

Philosophy of Education and Leadership in Nigeria: Benchmark for Attaining National Development

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Abstract

This paper aimed at investigating the relevance of philosophy of education and leadership, in Nigeria for sustainable national development. The main concepts in the work which includes philosophy of education, leadership and national development were analyzed. It is shown that philosophers are relevant to practical life and national development of many lives and countries in the world, it tries to show how philosophy of education is and how it can be relevant for effective leadership which in turn led to national development. The paper recommends that Nigeria as a nation should Endeavour to fashion out for herself a stable and sound ideology which other sectors of the national life will be pattern or else the future probability of sustainable national development will not be possible.

Key words: *Philosophy of Education, Leadership. Benchmark, Attainment of National Development*

Introduction

Education and leadership in Nigeria raise the following fundamental questions of: Who to lead? How to lead? What type of education is necessary and sufficient for leadership? These questions among others are complex and of philosophical relevance. Philosophy of education is neither limited to conceptually clarifying conceptual categories used in education nor is intellectual engagement with education limited to critical evaluation of problematic education themes and issues, but extends its task to applying the various methodological tools and theories of philosophy to help expose and solve perceive and hitherto unidentified problems both of educational content and those related to education.

In our world today, the problems of leadership are more assuming. It is at the core of social order, national stability and development. Given the phenomenal spreads of democracy in contemporary politics and the changing faces of political values and culture, it is logical to expect the recurring theme of leadership in intellectual discourse. If this is so, the question of what roles does education have toward nurturing and sustaining the right crop of leaders that will man our economy and industrial concerns, our educational, financial and political institutions and as well as another facets of our national life becomes pertinent.

Clarification of Concepts

The writer deep it fit to clarify the key concepts of this article which are; philosophy of education, leadership and national development.

What is philosophy of education? Philosophy of education is the application of philosophy to solve the problems of education. Philosophy of education in the word of Maina (2008) is the "use of philosophical instruments, principles and the application of philosophical methods to

questions of education as well as the relation to education of the relevant results of philosophical thinking". Philosophy is therefore applied to education in investigating educational issues.

To be specific, what is philosophy? The etymological definition of philosophy is attributed by Legend to the famous Mango (2011) too modest to wish to be called wise, he said that he was not a wise man, but only a lover of" wisdom - a philosopher (from the Greek "Philos" - loving and "Sophia" - wisdom)." From time immemorial, philosophy in the true sense has been understood as desire for the highest knowledge, as distinct from everyday and other forms of applied knowledge, and also from religious or mythological forms of thinking. Philosophy in its most original and general sense is defined "as a search for the basic truth, meanings, realities and principles behind the superficial and surface appearance of the phenomena or events. It is finding the rational explanation of what may not be too clear to us."

Leadership is the ability to take an initiative, to motivate, to influence, to direct and control the thoughts, the opinions and the actions of the followers in a given society towards the achievement of purposeful desired ends. Fayemi (2008). Leadership does not necessarily imply the status of a person at the highest helm of affairs, not does it has politically restricted meaning. Leadership in a broad sense is the state of being part of a key stakeholder in an organization, social grouping, society, state of regional borders and the ability to measure-up to duties and responsibilities that go with it. Depending on the levels and number of social grouping (such as family, school, religion, village, corporate establishments).

National development, it refers to such factors as growth in political freedom and participating, growth of knowledge and growth of human control over the natural environment signaled by technological advancement and economic efficiency. Using the above as criteria to evaluate the national developmental effort throughout this century, despite the Nigerian possession of abundant human and material resources, it is still undeveloped, economically, industrially, agriculturally and educationally.

According to Obianuju and Obi (2004) development is a comprehensive change or transformation in cultural, educational, economic, social and political fields in order to enhance living conditions of the greater majority. Development is holistic phenomenon. Saya (2005) defined development as the process of economic, social, political and cultural change engineered in a given area by the efforts of all stakeholders, both internal and external (communities, government, private sector, civil society) with the view to improving the conditions of life of the population in a sustainable way.

Philosophy of Education for National Development

The relevance of philosophy of education cannot be overemphasized; it is essential and very necessary for development of any nation. In the first place, philosophy of education enriches our mental lives and if the mental lives of citizens is enriched, it would enrich the nation and thereby develop it. Russell in Mango (201 1) argues that although philosophy of education does not enhance our physical well-being, it greatly enriches our mental lives. This enrichment does not come from proving definitive answers to philosophical questions, for practically all philosophical questions remain undecided. For example, no one has ever

proved or is likely ever to prove that the universe has or does not have a purpose. The uncertainty in philosophy is an asset rather than a liability. By teaching us to inquire about the universe and question our ordinary beliefs. Philosophy of education liberates us from the prejudices of common sense, culture and custom. This develops greater confidence in us by becoming familiar with the roots of cosmic existence, nature of knowledge and principles of human relations thereby build courage and hope in us which is necessary, thereby build courage and hope in us which is necessary for national development.

