PHILOSOPHY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract
Patterns and contents of development are products of philosophical thoughts. As such, human development and achievements are generally products of philosophy. But is Nigeria sustainably developing? To what extent is there a link between philosophy and sustainable development in Nigeria? These are the fundamental questions this paper analytically sets to answer, as it examines the critical link between philosophy and sustainable development in general. The study finds that Nigeria has recorded series of epileptic development which are presently unsustainable. These are so because such development stems from negligence of philosophical thoughts in governance, policy making and implementation. This paper however unveils the philosophical foundation of sustainable development and proffers axiological panacea to Nigerian predicament. The study then concludes that philosophy is central in human existence, and undermining this essential discipline has a dire consequence on the sustainable development of the human person and the society.
K**eywords:** Philosophy; Sustainable Development

Introduction

Sustainable development of western nations was triggered by the intellectual philosophic contributions of Philosophers. These contributions stem from philosophic discussions of fundamental problems and questions posing challenges to their socio-economic and political growth. These dialectical inquiries give rise to constant answers which form the content of policies, their pattern of implementation and governance. The philosophic drives towards development in western nations were indeed the catalyst that propelled African nationalists; Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, etc into philosophic discussions of African predicaments, freedom and independence. With this in mind, Nkrumah reminds African Patriots that just as Europeans discovered Africa, African Philosophers will be of immense help to the rediscovery and sustainable development of Africa (Ndianefo, 2011:125). Thus, Nkrumah was explicit that Philosophy is the engine of human and socio-economic development, which will drive Africa towards rediscovery and harnessing of her natural potentials to an enviable class of developed nations.

However, in post-independence Nigeria characterized by oil boom, military incursion, emotiveness, tribalism, nepotism, party politics, and persecution of intellectuals and educated, corruption, wastes of society's talent and resources as well as undemocratic democracy, the power of philosophic knowledge has been undermined. Hence, Alatas postulates that the cause of prevailing backwardness of the developing societies like Nigeria is that there was no intellectual and philosophical revolution preceding the modernization and development process (1977:79). This condition negates the historical fact and contemporary experience that philosophic knowledge is the proactive power that propels stable development. Consequently, meaningful resolution of ultimate existential problems and questions that compels sustainable

development has been direly affected. As such, Nigeria is conspicuously lagging behind in sustainable cultural, socio-economic, educational, political and technological development on world paradigm.

Thus, the present situation gives credence to the fact that Philosophy is an inevitable tool in advancing human society to greater height. For the unfettered reason knows no boundaries and drives a country where it is deeply recognized with enormous advances. This is as it casts critical and rigorous investigations into human existence and societal development and improves the human person and the society. In fact, tangible structures or innovation in human society has its foundation in the philosophical suppositions and presuppositions that determine its theories and praxis. The being of these structures and the possibility of their existence as well denote philosophy as their necessary ground from, ground on and ground about their existence. Patterns, contents and sustenance of human and societal development are therefore products of philosophical dialectics; suppositions and presuppositions. In other words, development and its sustenance are *ab initio* beings in the mind which manifests through critical rational thinking and psychic dialectics. Thus, the creation, shaping and continuous existence of human feats depends largely on consistent philosophical reflection and application. It is based on this mega-character and function that Plato in his *Phaedo* describes philosophy as "the noblest and greatest of art" (Agbanusi, 2011:82). This description brings to view Plato's taught that for a state to record sustainable development, Philosophers must be kings or Kings and potentates must be Philosophers.

The trouble with Nigerian therefore lies in the fact that her development trajectory do not hinge on philosophical thoughts and principles. In fact, Philosophers are excluded in policy making, implementation and governance. This is unlike the many leading world economies in the west and Asia which till date is being run on more philosophical and scientific principles (Otonti, 2006:136). The consequence of Nigerian decision has been unsustainable development; economic recession, harsh living condition, instability and low life expectancy. And so, we are compelled as Philosophers to revisit again the "how" of sustainable development, the "who" behind it and the all-important nexus between philosophy and sustainable development. Hence, this paper is an exposition on the theoretical and practical relevance of philosophy to sustainable national development.

