

A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPOSITION OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PRACTICES THAT HINDER DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Many countries in Africa are still developing, some faster, others slower. There are more developing countries in Africa, than in any other continent in the world. The lack of proper infrastructural and economic development in many African countries, makes the continent to lag behind and be neglected, during the taking of far-reaching and important decisions. This paper argues in a coherent and critical manner, that many religious and cultural practices in Nigeria are responsible for the lack of development, the country has continued to witness. For example, a culture that gives titles to rich but corrupt politicians, public servants or drug barons and swindlers; aids embezzlement. The objective of this research therefore, is to use the tools provided by philosophy, to try to solve the inherent problem of development the country has continued to experience; on account of religious and cultural practices. The Greeks were able to use philosophy to solve the problems of their environment. Some religious and cultural practices in Nigeria are as a result of illiteracy and lack of development of critical mind. Nigeria's irrational beliefs and cultural practices have impacted negatively, on the nation. Many issues and practices are not critically analyzed. This paper insists that ignorance of basic logic and lack of critical thinking regarding many religious and cultural practices, has helped to hinder infrastructural and economic development of the country. Things and issues that have philosophical explanations are given different interpretations and meaning. Invalid and unsound logical statements are considered to be true because they are religiously or culturally based. This work concludes succinctly that with the help of philosophy, unwholesome, unsound and irrational religious and cultural practices would be eliminated; in order to enhance proper development of the country.

Keywords: Religion; Culture; Cultural Practices; Development; Philosophy; Belief

Introduction

Development is one of the major and important parameters for measuring the wealth and advancement of countries. To buttress this point, countries are classified into developed and developing, first and third worlds. In many

developed countries of the world, there are basic structures that support alleviation of poverty, adequate security that ensures protection of life and property, proper education that aids in the achievement of educational goals/objectives and economic policies and practices that enhance the overall economic wellbeing. In some African countries especially some of those in sub Sahara, there are various obstacles to development.

Nigeria is one of the developing countries of the world and is located in West Africa and in sub Sahara. She is still struggling to develop in spite of the rich human and natural resources she has. There are factors that hinder the proper and adequate development of the country. Among them are some religious and cultural practices. These do not support the achievement of adequate development. Years ago, the country emphasized the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the present decade, the emphasis and attention have shifted to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). No matter how the phrase is couched, the fact remains that Nigeria is still undergoing developmental processes, often marred by some inherent religious and cultural practices and behaviours.

In a bid to tackle the problem of development in Nigeria, this paper examines some of the major religious and cultural practices that hinder the development of the country; the root causes of those practices, their impact on Nigeria's development; and the relevant role philosophy should play. It also offers possible solutions to the problem.

Explication of major Terms:

1. Philosophy

Philosophy comes from the Greek word *Philosophia*. In English it is translated as "love of wisdom." The one who engages in this love of wisdom is described as a Philosopher. Philosophy as a discipline seeks to understand the basis of all things, and all truth. It is a fundamental search for knowledge and truth. It is the quest for knowledge for its own sake. That is why it is regarded as a disinterested quest for knowledge, it is primarily not for any benefit or utility. It is also a critical quest as the philosopher does not just accept the basic assumptions of the society, but seeks to understand why things are the way they are. He looks critically at commonly held assumptions. By so doing, he raises questions and scrutinizes the foundations of beliefs, behaviours, cultures and modes of thought, with the aim of making them better. According to *The Basics of Philosophy*:

To the ancient Greeks, the term "philosophy" **originally** meant the **pursuit of knowledge for its own sake**, and comprised ALL areas of speculative thought, including **the arts, sciences and religion**. **Philosophical questions** (unlike those of the sciences) are usually **foundational** and **abstract** in nature. Philosophy is done primarily through **reflection** and does not tend to rely on **experiment**, although the methods used to study it may be **analogous** to those used in the study of the natural sciences. (https://www.philosophybasics.com/general_what_is.html accessed on 6th May 2019).

The importance of philosophy is also seen from the fact that the highest academic degree one gets in most disciplines or specialties is a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). This is because philosophy encompasses many other disciplines, and originally most of the distinct areas of knowledge we have today were branches of philosophy. One begins to philosophize when one starts looking critically at issues and commonly held assumptions.

