AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, AND FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION: FOR RAPID DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN AFRICA

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Abstract
African nations have multiple problems and challenges, ranging from bad leadership and corruption, through famine, hunger and poverty, terrorist attack, violence, abuse and exclusion of others (ostracization). Using Nigeria as an example, one sees an era of unknown gunmen, born out of some ethnic or tribal agitations, youths' restiveness, violence, banditry, herdsmen attack, and Boko Haram attack. African continent is mostly known for its poverty and under development. The main purpose of this research is to see how African Philosophy, African Religion, and Functional Education can foster rapid development in African nation, thus alleviating or eradicating poverty. And we do this in Philosophical style, through analytical method. We clarify expression by elucidation of its use in a discourse. We analyze concepts, words, ideas, experiences etc, in order to bring deeper meaning and clarity of thought. Analytic method of Philosophical research enquiry is proper here, as the goal of every Philosophical enquiry is ultimate search for truth. Among our findings is that African nations need not just "knowledge for knowledge sake as emphasized by early Greek philosophers", but most importantly is that African nations need education with utility, (functional education), one with relevance, where utility or usability is seen in both its short and long terms. Thus, need for urgent review of most African nations' education curricula. It is obvious that through the processes of formal, non formal and informal educational information, formation and reformation, most African youths can acquire most basics and necessary entrepreneurial skills to become independent and useful in their various societies. Through sound African philosophical ideas, sound Religious beliefs and teachings, and through accountability by political leaders, corruption and bad leadership is reduced and finally, through refined African culture, and functional education, rapid development is then assured and poverty alleviated.
Keywords: philosophy, African Philosophy, Religion, Education, Functional Education, Development and African Development.

Introduction

Development has been a vital issue as far as mankind is concerned. Philosophically, development is linked with man as a rational being; and not to other animals and birds. Raven for instance has been making its nest in a stereotype manner for years and centuries. But ever since the world began man as a rational animal has constantly advancing or improving his environment and this he does nowadays in gland style through science, technology and even through hyper technology. African continent is a great and rich continent, counting from the availability of both human and natural resources. Africa has a large quantity of natural resources, including diamond, sugar, salt, gold, iron, cobalt, uranium, copper, bauxite, silver, petroleum, and cocoa beans, tropical timber and tropical fruits are inclusive. Recent oil reserves in Africa have eminently increased its economy. In African oil output, we have Nigeria, Sudan, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Angola, Gabon, the DRC, Cameroon, Tunisia, Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Congo and others.

However, not minding the availability of natural and human resources, African continent is still not developed owing to so many ills. African nations have suffered much from bad leadership of military dictatorships and of course corrupted democratic leaders. Corruption as a cankerworm has eaten deep into the African political leadership and has seriously impeded rapid development in the continent. Indeed, many African countries have embraced democracy as open sesame to effective government, but the practice of this ideology in Africa has not brought much dividend, as the practice of institutional processes of democracy, alongside capitalist model of globalization, neo-colonialism has turned Africa and Nigeria in particular into state of political confusion and loss of fine tuned democratic identity.

Some African countries, Nigeria for instance suffers also from wrong amalgamation where some tribes that like and really works for development are frustrated daily by the some other region through political power, of course gotten through numerical strength. Now, as we portray extensively how African philosophy, Religion, and functional education can help in quick development of African nations, we begin with definition or explication of terminologies.

Religion

It is very difficult to define Religion; Ikenga Metuh holds that it is an elusive concept as far as its definition is concerned. This he said is because the object of religion for the most part is invisible and spiritual beings are not subject to

observation and are concerned in different ways by different peoples.[1] We have definitions of religion, given by some renowned authors like E.B Tylor, J. Martineau, H. Spencer J.G Frazer, and others. Tylor holds that Religion is a belief in spiritual being.[2] However; this definition was greatly criticized as taking a very restricted view of both object and subject of religion. Martineau holds that Religion is the belief in an ever living God that is, in a divine mind and will, ruling the universe and holding moral relations with man.[3] Spencer holds that Religion is a recognition that all things are manifestations of a power which transcends over knowledge.[4] Frazer holds by religion, he understood "a propitiation, conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the cause of nature and of human life.[5]