Essence of Philosophy

Philosophy is love of wisdom. And wisdom is a rational behaviour in all areas of life; the capacity of determining what is good or bad and the ability to make good choices or wise decisions whereas love is an attitude of the mind towards what exists. This etymological meaning remains the meeting point of all definitions of philosophers as they reflect the essence and functions of philosophy. Philosophy is therefore equivalent to being rational, and of all the attributes bestowed on humankind; none surpasses rationality (Asiegbu. 2011:105). When compared to other disciplines however, Philosophy alone privileges reason as its sole tool (105). Rationality as synonymous with and characterizing philosophy also depicts man's ability to think

differently and proactively. Here, the philosopher in his critical reflections stands out. Thus, rationality depicts:

> …the positive intent to galvanize available means to desired and approved ends; an intent that must be backed up by the qualities of efficiency, impersonality, objectivity and neutrality. It (Rationality) means that at their deepest levels many of our problems, just as the problem of African identity itself, are philosophical problems (Wiredu, 1985:222, Bodunrin, 1985:41).

The speculative character of philosophy however makes it central in human existence. This is as this character fosters a logical movement beyond empirical investigations in the search for answers to human predicament. Empirical investigations as characterizing science in fact produce truths which are valid only in the realm of experience. But through the power of reason, Philosophy produces results which are universally valid and sound in the realm of experience and beyond. This is why Scrutton argues that "a discipline like Philosophy constitutes a "superior virtue"; one of attaining the realm of necessity, where the real contents of the true world are revealed (1995:7). Plato earlier gave foundation to this argument when he avers that existing states are bad because their resolutions are ineffective remedies lacking radical measures emanating from true philosophy that enhances the true view of public and private rights and the end of human troubles. (Asiegbu, 2011:107). He then adds that only philosophy can effectively provide a good way of life and determine the course humanity takes in life (Ejeh, 2009:44). Truly, it is in line with this thought that Omoregbe argues that Plato's assertion is so because philosophy is "a rational search for answers to the questions that arise in the mind when we reflect on human experience." (1990:22).

Philosophy therefore do not only engage in self-criticism and study of its own methods, aims and contents, but also in the possibility of other sciences to reach valid conclusions that are relevant to the growth of human society. As such, philosophy has a conspicuous edge over other disciplines. This edge makes it enormously influential and universally appealed to in every sector of human existence. Based on this quality, Philosophers are well equipped to be aware of their surroundings and to contribute practically to the positive change of their societies. In its contribution, Philosophy applies rational mind to society's problems, achievements, socio-economic policies, ideologies, identity, structure and progress. More so, a society's meaningful innovations and development *ab initio* rests on philosophical background and goal. Thus, human society owes its progress and development to adequate rationality and ability to think critically and differently (Oguejiofor, 2006:12). Hence, in the midst of scientific exploits, methods and results which are applicable in human and societal development, philosophy remains relevant and indispensable.

Nature of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the consistent growth of all aspects of human society; the cultural, economic, socio-political, technological and environmental. Izunwa and Ehujuo describe it as "a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with the future as well as present needs" (2011:6). Thus, sustainable development consists in advancing the state to meet the needs of the present generation and ensure the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. As such, sustainable development gears towards meeting the present and future needs of members of the society by ensuring the undisrupted development of every aspect of the society. In other words, it is about ensuring a more advance and stronger society by consistently creating and producing something new or more advanced. Within this activity, human thinking connects space and time and this thought is made real in the present decisions, policies and implementations which affect the future quality of life.

Besides, sustainable development consists in increment of skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being (Rodney, 1990:9). Referring to this, Todaro describes it as continuous growth of social, political and economic systems, improvement in incomes and output, positive and radical changes in institutions, popular attitudes, social and administrative structures as well as customs and beliefs (1980:87). Here, sustainable development connotes an increasing change from one stage or social level to another. In broad sense, it points at a struggle towards achieving material abundance, political stability, and physical security for the greatest number of people (Krinsky, 2007:2). Hence, it can be said to encompass and absorb economic improvement (Ndianefo, 2011:107).

Based on historical and contemporary experience, the consistent quality of institutions in a state, the growing positive and objective attitude of the leadership and the citizenry are the measures of sustainable development. Sustainable development is also measured by the quality of life indices of the citizens of a particular country. Indeed, it is all about attaining modernity through secular means that breaks off unfavourable traditions, religious and cultural hindrances. In this condition, the citizenry experiences greater freedom and responsibility for their existence and history.

