, which was 3 percent in the 1965-73 period, became negative in the 1980-1986 period, with a growth rate of -4.4 percent being recorded in 1987. The decline period coincides with the period when most SSA countries embarked on SAPs. (Saitoti, G: 2002)

The stagnation or decline in GDP growth rates is partly as a result of low national savings. Not many African countries have been able to achieve saving rates high enough to facilitate economic growth. Other than declining growth rate in GDP and gross domestic savings, the poor state of macro economic environment in Africa has been worsened by an extremely high public debt. Although Africa's public debt in absolute terms is not so high when compared to the public debt of developed countries, such as the United States of America, Africa's capacity to service her external and internal debts is constrained by its low GDP.

The external debt for the region stood at US \$ 5.4 billion in 1970 and rose to US \$ 112 billion by 1988, an average annual increase of about 74%. (Saitoti, G: 2002) The effects of the huge debts are reflected in the slow economic growth; and consequently the ability of governments to offer quality services to their people.

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Africa development challenges go deeper than low income, falling trade shares, low savings and slow growth. They also include high inequality, uneven access to resources, social exclusion and insecurity. Income inequality is as high as in Latin America, making Africa's poor the poorest in the world. More than 40 percent of Africa's 600 million live below the internationally recognized poverty line of below \$1 a day, with incomes averaging just about \$0.65 a day in purchasing power parity

terms. The number of poor people has grown relentlessly causing Africa's share of the world's absolute poor to increase from 25 to 30 percent in the 1990's. (Saitoti, G: 2002). The introduction of SAPs in the region further aggravated the situation reducing the ability of states to offer a good quality higher education. Majority of citizens are too poor to afford such services.

Many people in SSA lack the capabilities including health status, education and access to basic infrastructure –needed to benefit from and contribute to economic growth. Health and life expectancy indicators in Africa are adverse, even taking into account the low incomes. In many countries 200 out of 1000 children die before the age of five. (World Bank: 2000) Large parts of the population are locked in a vicious poverty cycle and are progressively less able to escape because children lack the basic capabilities to participate in a productive economy and to contribute to growth. For the large portions of the poor, introduction of cost sharing and fees payments arising from cuts in public expenditure would just aggravate the situation as they can not meet these expenses. Access to higher education would prove to be an elusive goal for the poor; who are unable even to meet their basic necessities.

More than 250 million Africans lack access to safe water, more than 200 million have no access to health services and more than 140 million youth are illiterate. Disparities in social spending between poor African countries and rich industrial countries are massive. Education spending in poor African countries averages less than \$ 50 a year- compared with more than \$ 11,000 in France and the United States. However, this is a big proportion of the overall budget as most SSA countries are poor. For

instance, in 1993 public investment in education in SSA averaged 3.8% of GDP, compared with 2.7% in Asia and 2.8 in Latin America. In education therefore, the main issue is the efficiency of resource use, as spending tends to account for a larger share of GDP in the poorest countries than in the richer ones. More generally, the youth of most African populations means that spending on education should probably account for a larger proportion of GDP than in many higher income countries. (World Bank: 2000)

## **2.4 Human Resources In SSA**

Africa has extremely low levels of human capital formation, as measured by levels of literacy and school enrollment. In several social indicators- life expectancy, secondary school enrollment, infant mortality and population per physician –Africa has only in the 1990s reached the corresponding Asian levels. SSA was still far worse off than Asia in 1965 with respect to school enrollment and adult literacy, which were 68 percent and 50% in SSA but 80 percent and 35 percent in Asia. A considerable investment was made in the social sector by many SSA countries. Despite the enormous efforts made in the education and the quite significant increase in enrollment at higher levels, the number of students enrolled after almost two decades of efforts remains far below the figures of other developing countries. (Mkandawire and Soludo: 1999: 3)

From the table below it is clear that the average annual growth rates for higher education enrollment rose sharply between 1960 and 1980 but declined from the 1980s. A further decline was registered between 1985

and 1990. This enrollment slump coincides with the introduction of SAPs. Poor economic growth of SSA countries was also recorded during the same period. Zimbabwe's increase in enrollments from 1980 to 1985 could be attributed to the fact that Zimbabwe had just attained its political independence and was hence embarking on its initial post independence education expansion programmes.

**Table 1**  
**Higher education enrollment in selected African countries.1960-1990**

	Total (thousands)					Average annual growth(%)		
	1960	1970	1980	1985	1990	1960-1980	1980-1985	1985-1990
Cote d'Ivoire	0.3	4.4	19.6	20.5	24.2	23.2	0.8	3.4
Ethiopia	0.9	4.5	14.4	27.3	34.1	14.9	13.7	4.5
Ghana	1.5	5.4	15.5	17.0	19.0	12.4	1.9	2.2
Kenya	1.0	7.8	13	21.8	33.0	13.7	10.9	8.7
Senegal	1.4	5.0	13.6	13.4	19.0	10.4	-0.4	7.3
Sudan	4.0	14.3	28.8	37.4	75.0	10.4	5.4	15.0
Tanzania	-	2.0	4.1	4.9	5.3	-	3.5	1.6
Togo	-	0.9	4.8	5.5	8.0	-	3.0	7.8
Zimbabwe	0.3	5.0	8.3	30.8	49.4	18.1	29.9	9.9

Source: Source: Mkandawire and Soludo (1999).

Africa's capacity for rapid industrial development, the extremely low levels of development of technical and scientific personnel do not



enhance structural transformation, and that the current levels of enrollment fall far short of what Africa needs.

In reform implementation it has been observed that economic growth mainly depends on the education and health status of the populace. On the other hand a good fiscal policy has its roots in small budget deficits and a low ratio of government consumption to Gross Domestic product.

Prior to adjustment, the ratio of government consumption to GDP in Africa had remained quite high. Government consumption began to rise in the early 1960s and reached its peak of about 20% in the mid- 1980s, which was quite high in relation to the 5 percent to 6 percent in other regions of the world. This high government expenditure was expected as most African governments saw themselves as the agents of development through the provision of social services, infrastructure and direct participation in production through state owned enterprises. This has been reversed by the implementation of economic reforms in the 1980s and 1990s.

A major implication of these reforms has been a fall in government expenditure as a percentage of GDP in most countries. A World Bank survey details that in African countries that were implementing economic reforms, education expenditure as a percentage of GDP fell from 14.8% in 1980 to 12% in 1986. In Zambia the education budget fell from 13.4% in 1985 to 9.1% in 1992 as a percentage of the total government budget. The average share of government budgets in SSA allocated to the education sector increased slightly from 16.3% to 16.6% between 1970 and 1980 but declined to 15.2% in the 1990s. Cote D'Ivoire, Benin, Kenya, Senegal, and Ghana provide most support to

education, which averages 25% to 41% of the total budget.

Government's commitment to education is reflected in education expenditures as a proportion of GNP. On average this share increased from 3.4% in 1970 to 4.3% in 1980 but fell to 4.0% by 1988. (Saint, 1992). This could be explained by the fact that GNP was falling at the same time thus the negative trend.

To curtail expenditure governments have introduced cost sharing to ensure that beneficiaries of the government services would have to pay for part of the cost. Although the move is perhaps inevitable, there is the question of its effect on groups who may not be able to pay the required share of the cost. Cost sharing in areas such as education could make it difficult for the poor to uplift their standard of living. Consequently the gap between the rich and the poor would continue to widen.