2. Religion

From Greek and Roman antiquities till now, man (understood generically), has had an attitude of respect and awe towards beings, some in his immediate environment; others unseen by him. He had always looked for ways of appeasing some objects and, places to which he offered sacrifices. This was because he had always wanted to live in harmony with other beings and with nature. Thus, man is said to be naturally a religious being, in the sense that he has a revered attitude towards another being revered as divine, holy, sacred and powerful. According to *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary* (1983, 1093), religion means,

...belief in, recognition of, or an awakened sense of, a higher unseen controlling power or powers, with the emotion and morality connected therewith: rites or worship: any system of such belief or worship: devoted fidelity.

Some people argue that it is on account of religion that man talks of morality, what is good to be done, and what is evil to be avoided. But the relationship or difference between religion and morality is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that in religion man worships being, or beings. By so doing he feels fulfilled. Man's religious practices determine to a great extent how he behaves in the society. "Religion binds man to the unseen powers and helps him form right relations with these non-human powers; it also binds him to his fellow

human beings. Religion acts as a cement holding our societies together, and provides the necessary support and stability for our societies" (Opoku,1978, 11). In Nigeria, there are basically three major religions: Christianity, Islam and Traditional Religion. There are a few other ones but the adherents are in the minority, and they constitute an insignificant number.

3. Culture

The term culture is often difficult to define since it involves everything done by a people: their way of life, their customs as well as their language, dressing, manner of eating etc. Sociologists, Social and Cultural Anthropologists, Archeologists and even Philosophers define it differently, though they still all have one thing in common: it is the totality of a people's way of life. According to Otite and Ogionwo (1979, 44),

The concept of culture is used in various ways with different meanings. The usages are either colloquial or scientific. In colloquial terms, culture or "cultured" is used to state that someone has or does not have good manners or behaviour.... In scientific usage, culture is often defined in blanket terms as the total way of life of a people.

Culture involves the whole gamut of a people's way of life. To know a people well is to know their culture. This explains why culture is also defined as "the complex whole of man's acquisitions of knowledge, morals, belief, art, custom, technology etc which are shared and transmitted from generation to generation" (Otite and Ogionwo, 1979, 44). With this definition, it is clear that the culture of a people outlives the individuals. Those who belong to a particular group have the same culture and are to be identified with it. That is the reason we talk of "cultural identity." Culture makes a people.

4. Development

The term development has various nuances. It literally means and entails growth. For example, when one says 'the child is developing', it implies that the child is growing. According to *Cambridge English Dictionary*, (<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/development>), development could be defined in various ways: It is:

- "the process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced;"
- "a recent event that is the latest in a series of related events;"
- "the process of growing or changing and becoming more advanced;"

- "the process of coming into existence or of creating something new or more advanced."

From what the above explains, development brings about a change; which is most often for the better. In the view of Aloysius Obiwulu, "it is a gradual act or process of unfolding by which something acquires new elements and new characteristics" (Obiwulu, 2009, 4). From the point of view of economics and with regard to nations, "development is also the organized increase of a country's industry and wealth" (*Cambridge Dictionary*). It is this understanding of development that interests us in this paper. In other words, the development we are discussing in this paper is infrastructural, educational and economic development which often forms the yardstick for measuring, classifying and categorizing nations as "First World" or Third World," "Developed" or "Developing." With this explanation, countries are measured by their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and those that have advanced infrastructure and high per capita income are regarded as better developed than those that do not have them.

Why is Nigeria Poor and Undeveloped?

Nigeria is one of the countries in Africa and she is the most populated country of the continent. She is blessed with various human and natural resources. Unfortunately, she is one of the poorest countries of the world, though she has large deposits of crude oil and other minerals like gold (in Zamfara State), Limestone (in Ebonyi State), Kaolin (in Anambra State) etc.

It has been convincingly argued that a country is poor or underdeveloped not because of her geography, but rather because her institutions are not well organized. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson (2013, 45) succinctly opine that "poor countries are poor not because of their geographies or cultures, or because their leaders do not know which policies will enrich their citizens." Rather, they are poor because of mismanagement and failed institutions. That Nigeria is counted among the poor and undeveloped countries is not on account of her geography. The argument of Acemoglu and Robinson is correct because many countries both in the temperate and tropical zones of the world had been able to conquer their peculiar geography, history and topography. The arid and desert country of Israel, the very cold Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland), the temperate regions of Europe and even the Antarctica, the large vast lands of North America have all conquered and surmounted their "unfriendly" geography and natural habitat.