The Role of Philosophy

Despite scientific exploits and results, philosophy remains indispensably relevant in societal development. This is because it broadens human mind enabling it to understand different ways of viewing realities in the cosmic realm. Scientific researches are also informed and guided by philosophical postulations. With enlarged mental capacity provided by Philosophy, one is convinced to leave behind the rationalization of his fears, misconceptions and prejudices. In similar vein, one's sphere of action and affection which are vital for sustainable national development are enlarged. Philosophy provides humanity with an insight on how great men of wisdom in various epochs approached the problems of life. Thus, it fills people with different

ways of perceiving truth and reality, and spurs them to solve the pervading and prevailing political, economic, social, ethnic and religious problems which are formidable obstacles to national development. Besides, Philosophy inclines one to think more critically and reflectively. With this, one's confusion brought about by personal interests and prejudiced emotions are cleared. This is why Donald posits that Philosophy frees one from the instinctive tendency to interpret everything in terms of self (1994:45). With this quality, attempt is made to think of the universe as it is.

Philosophy equally plays a significant role in the formulation of Education policies. It enables these policies to capture the socio-political ideology of the particular society they are designed for. As such, Philosophy not only connects the societal ideology with the goals and objectives adopted in education policies, it goes further to intermittently criticize ideologies to ensure that they are worthwhile and fitting for society development. As an anchor, philosophy coordinates the various inputs from other discipline of education (psychology, sociology, history and economics, etc) into the policy as a complementary whole. Without such efforts, the whole of education and policy process will remain "a jig-saw puzzle whose bits and pieces hang together in a crazy quilt" (Akinpelu, 2005:167) However, Philosophy harnesses the goals and objectives needed for successful policy formulation. The mismatch between setting of goals and achievement of set goals, have been one of the reasons behind the recorded failures of some national education policies. In order to dispel such mismatches, philosophy ensures and maintains a perfect harmony between goals/objectives and their implementation. This will in turn enable the people for whom the policies are designed for to arrive at some degree of national development. Thus, it is the task of philosophy to necessitate flexibility and adaptation of educational policies in conformity with constant changes that affect human society and its ideology. This is to state that, for any nation's education practice to achieve its best for its peoples, it has to be directed by sound philosophies.

Supportive of the above, Amaele asserts that "a well formulated policy on education built on a strong philosophical footing, is indeed a sure guide to getting things right in the world of education, and consequently in the development of a nation" (2005:68). In recognition of this fundamental and indispensable role of Philosophy in human existence, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2002 in its Paris Headquarter inaugurated the World Philosophy Day to be celebrated as an annual event of global import. According to UNESCO, the aim of this recognition is to bring philosophic education to all peoples of the world, to relive the perennial relevance of philosophy to mankind's search for global peace, justice and development; and to inspire more people to live the examined life of philosophical reflection" (Ndianefo, 2011:121).

Philosophy and Sustainable Development

The common desire of man is to pilot the society to a more advance cultural, economic, political, scientific, educational and technological levels. This priority bothers on consistent changing of the society from one positive stage or social level to another. This change is however facilitated by human beings. It then means that the

development of the human person constitutes the bedrock of other forms of development. To achieve this, philosophy comes in as the veritable tool for moral and intellectual enrichment of the human persons who operate the activities in the critical areas of life. Emphasizing on this role, Omoregbe observes that:

> …authentic development in any nation can only mean primarily the development of the human person, and this consists mainly in the development of his mind and will. The training of the mind to see things critically and to seek the meaning and intelligibility of things is an important aspect of the development of the human person. This is part of the contribution of philosophy to the development of the human person (1990:197).

Philosophy however achieves this change on the human person through supplies of its essential tools of criticality, consistency, logicality, comprehensiveness, profundity and coherence in the education system. This is why a society devoid of genuine philosophy in her education system soon relapses into a state of nature. For philosophy shapes the development of human societies through education where it has remained the cornerstone of the contents of teaching and learning process in art, science and technology. Umo affirms this fundamental character arguing that worldwide, philosophy through education has been recognized as the catalyst behind socio-political, economic, scientific and technological development (2005:35). In agreement with this understanding, the Federal Government of Nigeria in its National Policy on Education (NPE) declares philosophic education an instrument par excellence in achieving national development (2004:4-7). This implies that meaningful growth and development of any country must be preceded by a sound educational planning backed by sound philosophical ideologies.