The main elements of human resource development are basic (primary and secondary) education, mass literacy and adult education, higher education and specialized manpower training. Human resource mobilization concerns manpower utilization and motivation, community organization and motivation for commitment and development action. Although Africa's efforts in human resource development are impressive, the problem of access still remains serious. Not all those who aspire to attain higher education get the opportunity to do so.

However, despite cuts in government expenditure, African universities have increased their number of graduates over time. In 1970, African universities produced only 17,000 graduates and generated 83,000 graduates in 1987. This output slowed significantly to 6.7% in the 1980s although the 1970s saw a pace of 15.4%. Enrollment growth was 9.6%

annually during the 1980-1989 period, prompting universities to be less efficient as producers of graduates. (Saint, 1992) Postgraduate output has been very low, possibly due to the universities' primary mission to date having been undergraduate production. In this respect quantity has quite often substituted quality.

During the 1990s, there has been widespread abandonment of interventionist policies and an embrace of donor supported SAPs, believed to enhance faster economic growth and development. In the southern region of Africa, hopes of development are high. South Africa's peaceful transition and the subsequent reintegration into both global and regional economies has generated hopes of positive spillovers for its neighbors of more rapid domestic economic growth and created potential for regional economic integration initiatives to work. This emanates from the fact that South Africa is far ahead of other SSA countries in terms of economic growth and development, of which higher education provision is a key factor.

Cross-country studies reveal that there are also other underlying factors that hamper the growth of GDP. They include political instabilities and civil wars. For many African economies, the macro economic and human costs of war have been greater than those of any other exogenous shock. A World Bank study indicates that 21 out of the 53 African states have experienced war as one of the largest factors in suppressing economic growth, only comparable to the effects of decline in the terms of trade. However, there have also been mistakes in economic policies in African governments whereby adequate attention has not been given to the human dimension. The 1980 World

Development Report stressed that improvement in health and education were important both in their own right and in stimulating economic growth. The report regards these service sectors as important in reducing poverty levels and is consistent with economic growth.

## Chapter Three

# **GOVERNMENTS' ROLE IN THE PROVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

### 3.1 Introduction

As pointed earlier in the first chapter of this dissertation, the role of higher education in development in any nation cannot be disputed. Since education has been pinpointed as a key element in the development process, a large proportion of government expenditure has been devoted to it. While education in SSA has rapidly expanded, putting additional strain on the public purse, other social sectors have grown in importance and are now competing for public funds. Because of rising costs of education as a function of high enrollment and inflation, SSA countries have had to seek better ways of organizing their educational systems, especially at higher levels, in order to maximize benefits and minimize costs. Reforms in education have been a sure way towards this end.

The crises of higher education, especially in the public sector are stimulating change to the extent that objectives and modalities of government intervention in higher education are set in order to ensure a more efficient use of public resources. Rather than direct controls, the government's role has been moving towards providing an enabling policy environment for both public and private higher education institutions and that of using leverage of public funding to stimulate these institutions to meet national training and research needs.

Such moves have been necessitated by the application of SAPs by SSA governments; where the individual beneficiaries of education also participate in meeting their costs of higher education.

### **3.2 Why Reform Higher Education?**

Since the implementation of SAPs in the 1980s, governments have devoted less funds for the higher education sector in SSA, as a way of reducing budgetary deficits.

Saint, (1992) refers to surveys that show that very difficult conditions prevail among African universities. They are inadequately financed, suffer from poor staff morale, and experience steady staff losses to the private sector or to universities in other countries, which will keep on increasing as new world markets crop up. Building estates and equipment are poorly maintained, library resources are outdated and students confront both universities and government authorities. The relationship between university and government as regards financing is therefore strained.

Africa requires both highly trained people and top quality research in order to be able to formulate policies, plan the programmes and implement projects that are essential to the economic growth and development. Preparing individuals for positions of responsibility –in government, in business, and in the professions - is a central role of the continent's universities, supporting these individuals in their work- with research, advice and consultancy - another equally important role. Reforms therefore are inevitable if SSA countries aspire to have

organized and working institution of higher learning – which stress the involvement of all stakeholders in provision of education.

Of the three principal outputs of higher education – high level manpower, knowledge and innovation (research), and development advisory services- Sub-Saharan Africa generally produces too much of the first and not enough of the second and third. Austerity measures combined with expansion of enrollment have led to universities devoting their resources in the less expensive humanities and social sciences: and have less funds for the more expensive scientific and technical based courses. The proportion of scientific, technical and professional positions filled by expatriates therefore remains substantial in many countries, especially in the education sector. Nevertheless, short to medium term over production of high-level manpower - at least of requisite quality is suggested by the growing problems of unemployment and underemployment among graduates. Whereas there is over production of graduates in many African countries, an excess demand for graduates still exists in some fields of study. These include specific scientific and engineering fields, which focused expansion of capacity in higher education will often be required.

Cuts in government expenditure have adversely affected universities' capacity for research with less funds devoted to research. A study of 18 African countries showed that they spent an average of 8.5% of recurrent expenditure in 1985 on books, research, and library acquisitions. This figure went down to 3% on half of these countries five years later on the same items. (Saint: 1992: 10) Stagnation or outright decline in research output and in the capacity to produce future

researchers jeopardizes Africa's long run ability to take advantage of the worldwide advance in science and technology. The training of Africa PHD holders in foreign institutions testifies the inability of the continent to do it locally as funds dwindle due to austerity measures. The continent needs to increase its capacity to absorb and use new knowledge, and that capacity is in large measure developed through indigenous postgraduate teaching and researching programmes. For example, advances in genetic engineering and other areas of biotechnology are potentially applicable to problems of plant and animal health in Africa; the impact on production of food crops and on export agriculture could be sizeable. The argument can be extended to human health and even industrial process. However this is curtailed in majority of African universities as fewer funds are devoted to higher education since the introduction of SAPs.

The World Bank acknowledges that even in their present depressed and fragile state, Universities in Africa represent a nation's largest reservoir of expert knowledge and cosmopolitan experience. There is continued demand for expatriate technical assistance from both public and private sector organizations. This suggests that there are still tasks requiring the highest levels of professional experience. Yet, with few exceptions, African universities do not allocate much time and effort to direct service activities, except for special training programmes. This work could be done by African University staff, who in the process would enrich their own research and teaching by gaining more thorough grounding in present-day African realities. (The World Bank, 1998: 73)



Responsibility for different types of higher education is often fragmented among government departments. The World Bank in *Higher education: The lessons of experience* (1994), advocates for a coherent policy framework. The report argues that national research priorities and funding at times are determined by bodies that do not have responsibility for higher education and human resource development. The training of private higher education institutions may also not be subject to any government supervision and have an oversight of the systems and its linkages to primary and secondary education to other economic sectors. Whether public or private, universities and other higher education institutions all have different but related training reasons. With SAPs in place, the number of stakeholders in the provision of higher education has increased. For this reason, governments have a role of providing a cohesive framework to enable the training needs to become a reality.

Higher education provision requires some institutional autonomy. Promotion of the understanding that there should be general disengagement from government, particularly in matters known in the university world as best kept in the hands of academic staff is a priority. Many SSA governments are trying to achieve this through the establishment of bodies, which cater for higher education. In Kenya for example, the Commission for Higher Education deals with matters pertaining to higher education including accrediting of private universities. The Commission also carries out an inspection annually in relation to student profiles, staff profiles, compliance of space norms, contact hours norms and also the duration and number of programmes at different levels.

