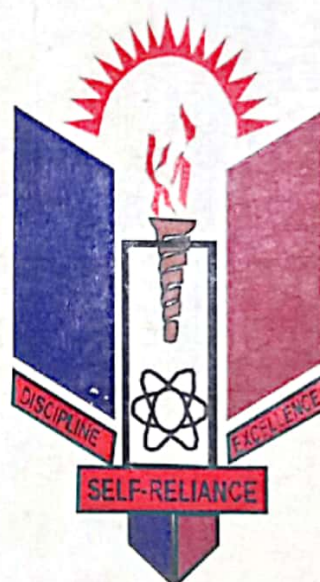


# OGIRISI:

A New Journal of African Studies



Volume 2 No. 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Recreational Facility Provision and Leisure-Time Attitude of Residents in African Cities: Case Study of Benin City Nigeria - 1-15  
*Onome Daniel Awaritefe Ph. D*
2. Social Influences of Harmful Traditional Practices: Implications for Counselling in Nigeria - - - 16-26  
*Mercy Aku Anagbogu Ph.D*
3. Globalization vis-a-vis Africa and the Rest of the Developing World - - - - 27-48  
*Stephen C. Chukwujekwu Ph. D*
4. Ivory Tusk: Its Spiritual Connotations in the Art and Culture of Benin Kingdom - - - 49-58  
*Franklyn Egwali*
5. Developmentalism: An Orientation and Perspective in Contemporary African Philosophy - - - 59-70  
*Aghamelu Fidelis Chuka*
6. Folklore in Theatre-in-Education: Values and Contributions to Child Development - - - 71-78  
*Aghamelu Helen U. & Aghamelu Fidelis Chuka*
7. Globalization and Manpower Development: The Position of Tertiary Education in Nigeria - - - 79-85  
*Odimegwu Christy Obiageli*
8. Poor Attitudinal Values and Democratic Disorder in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of Nigerian Electoral System - 86-101  
*Nwanegbo Chukwuemeka Jaja*
9. Hobbes' Authoritarianism and Nigerian Democracy - A Comparison - - - - 102-113  
*Arinze Agbanusi*
10. Re-Appraising the Family System in Africa: Lessons from the Western Experience - - - - 114-134  
*Prof. Azubike F. Uzoka Ph. D. FNACP, FNPA*

# DEVELOPMENTALISM: AN ORIENTATION AND PERSPECTIVE IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

---

AGHAMELU FIDELIS CHUKA

---

## Introduction

The problem of development is a perennial human problem. It has lived with men. The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a great accentuation of the human specie towards annihilation, which has made the problem in this 21<sup>st</sup> century to acquire prominence and importance. Human and social development, whether socio-political, economic, cultural or scientific and technological had always posed the ultimate questions of happiness, justice and peace for man.

In this direction, the world has witnessed a lot of efforts. The U.N.O. for instance, through its numerous organs and agencies has sponsored many development programmes, for instance, " the U.N. conference on science and technology for development" in Vienna (August 1979). There are also other developmental programmes that touch on social, economic and political development of peoples. But before I delve into the crux of this paper, permit me to reproduce the admonition of the "populorum progression " (1965) of Paul VI, concerning development in general, from which , I think every development proposal must draw.

...every programme ... has in the last analysis, no other *raison d'être* than the service of man. Such programmes should reduce inequalities, fight discriminations, free man from various types of servitude and enable him to be the instrument of his own material betterment, of his moral progress and his spiritual growth. To speak of development, is in effect to show as much concern for social progress as for economic growth. Society, economics and technology have no meaning except from man whom they should serve. And man is only truly man in as far as, master of his own act and judge of their worth, he is author of his own advancement, in keeping with the nature which was given to him by his creator and whose possibilities and exigencies he himself freely assumes.

Development therefore is human aspiration, determined and measured by his essential nature. Development includes both material and spiritual dimensions, but for it to have a human face, it must be constantly referred to the spiritual values that alone will guide development in the right direction that will guarantee real progress of persons and nations. As a human phenomenon, the goals of integral human development is not achievable out side the social milieu. The sociality of development is of utmost import on account that he who has no need of the society is either

a beast or a god. To this end, adherence to the directive principle of the society becomes a fundamental moral principle of development.