As a result of this mega-character coupled with realization of expected results, philosophy is applicable in every department of learning either directly or indirectly as part of the General studies. The more reason for this application however lies in the need for philosophy in everything in order to enhance results. As such, philosophy is a mega-discipline, a sustainable development legislator employed for enhanced study of arts and sciences and in every human activity. Hence, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) remains the highest academic degree attainable by man in every field. Consequently, no society can "consistently construct rational arguments, proposals, bills, policies, determine correct and fallacious reasoning, and embark on steady and systematic implementation without a deep knowledge of philosophy" (Chinweuba & Ezeugwu, 2018:5). This is why philosophy is above other disciplines prided as the science of itself and of other sciences, "an indispensable discipline in the sustainable development of the human person, human institutions and human existence at large" (5). As such, the modern Philosopher Rene Descartes calls it "the mother of all disciplines" (Aghamelu, 2005:6). In line with him, Otakpor describes it as "Queen of all disciplines" insisting that no agent of nation building and sustainable development; the Scientists, Historians, Lecturers, Lawyers, Engineers, Doctors, Educationists, Politicians, Business tycoons, Industrialist, etc can afford to present a disorderly work

and expect to be taken seriously; for to be orderly is to be philosophical (2000:5). As such, Plato observes that:

> Unless it happen either that philosophers acquire the kingly power in states, or that those who are now called Kings and potentates be imbued with a sufficient measure of genuine philosophy-that is to say, unless political power and philosophy be united in the same person…there will be no deliverance for cities…nor yet for human race; neither can the commonwealth which we have now sketched in theory, ever till then grow into a possibility, and see the light of day…there is no other way by which happiness can be attained, by the state or by the individual (1997:178).

Through its indispensable presence in human education and formation, philosophy influences life habits and rationally breaks a people away from traditional impulses, religious orthodoxy, authority and primitive way of thinking that hinders human feats, positive values and creates primitive or traditional people in the modern world. Such fettered condition and absence of freedom devoid of philosophy rob a nation of productivity, sustainable development and quality life. But reason leads to abundant liberty and creates the required objectivism and pragmatism replete with vision of the self, consciousness and knowledge that strongly reject any suggestion of the social, biological, or historical conditioning of individual. These objective and pragmatic qualities, according to Krinsky, fosters national consciousness that drives productivity, stability and secular development (2007:5). It is therefore only within the philosophical transformed condition devoid of traditional constraints but filled with total liberty and freedom that every state can consciously succeed in the modern market economy, direct the development of the society towards a pre-conceived goal, and respond effectively to the challenges of sustainable development. This is the rationale behind the postulation of Aghamelu and Ani that the movement for development must be characterized by a break off from tradition and social pressure which is a sort of renaissance, reminiscent of the European Enlightenment characterized by unencumbered freedom of thought (2011:96). Krinsky as well describes this condition as being similar with English enlightenment philosophy of the self as rational, autonomous, disciplined, intellectual and forward looking (2007:3). Such philosophical condition produces leaders and subjects who are capable of suppressing their immediate impulses, desires, parochial and primitive irrational attitudes that inhibit consistent national development and historical progress.

The union of philosophy and development in fact leads to critical examination and resolution of ultimate existential problems that ground genuine socio-political, economic and technological growth. In other words, Philosophy within this union tackles the general and fundamental matters that rob the society of enormous advances. This is why Teichmann and Evans observe that Philosophy focuses on problems which are ultimate, abstract and very general; problems concerning nature of existence, knowledge, morality, reason and human purpose (1999:1). However, the "how" of sustainable development is more evident in the fact that philosophy as

critical reflection puts a crack in the society's developmental track. It again interrogates the entire present human existence in its multi aspects and subjugates its assumptions, theories, values, laws, policies, modes and goals to critical analysis and reappraisal, and consequently creates a more enlightened existence to members of the society. These constructive criticisms serve as antithesis that ushers synthesis which is a purer idea that translates to social realities which humanity calls development. In its natural capacity therefore, philosophy not only provides the theoretical basis of development but also the criticism that brings a new phase to society's growth. Working with facts which society's culture and environment provide, philosophers evolve effective concepts and theories that speak to the situation, and accompany developmental trends with efficient means of actualizing the national goals.