To counter the adverse effects of SAPs on higher education in Ghana, the government embarked on an exhaustive appraisal of the role and mission of higher education. It also launched reforms to rationalize the network of institutions, improve the quality of teaching and secure financial viability of the systems. In Uganda, a National council on Higher education was set up to strengthen planning. The council is designed to operate as a consultative body, working in close collaboration with an inter-ministerial capacity-building secretariat that prepares and plans for human resource development. Members are drawn from universities, colleges and private enterprises. Its functions include projects enrollments, costs, financial requirements, advise external aid and lending agencies on investment needs, register and accredit instructions, sanction new programmes, coordinate admission policies and prepare a strategy for reforming the financial and management of public higher education.

### **3.3 Government – Universities Relationship**

The World Bank estimates that African governments provide for 85 percent or more of operating funds to most Universities in Africa.(Saint, 1992) Universities thus are heavily dependent on governments for their continued operation and institutional stability, and are vulnerable to changes in the levels of financial support. As real levels of budgetary assistance fell steadily during the 1980's, on advent of SAPs, universities found it increasingly difficult to pursue a coherent planning process. In some countries, governments moved away from an earlier practice of multi-year commitment to university funding. In Sierra Leone, for example, policies in higher education have been directed towards a

more functional approach stressing income-generating projects. (Elliot, Jessie: 1994). In others, they proved unable to deliver on estimated budgets. In 1990-1991 for example, the University of Zambia received 79 percent of its funding request, while University of Ghana obtained 53 percent and Makerere 34 percent. (Saint. W: 1992).

Governments also control policy environment for higher education. They set access policy, whether it be open access as in Francophone countries, whether limited access as in Tanzania or expanded access as in Kenya. *Open access* refers to the situation whereby the government in question does not apply many restrictions in the students' bid to join universities. *Limited access* is the situation whereby the government in question contracts the places available in universities and access to the institutions is just granted to a few. *Expanded access* refers to the situation where governments deliberately expand tertiary institutions including accrediting private ones so that as many university student aspirants as possible gain access to the universities.

They also control the sources and mechanism of finance. The setback to this kind of control is that it does not encourage universities to diversify their financial sources. When individual universities seek their own funds, which the state appropriates in turn, those who garner more resources do not have a lot of morale to continue seeking other avenues of raising funds. This is due to the fact that the benefits of fund seeking do not directly benefit the sourcing universities.

Governments also determine the universities' administrative flexibility to reallocate budgets internally in order to provide incentives or put efficiency savings to other uses. Sometimes budget allocations for

higher education institutions are based on negotiations or ad hoc decision-making. Here argumentation skills and political connections are often more dominant than rational planning criteria. Budgets are also frequently adjusted by percentage increments linked to inflation or general availability and rarely through predictable processes based on enrollments or strategic planning. This has created considerable variations from year to year. Some Universities could be funded on monthly basis. This makes management inefficient as it encourages routine maintenance postponements and precludes the possibility of bulk purchase of frequently used materials. (Saint, William 1992)

Reforms in the education sector advocate for more autonomy in the universities to enable them to design their own course of development. Successful implementation of higher education reforms has been shown to depend on a mode of governance that emphasizes:

- A coherent policy framework,
- Reliance on incentives and market oriented instruments to implement policies, and
- Increased management autonomy for public institutions.

(The World Bank, 1994)

### **3.4 Alternatives To Government Funding In Higher Education**

The World Bank is of the opinion that through subsidization of higher education and university research, government can actually affect the supply of graduates to the labour market and give direction to research and training, thus,

“Through scholarships, student loans and resource allocation, governments can control the size and distribution of students’ intake. Enrollments are often too determined by fixed- coefficient labour requirements forecasting. However, long periods of forecasting in labour markets lead to big errors, as it doesn’t take into account the impact of technological changes on demands for skills”. (The World Bank, 1994)

For students to make rational choices, they need good information on the costs and quality of courses offered at different institutions and also on the labour market opportunities for graduates of different courses. Government can provide this information. They can also accredit institutions and establish procedures for recognizing degrees, diplomas and certificates themselves or allow private accrediting agencies and professional associations to perform this function. As higher education systems increase in size and complexity, responsibilities for quality assurance are best devolved into institutional or professional organizational that operate independently of government.

In implementing viable austerity programmes, public funding could be transferred from government to universities in ways that support institutional autonomy. For instance, institutions can be granted access to the allocated resources, albeit limited, when they actually need them and also are allowed to draw up their own budgets. This is possible if operating funds are received in the form of block grants that allow the transfer of funds from one expenditure to the other. Institutions require this flexibility so as to cross subsidize programmes, launch new initiatives and provide resources to academic units to strengthen their programmes.

Private universities are and have been a potential way of diversifying the financial base of national higher education systems, with less government funds devoted to higher education as a result of SAPs implementation. Private universities offer an alternative for expanding higher education without adding significantly to government costs. However, at present, private universities are few within Africa with most of them concentrated in Kenya and Zaire. Other countries with private Universities include Liberia, Niger, Madagascar, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe. However, private higher education in Africa is expensive to provide and costly to attend.

African governments have allowed private higher education with the belief that this can deflect student demand away from public institutions due to the growing financial pressures that arise from cuts in government expenditure and the higher demand for higher education. However, they do not absorb a significant portion of University enrollments in Africa. As long as the governments at little or no cost provide public higher education to the individual, and private education remains entirely self-supporting, private universities will continue to play a very minor role.

With continued cuts in government spending in SSA countries, per capita spending on higher education has plummeted in absolute terms, as earlier discussed in chapter 3.3 (Governments-universities relationship).

Payment of fees is one of the most frequently mentioned alternative sources of higher education financing. Arguments advanced for fees

payment as outlined by the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in Paris (5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October 1988), include:

- a) The needs for which higher education must satisfy are numerous, and it is difficult for governments to find all resources needed to meet them,
- b) Higher education offers graduates appreciable benefits of various kinds (financial, social and cultural),
- c) Payment of fees increases motivation,
- d) Cost consciousness leads to a heightened awareness of the need for effectiveness and efficiency, and
- e) Differentiated fees structures are an aid to diversification of higher education both within and among institutions.

The conference also found drawbacks associated with fees payments.

These include the following arguments.

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- a) The importance of higher education for a country's development needs no further demonstration and the state, which is responsible for framing development policy, therefore cannot evade its obligation to give priority to the financing of higher education,
- b) Although individuals benefit, higher education investment transcends the individual and represents an investment for the future (the underlying purpose of policy should be to look into the long term development),
- c) Motivation should not depend on financial incentives,
- d) Fees are not a precondition for greater effectiveness and efficiency, quality assessment strategies being much more relevant and necessary,

- e) It is not reasonable to charge fees during periods of economic recession, higher education on the contrary is an investment in research and training which will eventually make it possible to find a definitive solution to the crisis,
- f) In developing countries most families are unable to pay even minimal fees, and
- g) Numerous studies show that fee charging reduces access to higher education and leads to greater social inequality.

In consonance with the above arguments, the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in Paris (5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October 1988), reiterated (on the issue of fee charging) that access to higher education should be based on merit and this criterion outweighs all others, policies on fees should give this criterion priority over all others, even if it meant introducing positive discrimination arrangements (scholarships, reduced charges etc).

Diversification of learning opportunities in the higher education sector has grown to include the use of distance learning. In Kenya for example, the African Virtual University based in Kenyatta University has facilitated this. There are other students who opt to study by correspondence in connection with learning institutions abroad as Kenya has liberalized the education sector as a means of education reforms. There has also been the introduction of parallel education programmes in the public universities, conducted mainly in the evenings and weekends, where students meet the full costs of their education.



