

## PHILOSOPHY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

**Maraizu Elechi, PhD**

Department of Philosophy

Rivers State University

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

[drmarazuelechi@yahoo.com](mailto:drmarazuelechi@yahoo.com); 08038954871

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.26043.64803

### **Abstract**

*It is not uncommon especially in our clime, either out of prejudice or ignorance, for people to condemn philosophy as impractical, unprofitable, a waste of time and useless. The fact that some educated people are among those at the forefront of this criticism, heightens the apathy for the discipline and its practitioners in our society. They erroneously think that philosophy has no role in the development of a nation. Without doubt, this unhealthy criticism, which turns out to be as old as philosophy itself has remained a perennial issue requiring continuous reflection. Reflection into the relevance of philosophy to national development is not and cannot be "done and dusted" in spite of the diversities of responses here and there from different philosophers. This makes the issue a philosophical one. Again, that people still raise such seemingly outdated but ongoing question or one that is similar or connected to it, implies that philosophers should never be tired of pontificating their responses and making such responses much clearer. This is what this paper sets out to do; it emerges out of genuine persuasion to response, address and enlighten people on the relevance of philosophy to national development. It argues that a nation can perish for want of philosophy and that the nature, quiddity and continuous existence of philosophy is made manifest in its critical search for rational solutions to the problems of human life and development. Philosophy reflects on national development challenges like moral decadence, environmental degradation, insecurity, poverty, corruption, etc.*

**Keywords:** philosophy, national development, science and technology, moral decadence, environmental degradation, insecurity and poverty.

### **Introduction**

The thesis of national development is a critical human cause that must always be kept alive in thought and action. There are many challenges or hindrances retarding national development. These challenges include political crises and insecurity, economic woes, moral decadence, social disorder, and other associated challenges like infrastructural decay, corruption, poverty, diseases, to mention only a few. These challenges constitute philosophical issues; they are material issues philosophers philosophize on. Philosophers of different epochs

have articulated different views or solutions in response to these challenges, yet the challenges still persist. The fact remains that these challenges cannot be solved ones and for all; they are philosophical problems that come in different shades and forms and evolve as the world continues to evolve too. Again, these challenges will continue to confront man and the society because they are both man-made and man-related. The extinction of man would imply the end of these challenges and therefore, the end of philosophy as well. Philosophy as humanocentric (that is to say that man is the centre and point of departure for every rewarding philosophizing), will continue to reflect upon these challenges as they present themselves even in different and most complex ways. As a discipline, philosophy is devoted to seeking rational solutions to the problems confronting human life and survival. It can only complete its role and therefore become irrelevant and useless when man and the society at large are completely liberated from problems and challenges, otherwise its critics notwithstanding, may not live to see its end. Philosophy is part of the collective human world and existence.

Every society constantly faces challenges to its immediate political, social, moral and aesthetic ideals. Many methods are adopted for combating each challenge. Many failures, many successes do result. In the process the human persons in that society change or modify their thinking, adopt new ideals, discover other ways of meeting challenges (Uka 1982:185).

In other words, the existence of problems and the rational search for answers and solutions define the very nature and quiddity of philosophy, and will continue to justify its continuous existence. This justification further explains why philosophers of different epochs have reiterated their convictions on the contribution of philosophy, however modest, to the development of our society. Aristotle tells us that "Philosophy has been for long in history the custodian of all most all other disciplines; it has made immense contributions to the growth of science, to political ordering, to social and economic revolution and to ethical and theological reasoning" (*Metaphysics*, Book 1, chapter 2, p. xiv). The American pragmatist John Dewey offers that philosophy is "an organ for dealing with... the social and moral strife of our days" (1957:26). Plato says "I would like to see philosophy to be appreciated even by plain people" because he was convinced that only philosophy can make the needed change in our society. According to him, the way forward for any country is the return to philosophy. The French philosopher Henry Bergson furthers that the return to philosophy is the return to the land of birth (*un retour au pays natal*). This, we think, is the return to the ultimate foundation of all realities, the ultimate causes of our developmental

problems, the basic essence of our social ethos, and perhaps, the most basic values of our economy. Just like the scholastics put it: “Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas” - happy is he who can know the causes of things. Philosophy is the science of the ultimate causes, therefore philosophers are blessed.

### **Philosophy and National Development: A Conceptual Clarification**

Philosophers are united in the view that philosophy contributes to national development. What then constitutes national development is our main task to articulate in this section. In view of the foregoing, it will be expedient for us to evolve some sort of theoretical reflections or clarifications of the concepts that constitute our research, namely, philosophy and national development.

