

Ethics, Education and Development in Nigeria: A Philosophical Exposition

SOTONYE BIG-ALABO

*General Studies Unit, Nigeria Maritime University, Okerenkoko Delta State, Nigeria
Department of Philosophy, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria*

Abstract

The concept of "Development" goes back to the period of grand acceptance of Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution, yet it is on its activating process, but not a new process, even peep into the Universal Human History to delve back Adam and Eve in the Eden, Paradise from where the global development evolved.. The study examined development in present day Nigeria looking at it from the angle of ethics and education. The study was guided by one objective which is to; examine the relevance of ethics and education to development in Nigeria. Furthermore, the methods of exposition and content analysis was used to analyze the data collected from secondary sources like text, journal articles and internet sources. Concepts of development and development ethics were clarified. The study exposed that because of immorality striving such as corrupt activities, Nigeria is yet to be a developed country. The study further exposed that Nigeria government has not put in enough in the educational sector and this has made the country lack in different areas of expertise therefore hindering development in the country. . William A. Morris opines "Socialism is partly an economic plan, party an ethical movement. But as a sidewalk, Ralph W.Emerson firmly confirms "Education is the single most important job of Human race" All Philosophy lies in two concepts, ethics and education to handle softly and liberally for the development of humankind" says Epictetus

Keywords: Ethics, Education, Development and Nigeria.

Introduction

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, having a geographical ground area of 923,773 Sq.Km is in the western part of Africa, proudly seen as the grand giant of Africa because of its richness in both natural and human resources. It is the most populous nation in Africa as well as the most populous black nation in the world having a literacy rate of 57%, communicating in English, Hausa, Ibo, Edo and Yoruba languages.. Nigeria after its independence in 1960 have had several heads of states and government in military and civilian rule but these various governments have failed in the social contract and thus keeping the nation in a state of struggle. Furthermore, the Nigerian state is seen as a developing nation with its capital Abuja, and this is because the indexes of a developing nation is predominant. Asike (2017) opines that in Nigeria some philosophical principles are generally used in the enhancement of development; the philosophical issues of concern are important process in the development process thus, they give a global blueprint for all sets of functional relations and human activities in Nigeria. Development as an emergence of the formation of a society is something

that every society strives to achieve but to achieve this there are some fundamental things that must be put in place. Gran (1983) is of the view that development as a social and practical process which aims at liberation of human potential so that people acquire the maximum socially feasible and potential control over all the available resources needed for the realization of basic human needs and security. This means development is about liberation of human potentials towards people's absolute control over resources to meet their human basic needs. Asike (2017) see development as a process of transformational agenda. It is not purely materialistic but rather happens within the context of a people in relation to the level of growth and progression of individual members of the society. Talking about ethics, the formation of a society automatically binds individuals with moral obligations. Ethics is as old as the history of the creation of man and thus a society cannot function properly without ethics and this is also applied to Nigeria. Nigeria as a nation have moral codes that are binding on everyone but in a situation where these codes are not followed or do not guide our actions then the society will crash morally and as well struggle with

development; this is obviously the Nigerian situation. Education as a fundamental human right is essential for any development to take place. From the inception of formal education in Nigeria, the country has grown over decades but the government has not done enough in this sector compared to other nations that Nigeria is richer than. The study aims at analyzing development in Nigeria from both the ethical and educational lens. As we know there are other areas of development and since a nation is more like a living organism with several components, all these components must need development. The objective of this work is to; analyze the relevance of ethics and education to development in Nigeria.

Methodology

The work used the methods of exposition and content analysis to analyze the relevance and the need of ethics and education for the development of Nigeria. The analytic method was also used to adumbrate on the concept of development and development ethics. Furthermore, the work extracted from secondary sources like journal articles, text, and internet sources to aid the completion of the work.

Concept of Development

Getting to know the meaning and nature of development is one of the major concerns of man. Also, been able to point out if a society is developed, developing, underdeveloped and not likely to develop has as well posed some difficulties (Efemini, 2010). According to Efemini (2010), Ake thinks that economic growth or industrialization alone is not development. For him, "development is the process of social transformation in which people themselves are in charge of the process". This perception is in line with the main line of argument in classical economies where development is measured in terms of per capita income or economic growth. Efemini (2010) also opines, that development is the quantitative and qualitative improvement in the material, emotional, and spiritual conditions of human existence. For Todaro and Smith (2006), development is "both physical reality and a state of mind in which society has secured the means of obtaining a better life". From the lens of a peoples centered development view, development means "a process by which the members of a society increase their personal

and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justify distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations" (Korten, 1990). This view simply means when the quality of life is been improved by the individuals based on their personal aspirations. According to Burkley (1993) development can also be seen as a process by which an individual develops self-respect, and becomes more self-confident, self-reliant, cooperative and tolerant to others through becoming aware of his or her shortcomings as well as his or her potential for positive change. This takes place through working with others, acquiring new knowledge and active participation in the economic, social and political development of their communities. Development is simply defined by United Nations Development Programme/UNDP (1990) as "a process of enlarging people's choices".