Without much critique, we work with the above definitions of religion, only it is worthy to note that each stressed one aspect or another of religion to the exclusion of others. Thus Martineau and Spencer represent religion as some sort of belief or other cognitive state. Frazer sees it as ritual (conceived in a utilitarian fashion). Definition points to the essence and Julian Huxley writes that "the essence of religion springs from man's capacity for awe and reverence, that the objects of religion… are in the origin and essence those things events and ideas which arouse the feelings of sacredness"[6]

Philosophy

The word philosophy can be employed to express an attitude, worldview or even principles chosen to govern life. In this sense then, one often hears another say "my philosophy of life", "the philosophy guiding my actions" Philosophy is seen as a somewhat complex intellectual endeavor such that it is even difficult for philosophers to unanimously agree on its definition. However, there are common grounds among philosophers pertaining to the etymology of the word 'philosophy' as one may see in many philosophical texts. Martin Heidegger says that "philosophy speaks Greek"[7]. Etymologically, the word "philosophy" comes from two Greek words joined together: "philos" and "Sophia". philein- to love, philos- loving, philia- love, sophos-wise, Sophia-wisdom. Hence, we can say, "philosophia esti philia tes Sophias"- "philosophy is love of wisdom". A philosopher is a lover of wisdom, a person strongly desirous of wisdom. Wisdom here begins with wonder that is, astonishment. This kind of wonder is not ordinary wonder but of deep curiosity. As Plato would say, "It is through wonder that those who began philosophy started off". Also, in Theatetus 860,

155d "The sense of wonder is the mark of a philosopher"[8]. Philosophers wonder about things through reflective thinking and through their ultimate causes. Hence, the scholastics defined philosophy as "Scientia rerum per ultimas causas" which means "Science of everything through their ultimate causes"

African philosophy is a critical thinking by Africans on their experiences of reality. It is a way in which African people of the past and present make sense of their destiny and of the world in which they live. And the world in question is both visible and invisible.

Education
Etymologically from the idealist perspective, education is derived from the Latin word "educare" which means to lead forth, drag out or to pull out ideas which are believed to be innate from childhood.[9] So, education implies to lead out of darkness, a bringing forth into light. It is enlightenment. For Plato and other idealists, education involves stimulation of innate ideas or abilities in an individual, to grow and blossom into original thought and wisdom. For John Locke and other Realists, the Latin educare means sending in or putting in ideas into the mind of a child which is believed to be blank or empty at birth. Here, it involves forming or training the individual with experiences. Which are acquired through senses and these senses provides the mind with impressions and information.

Education has various definitions. Education is defined as the process or means by which the individual is acclimatized to the culture or environment in which he is born in order to advance it.[10] Education here is believed to be process and an instrument both for social and economic development. Again, Education has been defined as a deliberate systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and sensibilities.[11.] Here education is seen from the universal sense of its formal and informal contents. All aspects of learning that enables the individual interact fully with his environment is emphasized. Is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.[12] Reid holds that "education is a purposive activity towards ends which are rightly or wrongly deemed to be good"[13.] While Essien holds that we think of education and educated in terms of the very restrictive labels of engineers, mathematicians, doctors, lawyers, nurses rather than in those of citizens.

Functional Education is the total process of bringing up individuals to develop their potentials (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) to the fullest and consequentially be able to contribute maximally to the development of the society.

Development

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines development as the process of gradually becoming bigger, stronger or more advanced[14]. For Walter Rodney, it is "*an overall social process which is dependent upon the outcome of man's effort to deal with his natural environment*"[15]. He thus sees development from an economic point of view. Development is a process that is on-going. In order words, it is dynamic rather than being static. According to Pantaleon Iroegbu, development means: "*the progressive unfolding of inner potentialities of a given realities. It is to de-envelope, that is to bring out to light existential, functional and epistemic, what was enveloped, folded or hidden*"[16].

