



## Philosophy of Education and National Development: A Philosophical Appraisal

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### ABSTRACT

*Education, no doubt is the key to socio-economic and political development of any nation. This is based on the philosophy of the nation's education system, which encapsulate her needs, goals, objectives and aspirations. This paper observes that Nigeria has no Philosophy of Education she could called her own because of the eclectic nature of the philosophical ideas express in her National Policy on Education. It also observes that some aspects of education were not provided for in the nation's educational Magna Carta of 2004, and further highlight some of the impacts of Philosophy of Education on national development. The paper therefore, calls for remedial steps to be taken to redress the inconsistencies and contradiction that hinder smooth and rapid national development.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The issue of national development has always been a subject of great concern to both develop and developing nations of the world. As a result of it is importance to the socio-economic and political wellbeing of its citizens no nation has ever failed to place her overall development on the front burner of her policies and terms of human and material resources development. It is known that development in any society begins with its human elements. Which in turn develop the material resources. And the development of the human resources cannot be devoid of education in all its ramifications. For this reason, every nation that has the development of its human and materials resources as her greatest priority usually develop a blue

print of how they can go about to achieved her goals and objectives.

The blue-print encapsulate the guidelines, aims, needs, and aspirations of a given society which contain the philosophy from which the educational guidelines derived. In other word the development of any nation, to a large extent is predicated on its philosophy of education. This implies designing an adequate philosophy of education which must take in to consideration all the essential ingredients that would almost flawless. This could be possible this could be possible in some countries that have their philosophy as an off-short of an ideological revolution e.g Bolshervik's Russia, Fidel Castro's Cuba and Mwalimu Jalius Nyerere's Tanazania (Akinplu, 2005). But this is quite different in the case of Nigeria that

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follows the British gradual evolutionary approach, and even borrowed from most western philosophies. This eclectic nature of her philosophy of education has a lot of implications for national development.

### CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

The key concept of this discourse: Philosophy of education and national development need to be examined in the context of this paper.

#### *The Concept of Philosophy of Education*

The concept of Philosophy of education has been viewed from several perspectives by many scholars and great thinkers. As a result, a plethora of definition has also been attempted. Hence it has been difficult to arrive as a universally acceptable definition of Philosophy of education, since there are four perspectives from which it could be approached. This includes the traditional, analytic, technical and non-technical definitions-definitions of which we do not have time and space to pursue here. But it has been noted that Philosophy of education mirrors the need and aspiration of the society for which it was formulated (Apologun, 2012). It is in this regard that the Nigerian philosophy of education is rooted in the national goals and objectives of the Nigerian state.

However, some eminent scholars defined Philosophy of education as applied Philosophy primarily concerned with application of philosophical principles, to the practical conduct of education (Okoh, 2003). In other words, Philosophy of education has a wider scope that touches virtually every sphere of education in that it performs a central but critical function

for all segment of education. In simple terms, philosophy “oversees the activities of other aspects of education. By providing them, the necessary tools or instruments and techniques for a clear conception of their roles and operations” (Nwafor, 2007). For Akinpelu (2005), Philosophy of education could be seen as “an attempt to articulate the ideological commitment of the society through a set of Programme designed to realize and perpetuate their commitment.

From this view it is categorically base, and as such must contain the ideals and aspiration of the society. In short Philosophy of education should spell out the national educational objectives, it must analyze, examine and evaluate how consisted, integrated and comprehensive the educational Programme are: and also the extents to which the nation’s hopes and aspirations could be realized.

#### *Concept of Development*

The term development could be used interchangeably with evolution depending on the contexts in which it is been used, either positively or negatively to refer to situation, trends or issues.

Development ordinarily, means “mans” effort to make the necessary impacts on nature; his environment, and on himself with a view to transforming and improving himself and his environment (Nwafor, 2006). It clear that the development and improvement are synonymous. When something has been made to wear a new look from what it was therefore, we can say that a development has taken place. The words “growth” and expansion” are coterminous with development, and they suggest positive development. These words equally denote progress being made from one stage to another,

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which do not denote negative development like retardation, degeneration or decline.

