

# THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF NIGERIA

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A nation's policy on education is government's way of realizing that part of the national goals which can achieve, using education as a tool. No policy on education, however, can be formulated without first identifying the overall philosophy and goals of the nation.

This paper tries to highlight the provocative and unique issue in philosophy concerning Education in Nigeria, a quite a number of philosophical principles are generally utilized in the promotion of Education. Philosophical issues of consideration are vital process in the developmental process, and they offer a universal blueprint for all sets of functional Education activities in Nigeria. According to Onwuama, he views philosophy as: A critical, reflective and unbiased investigation on development aimed at providing principles, theories for development. Philosophical issues for development refer to those areas and problems of development that are reserved exclusively for philosophical clarifications and hermeneutics [1].

Nigeria Government introduce 6–3–3–4 system of Education in Nigeria, the recipient of the Education would spend six years in primary school, three years in junior secondary school, three years in senior secondary school, and four years in a tertiary institution.

According to the National Universities Commission (NUC), Nigeria presently has forty-three Federal Universities, forty-eight State Universities, and seventy-nine Private Universities. There are 170 universities in total.

The analysis gathers that applicants for admission into universities in Nigeria consider academic stability, popularity, affordability, available facilities and quality of lecturers in determining the choices of preferred universities.

Philosophy and education in Nigeria: Forty-three universities offer philosophy in Nigeria. Why do we need philosophy?

– In order to know how best to do something, you need to be very clear about what it is that you are trying to accomplish.

– Philosophy is teaches the student rigorous critical thinking which helps them in the carriers.

– Philosophy is grounds students in an intellectual tradition larger than their own personal opinions.

The task of a genuine philosophical inquiry is important for human development in Nigeria, because it will assist us to a more profound understanding of the society, to a better human development. In 1960 at the inception of Nigerian independence, it inherited what were actually for economies, the traditional African indigenous economy, the modern, the Christian religious economic tradition, and the Islamic – religious traditions.

In this section, therefore, we shall attempt to highlight the role of philosophy in our contemporary Nigerian society under the following subheadings.

Philosophy and Ethnic Relation in Nigeria: Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation. Nigeria today has more than 250 ethnic groups. Each of the ethnic groups has a distinct language that characterizes the particular group. Ethnic relation in Nigeria is such that it is characterized by division, hatred and rancour. Nigeria is a place where the Hausa person feels at home only with a fellow Hausa person. The same thing is applicable to other ethnic groups. There is a kind of natural hatred of one ethnic group against another. This is where the study of philosophy plays a major role. Our knowledge of substance and accidents in metaphysics (a branch of philosophy) shows that every human person shares one substance – the humanity of the human person. The humanness of the Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Efik or Ijaw is not lesser or higher than the humanness of the Fulani, Tiv, Idoma, Esan or Egede as the case may be. We all share humanity. The fact that one is an Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa is simply accidental to the being of the individual person. In this regard therefore, the study of philosophy will certainly play a vital role to unite Nigeria together. It will help Nigerians to realize the existential fact that there is no essential difference among all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. This is a significant role that philosophy plays in or should play in our contemporary Nigerian society. This understanding will bring about good relationship among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria [2].

The idea of human nature and rights from where the declaration of human rights came originated from philosophies of such people as St. Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jacque Rousseau and others. The point being made here is that the study of philosophy provides us with the necessary ingredients for good and authentic human relation that is devoid of tribal sentiments. It provides for an unbiased assessment of human behaviour irrespective of one's ethnic affiliation.

Philosophy and the Political Sphere in Nigeria: As a nation, Nigeria has experienced different political dispensations. It is true that the human person is a political animal but it is also true that politics as it is being practiced in Nigeria cannot grow or even develop

without the aid of philosophy. Our politicians need at least a little dose of philosophy in order to be truly rational in all their dealings. It takes a good dose of philosophy for one to understand and evaluate the essential needs of one's people.

**Philosophy and the Religious Sphere in Nigeria:** Philosophy has a major role to play in the way and manner religion is understood and practiced in Nigeria. From our knowledge of metaphysics, we learnt that everything that is, derived its being from the being that is by necessity. This being that is by necessity is what religious people call God. This is a simple philosophical knowledge. The implication of this understanding is that there is only one Supreme Being that is approached differently. The knowledge of philosophy will help the contemporary Nigerians to appreciate the fact that each of us is unique and as such every religion is unique. It is philosophy that should help us to respect the views of others, be it religious views or otherwise. Basic philosophical knowledge will make Christians, Moslems and Traditional Worshipers in Nigeria to tolerate each other without any form of violence or hatred. So because of the fact that philosophy is love of wisdom, it will dispose Nigerians to appreciate the good aspects of each religious group in Nigeria. In this regard, Christians and Moslems are to see themselves as collaborators and not as enemies. This is the "magic" of philosophy [3].

**Philosophy and Economic Development:** In a general parlance, economic development has to do with the production and distribution of goods and services for the good of human society. Philosophy has what it takes to develop Nigerian economy. Philosophy, we must recall, is a reflective activity. And it takes only a reflective mind to bring about economic growth and development. It will not be an overstatement to say that Nigerian economic problem is hinged on the lack of philosophical training. It is clear that when the mind is developed, it will certainly affect other aspect of human endeavour.

**Philosophy and Social Change:** By a simple definition, social change means any form of alteration in the social order of the society. It is a kind of paradigm shift. The basis of social change is the transformation in the thought processes of the human person. The study of philosophy can bring about social change in Nigeria. This is possible because philosophy sharpens our minds and liberates us from the shackles of prejudices of our age. With this sharpened and correct state of mind, Nigerians can now question certain cultures and traditions that contradict human rationality. Such practices that do not fall in line with reason are to be discarded or modified. This is where the radiant light of philosophy shines that brings about social change. Philosophy provides us with the intellectual disposition and stamina to jettison varied superstitious beliefs in our locality.

The attempt of this paper so far has been to justify the important role of philosophy in our contemporary society. We have tried to do justice to it. However, the claim of the researcher is not that the aforementioned is all there is about the role of philosophy in our contemporary Nigerian society. The value of philosophy cannot be overemphasized.

#### Reference

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