Development is the unwrapping of potentials. In the same vein, Lebret holds that a development has to do with growth and creativity of all human potentials achieved at the lowest possible cost in human suffering and in sacrificed value.[17] Human development in contrast to "envelopment" implies advancement, evolution, expansion, improvement, increase, progress, addition, boost, buildup, enlargement, flowering, maturation, maturity, progression, reinforcement, ripening unfolding, elaborating etc. Development means a progression from a simple or lower to a more advanced, matured or complex form or stage. It is also defined as a gradual advancement or growth through a series of progressive changes. Development is a process not a level. It is a path to achieve certain goals, a striving towards perfection.

In line with the above, Chuba Okadigbo holds that "*development is a movement from bad or good to better, from better to best, from primitive to civilization, from stone age to machine age, from slavery to freedom, feudalism to capitalism, from illiteracy to literacy, from ignorance to wisdom, from abject poverty to relative richness, from colonialism to political independence, from political independence to economic development, from tribalism to nationalism, from nationalism to pan-Africanism*". Truly, development is many-sided process. It involves material, social, spiritual and moral dimensions. A genuine development is one that is accessed in terms of the welfare of human beings who at the same time serve as agent and shapers of the developmental process. This implies that the human person is indispensable, for he/she is the determinant of development.

Africa and Development

Without much emphasis on some theories of development like, modernization, globalization, dependency and world system theory, one sees immediately that African countries are under developed and is characterized by poverty. All over towns and villages are faces of malnourished people, squalid living conditions, diseased with scanty medical facilities, roadside beggars, street children, etc. Thus the fathers of African Synod write that:

> One common situation without any doubt is that Africa is full of problems. In all the nations, there is abject, tragic mismanagement of available scarce resources, political instability and social disorientation. The result stare us in the face: misery, wars, despair. In the world controlled by rich and powerful nations, Africa has practically become an irrelevant appendix, often forgotten and neglected [18].

Corruption is the major factor militating African development. Gorge Ehuasani writing on Nigeria writes that:

> Nigeria has been stripped naked by corrupt, greedy and callous elites. They have been humiliated, pauperized and reduced to a state of destitute by the combined forces of military dictatorship, political subterfuge, economic profligacy and moral degeneracy.[19]

The above statements on Nigeria state are still valid today as is still corrupt and has been managed and even presently being managed by corrupt leaders who have made the state an instrument of capital accumulation; rather than using it for the interest or for the development of the citizenry. Africans may have a good plan for development, but as is supervised by corrupt leaders, they can hardly do a thorough job as corruption and development are antithetical. Many African leaders are not working towards sustainable development goals.

Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sustainable development is the development that meets the need of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. It is the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs[20] Sustainable developmental goals are the blue print to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Sustainable development goals is a global goals or a collection of 17

interlinked global goals designed to be a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all[21] (by 2030). The 17 SDGs were adapted by all United Nations member states in 2015 general assembly, with 169 targets to reach or to be achieved by 2030. The goals and targets are universal, meaning they apply to all countries around the world, not just poor countries. Here are the 17 sustainable development goals to transform our world:

1. No poverty; 2. Zero Hunger; 3. Good Health and well being; 4. Quality Education;
5. Gender equality; 6. Clean Water and Sanitation; 7. Affordable and clean energy;
8. Decent work and Economic Growth; 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure;
10. Reduced Inequality; 11. Sustainable city and communities; 12. Responsible consumption and production; 13. Climate action; 14. Life below water; 15. Life on land; 16. Peace and justice, strong institution; 17. Partnership to achieve the goal[22]

Instead of African nations strategizing on the attainment of at least one of the above goals, they are mainly pre occupied with ethnic and religious crises, terrorist's attacks, Nigeria is a good instance. We now see how philosophy can help Africa in speedy development.