Philosophy which literally means ‘love of wisdom’ is an attempt to arrive at a rational explanation of all reality. It is by its nature, an absorbing or all-inclusive discipline. It is often described as the mother of all sciences because it is the discipline from which other disciplines were born. However, it goes beyond common sense into the foundations of many things including that of national development and its sustenance is impossible without philosophy. For, philosophy is the science whose duty it is to lay the foundation for true and valid knowledge about the fundamental reality of all realities. It offers guidelines with regard to how reality should be sought in every area of human experience. It adjudicates in conflicting cases concerning what has relevance to reality, and what should qualify as mere fiction. For this reason, philosophy offers the foundation of every area of knowledge including the sciences and technology. However, for the sake of emphasis, philosophy can be defined as a critical, rational and insatiable search for knowledge for the sake of proffering solutions to the ultimate questions and problems arising from human experiences and reflections. Its essence is to carefully and systematically penetrate and understand the vast, varied and complex human and societal problems with the aim of proffering rational solutions to them. In other words, philosophy could be said to mean “the pursuit of mental excellence”, an original meaning of the word “philosophia” for the Greeks. “Philosophy as the pursuit of excellence is therefore in principle a perpetual struggle, a continuous attempt to realize an ideal” (Nwodo 1982:4), and most importantly for the creation of proper environment for development possibilities. There is no gainsaying that development is fundamentally philosophical and must therefore be built or achieved through the inculcation of mental excellence (Elechi 2016:2).

Let us now understand what national development means, and to do so, we must first and foremost understand in concrete terms what development is. The word development has its root from the French word “voloper” meaning “to wrap”. To develop thus means to “de-wrap” or to unfold gradually, to cause to grow gradually fuller, larger, stronger and better. Development therefore is the process or a state of being developed (Udoiem 1992:102). It can be defined as a process of unfolding, evolving, or maturing that entails a movement from a lesser stage to a greater one. (Unegbe 2002:101). In a somewhat different view, Rodney notes that development implies increased skill, capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well being (1982:3). This view that development implies freedom is corroborated by Ellah, when he explains that:

No development can occur in the absence of freedom, because without freedom we are in bondage, and bondage is slavery, which is the lowest degradation to which human nature can fall, which is the very opposite of development. There can be no development if men are ignorant, intimidated, poor and sick in body and mind... there is no development if man himself, is not developed in his body and his mind (1987:45).

Human societies and countries are developing at different varying levels even within distinct parts of the same society and country. But technically speaking, no society or country, nation or people can claim to have reached the apex or terminus of development to end all developments. Even those countries that claim to have developed are still developing. Development like philosophy is therefore an ongoing struggle towards excellence; it is a continuous process or possibility, never a completed project or *terminus ad quem*. Nevertheless, the ultimate essence or purpose of development is the development of man, the realization of human potentials and the liberation of man from poverty. In other words, true development at the individual level must seek to realize the creative capacities or potentials of man, enabling him to improve his material conditions of living, through the use of the resources available to him. Development is a process by which human personality is enhanced in a creative, organized and disciplined fashion. It is this enhanced personality that is the driving force behind the material transformation of any society. This simply means that development does not start with goods or material things; it begins with the people – their orientation, beliefs, values, attitudes, organizations, confidence and more importantly, self-discipline. It begins when man is able to take control and manipulate his environment to increase production and productivity of those things he needs to live a qualitatively better

life. In corroboration of the indispensability of man as the nexus of development, *The Report of the South Commission* states that:

But a nation is its people. Development has, therefore, to be an effort of, by and for the people. True development has to be people-oriented. It has to be directed at the fulfillment of human potentials and the improvement of the social and economic well being of the people. And it has to be designed to secure what the people themselves perceive to be their social and economic interests. Its first objective must be to end poverty, provide productive (1993:11).

The fact that the development of man is the focal point of national development also coincides with the philosophical belief of man as the centre and point of departure for every rewarding philosophizing. What constitutes a nation are the people, so national development has to be people-centered. It is the product of the people and must be directed towards enhancing the wellbeing of the people. But before we proceed further we really need to understand what national development means.