This social connection of development to my mind defines the crux of the contribution of African Philosophy to African development. This is a peculiarly African historical fact. The issue of social organization, ie; evolution of a human and just society becomes the greatest task for the African Philosopher, John Paul II (1979:44), in the "encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*", describes this society as,

affirming the necessary basis, the unquestionable principles that must sustain every action that aims at constructing a society which must meet man's needs, both at the level of material goods and of those that are spiritual and religious, a society founded on a system of values that protect it from manipulation guided by individual or collective selfishness.

Even now, the issue of development is gaining a global focus with the world turning into a global society. Social considerations take precedence over other issues in African development. This, African Philosopher can contribute positively to this by challenging those existential situations of socio-political nature that are antithetical to genuine development of the continent.

#### Meaning and Essence of Development Definition

Sanda. B (1989:5), defines social development as the "transitional process sustaining a multifaceted improvement in human condition resulting from positive structural and functional changes in the social, economic, political, techno-scientific and every conceivable sphere of human endeavour". This definition emphasizes in its essential parts the promotion of normative and organizational schemes in the society as the sustenance of positive and highly functional values, customs, practices relating to all aspects of human relations and life.

Akukwe N (1985:25) defines social development as "the process by which the well being of any society and its people is ensured through collective action vis-à-vis the changes taking place in the political, economic and social life of the people. It is a means of ensuring that the quality of life of the people reaches an acceptable minimum standard".

Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965:17), see in development those "formally organized and socially sponsored institutions, agencies, programmes, exclusive of the family and private enterprise, which function to maintain or improve the economic conditions, health, physical mental and spiritual, or interpersonal competence of some part or all of a population". It is a process of action and interaction in which every one

gives and receives after some measure of equality.

From the above definitions, it is observed that development is not a chance phenomenon. It is a deliberate social arrangement regulated by certain social norms to achieve desired results conducive to human flourishing. It is a definitive human social phenomenon, which exists to service the being of man. In all its ramifications, development points to man in his essence, bringing all its elements both material and spiritual in a rational balance. In this composition of the material and spiritual, the balance of development is insured by the "pre-eminence of the values of the spirit which forms the basis of a just peace" it is also a contributing factor to ensuring that material development, technical development and development of civilizations are at the service of what constitutes man. This means enabling man to have full access to truth to moral development and to complete possibility of enjoying the goods of culture, which he has inherited, and of increasing them by his own creativity. Development therefore guarantees to man the maximum utilization of his effective freedom.

Development is at the service of being and persons not things or having. It is only concerned with things and having to the extent they rationally promote being. An extreme materialist model of development will be one that does damage to the human transcendence. We reject materialist development as a paradigm for Africa because, according to John Paul II (1982:21):

It does not have the unlimited capacity for satisfying the needs of man. They are not in themselves easily distrusted and, in the relationship between those who have and enjoy them and those who are without them, then given rise to tension, dissension and division....

The problem of development in African is primarily associated with this epistemological misplacement often associated with the jettisoning of "being" in favour of "having", which today both in politics as well as religion remains the source of our national under development. "When emphasis is on having rather than being, those frequently frustrated in their attempt to have destroy life and commit any crime in order to have". (1982:30) This could count as the major cause of the numerous social problems in Africa, starting from political instability, because leaders want to have, other cases of violence and conflicts because of the pervasive world view of materialism, which negate the moral principle of common good. The consequence is the mass impoverishment of the population and alienation.

#### The Common Good and Social Context of Development

The greatest mistake of communism remains historically its defective understanding of human sociality, especially in the relationship between

Authority and liberty, Rights and obligation. This anthropological misunderstanding created a grave consequence for the development of man and society. The fact of human sociality proposes a profound metaphysical background, which makes the common good the moral justification of sociality. This common good defines, establishes determines and limits properly rights and obligations of intersubjectivity.