As such, the tasks of philosophy consists in reflecting on information gathered from culture and environment, analyzing national situations, standing against the ills of the society, shunning mediocrity, shouldering the challenges of the society and providing the society with appropriate ideals and ability to pursue them. Within this function, reason is applied to realities; human conduct, national situations and policies, political association, economy, governance, etc with the aim of facilitating the abundant growth of every sector, proffering solutions to fundamental problems of existence and improving human condition. With these, the agent of change is inclined to exercise an elevated observation and analysis of things and situations. These are in fact the reason why Socrates describes the place of Philosophers in human society as that of midwifery and gadfly. Since philosophy has the potential to sharpen human reasoning capacity because of its essential attributes of criticality, consistency, logicality, comprehensiveness, profundity and coherence, it is the major influence in politics, science, religion, academic research, commerce, increased productivity and sustainable development in general. For these reasons, philosophy is a vital force and the catalyst that propels sustainable development. And any nation that undermines sound philosophy may not achieve its envisioned end and happy life. More so, continuous improvement of human environment will forever depend on constant application of reason; for reason provides the need for genuine human actions, the rationale for such actions and will do for any nation what it has done for the west in the pre-industrial epoch.

Philosophy and Nigeria Predicament

Philosophy is a critical rational thinking and absurdity is its opposite. This opposite has glaringly become the condition of Nigeria. This is historically and empirically evident in the sentimental governance, policy formulations and implementations which grossly lack essential philosophical influences. In clear terms therefore, egoistic aggrandizement, tribal and party consciousness inform the thought of the greater Nigerian population. One of the conferees in the last Nigerian national conference, Prof. Oyewale Tomori concurs to this existent reality, observing that the conferees who suppose to be loyal to the state were not as "each person came up with his own clear cut individual agenda, which in most instances, reflected ethnic or regional interests" (Obatala, 2014:4). This bias condition has negatively affected everything; governance, policy making and implementation, national unity and civic responsibilities. Thus, most Nigerians use politics and governance just to advance

their individual, group, ethnic and religious interests and those of their cronies. As such, it is extremely difficult to get a policy in Nigeria that actually gear towards objective and collective national interest.

Indeed, the absence of Philosophy in Nigerian socio-political, educational and economic spheres is presently more glaring. The desperation of the ruling party (APC) to capture and exercise power by all means, cowing of socio-political, security, legal and economic institutions, failure to implement the minimum wage, incessant academic strike, persistent embezzlement of public fund, neglect of objective governance, spate of favouritism, tribalism, leadership apathy towards mass killings of innocent citizens and neglect of security as well as the rape of justice are few examples in this context. With the spate of these social problems, Nigeria is today viewed as a country where absurdities has taken precedence with consequential decline in human capacity building, resourcefulness and enhanced productivity. To be true, the little development Nigeria has is even dilapidating. This is because the so called development and modernization as well as their processes are not the products of indigenous philosophical thoughts. In other words, such developments are in the words of G.W.F Hegel not the objectification or externalization of Nigerian mental infrastructure. This shows that alien philosophies and ideologies often lack the capacity to drive indigenous people towards industrialization and sustainable development.

The Philosophical Basis of the Argument

In theoretical and practical ways, philosophers have through the ages demonstrated the important link between philosophy and sustainable development. These demonstrations show the potentials of philosophy and its indispensability in sustainable development. Volumes of texts indeed hold that philosophical ideas, ideologies, conceptions and theories form the contents of educational curriculum which is in turn the fulcrum of human existence. These shape the life of humans into effective agents of nation building and sustainable development. Aristotle for instance documents that great society builders like:

Pericles did not rely entirely on his mother with a view to control the Athenians for thirty almost uninterrupted years. His association with the great natural Philosopher Anaxagoras led to his incorporating in his political speeches some of the jargon and conceptual subtlety that had developed even in the infancy of natural Philosophy (2004:4).