Historically, the number of countries in the temperate regions of the world that are developed far outnumber the ones that are in the tropical regions that are not developed, especially in sub Saharan Africa. Nigeria is poor and undeveloped because of several factors which include lack of proper management, failed institutions, endemic corruption and embezzlement. There are also religious and cultural practices that have hindered her development and progress.

Some Religious and Cultural Practices that Hinder Development in Nigeria

We have already stated above that Nigeria is a poor and undeveloped country. Apart from the reasons already given, we emphasize here that Nigeria's poverty and lack of development stem from some religious and cultural practices that the people had been unwilling to change.

1. Belief in Spirits and Forces (that reward one with wealth)

Nigeria is one of the countries in sub Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, the African traditional religion existed before the arrival of the Europeans in the early part of the 17th century. African traditional religionists believed in the existence and power of spirits and forces. According to Emefie Ikenga-Metuh,

studies of the world-views of many African societies show that most African societies recognize fundamentally two different types of divinities – the Supreme Being, and the subordinate deities. The Supreme Being though recognized as creator and lord of the entire universe, features less frequently in public worship and rituals than the deities, who are many and feature in almost every aspect of African life. (Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, "The Nature of African Theism: Analysis of two Nigerian Models" in Elochukwu E. Uzukwu (ed.), *Religion and African Culture. Inculturation: A Nigerian Perspective*, no date of publication given, 60).

Most Nigerians just like their West African counterparts believe in the existence of spirits and forces. This is corroborated by Opoku (1978, 14), who asserts that "West African societies each have names for God, which are unlike the names given to other spiritual beings they recognize." In African traditional religion these spirits and forces are respected and feared, sacrifices are offered to them. "Because of their nature and function, the gods are placed above human beings" (Opoku, 55). It is believed that people are endowed with wealth by the gods and goddesses. The veneration of the gods/goddesses and cult of the ancestors, help to secure favours from them.

In Igbo land (in Southeast Nigeria), people talk of *akaraka* (destiny). There is the belief that there are people that are destined to be poor, and others rich. In Christianity there is also such a belief. The Psalmist says: "...he (God) showers wealth on his beloved while they slumber." In Islam, the Moslems believe there are some whom Allah has destined to be rich, and others who will be beggars. According to them, it is the responsibility of the rich to help the poor. These poor people roam the streets as the *Almajiris*, and begging is their "profession." Among the Moslems, almsgiving to the poor (*Zakat*) is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and is an obligation.

The attitude and belief hereby described does not support hard work and industry. If God and the gods (goddesses) determine who would be rich and who would be poor, it is no longer necessary to toil to make ends meet. Many Nigerians believe it is so, and they no longer care to work to earn their daily bread. Some of them resort to begging. The country is therefore deprived of the contribution such people should have made towards national development.

2. Belief in the Power of Charms

Nigeria is a country where the belief in the powers of the gods/goddesses, spirits and deities is very rife. These are believed to play important roles in the affairs of men and women. One of such spirits is the mermaid spirit which is worshipped among the Igbo of southeast Nigeria as *mmoo mmiri* (mermaid); or as *Olokun* (owner of the sea), among the Yoruba and Benin people of western Nigeria (Opoku, p. 61). The gods/goddesses, divinities and spirits are feared and respected. According to Oguejiofor (2009, 6), "It is a world in which the divinities were very common, and their role in human affairs makes them not to be regarded as distant. Many occurrences were attributed to their machinations."

The Nigerian worldview is one where there are various categories and classes of medicine men and women called *dibia*. Their function is different from that of a priest. According to Francis Arinze (2008, 148), "the *dibia* do not dress elegantly. They are rather weird-looking and do so on purpose, probably to impress on people their capacity to "see" the spirits, and not excluding a possible intention of putting fear into people; especially children." They act as mediators between the divinities, spirits, deities and human beings. Unlike the priests, the *dibia* prepare various kinds of medicines and charms, according to the needs of the people. Some of the medicines could cure someone, bring good luck or bad luck, fortune or even misfortune. The *dibia* or medicine men are believed to be able to make charms for various purposes, depending on interest and request.

A charm is an object which, by some mysterious, immanent and unconscious power, is believed to preserve the bearer from evil, disease, bullets, or motor accidents, or to make one succeed in trade, in a love affair, in fishing, in catching thieves, in passing examinations, etc. (Arinze, 2008, 38).