Concept of Development ethics

The term development sounds self-evidently desirable (Gasper, 2014). The area of development ethics looks into questions as well as debates connecting to what is good development of societies and of the world and good development for individual persons (Gasper, 2014). Development ethics examines the implications of the interconnections and in-built conflict in social economic development, among nation, internationally and overtime. The discipline of development ethics is like a meeting point for theory and practice and of several areas and types of knowledge (Narayan et al. 2000). According to Goulet (2006) and Gasper (2004) some development ethics work has to do with fundamental issues of concepts and theory whereas for Dreze and Sen (2002) some engages with specific sectors and policies.

Ethics and Development in Nigeria

In every part of the world the most important aspect of development is the development of human personality. This can also be seen from the angle of the moral development of the citizens that make up the country. Nigeria as a country has 36 states and the federal capital territory with over 700 local governments cut across these 36 states; the nation has diverse cultures, ethnic groups and languages and this goes with diverse moral values

hence making it difficult for leadership. As pointed earlier, the country Nigeria is like a living organism with several parts and all of these parts need development, consequently, if any part is not developed, then the whole system suffers for it. In other words, each part of the organism has a vital and peculiar role to play towards the growth and development of the entire system. It must be noted that as much as each part is important for the success of the entire system there is still hierarchy in the level of importance in these various parts of the system. According to Omoregbe (2012), in the organism of the country, the primary aspect means the human dimension whereas the secondary aspects means the infra-human dimension. The roads, machines, lands, infrastructure are all important to be developed in a country but all of these are of secondary importance. As stated earlier, the primary is the human dimension. In other words, the development of a nation is mainly or basically the development of the human dimension which is the development of human persons (Omoregbe, 2012). Since the human persons are the primary aspect of development, it is necessary that the moral aspect of these human persons be taken into cognizance and consequently, needs to be developed as well or else this individuals will not be complete. Moral maturity is a mark of human development and is perceived to be the most important aspect of national development. In other words, it is a *conditio-sine-qua-non* for national development. It is impossible for a nation to be morally underdeveloped and yet witness development. Hence, the moral development of a populace should be put in front as a priority before other aspects of development, else the process of development will be distorted by the immoral activities of the populace (Omoregbe, 2012). Obviously, when immorality strives amongst the populace of a country, those actions becomes a powerful hindrance to the development of such country.

Nigeria as a case study is tagged as a developing nation but is supposed to be a developed nation with the richness in its resources both human and natural resources. Now the question is why has Nigeria found itself where it is? What is the cause for the struggle for development until this point even with all the resources the country has? One obvious answer to these questions is that the, majority of the Nigerian populace are morally

underdeveloped and in such an atmosphere development cannot strive. In the eyes of the world, Nigeria is one of the most corrupt nations in the world where a lot of immoral activities take place in governance and the society at large. In fact, it would not be out of place to say that in almost every aspect of the country immoral activities strive, thus, this decay has resulted to the struggle for development. The level of egoism and corruption amongst leaders is disastrous and thus an average Nigerian perceives that corruption has come to stay and cannot be eradicated in Nigeria. Furthermore, it is clear that when egoism is dominant amongst the populace of a nation, development cannot take place; it is also the same challenge a nation will face when corruption strives and this is the case of Nigeria. If Nigerian leaders are morally upright and developed as well as the populace, the nation will automatically be a fertile ground for development to take place. In other to achieve this there must be a rigid enforcement of morality where corrupt and egoistic acts or practices such as diversion of public funds for development, collection of bribes, saboteurs, fraud etc. will have no room to strive but if those who are supposed to enforce morality are immoral then there will be no hope except the bull is taken by the horn. In summary, the development of the moral aspect of humans in the society is most important for the development of a nation because a nation populated with individuals that are moral dwarfs cannot develop.

Education and Development in Nigeria

The relevance of education as a tool for development cannot be overemphasized. The widespread believe that education is relevant in development is clearly symbolized at present or currently by the focus of two Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) on education (McGrath, 2010). According to Soni (2008), the question of education remains at the core of the development continuum. A country is obviously a complex organism and thus requires and needs specialized knowledge to develop the different parts of this complex organism; it is only through education that such knowledge can be impacted. It is obviously the complex nature of modern civil society that has brought about the emergence of various branches of knowledge and various areas of specialization (Omoregbe, 2012).