In a classical scholastic fashion, the metaphysical principles of immanence and presence have created a reflection of each man in each man within a social network of relations. They form the basis for equality, roles, concern and responsibility of all persons in matters relating to life and interests. So, social justice forms basis of the common good and development, which are in turn influenced by the prevailing economic, social and political theories and practices of the society.

According to the ethical perspectives, the society should provide the condition of perfect realization of man's spiritual and material aspirations in freedom. John XXIII, defines the common good as all those social conditions which favour the full development of human personality (1965). The document of the Vatican II (Gaudium et spes No. 74), defines it as the sum total of those social conditions, which allow individuals and groups to achieve their proper purposes more fully and quickly. Talking about social condition we mean institutions, programs and agencies sponsored by the society to provide good life to the people. I propose some other social principles as appropriate for the realization of the common good in Africa, in view of the peculiar development needs, which require a high level of commitment on the operators of the social system ie: government and her agencies.

### 1. Principle of Subsidiary

The civil society, though sovereign, cannot competently provide all the requirements for proper human development. Sovereignty does not necessarily mean omniscience for there are other human affiliations which are naturally equipped to provide certain services which the state cannot, but is only called upon to recognize and respect such rights. Omniscient state creates state totalitarianism. This was the case with the usurpation of the institution of private property in communism. Human institutions as the family and the church are more competent to provide for the spiritual needs of man but the present situation weakness to the exercise of that right. This principle states that a community of higher order, eg: the state, should not take over what a lower order eg family, individual and the church, can do for themselves. It is a principle that promotes and safeguards the right to self-determination and participation.

### 2. Principle of Solidarity

The present situation in Africa has created a dualistic society, the rich and the poor, the weak and powerful. The worst still is that instruments of the state are used to foster this kind of discrimination, a flagrant abuse

of the common good. The principle of solidarity is both Christian and African to the core. It is, according to the Awka Catholic Diocesan "Instrumentum Labooris" (2001:47).

... a deliberate choice to enter in some degree into the world of those who are deprived - to share in a significant way in their experience of being mistreated, by passed or left helpless. It springs from compassion and a choice to deepen this compassion by sharing in the suffering of the poor... virtue and approach which inclines one to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others in the group and to devote oneself generously to the common welfare.

The principle is a call to justice and struggle with the poor. Solidarity creates peace, an inestimable good for peoples and nations in every part of the world. In fact, peace has become synonymous with development.

Corruption: Anti - Thesis of Development in Nigeria

Corruption is a "vital matter" in the development of African societies, ie. of being an issue of great concern for life. According to the saurus corruption is synonymous with evil, dishonesty, pollution, depravity, vice, baseness, degradation, dissolution or immorality. All these nuances of corruption refer to severe negative approach to life - anti life - corruption is the greatest act of violence to being. It is a disorientation in being and its alienation from its essential destiny. It distorts the human perspective and replaces it with a disperspective, which in act violates the social and personal purpose of existence.

Corruption challenges and questions the very essence of social life and is an attack on the common good which establishes the just arrangement in social relations, specifying duties and determining rights organs, institutions and norms which best guarantee the flourishing and realization of the highest possible level of human development within a social context. It disregards and harms our social sensibilities of roles and obligations, the safeguards of mutual and just coexistence. Corruption thrives on and promotes psuedo-world view. In its final analysis it brings about annihilation of the society and individuals.

Prof. Ukpong (200:12), opines that while social justice imposes obligation on individuals to contribute and promote the common good of the society, distributive justice makes it imperative on leaders and authority to defend the common good. Prof. Ukpong gave a contextual definition of corruption in relation to Nigeria as follows:

Graft, misuse of public funds looting of public treasury, embezzlement, rigging in election, inflation of contracts, over invoicing, favouritism, deprivation of

peoples rights, illegal acquisition of public property, false declaration of assets, frauds, pervasion of justice, evasion of taxes, mediocrity, god fatherism etc.