### 3.5 Country Studies – Realities

THE UNESCO / IIEP / DSE / KENYA NATCOM Workshop on institutional Management of higher education for southern and Eastern Africa held in Nairobi (14 – 29 March, 1996) gives a general overview of the efforts that African institutions of higher learning have made in response to reduced government budgets after the implementation of SAPs.

Many African governments provided free higher education or provided it through heavy subsidies for most of the 1960s and 1970s. In Kenya, university education was free until 1975 when the government introduced a students' loans scheme so that the beneficiaries of university education would repay after securing employment. In 1998, a structural adjustment loan was contracted to finance reforms in education and health. Agreed policies were to include direct cost recovery from the beneficiary. Tuition fees as well as a student loan scheme were introduced. Also introduced were bursaries to help needy students. The unit cost per student per year is fixed at Kshs. 120,000/-. Those that are able are encouraged to pay. Government provides to needy students Kshs. 42,000/- as means tested loan while each student pays Kshs. 16,000/- directly as tuition fees. (UNESCO / IIEP / DSE / KENYA NATCOM: 1996) Food and accommodation are paid for at market prices. This report observes that revenue from non-governmental sources had increased by 31.6% in University of Nairobi, 25% in Kenyatta University, 17.1% in Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and 16.4% in Moi University. The above measures were meant to deal with the problems of the disproportionately large share of the recurrent budget, increased

enrollment, and reduced quality of education and insufficient funds for books and equipment. (UNESCO / IIEP / DSE / KENYA NATCOM: 1996)

In the University of Zimbabwe, enrollment grew from 2000 in 1980 to 9017 in 1990. The University also lost experienced staff and faced critical problems in staff recruitment. Enrollment decreased from 9017 in 1990 to 7200 in 1994, following the introduction of SAPs. Other privately funded universities were set up, the Africa University of science and Technology and also Solusi University. This broke the Monopoly of University of Zimbabwe. The University now also receives grants from donors for specific research projects. (UNESCO / IIEP / DSE / KENYA NATCOM: 1996)

In University of Malawi tuition fees were introduced in 1985 as a means to cut down government expenditure. The present rate is K.360 (us \$ 24) per student per year. The estimated cost in 1995/96 was K. 31662 (us \$ 2110). The council's attempt to raise the fees to K. 1500 per student was overruled by the government, although the students receive a loan of K. 360 per year. The University has income generation activities but still faces a myriad of financial problems, as financial management has no clear set of rules. Beneficiaries of the loan scheme also cross borders after graduation and therefore loan recovery becomes difficult. This adds up to inadequate funding, leading to less quality of education and friction between students and administration. (UNESCO / IIEP / DSE / KENYA NATCOM: 1996)

Sokoine University of Agriculture of Tanzania has a different story. Started in 1984 with a student population of 1074 and staff of 1092, it is mainly funded through donor assistance. The government provides the secondary source of assistance. Donor funds cover research, staff development capital development and rehabilitation projects while the government covers recurrent expenditure. Today there are postgraduate fees, consultancies and other income generating activities, as government and donor funds are not enough to cover all the necessary costs. (UNESCO / IIEP / DSE / KENYA NATCOM: 1996)

The University of Namibia was founded in 1992 with 2,500 full time students. The management takes the mission of human resource development, research and provision of consultancy and extension services both to private and public sector 90% of its funding comes from the government. The 1996/97 budget was out by 14.5% from the 95/96 allocation as a public expenditure downsizing measure. Although there are income-generating activities including a joint venture between the university and a local brewery the university still faces financial crisis. (UNESCO / IIEP / DSE / KENYA NATCOM: 1996)

Nkumba University of Uganda is a non-profit making private university with 615 students (216 degree and 399 diploma), it offers courses that are immediately marketable. Makerere university staff offers their services on personal arrangements part-time. Fees payment is the only source of the finance since its inception. There is a credit system of grading which allows students move flexibility in planning for their learning time. However, the university faces financial crisis as, the fees

cannot sustain all the requirements. (UNESCO / IIEP / DSE / KENYA NATCOM: 1996)

Economic crises facing Africa, coupled with donor initiated SAPS and rapid increase in population, has complicated higher education funding. Governments have found it inevitable to significantly reduce funding for higher education, resulting in an increase in direct and indirect cost borne by African students and their families. As donor agencies particularly the World Bank, encouraged cost recovery programmes for higher education, African governments must brace themselves with the task of striking a balance between constrained funding and access to higher education for their population. This leaves African governments at cross roads. If Africa is to have significant overall development, higher education provision has to be accorded the prominent position it deserves. On the other hand, SSA governments are financially constrained to meet all the training needs they desperately require to match their research, manpower, and knowledge needs.

However as Lamine, Ndiaye (1993) puts it, several African countries have made important sacrifices to implement the economic recovery programmes and adjustment measures while encountering immense social and economic problems; especially in higher education. The call for adequate resources for the implementation of SAPs with human concerns at the centre is therefore most appropriate, with adequate attention to population dynamics, its causes and consequences. This is to imply that, in SSA, the vulnerable group has been affected both by the impact of recession and decelerated growth and crucially by the

consequences of adjustment. Indeed it is widely accepted that in Africa, people today are poorer than they were at the beginning of the 1980s.

## Chapter Four

# **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS OF SAPS ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The development of education has been a longstanding objective of most SSA governments. The introduction of SAPs in the 1980s led to huge cuts of government expenditure in the social service sectors as discussed earlier in the first chapter. There were calls to decentralize and liberalize education institutions and structures to promote efficiency and effectiveness by involving more stakeholders in decision-making and in the running of education programmes. Higher institutions of learning were required to be more pragmatic and proactive in their programmes to help them raise resources for their survival. As pointed out in chapter three, some governments have as a result of the SAPs been unable to deliver on estimate budgets that universities expect from them. The goal of providing for higher education was unattainable as the African economies became weaker in the pre SAPs period. This spelt doom for most universities as the affordability of education materials became elusive, and consequently the education standards declined substantially.

Due to massive cuts in government expenditure in education, there have been crises across public institutions of higher learning. High

enrollments in universities in some countries as in Kenya, where there has been a rapid expansion of higher education have also aggravated the situation.

However, even with austerity programmes in place, Kenyan universities enrollment figures show how expansion has been rapid in the country. The high enrollments as a result have stretched the available resources per student. There has also been a lot of congestion in the huge classes in place while most of facilities' capacity has remained constant. The situation at times has brought friction between the students and the administration, as happened in the Faculty of Law of the University of Nairobi in October 2003, leading to its closure.

Table 2

**Kenyan public Universities enrollments (regular and parallel) in: UON, MOI, KU, EGERTON, JKUAT AND MASENO.**

	85/86	86/87	87/88	88/89	90/91	93/94	95/96	96/97	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02
Undergraduates	7482	8593	15051	20046	36691	36019	40231	36188	33921	33404	36866	46293
Post graduates	1353	1236	1291	1292	1580	1652	2129	1764	3200	2597	2751	1320
Others	65	59	83	1800	1160	572	1549	1395	3147	2412	2891	3493
Total	8900	9888	16425	23138	39431	39243	43909	39347	40268	38413	42508	52906

*UON - University of Nairobi*

*KU - Kenyatta University*

*JKUAT – Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology*

Source: Statistical Abstracts 1995, 1991,2000 of Republic of Kenya

The high expansion rates from the 1990/91 academic year can be attributed to government policies geared towards cost sharing in public universities and the need for the institutions to venture into other avenues for higher education funding apart from government

expenditure. This led to the introduction of parallel programmes mostly administered in the evenings and during vacations.

