

## THE RETHINKING PHILOSOPHY OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

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### ABSTRACT

*Tertiary education in Nigeria is intended to be the kind of education that prepares an individual for full engagement in the economic development of the nation. The paper attempts to x-rays the philosophy of tertiary education in the past and present and tries to redefine the future philosophy with the aim of addressing social issues that hinder national development. Through tertiary education, an individual then become a catalyst for self-sufficiency and to also contribute to societal development. The challenges of tertiary education and the lost philosophy, if not corrected can lead the country to retarded growth and development. It is only a redefine philosophy of tertiary education that is tailor toward values education that can remedy our dwindling economy. Values are guiding principles of life that reflect our attitudes, thought, judgment decision and choice; in spite of spectacular achievement in science and technology man is not happy and contended. Today violence frustration, immorality, self-centeredness, corruption is rampant everywhere. Suggestions, recommendations were proffered and concluded that reemphasizes the place of value education in tertiary institution is tantamount to National Development.*

**Keyword:** Philosophy; Philosophy of Education; Education; Tertiary Education; Values.

### Introduction

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) which was destined to play a more prominent role in the development of Nigeria education was narrowly beaten by the Wesley Missionary Society in the race to open up the society to the Christian faith. The primary purposes were to convert the newly convert to Christianity through education. The missionary fashion early school to include in the curriculum that will be thoughts without involving many expenses. Educational provision was for basic literacy that is, reading and writing.

In 1811, the colonial administrators first indicated interest in education. Prior to that time, the planning and execution of educational policy was limited to the various missionary societies. The government later introduced education ordinance which led to the establishment of public schools and were run by the public fund. Shortly after independence, the Federal Government through the national policy on education

enforces mass literacy through proper supervision and funding. The Nigerian government keeps on modifying the educational policy time after time (Sokoya, 2015).

It can be correctly observed that the foundation of education in Nigeria was laid by the missionaries with the philosophical aim of getting more converted through education. The changing philosophy during the pre-colonial, colonial and the post still lack basic ingredient and cannot meet the current challenges of the country.

Even in view of the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education; its intended programme is that the universities programme will be intensified and diversified to meet the need of the growing economy; course content in the professional fields should reflect national requirements and more cooperation will be sought between government, employers and universities to hastened national development. Education of higher professionals will continue within the university system and will be more functional with scientific background and values system if not incorporated in the entire system; the attainment of educational goals is a mirage.

Tertiary education is designed to train individuals for manpower development; the philosophy attached to it must not be far from the attached values. A functional philosophy of education which must sustain all the various facets of life should be put in place.

Education being the bedrock for national development and a right for all individuals must be given its rightful place. No nation can develop above the level of her education. Africa and Nigeria in particular has not witness tremendous development over the years since the past philosophy did not provide us with the right environment needed for meaningful development.

Education in Nigeria has suffered serious setback as a result of the challenges surrounding it, there is a shift of value, non-challan attitudes of government in the area of funding and infrastructure, students lack of readiness to learn amongst others, A more define philosophical strategies in an era of insecurity in our tertiary education is required for the sustainability of tertiary education as well as national development.

Prior to the aforementioned reformation agenda of former President Goodluck Jonathan the federal government of Nigeria in 1979 issued a white paper titled “Government views on the implementation committees on the issue of National Policy on Education”. By 1981, a revised edition of The National Policy on Education was published and government promised to take various measures to implement the policy. The policy stated that education will continue to be highly rated in the National development plans, because education is the most important instrument of change (FRN 2013). Any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. It is unfortunate that this statement was a mirage that is yet to be realised. Thus Adewole (2001) remarked that:

...our educational experience, however, is replete with actions that are far from being rational. Perhaps the most problematic issue here is the way politics is made to determine what education action are taken.

He further states that this is not to say that politics is irrelevant to education, rather we need to draw a line between when and where politics ends and professionalism takes over in education. Similarly, Gyong (2013). Observes there are many factors that hinder the attainment of the laudable agenda of every successive government especially, that of former President Goodluck Jonathan.