Development in a wider context deals with socio-economic and political life of the society; it connotes the fulfillment, realization or actualization of goals and objectives, hopes and aspiration of that society. The process of actualization begins when a society recognizes its inadequacies, and gets goals for itself and decides to make a deliberate effort to remedy perceived deficiency in order to attain desire goals (Nwafor, 2006). In this regards, Nyerere in Ezimah (2004), views development as having and emancipator goals, i.e it deliberates man from shackles of ignorance, supervision and operation in all its ramifications. Consequently, all forms of development have to some extents a reasonable dose of educational process. For that reason, the development of the intellectual frontiers of the individual cannot be left untouched, by extension therefore, the development of the individual's intellectual capacity and capability empowers him socially, economically, and politically; thereby given him not only a sense of a self-fulfillment, but also a sense of belonging and commitment to the overall development of society. In essence, education should contributes to the realization of three most important objectives:

1. The development of Individual;
2. The development of society;
3. The development of the national economy

This could be done in such a way that skills of the individual in the labour market will be in tandem with the need of business organizations, companies,

government parastals, and private employers of labour. These objectives highlighted above are mid-wifed by education through philosophy of education which encapsulates the societal goals and objectives, needs and aspiration.

### *Impacts of Philosophy of Education on National Development*

Nigerian's philosophy of education as enunciated and revised cover the years is geared towards the actualization of national development goals and objectives. Some of which have been achieve to some extent, while other are still in limbo, and utopian in nature. Hence evaluation of its impacts (positive or negative) on the development of nation is necessary.

The national philosophy of education has contributed reasonably to national development since its inception in 1997. The philosophy of education at that time come on board with the 6-3-3-4 system of education, which was greeted by population explosion in students' enrolment, especially, at the primary school level. As the universal primary Education (U.P.E) was equally introduced. Although, there were many problems resulting from poor implementation of the Programme because of lack of foresight, and in effective planning. Akinpelu (2005) observes that a rationally planned educational system cannot afford to plan for universal coverage at the primary level without making corresponding plans for the secondary and tertiary levels. "There is no doubt that the most products of the U.P.E had no placement in the post primary institutions because students who completed their U.P.E Programme were not given automatic

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admission in to the junior secondary schools as planned (Adesina, et-al: 1983). Hence Akinpelu, (2005), pungently states that U.P.E will not be effective and beneficent within a rationally planned educational system, in which other levels and aspects has hang together like a seamless robe. However, by the time measure were taken to arrest this situation, U.P.E had collapsed but it lead to the establishment of more post primary and tertiary institution with a view to developing “the individuals in to a sound and effective citizens” (Nigeria, 2004).

Another bold step taken by federal government in her mass educational policy was the introduction of Universal Basic Education (U.B.E). In spite of the huge financial commitment and vigorous enlighten campaigns. The U.B.E seems to be a replica of the U.P.E as school are overcrowded with unanticipated student’s enrolment. It was designed to be “free and compulsory,” but this is farfetched because apart from free tuition every other thing is yet to be in place. Students learn under trees, some seat on bar floors and teachers has no offices and furniture. Laboratories, technical workshops for practical demonstrations, instructional materials and teaching aids are conspicuously absent in most schools.

In order to meet the increasing admission demand by students in higher institutions of learning many more universities were established; both public and private universities. The situation in the lower rungs of our educational leader equally manifested itself in the tertiary institutions. They include inadequate funding, death of qualified personnel, poor infrastructural facilities, and epileptic payment of

teachers’ salaries and so on. It is for this reason that Adah (2009) lamentably observes that.

#### Conclusion

In this discourse, it was observed that national development will be a far cry without education anchored on sound philosophy of education and that the various education Programme and politics in Nigeria were not truly Nigeria in nature and content as the ideas is underlying them were essentially foreign. Hence there are inconsistencies, contradiction and controversies over some of this idea. As a result, national development did not progress as envisaged and enshrined in the National Policy on Education. It is hoped that when some this lapses like integration of all aspects of education are taken in to consideration and the Programme and policies religiously implemented. Nigeria will experience accelerated national development.

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