## **4.2 Quality Of Education**

With a few notable exceptions, higher education has been under-funded by both the governments and donors. Governments have curtailed expenditure in education in an effort to contain deficits in balance of payments- as a means of reforms. On average the share of education expenditures as percentage of GNP in SSA dropped from 4.3 percent in 1980 to 4.0 in 1988. (Saint, 1992). This has adversely affected the quality of education in the affected institutions. The IMF and World Bank have stressed a focus on basic education as having the highest rates of return. This approach is important but if it focuses on basic education alone, it will leave societies ill prepared for survival in tomorrow's world, which requires high-level skills to match research, manpower, and knowledge needs.

Despite the cuts in higher education expenditure, this sector has made great strides in terms of expansion. The figures in the following table can be used as a guide to approximate on expansion rates in university enrollments in some countries. As population was increasing rapidly in SSA from the 1970s, so was the quest for higher education.

Government policies in most of these countries have had to expand their higher education institutions to have high-level manpower.



Table 3

Projected tertiary enrollment in selected Countries 1991 – 2000.

	Ghana	Kenya	Nigeria	Senegal	Zimbabwe
<b>Population 20–24yrs 1990</b>	1,308,000	2,029,000	10,134,000	650,000	920,000
<b>Population 20 –24yrs 1995</b>	1,538,000	2,498,000	12,090,000	800,000	1,086,000
<b>Population 20 –24yrs 2000</b>	1,843,000	3,404,000	14,508,000	915,000	1,125,000
<b>Gross Enrollment 1991</b>	0.7%	2.0%	1.6%	2.9%	1.1%
<b>Tertiary Enrollment 1990</b>	9,300	40,500	162,140	18,850	10,000
<b>Tertiary Enrollment 1995</b>	10,766	49,960	193,440	23,200	11,946
<b>Tertiary Enrollment 2000</b>	12,901	68,080	232,128	26,535	12,375
<b>% Increase 1991 –1995</b>	15.8	23.4	19.3	23.1	19.5
<b>% Increase 1996 – 2000</b>	19.8	36.3	20.0	14.4	3.6

Source: Saint, William (1992) Pg 106

Private institutions are today expanding very rapidly and there is an urgent need to explore what the private sector can and cannot deliver. Policy makers need to plan for an orderly development of higher education system and establish mechanisms that maintain quality and

most importantly nurture areas for which private funds are unlikely to be available.

From the table below, we have enrollment figures of private accredited universities in Kenya. They confirm the high expansion rate of private universities in Kenya. The period between 1995 and 2002 has seen a 77% rise in private universities enrollments. This constitutes almost 14% of the overall Kenyan universities enrollments.

Table 4.

**Private Accredited Kenyan Universities Enrollment Figures.**

	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	½
Daystar	1123	1250	1292	1681	2278	1812	1864
Baraton	883	922	842	952	1044	1306	1127
Catholic	758	1207	1320	1402	1617	1477	1574
USIU	1252	1753	1808	1901	1960	2311	2544
Scott Theological College	58	78	82	96	103	93	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>4074</b>	<b>5210</b>	<b>5344</b>	<b>6032</b>	<b>7002</b>	<b>6999</b>	<b>7211</b>

USIU – United States International University

Source: Statistical Abstract 2002- Republic of Kenya

Unit cost reductions in higher institution of learning achieved largely through cut backs in research, staff development and maintenance have favoured maintenance of status quo over efficiency – seeking

management reform. These have negative implications on the quality of teaching and research. A research carried out in 1984-1985 in eighteen (18) African universities showed that they spent an average of 8.5% of recurrent expenditure on books, research and library acquisitions. Another survey carried out five years later showed that they spent 3% of their budgets on these items.

(Saint, 1992)

Although the number of books is not a strong indicator of educational quality, it gives some evidence of an institution's capacity to provide basic facilities. A look at the number of books per student in African universities as indicated in table 5 illustrates that education standards are declining. The average number of books per student declined during the 1980s in twenty two (22) of the thirty one (31) universities examined. In fourteen (14) of these, the number was less than twenty five (25) books per student. Exceptions were Addis Ababa University, University of Lagos, and the University of Swaziland, which doubled their number of books per student in the same period. By way of comparison American university libraries average seventy eight (78) books per student.

Most universities have had their number of books per student decline from the 1980s. Rapid university enrollments, coupled with less funds from the government in SAPs implementation has rendered most African universities unable to maintain the same number of books per student as before. This is because most universities find their budgets tight and hardly able to cope with provision of learning materials as books.

**Table 5: Books per Student in Selected African Universities**

Country	1979	1988
Benin	11	5
Botswana	58	51
Burkina Faso	30	12
Yaoundé, Cameroon	9	6
Chad	16	4
Cote D'ivore	5	8
Ethiopia: Addis Ababa	21	46
Asmara	53	42
Gabon	24	11
Ghana: Legon	76	93
Cape Coast	89	101
Kumasi	32	38
Kenyatta/Kenya	29	27
Lesotho	119	124
Malawi	123	57
Niger	16	22
Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello	85	54
Benin	19	12
Calabar	38	17
Ibadan	48	31
Ife	19	11
Ilorin	16	8
Lagos	14	21
Maiduguri	19	15
Port Harcourt	37	8
Rwanda	147	38
Cheikh A. Diop/Senegal	21	20
Fourah Bay/Sierra Leone	90	64
Swaziland	36	61
Dar es Salaam	84	65
Uganda	129	84

Source: Association of African Universities – 1980,1988

In addition, African governments have not shown much interest in funding research while the bulk of African research capacity resides in its universities. However, these institutions have become dependent on universities from outside Africa for applied research and policy directions.

Dismal performance by students could be attributed to lack of essential facilities as books, laboratory equipment, and also funds for research. This leaves students ill prepared for examinations and more inclined to theory than practical aspects of the disciplines they pursue. African higher education systems are inefficient in terms of their graduate output. Low grade outputs delays national output capacity building efforts. In Senegal, he records that first year pass rates vary from 23 – 43% and repetition is unlimited. 20 student years are required to graduate from a four-year programme in this case. To complete a 3-year undergraduate programme, Cameroonian students require an average of 7.7 years in arts, 8.9 years in sciences. In Mozambique drop out rates approach 50% and in Congo the average age of graduates is 30years. This is due to the fact that it is rarely possible to study part time in Congo and failure in any course cancels all grades obtained that year, even for courses earlier passed. In DRC, a rare case of an exception is the American University of Kinshasa, which is private. It has a credit-based system that allows students to programme their courses around a work schedule. (Saint: 1992)

With the deteriorating quality of higher education, most universities find it inevitable to devise their own means of survival.

The L'universit'e nationale de Cote d'Ivoire has responded to its problems of overcrowding, high repetition rates, low educational quality and unsustainable levels of expenditure by establishing two new campuses at Bouake and Abobo away from the Cocody main campus. These give a wide range of reforms so as to enhance performance and make it cost – effective. This includes the introduction of an academic credit system, use of common curricula and having classes across disciplinary courses for first year students, a computerized management system for students' records and a decentralization of management responsibilities to faculties and departments. Professors, deans and international experts manage this.