On account of the Nigerian worldview or cultural/religious background, many Nigerians are of the view that getting rich through the use of charms, works. This is one of the reasons why some engage in ritual killing in order to be rich. *Juju money* for some Nigerians is a reality. According to Zivkovic,

It is being said and well referred that business men in Nigeria follow and practice Juju in order to make money. According to the preachers and the followers, the money keeps on flowing in as long as one continues to perform juju rituals. Some people go for juju for protection from ill luck and competitors and some for fame and prosperity. (*Journal of Business and Management, "Entrepreneurship and Juju (Black Magic)"* Volume 19, Issue 3. Ver. II (Mar. 2017), PP 118-122 www.iosrjournals.org. This was accessed on May 6, 2019).

The belief in the power of charms hinders development and progress. Many Nigerians are of the view that whoever has made the right charms, would be rich. Several Nigerian newspapers report almost on weekly basis stories of how people are ritually killed, for making-money. For example, the *Vanguard Newspaper Online* of 20th May 2020 reports the following: "Operatives of the Ogun State Command of the Nigeria Police in collaboration with officers of the So-Safe Corps have arrested a 40-year-old herbalist, Michael Itomu and three others for allegedly possessing human hand in Idiroko, Ipokia local government area of the State." This is just one out of the many such reports, in the Media in Nigeria.

The terms "ritual killing" and "money rituals" are now common in Nigerian phraseology. *The Vanguard Newspaper* cited above states explicitly that "the suspects were arrested following information received by policemen...that the four men had been in contact with the herbalist for money rituals, positing that the herbalist asked them to provide a fresh human hand for that purpose." How can a country develop when many of the citizens instead of looking for development through science and technology, rely on the power of charms? This is a clog in the wheel of development.

3. Sowing of Seed

Nigeria has many Moslems and Christians. About 45% of the population are Christians, especially in southern part of the country. Among the many Christians that are made up of Catholics, Pentecostals, Anglicans etc., the theology of “sowing of seed” is predominant. The belief is that one should give some money from one’s monthly earning or income to God through his/her parish priest, pastor or evangelist. This money is like a seedling which is sown. Once the money is given to one’s religious figure, then a seed has been sown and one will be blessed by God, and one would later reap abundantly.

Today in Nigeria, there are many people who “sow the seed” and then they wait to reap, without doing any reasonable work. They tend to believe that ‘manna will fall from heaven.’ This is wrong. The attitude supports laziness, lack of spirit of competitiveness and mediocrity. They are misled by their religious leaders to believe that sowing seed without working, would make one rich, or would gain one an employment. Unfortunately, most of those who advise others to sow seed are active, working and earning their daily bread, through their hard work. Why don’t they sow seed, and sleep?

Nigeria cannot develop when many people who are supposed to be working, are idle. Philosophically, God is a supreme being. He is a necessary being too. Humans are contingent beings. A contingent being is inferior to a necessary being and cannot command it. A pastor should not play God through forcing sowing of seed and assuring people of success or “reaping” abundantly. It is God who in His omnipotence will decide what to do, how to do it and when. Sowing of seed should not be a play on peoples’ psyche. Such an action does not encourage developmental effort and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, many Nigerians have imbibed this attitude and belief.

4. Payment of Tithe

Nigeria is a country that is very backward, with regard to development. The infrastructures are very poor, and in some areas nonexistent. The economy is at its lowest level. The GDP is very low. Many earn less than one US Dollar per day. The poverty rate is very high. The only thing that helps to sustain the people is hope, hope that tomorrow might be better. And many have this hope that things would get better.

The history of religion and societies had pointed out that in difficult periods of human history, people had turned to supernatural forces as the last hope. In

Nigeria that is the case. Very many people have appeared to be “more religious.” In the Churches they are thought to pay tithe to God, that is, give 10% of their monthly earning to God, so that all their problems will be solved. Pastors and men of God indoctrinate many into believing that paying of tithe would help one get employment, get a good marriage partner, be promoted in one’s job/career, cure illness, cure infertility, pass examination etc. According to Emebo (2017, 51), “Tithing is today presented as the surest way to get a favour from God. Even a poverty-stricken church member is taught that he/she is undergoing life difficulties because he/she is withholding God’s blessing, that is, tithe.” Tithe could be paid willingly, not by force, if one decides to do so. No one should be indoctrinated or coerced into paying it. The guarantee that it will solve all one’s problems is a matter of faith. In the end, it is God who decides how to accord favours.