Education from every lens is one of the basic factors of development. According to Ilhan (2008), no nation can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital. For him, education develops peoples understanding of themselves and world. Education enhances the quality of people's life and amounts to social benefits to individuals and society. It also increases people's productivity as well as their creativity and encourages entrepreneurship and technological advances.

Education is hence founded on human nature and is centered on it. The development of a nation is simply the process of taking care of various needs of man's complex nature. Consequently, a developed nation is that which has made significant progress in the process of taking care of man's numerous needs (Omogbe, 2012). In other to meet up with these needs of man, individuals require thorough and indebt knowledge of these needs and how best to take care of them. This knowledge is gotten through formal education; thus, education is a *conditio-sine-qua-non* for the development of any nation (Omogbe, 2012). It is no news that developed nations of the world are nations that have put so much in their educational sector whereas underdeveloped nations are nations that have neglected their educational sector. In the case of Nigeria, the budget for education clearly shows that the nation has not put in enough as recommended and that is why Nigeria is struggling with developing. Nigeria lacks expertise in so many areas and thus spends a lot when they import technologies that are not obtainable in the country and this is because the government has not done much in the educational sector in other to enhance research in areas where the country is lacking. It is not in doubt that the corrupt nature of the system has badly affected the educational sector but there has been clamor from different organizations and bodies for a revolution in the sector.

Conclusion

In recapitulation, the study reveals transparently that the positive and possible development can be looked at from various perspectives and that it is as a result of the formation of a loyal society and expansion that the need for development arose. The study also points out that there are many factors that must be considered for development

to strive. Consequently, the work looked at ethics and education as an important tool for development in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study concluded that since human development is primary then the morality of these humans must be at the fore because any society where morality strive amongst the populace then that society will be a fertile ground for development. The study also concludes that development is diverse because a country is like an organism with different parts and all these parts need development; this implies that expertise in various fields will be needed and this can only be achieved through formal education. In summing-up, the Nigerian populace is gradually doing away with required ethical, factual and moral values and that is why corruption is striving, hence, hindering development in the country; the government as well is not putting much in education and that is one of the major reasons as to why Nigeria is struggling hard and lagging behind to achieve and reach the vision and target of positive development for the betterment of its people. "Development, in the end, improving not only its people, not the statics but really and truly the whole nation which is struggling for its development with refined Ethical value and effective Educational background backed by Human Developmental Philosophy which will lead the whole nation to reach the pinnacle of winning success.

References

1. Asike, C. J. (2017). Role of philosophy in human development in Nigeria. Retrieved 5 June 2020 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v18i2.3>
2. Burkey, S. (1993). *People first: A guide to self reliant participatory rural development*. London: Zed Books.
3. Drèze, J. & Sen, A. (2002). *India: Development and participation*. Delhi. Oxford Univ. Press.
4. Efemini, O. A. (2010). *Claude Ake's philosophy of development: Implication for Nigeria*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
5. Gasper, D. (2004). *The ethics of development*. Edinburgh University Press.
6. Goulet, D. (2006). *Development ethics at work: Explorations 1960-2002*. New York: Routledge.
7. Gran, G. (1983). *Development by people: Citizen Construction of just world*. New York: Praeger.

8. Ilhan, O. (2008). The role of education in economic development: A theoretical perspective. Retrieved 5 June 2020 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1137541>.
9. Korten, D. (1990). *Getting to the 21st century: Voluntary action and the global agenda*. West Hartford: Kumarian Press.
10. McGrath, S. (2010). The role of education in development: An educationalist response to some recent work in development economies. *Journal of Comparative Education*.
11. Narayan, D. R., Chambers, Shah, M. K. & Petesch, P. (2000). *Voices of the poor: Crying out for change*. New York: Oxford University Press.
12. Omoregbe, J. (2012). *Ethics a systematic and historical study*. Educational Research and Publishers Limited.
13. Robert, B. P. & Vandana, D. (2014) *the companion to development studies*. Abingdon: Routledge.
14. Soni, D. V. (2008). The role of education in development: A socio-political perspective. Retrieved 5 June 2020 from <https://doi.org/10.1080/03768358708439353>.
15. Todaro, M. P. & Smith, S. C. (2006) *Economic development*. Addison-Wesley, Reading.
16. UNDP (1990). *Human development report 1990: Concept and measurement of human development*. Retrieved 5 June 2020 from <http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1990>.