### **4.3 Education Relevance**

The proposed Eastern Africa Regional Projects and programmes for funding under the NEPAD framework concedes that in East African countries, the levels of higher education funding have not kept pace with enrollment requirements. As a means to economic reforms, governments have cut their expenditure on higher education. As such, universities have been faced with serious challenges including staff development, adequate and quality research, access to and application of modern technology.

The Kenyan Education and Training master plan (1997-2010) has associated the rapid university enrollments in Kenya with a decline in the relevance and quality of education. This has resulted, as growth has not been accompanied by commensurate increase in essential resources. All universities have experienced serious shortfalls and inadequacies in areas such as physical facilities teaching and learning

and management technologies, research amenities and professional and management staff. The Kenyan government only provides for teachers' salaries in secondary school education and hence the beneficiary meets the bulk of the cost. Most secondary schools, due to economic constraints find it difficult to provide for laboratory equipment and other necessary materials required for science based subjects. The quality of academic grades of most secondary school students qualifying for university entry is therefore skewed in the Arts direction as opposed to Science and Mathematics. As a result, universities have resulted to putting emphasis on development of art-based courses in general. The Kenyan scene has been rapid quantitative growth in the number of institutions and enrollments particularly during the 1980s and the early 1990s. Public universities increased from one in 1970 to five in 1994, with the students' population growing from 3,443 in 1970 to 9,044 in 1984 and rising to over 40,000 in 1990/1991. The number of private universities has also grown tremendously and with 17(seventeen) currently in operation. (The Kenyan Education and Training Masterplan 1997-2010)

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In spite of university missions originally aimed at addressing the variety of manpower requirements in the economy, most universities have had no option but to tilt the balance between science-based and arts-based programmes in favour of the latter which are seemingly cheaper to finance and easier to teach and manage. The outcome of this has been an exacerbation of mismatch between formal education and requirements of the workplace, a factor associated with growing unemployment and underemployment of university graduates.

Public and private employers express dissatisfaction with some aspects of university students. Most complaints are that graduates are narrowly trained in a single discipline and cannot therefore have the capacity to confront complex problems. In Zimbabwe, a major manufacturer was quoted to say that he must give university graduates in engineering an extra six months training in business administration before they assume responsibility. In Botswana 1,300 firms indicated that they required management more than any other profession. (Saint: 1992: 80)

DRC had only 2 universities at independence in 1960, with a combined enrollment of about 2,000. By 1965 this had not changed much. Government and private organizations have tried to address the growing demand for higher education where the government established several pedagogical institutes to produce secondary school teachers and several 3year institutes and also a few private universities offering medicine, economics, international relations, law, politics, communications, humanities and philosophy. (The World Bank, 2001)

The Bank also reckons that despite the above initiatives, due to budgets constraints arising from SAPs, demand outstrips capacity. In technology, Science and medicine fields, which are expensive to provide, requests for enrollment are quite high. In the 1995/96 academic year, the Public university of Kinshasa had nearly 2,500 freshmen packed a single class in biomedical Sciences. Given that DRC has only one doctor for every 14,000 inhabitants, students are right in seeking admissions. By 1995, the proportion of enrollments in higher education remained lower than in other developing countries. (The World Bank: 2001) The problem was that new schools replicate each other and



programmes for instance in medicine, technology or specialized education remained rare. Universities in DRC face challenges of lack of funds to provide basic educational infrastructure-classrooms, laboratories, equipped teaching hospitals, libraries, computers and Internet access. This definitely has a great impact on the ability of graduates from these universities to be well equipped with the necessary skills to perform well in the areas they are trained for.

In an interview with Mr. Kavuu, the senior assistant commission secretary (planning), of the Commission for The Higher Education, confirms that with the implementation of SAPs in Kenya, there has been a lot of course programme duplication. He concedes that out of the current six public universities, five of them offer Bachelor of Education (Arts) degree, as it is cheaper to maintain. According to Mr. Kavuu, reduced government spending on education and the subsequent making of these institutions semi-autonomous especially in the area of financial diversification resulted in many universities going for establishment and expansion of faculties that are cheaper to maintain. This according to the commission for higher education poses a problem as it leads to inefficient resource use and also produces graduates who are not needed in the job market. Mr. Kavuu points out that this is a problem that they intend to address urgently. A similar problem has been reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo by the World Bank in Partnerships For Development (2001).

With diminishing finances available for higher education resulting from reforms implementation, questions regarding the relevance of African higher education should be taken seriously. Such questions put university legitimacy at risk and undermine public confidence in the

benefits associated with the university experience. When governments, donors, students and their families wonder whether African universities provide value for money, universities must address the source of this dissatisfaction or face the possibility of continued financial starvation.

#### **4.4 Access And Diversity**

The World Bank says that even though tertiary level enrollments have grown significantly in virtually all countries in the developing countries the enrollment gap between the most developed economies and the developing countries has widened. In addition, tertiary education systems continue to be elitist as regards access and social economic composition of the student body. While on one hand there is the pressing need to overcome the existing coverage, equity, quality and governance problems that have beset their tertiary education systems, on the other hand, all countries are exposed to the new challenges arising out from the construction of knowledge- based economies.(The World Bank, 2002)

In the Kenyan situation, following the introduction of SAPs, the government could not keep pace with the growing demand for higher education in terms of providing the required finances; the response was the introduction of direct fees to be paid by students. This measure was not well received, causing university closures for almost a year in 1991. The arrangement was seen to have significant negative social and economic implications to the students; considering that the country is characterized by large disparities in households. This has therefore raised the salience of equity in providing university education to all qualified aspirants. Under a 1995 Act of Parliament The Higher

Education Loans Board (HELB) was set up to administer a scheme, which was to offer loans and bursaries as a move to cushion the new financial arrangement where students were required to cost share, including the poor. The loan takes the form of delayed payments by the students and bursary is meant to assist a student to meet user fees and costs upfront. However HELB does not access satisfactory resources and so most needy students are required to raise substantial amounts upfront.

However, in spite of notable and uneven expansion of higher education enrollments over the 1980's, access to the university remains relatively constrained. Swiftly rising enrollments have improved proportional access, in spite of rapid population increase. However, these gains were unevenly distributed across the continent as five countries registered absolute declines in access, and another 4 registered gains of 10% or less. For some countries, the percentage of tertiary students within the relevant age group could decline as the number of potential students increases faster than the capacity to absorb them, even under the most optimistic economic assumptions. (Saint, 1992)

Universities of SSA present divergent trends in their enrollments. Enrollments have expanded causing severe economic constraints since the 1980s, the period when most countries introduced SAPs. However, this has not occurred at the same pace. Overall expansion of university student population between 1980 and 1990 rose by 61% - from 337,000 to 542,000. Only few countries in 1980 had more than one university but by 1990, at least 15 countries had established 2 or more universities. (Saint, W: 1992) The new universities were given specific mandates on

agriculture, education, or science and technology. In most cases national higher education commissions were set up to plan and manage these institutions. In most countries, this was in line with need to reform even higher education systems in order to give them some form of liberalization. In spite of all this, access to higher education remains more limited in Africa than in any other region of the world. This can be backed up by the fact that the average number of university students per 100,000 people was still lowest in Africa by 1996 as demonstrated by the table below.