Philosophy of education broadens our minds by showing us many different ways of viewing at things in the universe and human existence. It provides us with an insight on how selected philosophies death with problems of life from generation to generation and helps one to understand the different ways of perceiving the truth and reality. This is relevant to national development, because it would enable the country to solve the pervading tribal, ethnic, and religious problems which are formidable obstacle to national development. It helps us to look at problems of life more critically, clearing them of confusions that personal interests prejudiced and emotions may introduce, it also helps us to think more critically and reflectively. It frees us from our instinctive tendency to interpret everything in terms of self. By attempting to see the universe as it is, rather than simply how it affects us, we enlarge our self by learning behind as much as possible rationalizing our hopes and fears our preconceptions and prejudice. And when we enlarge ourselves, we also enlarge the sphere of our actions. And affections which, is necessary for national development, philosophy of education offers deep intellectual development as activity of seeking wisdom. To engage in philosophy of education is to deepen our understanding of fundamental issues and problems of life. The lack of definitive answer in philosophy of education may seen frustrated until we come to see that the value of philosophy lies not so much in theories it produces as in the very activity of seeking wisdom. When citizens are led into activity of seeking wisdom the country is already on the path of development. In the activity of philosophy, philosophy of education has a humbling effect on those who pursue it thereby develops an open and questioning altitude in them and the nation in general. The humbling effect of philosophy of education helps us to have an open mind and questioning attitude since new evidence may render ones previous opinion less tenable.

Philosophy of education according to Maina (2008) can also be intellectually exciting. If a student understands philosophy of education artistically pondering its meaning for education and for himself, he can find it very vital and thought provoking, thereby offers deep intellectual development. It offers personal intellectual education to teacher and nation in general, that is, engagement in philosophy of education makes a teacher and nation to continue to develop himself and itself intellectually. A teacher or a nation can never truly teach unless he or it continues to learn himself or itself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flames. This means that a teacher or a nation should continue to develop himself or itself.

One of the common interpretations of philosophy of education is to consider it in the light of a country's laid down education policy. A good and every genuine national policy on education should be built upon a given philosophy of education which must be based on the following according to Fayemi (2011):

- i. The native of the society desired by the nation and should be built on a certain metaphysical world view. It must rest on the nation and value system or theory of what is considered as most valuable
- ii. The nature of man desired by the nation and this is concerned with the type of people that should be produced for the nation as conceived by the nation.
- iii. The type of knowledge to be provided and this concerned the knowledge worth fostering and promoting.

The inherited formal education which most of the developing nations like Nigeria have adopted obeyed these criteria, but mostly based on certain metaphysical worldview and set of value which have been developed in the Western Europe. It contains a world view, view of men and society which is particularly western. It is against this background that Nigeria's education is not developing the country, but with relevance of the criteria for formulating philosophy of education for a country, the country will develop. Also, philosophy of education has been taken as ideas that have governed the educational practice of a people from the past down the ages. This is why Nigeria continues with the colonial formal education without thinking of its own philosophy of education, until after independence on which again confused philosophy of education in form of formal education was adopted as the nation's philosophy of education. A formal education without genuine nation philosophy of education cannot lead to education and development. This is the problem we have in Nigeria education for what we have is a formal education for schooling domestication, and underdevelopment, because it lacks its own philosophy of education. Understanding this criteria and building national policy on education and educational system on it would certainly lead to national development.

Philosophy literary means "love of wisdom" or "pursuit of knowledge". This idea of seeking wisdom or knowledge was central in the primary role of philosophy as teaching the good life. It prescribes the good life to follow. Even the more abstract aspect of philosophy plays its role in achieving this goal, because continues pursuit and seeking for knowledge and understanding were part of good life. Pythagoras (201 I) distinguished three kind of lives, and by implication three divisions of people. These are he said, three different kinds of people who go to Olympic games. The lowest is made of those who go there to buy and sell, to make profit. Next are those who go there to compete, to gain honors. Best of all, he thought, are those who come as spectators, who reflect upon analyses what is happening, who insisting constant pursuit of knowledge of these three, the spectators illustrate the activity of philosophers who are liberated from daily life and its infections in the course of continues pursuit and seeking for knowledge. In other words, there are three different kinds of people in the word-the lovers of money, the lovers of honor, and the lovers of wisdom or the educated. The educated are the best, while the lowest are the lovers of money.