All these cases of corruption emphasize an attitude of "having" against "being". It distorts the conscience and incapacitates it as a practical judgment about good to be done and evil to be avoided both in the individual and society. According to him, "Nigeria has not been able to establish a stable democracy and development oriented government since 1960 because of corruption". Successive Nigerian governments for instance recognize the threat of corruption to National development. It was responsible for coups and counter coups.

The first Republic lasted for only five years (1960 - 1965) for the reason of corruption. Murtala Mohammed (1976), observed that:

The government was not able to fulfill the legitimate expectations of our people. Nigeria has been left to drift .... All over the country there were allegations of graft and misuse of public funds. There were complaints of ostentatious living, fragrant abuse of office and deprivation of peoples rights ... all which gave the impression that the states were run as private estates.

Sani Abacha (Oct, 1995) said of corruption... we cannot achieve a stable democratic polity in the midst of dishonesty and corruption. These vices have crippled our various institutions which otherwise would be viable assets to our economic recovery. All these views agree that corruption is antithetical to development. They agree for instance, that it is an affront on the legitimate aspirations, expectations of the people. This can only be remedied by a humane society, a just society, one that offers prospects for human development. Efforts in the achievement of this just society have been made in Nigeria though without success. Shagari initiated the "moral reorientation" revolution. But Obasanjo's Regime seems to have made a more practical approach in fighting the evil of corruption via the much popularized "Anti-Graft" Bill. When fully put into law, it becomes a legal institution against official corruption, which as the Vice-president Atiku Abubakar noted, is responsible for "Parlous state of the country's economy which has resulted in high incidence of poverty and unemployment". The relation between corruption and development is therefore obvious.

**African Development: The Contribution Of African Philosophy**

From my own historical estimation, African philosophy has passed three stages as far as periodization is concerned. The question of the establishment of various currents in orientation, The most contemporary



issue of the moment is the articulation of its proper contribution, which has made "developmentalism" the most crucial question of its being. What I mean is the nature of its roles in answering to the Fanonian challenge that, "every generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it" (Fanon Frantz, 1983:21).

The being of the African is defined within the context of his historical past, the challenges of environment and demand of globalization, which eternally precipitate the question of the relevance of African philosophy to African development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. "As a matter of fact like all philosophy, the nature of African philosophy reveals at the same time its ultimate task and goal" (Oladipo 200). The question of Eudaemonia has become elusive to the African society, i.e. The specific human environment for the actualization of every aspect of social and human development. This is so in the presence of the human problems militating against efforts in this regard. These include socio-economic instability, moral disorientation, poverty and death etc. What specifically is the contribution of African philosophy in this process of liberation and in what constitutes this contribution? This is the problem of relevance. It is the conviction of this writer that African philosophy can make some positive impact. It is in the nature of philosophy to explore the entire range of human possibilities and African philosophy is no exception. Without necessarily entering into the problems of definition for fear of the prediction of Sidney Hook that "Any definition presupposes some conceptions not likely to be shared by all philosophers".

I take the liberty of opting for a working description of the philosophic tack in general as a paradigm of the nature of the contribution of African philosophy to African development. African philosophers have proposed different models of development as panacea to African development problems. For instance, Prof. Okolo's social reconstructive" model and to some extent Prof. C.B. Nze's in "aspects of African Communalism". Prof K. Wiredu proposes extreme "scientism and technologism" as a paradigm of African philosophic input.

Philosophy according to Prof. B.C. Okolo (1992.9) in its professional meaning is a critical enterprise, something dynamic, a quest, a search... a spirit of evaluative inquiry into all area of human experience, of the world in which we live, of man himself and of his place in the universe". This implies that philosophy is a process of interpretation, which is critical in nature, which expresses itself at every stage of history in the face of any human reality of time and space. It enters into dialogue with all a reality with sole purpose of discovering a human meaning, human values, and the truth. It is therefore not just any kind of inquiry, but one, which adopts a method in conformity with a nature i.e., man.

As man confronts existence in al its dimensionality, the ultimate concern is the stability, security, redemption and validation of his being, his destiny and happiness. The rapport of existence with this being is human

development par excellence. In its general task,

Philosophy tries to give a coherent and systematic account of the multifaceted universe of being and knowledge, of what is, and how man knows it, it carries out a critique of daily experience in quest of truth of all existence as is rationally possible for man (Okolo, 1992:12).