African Philosophy and African Development

Existence of Philosophy in African was debated in the past, but nowadays, many scholars believe that Africans have Philosophy, however based on the coherency, criticality or logicality, scientificity and systematicity of that African thought in question. This Philosophy is known as African Philosophy. Plato (in western Philosophy) used his socio-political philosophy in ancient era to confront and solve the political scenario and challenges of the Greek city states, likewise, African philosophers and philosophy are meant to address both the socio-political, as well as the economic problems and challenges of African nations and people. Thus, African Philosophy brings development and the betterment of an African man is arrived at, for the purpose of development is for the improvement or betterment of the lots of mankind.

African philosophy first develops (an African) man as it makes man to see himself, not just as a being, but as an African man as well, for understanding of oneself is starting of man's development, thus the Socratic /Delphic oracle dictum "man know thyself". African philosophy develops Africa by recreating

African socio-political world by imparting rationality, logicality, criticality and systematicity to the minds of Africans as philosophy is never a mere opinion, statements or recommendations of people, rather it's a personal critical thinking/enterprise.

African philosophy helps in development of African continent as it sharpens one's rationality to tackle African problems. Thus, B.O Eboh and C.B Okolo are convinced that the problems bedeviled African is basically problem of the mind[23] Thus, our problems, be they in moral, economical, political and technological fields arise out of some prejudice and bias of the mind and until our minds are liberated from these prejudices and bias, true development remains a mirage to us[24]

Philosophy broadens ones horizon and vision about his world, life and problems and the rationality in question is versatile to many fields of human endeavors. Philosophy also exerts its own influence on African society. African socio-political philosophy evaluates and seeks rational justification for any form of government in Africa, hence philosophy becomes a critique of ideologies, and thus philosophy is particularly relevant in the sphere of politics, as held by some thinkers as P. Hountondji and O. Oladipo inclusive. In the past, some African scholalars and nationalists in quest for African development came up with some ideologies, example is Zik's socialism (welfarism) and Nkrumah's consciencism and others, thus, a big challenge to the present African philosophers and scholars to confront African bad leadership scenario nowadays.

Religion and African Development
African world view is one peopled by spirits; such makes an African man to be very religious. We have so many kinds of religion in African continent, but the most predominantly three among them are: Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion (ATR). Religion is really essential in African development especially as it concerns religious or moral instruction/education and its impacts on African man, also, recourse will be made on African tradional religious values as well.

Religious Education and African Development
Religious education is the term given to education concerned with religion. It may refer to education provided by the church or religious organization for instruction in doctrine and faith, or for education in various aspects of religion, but without explicitly religious or moral aims.[7] In a school or college, the term is often known as religious studies. Religious education is also called moral

education, and it is a process where children and young people engage in a search for meaning, value and purpose of life. This involves both exploration of beliefs and values and study of how such beliefs and values are expressed.

Religious education helps in moral formation of children and adult as well and this helps a lot as far as nation building / African development is concerned. Indeed with proper moral formation from parents and teachers and religious leaders, so many woes ranging from theft, human trafficking, kidnapping, and public fund embezzlement, ritual killing and the likes which are prevalent in most African nations will be reduced drastically. Likewise, moral education teaches the youths not to be lazy, but to be hard working/industrious.

Development via Value System re-orientation and Ethical Sanitization
In Africa, Religious education brings development of man through value system re-orientation and ethical sanitization. In Nigeria for instance, one sees that most citizens are self-centered and corrupt. Lack of self-discipline both as individuals and as a society is a major setback to the country. Others includes corruption which is the decline in moral or ethical values, thereby getting into moral anarchy, modernization of values, much recognition and esteem to riches and intellects and conceptual debasement of leadership itself. Owing to the above evils, there is an urgent need for ethical sanitization and re-orientation of the value system. We need to hold esteem, the value of handwork, and inculcate it to our youths for as Franc-Fanon said: work, over and above everything else defines the essence of man, defines the existence of man. Another is value of truth, for truth is now a scarce commodity, the value of respect for the elders and superiors, self discipline, and finally, respect for life which has mostly violated in our country Nigeria since the presence of Boko Haram insurgency in 2009 and Fulani herdsmen, Kidnappers, Gunmen, and Armed Bandits since 2015. Nowadays, in 2022, the situation is worst as there are killings everywhere. Religion plays its role as we see many bishops, priests and pastors reminding Nigerians, the value of human life.