A country that is always moving toward continues seeking for knowledge is the country that is on the path of development. Over time, people have mistaken the good things which are not really good, for example, unlimited wealth and power which are acquired wrongly. Socrates in Akinpelu (2005) maintained that "unexamined life is not worth living" is always quoted as the embodiment of an ideal philosopher or lover of wisdom. Wisdom or knowledge is a necessary means to a good life and development. The classic conception of philosophy "to know the good is to do it" was also central in the writing of Plato. Plato in

Nduka (2006) attempted to lead people to the good life for development raised fundamental philosophical questions that would lead to good life and development. The questions raised are: what is knowledge? What is the nature of reality? What is the nature of the physical world? What is human nature? What is the highest good for human beings? What is virtue or right conduct?

Philosophy of education is concerned with criticism or clarification of ideas, concepts, assumptions beliefs and problem of the subject matter in question: There have been plenty of cynical or skeptical critics who have pointed to the activities of philosophers that the very hope that philosophy might give knowledge or enlightenment of any kind is a chimerical one. But this skeptical attitude results from misunderstanding the significance of the critical activities of philosophers. Indeed, its significance has been appreciated by philosophers themselves only in quite recent years. The work off more and reseal in Mango (2011) in the early years of the century was the first stage of a revolution in philosophy that is still in progress. The work of the leading quality Cal philosophers in recent years has made it clear that philosophy, is not a body of knowledge of a positive kind, like history, biology and geography. It helps towards the solution of education problems by clarifying them of confusions. Philosophy of education relies on the validity and soundness of argument than on the acuity of the person arguing the case it encourages teachers to look t educational problems more critical by clearing them of the confusion that personal interests and prejudiced emotions usually introduced in education discussions indeed, criticism or clarification is a tool and weapon for national development.

Philosophy as an activity is relevant to national development because we learn it by doping it, Kant (1985) says “you will never learn from me philosophy but how to philosophize, not thought to repeat, but how to think,” philosophers are concerned with article examination of 10 phenomenon of human experience, evaluation of information and human affairs in attempts to construct some systematic, coherent and consistent picture of all that we know and think. In learning philosophy philosophers have thought and said about the central problem of philosophy, and indicate the kind of techniques and ways of reasoning that are relevant to the handing of philosophical problems. Philosophy of education helps in developing the skills of clear thinking what in turn leads to national development by improving the nation’s clear thinking on national issues.

Philosophy of education helps the teachers to become more aware of the implication of various issues involved in education. This, by engaging in thinking on the subject matt5er of inquiring himself, he will discover other dimensions of truths, meaning realities and principles which other education have neglected and this may lead to national development. It therefore helps in the development of critical mind in teachers and promotes the same in his students. It also provides an understanding of some of the most important considerations and issues in education. Such understanding can improve educational policy and practice, and examination of current beliefs conceiving education. This understanding; provides tools for national decision-making and a teacher at higher level of policy making and sifting goals for education. It increase the ability of the teacher to influence educational polices under which he operates since his engagement in the heretical discussions of educational issues and problems would enable him to be at the receiving end of educational polities formulated by others. Rather he will be cooperating with others to formulate more adequate policies which

he will implement in the classroom and guarantees the general national development against this background; it enables teachers to appraise their progress and shortcomings against the background aims and objectives of educational programme. This shows that any activity which has no philosophy cannot be appraise as success or failure. Thus, it helps the nation to know its obligations and do it very well for national development.

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Philosophy of Education and Leadership in Nigeria

The question, who is to rule? Plato quickly mentioned that unless the philosopher kings rule, state will not see peace. This may not be completely accepted for while we accept the role of education in good governance, it cannot be the case that all educated people give good leadership, just, as in the event that some non-philosopher kings give good leadership. History has shown that Nigeria before and after independence has been having problems of leadership. So far for what had been discussed only philosophy of education can promote good leadership in Nigeria

Ayo (2009) maintained that the greatest problem Nigeria has had to face since independence is that of leadership. Like the most fundamental problem of political Philosophy. Education and leadership are not satisfactory. With the type and state of education that we have in Nigeria totally, the nation cannot be enmeshed in the leadership crisis it is currently battling with. The leadership turmoil that we soaked in is more of a direct consequence of the mishaps in the education system. Where there is no enabling psychological and economic environment for both leaders and tutors, where there is infrastructural decay, where the curriculum is doggedly in-balanced and conflict with contemporary realities and challenges where teachers groan and down tools before due remunerations, work yearning and other aspiration are made to see the light of the day by the concerned authorities. What miracles do we then expect to happen in the process of nurturing essential leadership qualities of learners?

We need to move beyond the present statusquo overcoming our present challenges and march forward by conscientiously aspiring towards the ideal. Education ought to be a vehicle for discovering, nurturing and developing leadership qualities and skills potentially inherent in every being. Good education is the sine qua non of good leadership with the right education; leaders should be equipped with the basic mental, physical, moral, technical and psychological essential of leadership. Every child is a potential leader that can achieve his or her dreams if provided with an enabling environment right from the mother's womb into adulthood.