What is Education?

it is the act of systematic development or training of the mind, capabilities or character through instruction or study.

kabuk (2015) saw education as a dynamic agent of information change and development in any society, education is expected to build-up the character of individuals and make them useful members of the society. Latin; Edu-care means to draw out, that is education is all round development of an individual, and needs to be revitalized time after time in order to meet up with the dynamic nature of our society.

### **The Concept of Philosophy**

Aristotle (384 – 322 BC) who was Plato student saw philosophy as the study of nature and meaning of the universe and human life. A particular system of belief resulting from the search for knowledge about life and the universe. A set of belief or attitude. As Aristotle view it, it would be impossible without the underlying natural desire in all men and women to know. Amaele (2005) however stated that the idea of education fundamentally connotes a change or transformation an individual experience generally or in an organized institution.

### **Philosophy of Education**

The term philosophy simple means love of wisdom or more correctly, love of knowledge. For the purpose of this study, it is important to consider two distinct, but related conception of what philosophy of education is. In this sense therefore, we are going to look at the philosophy of Nigerian education. Philosophy of education in the public sense refers to the beliefs of education by the generality of the people. Bamisaiye (2016) submits that philosophy is that discipline which is concerned with analysing problems and issues, and also setting goals for education. It is important to note that there is no philosophy of education that can be planned without a consideration of the nature of man in relation to the society at large.

One of the components of philosophy of education is metaphysics which is concerned with finding out the meaning of the nature of man in relation to the reason why we need to educate man. Epistemology is another component of philosophy of education and it focuses on knowledge to teach that can bring about the desirable change (the curriculum). Finally, ethics which deals with the understanding of value that is inherent in education.

### **Philosophy of Teacher Education**

The Nigerian government is not unaware of the critical need for stable and objective human capital development. In view of this, the Nigerian government considers the teacher as an integral part of the process of creating a modern society. The mandate of the teacher education programme in Nigeria include: the training of teachers with high level of professionalism, integrity and competence that can

combine conservative and technology-driven modern teaching approaches and commitment. The objectives by the end of the graduate Education programmes include to produce students that are able to engage in logical discourse, display an understanding of the psychological and socio-economic factors that influence learners, effectively deploy conventional and new technologies in teaching among others. These objectives can be summarised into three dimensions: pre-service teacher expected behaviour; post-graduation teacher expected behaviour and the in-service expected behaviour in the larger society.

Education remains an unavoidable instrument for sustainable development and a vehicle for advancing the frontier of knowledge. For this reason, teachers are saddled with the responsibilities of disseminating knowledge, skills and attitudes to the learners. Teachers' influence is always felt in every aspect of the society. The quality of education is directly proportionate to the quality of teachers because they implement all the educational policies through actual classroom interactions or contacts with students. Education unlocks the door to modernisation; it is the teachers who hold the key to that door.

Teachers bear the brunt of the realisation of the objectives of education. Therefore to achieve an effective implementation of the policies, the quality training and retraining programmes for teachers at all levels must be ensured. However, it is striking to note that getting quality teachers for sustainable development has not been achieved significantly, in spite of various approaches and road maps by the Federal Government of Nigeria and partner agencies in Nigeria; National Policy on Education stresses the need for continuous teacher training.

### **The Aims of Tertiary Education**

Higher education, including professional education has the following aims:

- a. The acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value – orientation for the survival of the individual and society.
- b. The development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment.
- c. The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community.
- d. The acquisition of an overview of the local and external environment (FRN 2008)

### **Nigeria philosophy of education entails that:**

- a) Education is an instrument for national development and the interaction of reasons and ideas and all aspect of education.
- b) Education foster the worth and development of the individual and the society at large e.g. education has been regarded to be instrument for national development.
- c) There is need for the equality of education opportunities to all Nigerian children irrespective of any socio-economy background.
- d) There is need for functional education for the promotion of progressive, united Nigeria to make school program relevant; value education should be comprehensive enough while interest should determine individual direction.