In addition, Russell testifies that Anaxagoras dwelt on leadership qualities which sharpened Pericles and Euripides, making of them outstanding leaders and achievers of ancient time with knowledge of realities and knowledge of true nature of the intellect ((2007:68). Based on philosophic influences, these leaders achieved and sustained much development that made Greek empire quite outstanding. Annexed to these is the fact that Aristotle is widely acknowledged as the Philosopher who achieved great historic leadership in Alexander the great, son of king Philip of Macedonia in 343 B.C through his philosophical taught. His outstanding

philosophical works like *Politics* and *Art of Rhetoric* have till date led to sustainable development in many countries of the world. Evidently, Philosophers have from time immemorial offered rational and scientific answers to fundamental questions perturbing humanity (Omoregbe, 1991:2). Some of these existential questions which often bother on the nature of the universe, the nature and end of man, the first cause, time and space, substance and accidents, diseases, etc inform the theories or hypothesis that underlie of scientific investigations.

In fact, the pattern of sustainable development in present France was the brain child of the French revolution of 1789 influenced by the social contract philosophic theory of Jean Jacque Rousseau. And up until second half of the 18th century, the British constitution was based on John Locke's philosophy (Russell, 2007:55). This constitution became the basis of English developmental strides. Indeed, it was believed that Locke's philosophical teachings influenced the English revolution of 1688 which brought William of Orange from Holland to occupy the throne (Agbanusi, 2011:86). Till date, the philosophical ideas of social contract theorists coupled with utilitarian Philosophy of John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham remain the basis of electoral processes, governance, policy making and implementation, as well the development trajectory of many countries. However, Marx was famous in his view that philosophers have interpreted and changed the world in various ways. This alludes to Philosophy as playing outstanding and indispensable role in human society. Through Marx's dialectical materialism which unravels how human societies work; class conflicts and its consequential qualitative change, most European societies metamorphosed from mere subsistent and exploited agrarian societies to capitalist grown economies.

By and large therefore, philosophy has indirectly and directly been the bedrock of nation building and sustainable development, and will forever remain so. Remove philosophy therefore, human societies will deteriorate to natural state where life is deplorable, nasty, brutish and short. It is thus based on this indivisible nexus between philosophy and development that Plato became convinced that there can be no sustainable development independent of philosophy (Agbanusi, 2011:87). In adherence to this knowledge, Plato's work, *Republic* stands today as one of the most quoted in the arena of politics, governance and development. As such, his maxim that until philosophers become kings or kings and their potentates imbibe philosophical knowledge, human society will continue to crumble without a tangible sustainable development, has remained the watch words of developed and developing nations (Popkin, 1973:178).

Axiological Solution to Nigeria Sustainable Development

The major problem militating against solution to Nigerian sustainable development, and indeed that of Africa is that solutions are often sought in western Countries. This pattern has not yielded much result because solutions to African predicament ought to be sought from African thinkers who are more familiar with these problems and their genesis. This mad rush to the west is however traceable to the present Nigerian education system. This system with its contents is not to a large extent drawn from

Nigerian cultural experiences and driven by Nigerian languages. Consequently, Nigerian education still upholds that superiority complex created by colonial education. Because there is little in Nigerian education that is truly African, Okere concurs that the foreign grip on African minds are traceable to the still existent colonial education (2006:23-29). This is as the methodologies, perspectives and contents of this education are predominantly western resulting to developmental policies that are often not workable in Nigeria. Worst still, Nigerian education is driven by foreign language (English) in every institution of learning. Because language is the heart, soul and vehicle of culture, it stands that most Nigerians are no longer familiar with indigenous positive cultural contents which ought to be the fulcrum of their self-confidence, personhood and sustainable development.