Among the Moslems, it is believed that almsgiving or Zakat is one of the ways Allah blesses people. It is a religious obligation and one of the Five Pillars of Islam. God is a supreme being and He cannot be commanded to act by inferior and lesser beings. He is all powerful; it is for him to decide what to do. Philosophically, it is not possible for an inferior being to command and dictate to a supreme being what should be done.

The emphasis on Tithing among Christians does not support development. It is presumed that those who pay tithes will be blessed by God. Implicitly, they do not need to work again, their reward is assured. The idea is not good for the progress and proper development of any nation, after all, there are other ways people willingly and generously support the work of God and encourage their priests, pastors and men of God.

Causes of the Religious and Cultural Practices

Inasmuch as there are religious and cultural practices that hinder development in Nigeria, there are several causes that are responsible for such state of affairs. Philosophically, in order to attack or cure an effect, one has to, first of all know the cause(s) and then make effort to have them corrected, or eradicated. The causes of the religious and cultural practices that constitute obstacles to development are many. The following are some of them:

a. Poverty

The poverty in Nigeria contributes to accepting various forms of belief systems among the people. Poverty makes people to behave in various ways. In Greece,

philosophy began in the coastal city of Miletus, a city that was richer than others because of the various travelers and merchants who arrived by sea to buy or sell. The poverty index in Nigeria makes people to continue to seek help and solution. The poor easily become gullible to religious and cultural indoctrination, filled with empty hope of a better future, and prosperous tomorrow.

In various continents of the world, there is poverty. Historically and philosophically, one would say that poverty and richness are distributed geographically, either according to climate, or natural resources. However, this view is rejected by Acemoglu and Robinson (2013, 45-70), who have argued that it is not geography of a nation that makes it poor. It rather depends on how the institutions are run, managed and maintained, and the policies of the leaders. The view of Acemoglu and Robinson could be correct, but anthropologically and historically, it is evident that in the world there is regional distribution of wealth and poverty according to continents. Oguejiofor (2009, 8) supports this thesis when he talks of “parity of regional development”. According to him,

If we for instance view the U. N. Index of Human Development, we will notice that countries of the same region belong more or less to the same levels when compared with other parts of the world. Countries in Africa South of the Sahara all belong relatively to the same range of development in this scheme. The same is true of European countries, North American countries, South American countries, and Islamic countries of the Middle East.

The basic argument is that looking at the way poverty and wealth are distributed, one would observe that countries in a particular area have similar rate of development or even underdevelopment; “all nations living around the same region have more or less the same level of economic development” (Oguejiofor 2009, 8). In this regard, one could say that it is the poverty in sub Saharan Africa that has affected Nigeria. On account of this, the citizens engage in voodoo, religious and cultural practices, which they think would make them escape from poverty and embrace development.

b. Lack of adequate and proper education

Education is the bedrock on which to build the future. It is simply understood as preparing someone to be able to face and solve future problems in the society. It is also the foundational basis for development. “There is a high degree of illiteracy in Africa. Education will help people to acquire values that are relevant to them, and to the development of the continent... We cannot talk of economic and technical growth unless a sound education assures this.” (Aloysius Obiwulu,

(2011, 101). Among other advantages, education helps in removing the shackles of ignorance which constitute obstacles to meaningful development.

Many Nigerians lack appropriate education to be able to question some of the teachings and doctrines that are presented to them by priests, pastors, evangelists and even Imams. They wallow in ignorance and are not able to philosophically ask questions, regarding the religious practices. A simple critical analysis would have helped them to think twice before taking the religious and cultural practices hook, line and sinker. "Proper education is necessary and important in any society, nation or continent that wants to achieve great heights" (Obiwulu, 2011, 109). Both Aristotle and Plato saw the relevance of education. However, while "Aristotle preferred that women learn only what will help them in domestic chores, Plato is in support of equal opportunities for both boys and girls. Education for him is to be used essentially to achieve and promote societal and individual goals." (Obiwulu, 2011, 108).

c. Influence from traditional religion

The negative influence from Nigeria's traditional religion where there is emphasis on spirits, forces and charms has done a lot of harm to Nigeria's quest for development. More than one hundred and forty years after the coming of Christian missionaries and Islamic preachers/crusaders, many people in Nigeria are still wallowing in the traditional religious belief system. Some believe that wealth could be gotten by making of charms, amulets, killing of fellow human beings, for ritual.