Truth is the preoccupation of philosophy and of African philosophy as such. In interrogating the African world and being, African philosophy erects some rational principles to investigate the contents of our experience in relation to the truth. African philosophy becomes "a path to systematic, coherent discovery and disclosure of the African as being-in-the African world. Through this knowledge or disclosure of himself and his world by critical reflection, the African grasps reality, that is to say, attains the truth about man and the cosmos in its entirety.

There is a native rapport between African philosophy and the truth about African experience and this truth is a necessary and sufficient condition for every authentic social and human development in Africa. It directs the right order in the placement of values. Being confronted by numerous problems of different kinds, political and economical mostly and technological also, the African suffers the uprootedness of being, which is a constant invitation to live authentically. To discover and uphold the truth about man as such and African man for that matter. The truth about the African, which is the preoccupation of African philosophy, is a lively quest or inquiry for the truth, ie for the naked reality that is concealed behind the robes of falsehood.

Some African philosophers have interrogated the African world in view of some vision of development. Some for instance, Prof. C.B. Okolo and Prof. C.B. Nze believe in the socio-political imperative of African development. Prof. Nze sees the lack of patriotism in the African as the bane of our development. According to him, patriotism is seen as the foremost social principal and strategy, which promotes the culture of development in Africa. This is because patriotism and communalism, the native African social mentality have natural alliance. His position recognizes the primacy of the human and social element in development. Wiredu proposes an antihuman criterion of development by placing primacy on science and technology. Now which of these positions best represents the African situation?

According to Wiredu, an African philosophy which must be relevant to the contemporary Africa situation must be sensitive to both the local and global issues of African development. To fulfill this task, it must be "critical in methodology and exploit the benefits of modern science and technology".

In his own opinion the current of "Ethnophilosophy" does not fulfill this requirement and thus offers nothing in improving the African human condition in the face of enormous socio-economic transformation.

The new mode of philosophizing is capable of making accessible to the African the benefits of industrialization which in his own thinking holds the key to African development.

...for my part, I take science to be a crucial factor in the transition from traditional to modern world. All developing nations are endeavouring to improve living standards through the application of Science and any philosophy not thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Science cannot hope to reflect this.

There is no doubt that while extreme scientism is that path to a new orientation in African philosophy. As the worldview of the era, it determines every other aspect of social life including morality. To Wiredu, the reason why the authoritarian attitude of the present African society has persisted is simply to be seen in its rejection of the scientific approach and consequently, the impossibility of sustained development in Africa. This is the consequence of the traditionalist view of reality. The benefit of a scientific outlook is the inculcation of and acceptance of the attitude of freedom of mind, which encourages popular participation, which to me may not be a human participation.

The unscientific mind "has left the stage open for the prevalence in Africa of the intuitive essentially unanalytic and unscientific understanding, utilizing and controlling external nature and of the place of man in it. This has impeded the growth of our knowledge of and our ability to gain a scientism the intellectual bedrock of the new African, it is no longer difficult to see that the genuine human orientation in African philosophy, consists on, "how the human and natural resources of Africa can be harnessed to achieve the goal of emancipating Africans from poverty, wants and hazards of nature"

There is no doubt that science and technology are veritable instruments of development. But the position proposes new sets of problems, eg the ethical pluralism which weakens the bond of society. This approach to African development will promote a pragmatic theory of values and technological optimism. Onwuanibe (1987), did raise alarm against the dangers posed by this scientific and technological optimism. "It is regrettable that some people equate technology with culture or civilization. This kind of conflation spells the danger of technology overriding other cultural values. Contemporary malaise, to a great extent has its origin here".