Nurtured in this educational environment, with contents that are more foreign and with foreign language (English) as a means, most Nigerians can hardly speak their local language, think in an African manner or contribute to the sustainable development of the country and people. The confusion lies more in the fact that these educated Nigerians are neither Africans nor Europeans. Odimegwu captures them as *les evolues*; schizophrenic personhood with crisis of identity (2008:63). This is because their minds are colonized and the interiority of their beings and autochthonous nature has been ridiculed, bastardized and severed. As such, their present nature is no longer in congruence with their integral definition and *apriori* equilibrium of their personhood. Consequently, the key to authentic nation building and sustainable development lies in deconstruction of western mind-set among Nigerians. Based on this mindset, the westerners are seemingly more appreciated by Nigerians than their compatriots. Adichie resonates this western impact on Nigerian minds and how the country works when she notes that to gain respect, relevance and access to fund and sponsorship in Nigeria, one only need to present some white fellows as associates (2013:40). This *a priori* inferiority is therefore part of the reason behind our leaders rush for western support, advice and reassurance even to the detriment of the greater population. This is also why western ideologies and products flood the Nigerian minds and markets rendering greater number of the population mere consumers

The process of mental deconstruction among Nigerians is thus expected to begin with quality education with curriculum and educational policies that truly stem from African culture philosophy and experiences. This can be coloured with western epistemology that has something positive to contribute in national development. This philosophical move will certainly reverse the present educational, socio-political and economic set back. This is as it will subject western theories, doctrines of development and governance to rigorous philosophical evaluation to appropriate only that which is useful. Such philosophical evaluation will necessitate what the leading African Philosopher, Kwasi Wiredu, terms "conceptual decolonization" which is a critical self-awareness against unexamined assimilation of western categories, concepts and theories (1995:22). Indeed, it is only within this philosophical transformative condition that Nigerian state can respond effectively to the challenges of nation building and sustainable development. Evidently, the search for solutions to

Nigerian problems outside the country has only entangled the country with debts. Again, seeking solutions outside the country hardly address the root cause of the problem but rather opens door for borrowing that further impoverishes the country. Consequently Nigeria and most African countries are presently indebted to either IMF, World Bank, Paris club or rich countries of Europe and Asia like the United States of America, France, Britain and China.

Since only those with direct experience of a condition can truly analyze it, it stands that only Nigerian thinkers can really proffer axiological panacea to national problems. Moreover, these thinkers holds a better knowledge of the situation and have what it takes to advice leaders, stakeholders and other agents of development on best policies and course of implementation. Based on this, Aghamelu and Ani affirm that solution to Nigerian predicament lies in "launching a philosophical analysis of the problem, with the belief that it is better to approach the problem from all angles rather than using standard and set models" (2011:94). This gives allusion to the observation of Keita that development in the western world was spear-headed by its philosophers: and that of Africa should be handled by her thinkers (2004:1). If Nigerian thinkers should therefore be given similar opportunity as their western counterparts, educational, socio-political, and economic sphere would certainly be set on the right tract.

From the empirical sphere of things, it stands that Nigerian affairs are managed mostly by mediocre and touts. The ruling class is therefore not replete with the best minds. Worst still, this class hardly meddles with genuine thinkers. Rather, these intellectuals and the educated are often terrorized and persecuted leading to many of them migrating to western countries. The present situation in Nigeria can really be likened to the 1960s draconian socialist rule, institutions and policies of Chinese Mao Zedong with its drastic revolution that impoverished China and led to brain drain (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013: 62). Presently in Nigeria, this condition is leading to huge waste of the society's educated, best talents and resources.

Conclusion

Philosophy and sustainable development are indivisible bed-mates. This is in the sense that "philosophy prepares a population for competitiveness and performance that drives democracy, sustainable development and good living condition" (Chinweuba & Ezeugwu, 2018: 10). Considering its great potential, intellectual and moral equipment, Philosophy as a discipline is a human capacity builder. It builds the human persons who in turn build the society. Thus, meaningful development without solid philosophical grounding is impossible (Asiegbu, 2011:102). Consequently, Nigerian leaders and technocrats must evolve a Philosophy and ideology of sustainable development based on our peculiar cultures, experiences and contemporary realities. Such context bound ideology and philosophy is the fulcrum of socio-political, economic and technological development of Asian pacific countries like China, Japan and the Asian Tigers. Today, they are on the list of world leading economies. This goes to show that the impact of philosophical enlightenment and application has been decisive and revolutionary. Thus, indigenous Nigerian

Philosophers should be given a chance in governance, policy making and implementation. For the triumph of Philosophy over oppressive forces of conservatism and regressive traditions has remained the hope of human societies.

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