**Table 6: Number of higher education students per 100,000 inhabitants**

Country	1985	1990	1996
USA	5064	5395	5339
Netherlands	2794	3203	3176
Brazil	1158	1081	1094
Zimbabwe	368	496	638
Botswana	181	299	596
Mozambique	11	37	40

*Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, 1993, 1996 and 1998*

The application of SAPs in the higher education system has brought about different categories of higher education in SSA. William Saint (1992) categorizes the higher education systems in SSA into five: -

- (a) Small systems characterized by a stable or declining growth rates such as Malawi, Tanzania and Sierra Leone.
- (b) Small but slowly expanding systems such as Burundi, Togo and Uganda,
- (c) Small but rapidly expanding systems, which doubled or tripled enrollments over the 1980s period,
- (d) Medium sized systems with some institutional differentiation such as Congo, Ghana, Senegal and Zimbabwe.

(e) Large multi-institutional systems such as Nigeria, Madagascar, Kenya, Cameroon and Zaire.

He argues that each category presents different challenges in terms of cost effectiveness efficiency, access, division of responsibility and systems of management. They all illustrate the rich diversity characterizing African systems of higher education.

Table 7

## University Enrollments

Country	1980	1991	%Change	No. of Public Universities
<b>Small No-Growth Systems</b>				
Chad	2000	2048	+2	1
Lesotho	2200	1259	-43	1
Liberia	4900	4855	-1	2
Malawi	2200	2284	+4	1
Mali	5100	4715	-8	1
Swaziland	1900	1357	-29	1
Tanzania	5000	3406	-32	2
Uganda	5900	5533	-6	2
Zambia	7500	4857	-35	2
Average	4078	3368	-17	
<b>Small But Expanding Systems</b>				
Burundi	1900	2762	+45	1
Central African Republic	1700	2600	+53	1
Gabon	2000	2741	+37	2
Rwanda	1200	1650	+38	1
Sierra Leone	1800	2348	+30	1
Togo	4800	7348	+53	1
Average	2233	3241	+45	
<b>Small Rapid Growth Systems</b>				
Angola	2200	6048	+175	1
Benin	4000	8883	+122	1
Botswana	900	2255	+150	1
Burkina Faso	1600	4760	+198	1
Mozambique	1000	4333	+333	1
Niger	1400	3317	+137	1
Average	1850	4673	+153	
<b>Medium Size Systems</b>				
Congo	7300	11310	+55	1
Ghana	15500	10500	-32	3
Senegal	13600	19132	+41	2
Somalia	2900	15672	+440	1
Zaire	28500	16239	-43	4
Zimbabwe	8300	11000	+33	2
Average	12683	13461	+6	
<b>Large Multi-Institutional Systems</b>				
Cameroon	11500	34000	+196	5
Cote D'Ivoire	19600	22000	+12	1
Ethiopia	14400	22701	+58	3
Kenya	13000	40000	+208	6
Madagascar	22600	37181	+65	6
Nigeria	69700	160787	+131	31
Sudan	28700	33934	+18	6
Average	25642	50083	+97	95

Source: UNESCO Statistical Year Book, 1991, World Bank data.

With soaring university education costs as a result of SAPs, a big proportion of citizens has opted to enroll in non - university institutions.

The table below demonstrates the rise in enrollment figures in some government non-university institutions in Kenya.

**Table 8: enrollment figures in some selected non-university institutions in Kenya**

YEAR	84/85	85/86	86/87	87/88	88/89	89/90	90/91	91/92	93/94	95/96	97/98	99/00	00/01
NYA POLY	3240	3614	4014	3489	3259	3617	4673	5855	5918	4488	5014	4210	5908
ASA POLY									4406	2931	2797	3247	4659
RET POLY						343	523	625	545	536	599	1089	1168

## POLY-POLYTECHNIQUE

**SOURCE: KENYAN STATISTICAL ABSTRACTS 2002**

Apart from the above government institutions, there have come up numerous private non-university tertiary institutions to meet the high demand for higher education, while the private costs in these institutions are lower than in public universities.

Juma shaabani (ed.) 1997 reckons that the enrollments of non-university institutions in East Asia have grown faster than university institutions. These non-university institutions in the region include polytechnics, short course institutions, technical institutions, distance education colleges and adult education colleges. These have advantages in that they are cheaper to finance since they have lower per student costs and lower drop out rates. In Ghana for example, per student costs at non-university institutions are only 40% of average per student cost at the Ghanaian universities. They also appear to respond more flexibly to market demands and produce graduates who are in

greater demand within the economy than university graduates are. The same institutions also improve access to minority groups and women to higher education. The only setback to this form of education is that it is mostly viewed as second rate and is more under funded than universities and so sometimes considered as academic “parking lots” for excess students. When governments decide to upgrade them to fully-fledged universities, they divert them from their original missions.

A survey carried out in Mozambique with the educational level of fathers and mothers as a significant indicator of socio-economic position of students at governmental and non-governmental higher education institutions showed that reforms in education have hampered access to education for the poor.

**Table 9: Mothers' and Fathers' educational levels**

Educational Level	Governmental HEIs				Non-Governmental HEIs				Mozambique	
	Mothers		Fathers		Mothers		Fathers		Women	Men
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Primary	46	8.2	16	2.8	32	9.4	5	1.4	89.32	78.8
Secondary	240	42.7	162	28.5	118	34.6	113	32.5	9.8	18.5
Tertiary	182	32.4	201	35.3	126	37.0	124	35.6	0.7	2
Total	34	6.0	81	14.2	17	5.0	28	8.0	0.13	0.6
	60	10.7	109	19.2	48	14.1	78	22.4	0.05	0.15
	562	100.0	569	100.0	341	100.0	348	10.0	100.0	100.0

**Sources: Student survey, National Census, 1997**

This data shows that almost 70% of the university students' fathers have secondary education or more, as opposed to a mere 2.8% of men in the population as a whole. About 50% of students' mothers have secondary education as opposed to 0.9% in the population as a whole. While 89.3% of Mozambican women and 78.8% of Mozambican men



have had no formal education the percentages for the fathers and mothers of the surveyed students are about 8% and 2% respectively.

Before the introduction of SAPs, bright students from less privileged sectors of the society could win places in government secondary schools and then be sent to university by a watchful state. With the advent of the market economy, this has changed. Those parents who can afford to send their children to private secondary and pre-university schools can provide them with a greater chance of passing the increasingly competitive entrance examinations, which are a prerequisite to joining universities in Mozambique. Data on the results of entrance examinations for 1999 confirm this as over 18% of candidates from private schools passed the first phase of entrance examinations while only 11% of candidates from public schools managed the same.

# Chapter Five

## Conclusion And Recommendations

### 5.1 Summary

SAPs revolve around the argument that development and growth would only occur through a fundamental transformation of the role of the state. This reduction of state activity involves a reduction of state expenditure through the withdrawal of grants and subsidies in higher education sector. The basic philosophy of SAPs in the higher education is that they are aimed at restructuring the sector so that it is more responsive to price and market signals and therefore effective, entailing diversification of sources of finance, including adopting cost-sharing measures. Alongside this is the advocated liberalization of higher education to include more stakeholders in a bid to improve efficiency in the delivery of education and also reduce government expenditure.

While significant financial diversification and income generation necessitated by the application of SAPs may seem discouraging and distant, opportunities for success in cost reduction and cost recovery by SSA governments are immediate and depend largely on initiative, ingenuity and commitment. Their application has led to an expansion of higher education institutions in most of the SSA countries, albeit in quantitative terms.