There is a hierarchy of values of which science and technology is only but one, for development to be fully human, it must respect this moral order. It must for instance, respect transcendence of man. Wiredu makes science and technology the primary and sufficient cause of development

while relegating the social primacy factor. He does not seem to be convinced about the need to subject freedom to any form of control. By canonizing the formal aspect of truth, he rejects any appeal to any form of metaphysical principles. His unmitigated advocacy for scientific principles and disciplines is prejudicial to those other aspects of culture especially religion and morality. But the question remains, does science and technology constitute the ultimate ground of human happiness?

#### Conclusion

The issue of the contribution of African philosophy to African development is indeed a timely one. In its multi dimensionality, development remains a human phenomenon, a phenomenon that is in the service of his being. It is also a social phenomenon in the sense that no form of development is possible outside the social milieu. African philosophic project must always strive to validate the truth about man and society. Human existence is bound up to his eschatology and this requires that the African philosopher must build up philosophical systems, which must not humiliate the dignity of man. After all philosophy is the highest point of what it means to be human.

## REFERENCES

- Abanuka B. (1994) *A New Essay on African Philosophy*. Enugu, Snaap Press.
- Aghameli E.C. (2001) "Morality for Child Right and Development" In *Sophia, An African Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 3, No., Calabar, Pyramid Publishers.
- Aguene I.N. (1999), *Contemporary Social Problems*, Nsukka, Prize Publishers
- Akukwe N. (1985) *Towards a New Society: Introduction to social development*, Cecta, Enugu.
- Ekuwem J.E., 2000; Key Note address to the National Laity Council Dec. 1999 at Uyo, at the 1999 Annual Conference with the theme corruption in Nigeria.
- Gboyega (1996), *Corruption and Democratization in Nigeria*, Heinemann.
- Ifeanyi V. (2002), "Some Characteristics of Igbo Traditional Moral System" In *Bigard Theological studies*, Vol. 22 No. 2. Enugu.
- John Paul II (1979), Encyclical "Redemptor Hominis" AAS 71.
- John Paul II. (1982), Address to the XXXIV General Assembly of the UNO. "Science and Technology for Development Countries" in *Pontifical Academia Scientiarum, Scripta* No. 44.
- John Paul II, (1991), *Social Encyclical Centesimus Annus* Ibadan, Ambassador Publications.
- John Paul II, Message For The Celebration Of The World Day Of Peace 1<sup>st</sup> Jan, 200.
- John XXIII, (1951), Encyclical, *On Social Progress* Nairobi, St. Paul Publications African.
- Joseph Hoffner, (1996), *Ordo Socialis*, CID JAP Enugu. Nze C.B., (1989) *Aspects of African Communalism*, Onitsha, Veritas Publishers.
- Ogbogbo C.B.N, (1997) "The Poverty of African Philosophy" In *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies*. No. 7.
- Oguejiofor J.O. (2001), *Philosophy and the African Predicament*, Ibadan, Hope Publicaiton.
- Okafor S. (2001), *Awka Catholic Diocesan "Instrumentum Laboris"* Fides Publication Okpuno.
- Okolo B.C. (1992), *Problems of African Philosophy and Other Essays*.
- Olusegun O. (2000), *The Idea of African Philosophy*; Ibadan Hope Publications.
- Onwuanibe, (1987), "Technology the moral view point, at the 1987 NAPS convention" *Ikot Ekpene Nigeria*.
- Owolabi K.A. (2002), "Themes in African Philosophy" in *Journal of Philosophy and Development*, Ago-Iwoye A multi-disciplinary Journal published by Department of Philosophy Olabisi Onabanjo University; Vol 15, Nos. 1 & 2.
- Paul VI. (1965), Encyclical "Populorum Progrsio" Pontifical Commission *Iustitia et pax* series.

- Pius XI (1954), Encyclical On Social Reconstruction. Nairobi, St Paul's Publications - Africa.
- Sanda B. (1989), The Problem with Nigeria, Ibadan.
- Ukpong I.I., (2000), "Corruption in the political Life of Nigeria". The effects on Real Evangelization" delivered at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the catholic Laity Council of Nigeria Uyo.
- Wilensky (1965), Industrial Society and Social Welfare, N.Y. The Free press.
- Wiredu K. (1980), Philosophy and an African Culture. University Press, Cambridge.