Security is a necessary factor in development, it encourages foreign investors as well as local ones. Unfortunately, instead of equipping the police, military and other forces with the necessary gadgets and instruments, some waste resources engaging the services of hunters who are believed to have "strange" or "extraordinary" power. Such was the case when in 2019 in Bornu State, in northeast Nigeria, that had been ravaged by Boko Haram, the services of hunters who were said to possess powerful charms were employed to fight the Boko Haram. This is as a result of the Nigerian worldview and the influence from African traditional religion, where such belief is preponderant.

The Role of Philosophy in Nigeria's Development

In the quest for Nigeria's development, Philosophy has a prominent role to play. Philosophy as a discipline makes one to be critical and analytical about issues and situations. It offers the guidelines on how to solve the problems of society,

humanity and environment. It was because of the important role it plays in the society that the Greek philosopher Plato, recommended that rulers should engage in the study in philosophy, or philosophers should become rulers, in order to end the problems of the society. In his book *The Laws*, Plato emphasized the importance of education, and made it compulsory for all children. According to him "... education must be compulsory for one and all" (Plato, *The Laws*, Penguin Classic Series, translated by Trevor J. 1982, nr. 804.). The study of philosophy is important in attaining the development goals set for the country. Philosophy has something to contribute to the development of Nigeria especially in examining the religious and cultural beliefs that hinder development. The contribution of philosophy would include:

1. It will help to question traditionally held beliefs and assumptions. Some religious and cultural beliefs that were relevant in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries are obsolete in the 21st century. Today, the emphasis is on globalization, Internet and Communication Technology.
2. Many of the assumptions on which the religious and cultural arguments rest, are unsound and illogical. The study of philosophy will help the people to know when fallacious and non valid arguments and assumptions are presented as being true. Only critical thinking will help in removing what Francis Bacon called "the idols." "In the *Novum Organum* (the new instrumentality for the acquisition of knowledge) Francis Bacon classified the intellectual fallacies of his time under four headings which he called idols. He distinguished them as idols of the Tribe, idols of the Cave, idols of the Marketplace, and idols of the Theater" (Manly P. Hall, *The Four Idols of Francis Bacon and the New Instrument of Knowledge*, Online version: <http://www.sirbacon.org/links/4idols.htm>, assessed on 20th May 2020). These idols are obstacles to clear knowledge. They are caused by rigid acceptance of false religious, cultural and societal beliefs.
3. One of the branches of philosophy is metaphysics. It teaches that there are various categories of beings: corporeal, noncorporeal, finite, nonfinite, necessary, contingent. There are also matter, form, accident, substance, etc. A superior omnipotent being is the cause of his own essence and existence and therefore cannot be commanded by inferior beings like humans. So, pastors of souls and men of God should appeal to God's mercy and compassion towards created beings. Paying of tithe and sowing of seed, for example, should be ways of appeasing God, not commanding and controlling Him.

Conclusion

Many countries of the world are moving ahead in scientific inventions and technological break-throughs. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, many are still talking of charms, compulsory paying of tithe, sowing of seed etc. Religion and culture are part and parcel of every society. When the two constitute a hinderance or an obstacle, then that society's development will be impaired. Several religious and cultural practices still draw Nigeria backward, and hinder her developmental progress. Until these clogs in the wheels of Nigeria's developmental effort are removed, Nigeria may continue to wallow in poverty, dilapidated infrastructure, and abysmal neglect of relevant indices that make a nation great and developed.

In spite of her rich natural and human resources, Nigeria is still one of the undeveloped or underdeveloped countries of the world. She is the most populous African nation. The traditional belief and cultural system as well as vestiges of the traditional and modern religion, still determine the extent of her citizens' involvement, and effort towards realizing her developmental goals. In the 21st century, the citizens should make assiduous efforts towards conquering the indoctrination and placebo-effect consequences of religious and cultural practices that hinder her progress. One of the best ways of doing so is through the acquisition of adequate and proper education, especially the study of philosophy, which will help in critical examination of assumptions, and analysis of issues, beliefs and situations.

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