### **The Overall Goals of National Education**

- a. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
- b. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society (respect for the work and dignity of the individuals).
- c. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around.
- d. The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and to equip the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

### **Section Six of the National Policy of Education Outlines: The Goals of Tertiary Education**

- a. Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training.
- b. Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
- c. Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment.
- d. Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which enable individuals to self-reliant and useful member of the society.
- e. Promote and encourage scholarship and community service
- f. Forge and cement national unity and
- g. Promote national and international understanding and interaction

### **The Need for the Inculcation of Values Education in Tertiary Institutions: And Curriculum Reconstruction in the 21st Century**

Values are the guiding principles of life that reflect our attitudes, judgment, decision choice behavior, relationships, dreams and vision. Jena et al (2015), it is obvious that values gives direction and firmness as well as brings joy, satisfaction and peace to life; they also influence our thoughts feelings and actions. Values bring quality to life; in recent times we are face with value crisis in every sphere of life in our society which retards our personal upliftment and growth as a nation.

Value education means inculcation of necessary values among the students so that they can develop a sense of humanity; a deep concern for the well-being of others and the nation. Value education must be enshrined in our tertiary education. The teacher is to head the student through curriculum. Curriculum in the broader sense is all the learning experience in or outside the school, involving all the courses, activities and association furnished to the students to attain complete development.

The modern age of science and technology has created certain evils due to a shift of our national values; materialism has taken the order of the day. In spite of spectacular achievements in science and technology man is not happy and contented. Today violence, frustration, immorality, self-centeredness, corruption are rampant everywhere.

In our society, despite wonderful scientific achievement, the world is a place of violence, gloom and unease; moreover, a large section of our society is under the grips of poverty, immorality and corruption, such situation has arisen due to loss of value re-orientation and character change. We find no harmony

between our inner and outer selves, everywhere there is a feeling of emptiness, dryness and meaninglessness, therefore inculcation of desirable values among students is essential. The future of the human society depends on the judgment of values based education and curriculum reconstruction. Kumar (2015) change is conceived as a process rather than one short activity. Although change takes place in environment of uncertainty and itself is characterized by complexity. Nations can plan the change and change process in light of desire goals.

Sokoya, (2010). Once observed that the foundation of education in Nigeria as laid by the missionary was faulty and cannot meet the current challenges.

### **Conclusion**

Re-thinking philosophy of a vast and diverse nature of our nation to address the current challenges for a better tomorrow is desirable. Many developed nations in the world embraced cultural values and the sanctity of human life for the purpose of human capital development. The destructive tendency in Africa and Nigeria in particular can be associated to loss of our cultural values that promote peace and economy development. Tertiary education is cardinal and must be given a proper place for value re-orientation if we must dust our way to meaningful growth and development. Hence, philosophical knowledge, from the analysis so far, does not essentially differ from scientific knowledge. Thus, Russell stated that there is no special source of wisdom which is open to philosophy but not to science. It is the essential characteristics of philosophy that makes it a study distinct from science and in daily life yet it searches out any inconsistencies. It may be in principles; it only accepts that when after critical examination, no reason for rejecting them has been found. It is also important to know that when philosophy is spoken of as criticism of knowledge, it is necessary to impose a certain limitation. If we adopt the attitude of the complete sceptics, by placing ourselves wholly outside all knowledge, and asking, from the outside position, to be compelled to return within the circle of knowledge, then we are demanding what is impossible, and can never be accepted.

In all, acceptance of knowledge must begin with a piece of knowledge which the disputants share; from blank doubt no argument can begin. Hence the criticism of knowledge must not be of destructive kind, if any result is to be achieved.

Finally, on the value of philosophy to this study, if you as scientist are asked for the value of their area of study to humanity, you will come to know that through the medium of inventions, it is useful to humanity who is ignorant of it.

It is true that it is not really accounted for by the fact that as soon as definite knowledge becomes possible, this subject ceases to be called philosophy and becomes a separate science.

### **Recommendations**

1. Value education should be introduced at all level of education particularly at the tertiary level.
2. Corrupt teachers and students should be expelled or sacked from their places of work.
3. Corrupt politicians, government officials, civil servants should be punished.
4. Nigeria curriculum must always change with time in order to address issues that affect the nation.

5. A workable philosophy of education should be redesigned in our national policy.
6. Government should enforce full implementation of policies that encourages peaceful coexistence and our rich cultural values in the school curriculum.
7. Subject like history, religion, civic education, government and social studies should be made compulsory.
8. Law enforcement agencies should always join hands to address the issue of low morale in our society.

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