African Traditional Religion Values and African Development
Developing African nations in a pluralist African continent that encompasses different ethnic nationalities, diverse languages and dialects, diverse political structures on the one hand, on the other, the overwhelming influence of western and other era till date poses challenge to a smooth socio-political blueprint for the African continent. African development has not been a smooth task for Africans as the continent strives to build its place in the international political

sphere. Given its unifying ties that link the whole of Africa as one in one indigenous African Religious Spirit, it is believed that those values that are commonly shared by all Africans irrespective of ethnic background can be revitalized and infused into the very fabric of present-day African socio-political institutions and when this is done, speedy development is the result. However, this is not a call to idol worshipping as westerners see it, nor is it a call to return back antiquity. It can be said rather to entail a reconstruction of the pre-colonial African socio-cultural and religious setting to highlighting those religious values, and thus seek a cultural re-orientation of the African mindset in the wake of positive contemporary influences.

So, revocation of the African Religious Spirit with the various modes of particular manifestations will definitely help in the development of African nations. Those values include: Fear of the divine, Respect for the other, Respect for traditional norms and ethics, Value for collective responsibility towards community building, Respect for political institutions and system of social responsibility and accountability on the path of leaders, Selflessness in community service, Commitment to social justice and rule of law (the example of customary law practice in indigenous Africa), Commitment to truth and justice, Reverence for power and position in the social and cultural in nature apart from being religious were all inspired by the religious attitude in the West African man and woman.

Education and Development of African man and African Informal Business Sector
Education has been a vehicle of sustainable economic development. Thus the goal or purpose of education prior to 1960 (in Nigeria) was simple to lead into light or enlightenment/development of the new generation of civil servants and public servants who would take over from the colonial masters from all facets of the society.

The role of education in the holistic development of informal sector must be emphasized. And by this we mean the development of man as we know that it is man that will effect the change or transformation needed. Education is a panacea to Nigerian (African) development. In the face of moderate technological advancement, we Nigerians are still hovering under the shackles of ignorance, colonialism and primitivity. We are not yet with authentic or **quality and functional** education and political system, Nigerian leaders formulate

educational policies without philosophical involvement, and our political and ideological re-orientation of the society is poor. Practical education and experiences are needed in schools. Students not only write assignments, they need interpersonal experiences, both national and international. They can learn more through excursions, practical experiences, essay writings and the likes. Educational methods we recall includes story-telling, discussion, teaching, training and directed research. Pantaleon Iroegbu in his own solution pertaining to ethics and human development in view of technological challenges gave his own proposal which he called Enwisdomization of technology. By this, he meant the education of technology and all its tools, objects and subjects, personnel and advisers to operate within the norms of full authentic and integral humanity, balanced care of the universe, and reasonable projection and development of our own world. Enwisdomizing, he said does the work of "*Nkuzi*" (knock aright), that is, forms, informs and reforms technology[20.] Likewise, education forms, informs and reforms our informal sector of business economy for enormous contribution towards sustainable development and betterment of the lot of mankind. Through quality education in form of conferences at the community squares, seminars, workshops, the young entrepreneurs learn how to be available in their business so as to achieve their vision and mission. They learn how to be amiable, thus promoting public/customer relation and they likewise learn how to be accountable through book keeping and accounting. All these help in protection or security of the business itself.

Educational methods includes: storytelling, discussion, teaching, training and directed research. Education is the primary vehicle through which children and even adults use to learn the norms, values and skills they needed to function in society. Under types of education, we have:

Formal Education is the one normally delivered by trained teachers in a systematic intentional way, within a school, higher education or school or university. It is on regular basis, formally recognized, program is rigid and credential is gotten.