Fee payments and cost sharing are ways that have been frequently used as higher education reform measures. In some countries, students receive both tuition and living expenses loans. The terms of repayments vary considerably but most students' loans are highly subsidized so that graduates pay well below market rates. Experience with these loan schemes is that they do and can work and that students are willing to borrow. Loans existence has helped increase private demand for education and has enabled many to finance their own education. Loans create a greater impact on public funds than if tuition or boarding costs remain highly subsidized. They also help create an increase in the share of private finance for education investments. When well managed, the application of cost sharing measures has not greatly hampered access to the poor. Countries that offer bursaries and loans to their poor have had access open to all the higher learning institutions. However the poor still get disadvantaged when in the lower levels of education, that is; primary and secondary school levels, access disparities have not been well addressed and hence get cut out early before getting to the higher levels of learning.

The quest for higher education in SSA has not been satiated and hence university education in SSA has been characterized by soaring applications each academic year. Given the poverty levels in SSA economies as highlighted in chapter two, most SSA governments find it difficult to cope with the duty of providing this essential service. It is therefore inevitable, as most SSA governments have found, that they have to shift part of the burden to the beneficiaries of the higher education, albeit cautiously. Most governments in SSA have embarked on higher education reforms to help them cope with their economic

crises, but this sometimes has not worked very well in their respective countries. This then has awakened the call for having “home grown” reforms that would suit a particular country’s needs, taking into consideration that there are huge disparities prevailing amongst SSA countries higher education needs.

## 5.2 Conclusions

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI  
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SAPs have led to a decline in the resource base of SSA universities. However, this has been exacerbated by inefficient resource use. Rising enrollments in higher education institutions coupled with reforms have made educational quality economically unsustainable. From the 1980s the combination of cuts in government expenditure and rising enrollments in African universities have produced a generally recognised deterioration in the quality of education across the continent. As educational quality conditions the vision and capabilities of its graduates and ultimately the capacity of a nation to manage its affairs, this has disadvantaged African university graduates in the job market. Government funding of higher education has proved unable to provide a minimum effective standard of human development for their population as a whole. Prior to the reforms government budgetary allocations in education were skewed towards higher education in unit cost terms. However, removal of subsidies at the tertiary level was supposed to make resources available for other educational levels. This now largely precludes many students from poor backgrounds from attending universities. The poor are also cut off from attending higher education at either primary or secondary school levels where students are required to cost share in their education and cannot afford. However, the

situation is different where governments provide bursaries to needy students at all levels.

Reforms in a bid to liberalize the higher education sector and as a means of financial diversification has led to an expansion of higher institutions of learning in most of the SSA countries, albeit in quantitative terms. Most African universities have also currently demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in the effort to maintain relevance while working on tight budgets necessitated by economic reforms. Private universities have also been set up to compliment governments' efforts of providing higher education for their populations. It is therefore apparent that the application of SAPs has seen an expansion in the higher education in terms of enrollment figures. However, these institutions have encountered a myriad of problems. These include overcrowding, course programme duplication and inability of universities to provide for graduate research. This is largely due to the fact that as a result of cuts in government expenditure, resources for research are not always readily available and most institutions end up offering programmes that are cheaper to maintain.

SAPs have led to less access to higher education for the poor where positive counteractive mechanisms have not been put in place like the provision for bursaries. As reforms have been implemented at all educational levels, children from poor socio-economic backgrounds drop out of school early or even do not attend school. Even for those who do attend school, their learning is at times interrupted for lack of learning materials. Policies of selection are therefore biased against the poor as many barriers are created against them. Relatively few children

from low socio-economic backgrounds survive the early selection process and make it to the higher levels where their exceptional ability is noticed.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Private universities are an important avenue for diversifying the financial base of national higher education systems – without incurring additional government expenditure. Governments should encourage private higher education institution investments by creating a conducive environment for them. Caution should, however, be exercised by government to ensure that these institutions offer quality education. Private universities should therefore be required to avail their curricula to the relevant government authorities for purposes of standardization. As such, governments should in addition establish policies that give priority to the creation of quality and greater equity for its people.

University programmes ought to be flexible such that working people can enroll for part-time study in the evenings, weekends and vacations – to benefit those who would wish to combine work and study.

There is need to give more attention to the impact of SAPs on social and human welfare. This emanates from the fact that the public sector has heavy responsibilities in Africa and that its reduction within a short period can have serious economic repercussions. Fee charging and cost -sharing in higher education require a well thought-out cushioning move. Loans and bursaries recoverable later are ideal modes of assistance, which the governments ought to use but find means of curbing non-repayment so as to create a revolving fund.

Expansion of Africa's capacity to produce its own intellectual talent to fill the highest scientific and technical jobs is a critical matter. Economies of scale are important and these will be difficult to achieve within a national context except, perhaps, in a few of Africa's largest and wealthiest nations. This calls for joint research and development with the understanding of the communities' needs. An information network and documentation is important so that universities in partnership can share research findings in their libraries and resource centres and especially through the use of Internet technology. The proposed Eastern Africa Regional project and programmes for funding under the NEPAD for instance calls for a joint training programme for the University teaching staff for East African Region through the establishment of an East African Regional Scholarship scheme to be administered through the Inter-university council of East Africa.

As concerns funding, public universities need to evolve financial strategies that are known to be working. This calls for one to bear in mind the special requirements of those from under privileged backgrounds. Sources of funding should be diversified through privatization, staff development and training towards management and the use of the universities' productive sectors. As for the donors, foundations corporations and financial institutions with the potential to provide aid, universities should be up to date with their current policies. This means having up to date information on their records of expenditure on which types of projects, with which organizations, etc so that the enquiry would provide a visible manifestation of customer orientation. Most informed approaches lead to positive responses.

SSA countries also need to diversify their avenues for higher education provision. This calls for differentiated higher education systems. This is essentially a system that will accommodate a growing and diverse student body while meeting the labour market's needs for various levels of specialized skills and offering an increased number of choices. This can include traditional colleges and universities, community colleges, polytechnics or technical institutes, adult education or continuing education programmes, productive sector training and distance learning programmes.

The use of distance learning and the newly introduced open learning at the African Virtual University based in Kenyatta University present higher learning opportunities while incurring less costs per student than the regular higher education providers. The use of distance learning at the tertiary level of education has numerous advantages. It can reach out to a large proportion of the population in remote areas for whom access to higher education is next to impossible. To achieve the same objective, the conventional face to face method would require an enormous outlay of capital and infrastructure and take a long time. In view of acute shortage of relevant textbooks in African universities, students could access prepared notes and manuals. Students are also allowed to proceed at their own pace.

The resultant expansion in higher education due to reform implementation has a lot of course duplication in SSA universities. Resources used in duplicated courses could be put to good use by strengthening a few of them to give quality education. The case of chartered private universities whose programmes have been streamlined by both economic competitiveness and commissions for



higher education is proof that external forces can lead universities to be efficient. Left on their own, it is difficult for universities to eliminate programme duplications, as they opt for courses that are cheaper to maintain.

Better utilization of available resources is also possible through flexible learning programmes. Such include evening classes case as in the Kenyan case of parallel degree programmes and also ensuring maximum use of the available infrastructure. This ensures that resources are used more efficiently despite the limited economic prospects and the unremitting need for public austerity. Non – formal education could also be emphasized where courses and classes designed for adults and out-of-school people have planned for training purpose but not leading to formal qualification. These include work – oriented programmes (training in fields directly related to specific occupations, with the aim of enhancing productivity or introducing a new way of making a living).

All stakeholders should be involved in the drawing up of reforms in the education sector. This would result in measures acceptable to all, and the stakeholders would feel they own the reforms and consequently make them easier to implement.

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