Ayo (2009) maintained that a good balance education automatically produces a total personality. To attain this ideal, there is the need to embrace philosophy of education by the government and stakeholders, educators and teachers at all levels and parents. Our educational policy as well as the curriculum should reflect philosophy of education. The nurturing of leadership skills the learners' right from the basic educational stage. The absent of philosophy of education goal in our education policy is partly responsible for the leviathan and Machiavellian type of leadership that dominate the Nigerian society. A Leviathan wields absolute power over and above his/her subjects while Machiavellian rules with deceit for the sole aim of retaining power.

In order to maintain and sustain national development, our educational policy and curricula objectives should aim at producing graduates who can effectively use their knowledge of philosophy of education to tackle technical and analytical problems of the world. Providing them with leadership abilities in managing the affairs and contentious issues arising from different aspects and levels of their social living. Alozie (2005) was of the view that the curricula of basic, post basic, tertiary and post-graduate institutions should be designed to focus sufficient attention on leadership development with which to develop the Nigerian society to compete globally.

The above calls for the inclusion of philosophy of education for leadership in curricula and educational policy objectives and this poses challenges and responsibility on the teacher. Teachers ought to be role models for learners. Their teachings on nurturing leadership qualities in learners must be first and foremost, demonstrable. Our education system is not in need of, “do as I say teachers, but rather, do as I do teachers”. For we philosophers of education, we have the task of training the potential trainers, that is our students, on the way and how of being Socratic teachers'. A Socratic teacher, teaches and shows learners to desire and aspire to leadership position for the passion of selfless service for humanity, how to lead in a manner that will inspire confidence in followers and be committed to mutual purposes and interests. Regardless of disciplinary orientations, learners must be guided to develop and sustain some attitudinal values such as; integrity, loyalty, patriotism, empathy for the common good and building a community with strong institutions.

Fayemi (2008) makes it categorically clear that the values being promoted by the current feat in information and communication technology (ICT) age must not be uncritically allowed to thwart the system between education and leadership. The educated man in this digital age is conceived as one who has the 21st century skills (consisting of functional literacy, visual literacy, scientific literacy, technological literacy, information literacy and global awareness), inventive thinking, higher order thinking and sound reasoning, effective communication and high productivity. As important as these are, the moral basis and essential of fostering leadership are deemphasized. For this reason, sound moral values should be the basis of education for leadership skills. Having established the relationship that ought to exist between education and leadership, it needs to be stated that for this ideal to be translated into reality in Nigeria, the chain of problems dotting our education system must be forestalled.

Given the fact that the principal concern of education is the shaping of the society, it is strongly advised that the budgetary allocation to education should aim at the UNESCO's recommendation standard of 20% of the total national budget- The reason for this is that Nigeria cannot experience integrated development without investment in human resources through education. Also, it is hoped that the current federal government policy of zero tolerance for corruption will eliminate corruption and indiscipline in the management of educational funds.

In view of the above Obanya (2004) lamented that Nigeria despite her fifty-seven years of national history has not concretely spelt over her philosophy of education. All there

is as of today, is the national policy on education which is just a volume show-casing governments ways of achieving parts of our national objectives through education. The absence of a Nigerian philosophy of education is not a product of the dearth of philosophy of education in the country, rather, it is a function of the lacuna of national ideology. Nigeria unlike America and other developed nations of the world, has no precise and articulate ideology of her own. America is known for pragmatism and capitalism and as such, the philosophy of American education system is based on these ideologies. Socialist states like Cuba and Yugoslavia based their philosophy of education on the principles of socialism and their educational systems are made to reflect this. Until Nigeria fashions for herself a stable and sound ideology which other sectors of national life will be patterned after, the future probability of sustainable national development in Nigeria may be dwindled.

Philosophy of education must be taken seriously as a source and consequence of national development. It must be made responsive to the needs of the people and designed, planned and managed in collaboration with the people. Gone are those days when education was an instrument of preparing people to join and work with the Nigerian Civil Service. With the currently population explosion, it has become increasingly difficult for government to give employment to all educated persons. The focus of education now must be how to mould self-reliant entrepreneurs who can man the industrial concerns of the nation.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that the relevance of philosophy of education and leadership in Nigeria for sustaining national development as discussed in the paper needs serious attention and recognition by Nigerian government stakeholders, educators, policy makers and philosophers of education in translating theories to practice for national development.

Recommendations

1. Just like other developed nations in the world, Nigeria as a nation should endeavour to fashion for herself a stable and sound ideology which other sectors of national life will be pattern or else the future probability of sustainable national development will not be possible
2. The writer strongly recommended that for Nigerian to achieve sustainable national development the budgetary allocation to education should aim at the UNESCO's recommendation standard of the 20% of the total national budgetary.

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