Informal education - This refers to one that can occur outside a structured curriculum, it can occur through conversation and exploration and enlargement of experience can occur unnoticed. It includes home schooling, auto-didacticism (self-teaching) and youth work**.**

Non-formal Education includes various structured situations which do not either have the level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation and certification associated with formal learning, but, have more structure than that associated with informal which typically take place naturally and spontaneously as part of other activities, e.g. swimming session for toddlers, community based sports programs, boys scouts and girls guilds programs, community or non credit adult education courses, professional conference style seminars and continuing professional development.

Functional Education and African development
African/Nigerian education has not been functional owing to too much emphasis on theoretical and academic knowledge and undue emphasis on possession of certificates instead of on what one can do. Functional education is the total process of bringing up individuals to develop their potentials (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) to the fullest and consequentially be able to contribute maximally to the development of the society. It empowers the learner with relevant knowledge, values, skills and competencies required for productive tasks in the society. Functional education is very important as it allows a child to learn in a way that is relevant to how they will use that skill which strengthens the child's ability to generalize that skill. Imagine learning how to operate computer or how to drive a car from books or videos with neither ever typing on computer key board nor driving on the road before going for computer test or driver's test. Certainly, the individual will fail the test because of lack of application on the computer and on the road respectively. One supposes to get the computer or the car, and practice how it functions practically and learn from experiences.

By functional education, we mean that learning should be designed to be practical and useful rather than attractive, for the usefulness will surely attract pupils and students as it's future oriented for employment and development. Learning is a process that takes time, but, it does not always happen naturally or easily. Learning should be functional to support development and generalization of skills. Example, it is more functional to teach a child the word ball by playing with a ball than it would be having them look at a picture of a ball.

Functional goals make learning relevant and follow a more natural pattern of learning. Functional skill requires wide knowledge about various equipments and their functionality, example: mathematical skill, monitor and arrange system, public speaking, language skill, write, edit and summarize skill, arrange

and retrieve data, categorize and summarize data, etc. while Technical skill requires more of hard ware knowledge.

Functional Education as a Vehicle for change and transformation in Africa
Education is a veritable means of change or transformation, for human person and his society and environment as well. Education plays an important role as far as holistic development of man is concerned. First, premium is placed on the development of human mind or cultivation of mind and this is seen to be fundamental of all development. And it's from here that development starts and then reaches other sectors. Man is to be advanced holistically or integrally in both social, religion, political and in other perspective. When we talk of advancement or development, we mean advancement of the whole man, whole facets, institution, segments, practices and values (moral and ethical inclusive).

Conceptual Analysis of African Philosophy and its Impact on African Development
Just like its counterpart "western Philosophy" and "Oriental philosophy" can be said to have various branches like Logic, Ethics, Epistemology, Socio-Political Philosophy, etc. African Philosophy has her various but unique branches of inquiry and philosophical discourse. However, in the contest of this paper, the philosophy of development becomes aligned to a nation's or continent's socio-political treatise. On this note therefore, we affirm the presence of speculative inquiry in African philosophy taking into cognizance African sagacity, critical thinking and reasonableness in African parlance and logical enquiry. There is also African Metaphysics which co-relates with being, with "forces" that is, emphasizing the notion of "life-force". But beyond these levels of intellectual appreciation is "African socio-political thought and it is on these plat forms that treatise on national and continental developments should anchored upon.

Taking a leaf from this therefore, one comes on par with socio-political systems of thinking like liberalism, pragmatism, socialism and Utilitarianism in western thought, and models like consciencism, welfarism and other nationalist political ideologies in Africa. So far it is with reference to these systems of thought that we channel our critique to. In this wise, we use Nigeria socio-political climate as reference. Over years, since independence, there have been some efforts at nation building and development. The questions to ask are: During this time frame (from independence till present), has there been any spelt out socio-political ideology upon which the social contract establishing our common wealth (the state – Nigeria) can be said to stand upon? Is Nigeria a secular or religious state?

If the former is true, what is the involvement of religion as free enterprise in the nation's development today? What is the level of inter-cultural integration today in a pluralist Nigeria? Finally, can Nigeria be said to have been positively influenced by a formally recognized philosophical system just like pragmatism in USA and Consciencism in Ghana? If there are (is), what impact have they made in Nigeria's development? Do we have functional educational system? It is on these notes that we make our constructive criticisms given the content of the paper.

Critical Evaluation

A most important "Good" that should be targeted by any robust national or continental philosophy is the development of man as an individual and as a community striving towards national development. Culling therefore from the motto of Man O' War (a paramilitary outfit in Nigeria, charged with functional task on leadership development in people), the slogan: "Build the man, build the Nation" on the topic under study. Yes, as some contemporary African philosophers, B.O Eboh and C.B Okolo rightly observed the problem that have bedeviled Africa and undermined the process of development basically is problem of the mind[25]

Talking about African philosophy as a Panacea to rapid African development is not out of place. As a matter of fact, most continental philosophies in the past and present have arisen as consequences of existential problems that bagged different societies in the bid to address them and move society forward. Critically speaking, just as pragmatism can be said to have greatly enhance the American developmental history, great Britain and the entire western world were stirred into action by the theories of great thinkers like Adams Smith, Herbert Spencer, and the likes, through Karl Marx's utopic vision of a communist society is seen to have failed, the insights in his theories on capitalism and the travails of the proletariat have set up strong labour union today which vehemently advocate the welfare and self aggrandizement of the working class. Therefore, if one says currently the claims of formally recognized African philosophy to be criticized following the present predicament of African continent, one cannot be honestly faulted.

Today, Africa needs robust ideas, ideologies and informed system that will really stir her into rapid development, but foremost in our concern here is on the state of development of Africans. How developed is our mindset? And in what ways

have the rate of "unschooled brains" in Africa negatively affected the rate of African's progress? Is the present system of education not good enough, or collectively speaking, are the underlying African ideologies on education and development not abreast with African realities?

To this end, we bring in the variables of Religion and culture into our picture. Since these two systems greatly affect man, his behavior and attitude towards development. Can we really score contemporary African man high as regards one's mental maturity and conscious strive towards self development? Obviously not, Religion was supposed to build the conscience of man, and culture to boost one's ethnic integrity showcasing the uniqueness of one's background and what promises the culture has for national development. Our case study in this regard is Nigeria. With over 200 million people basically Christian, Muslims or African Traditional Religious faithful, remarkable cultures and outstanding ethnic groups, how developed can a "united" Nigeria claim to be. With the proud wings upon which African philosophy flies today in the country, what impact has it made on Nigeria and on her developmental strides?

The problem probably is that long standing mismatch between theory and practice. The theory-praxis dimension of continental philosophies in my reckoning is what African philosophy needs today. Pragmatism arose in America and formulated the American education system, students were schooled in a most defined culture of becoming useful and productive to themselves and then to the society. Religion in America via its constitution remained a liberal practice building in each individual the virtue of tolerance, equity and love irrespective of tribe, language or color. The American democracy was anchored under robust social contract scheme that presents one of the finest political constitutions in the world today. The American constitution has really driven America to the heights today. In what ways can we compare the constitution of America and Nigeria, their education, system, the religious liberties in both nations and cultural tolerance among the duo? No, they are "worlds apart". I therefore hold that the system in Nigeria is in dire need of overhauling. And this practice should be backed by a consciously driven socio-political ideology. This in a most serious way remains a challenge to African philosophy and African philosophers.

Conclusion

African nations need transformation from corruption and bad political leadership as these are antithetical to development. Value system re-orientation

and ethical sanitization are equally needed as corruption has permeated or has gone deep into many African man and woman mentality. Religious leaders have big task in formation of moral or good consciences. Finally, with functional education and improvement in African philosophy by African philosophers towards development/education of African minds, rapid development in various sectors of African lives and economy is assured and poverty reduced.

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