Lastly, is the question: what is national development? National development in concrete terms means a lot of things in various respects of human life. It means better standard of living, increase in goods and services, greater awareness and better appreciation of the essence of life and its conditions (Unegbe 2002:103). It means that the citizens must be patriotic and nationalistic, in the sense of having an unflinching desire to contribute meaningfully to the progress of his or her nation, as well as adequate vision and willingness or readiness to work for the progress of the nation. This is simply why Udoidem sees national development as "a gradual process of unfolding for the better or growth of nation; a type of growth that affects the nation as a whole or a development process that is patriotic or nationalistic" (1992:102). The enterprise or concept of national development, according to Elechi, requires not only modern technologies, skyscrapers or mansions and prestige automobiles; it also requires both a new conceptual framework: intellectual and moral capacities required to bring them to bear, as well as sustain them. Therefore, the essential theses for national development are the inculcation of the intellectual and moral dynamisms which are achieved through philosophical training or orientation and spiritual re-awakening of the human mind. It consists in investment on intellectual luxuries or culture and the training of critical minds and the critical training of the human mind, good governance, moral or spiritual decorum or reorientation as well as the creation of profound economic and material progress for and by a nation. It is

the provision of an enabling environment for human creativity, intelligence and originality of thought which enables the citizens to be sufficiently skillful for technological advancement and industries. (2016:4) Wiredu captures it thus:

Our societies are being rapidly changed by industrialization, and if we wish to understand this change and control its direction, we must adopt new ways of thinking, a new outlook upon man, society and nature. The philosopher can, and must, spearhead this endeavour (1980:61).

The implication of the above assertion is that philosophy has a vital role to play in any meaningful effort embarked upon towards national development. Let us now examine why and how this is so.

### **Philosophy and National Development: A Critical Analysis**

From our analysis above, it is clear that development, or put accurately, national development is broadly divided within the context of this paper into two compartments, namely human and material developments. These compartments correspond to the division of man as composing of the body and the soul, in the sense that while the soul corresponds to the human or spiritual aspect of development, the body which is nothing but matter, corresponds to the material or structural development. A glib understanding of the human or spiritual development and the dimensions which constitute it is very essential at this point.

### **Human/ Spiritual Dimension of Development**

Human development includes the moral or spiritual, mental or intellectual, and socio-political developments of man. It is the total or holistic development of the human person. Morally or spiritually, philosophy through its branch known as *Ethics* or *Moral Philosophy* is concerned with the moral and the spiritual life of man in the society. Moral and spiritual development of a person keeps him on course and stands him in good stead throughout life. Such development enables him to learn good manners so essential for good and healthy relationships as well as for coordinated actions or behaviour in the society. The fact is that there cannot be development in a nation where the financial or material capital of a people is richer than their moral and spiritual capital. Obviously, in such a situation development cannot endure since it will witness arrogant or incessant vandalism and destruction. Omoregbe attests to this fact when he argues that the most important aspect in the development of the human person is his moral development. Moral maturity is for him the mark of human development, and it is the most important aspect of national development. We cannot talk about the development of any country if the

members of such country are morally undeveloped and immature. The moral development of its citizens must precede other aspects of development otherwise the process of development would be obstructed by the immorality of the citizens. The immorality of citizens constitutes the greatest and most formidable obstacle to the development of a country (1993:147-8). Based on the foregoing, he queries:

How can there be development in a country in which public funds intended for developmental projects are diverted into a private and selfish ends? How can the economy of such a country develop? Nor can the economy of a country develop if its citizens lack a sense of duty, a sense of moral responsibility and social accountability? How can there be development in a country in which bribery and corruption break down law and order? What kind of development can we expect in a country which law enforcement agents (especially the police force and customs officials) can easily be bribed by criminals and economic saboteurs? What kind of development can we expect in a country whose government officials defraud the fatherland of millions of naira in collaboration with foreigners? If the citizens' dominant rule is self interest and are prepared to drain their fatherland to enrich themselves, how can their country develop? (1993:148).

Philosophy through its branch known as *Ethics* or *Moral Philosophy* teaches about character molding of the individual through the exposition of moral principles that will enable one to live a good and morally upright and decent life. Ethics exposes a person to take cognizance of the consequences of corrupt practices and criminal acts in the society as well as avoid them.

Philosophy is also concerned with the mental or intellectual development of man. For the purpose of clarity, when we talk about mental or intellectual development, we are simply in general terms referring to the fruit of philosophy not just as a corollary of knowledge, but as knowledge itself. Philosophy is known for the love and insatiable search for knowledge that leads one out or liberates him from the pangs of ignorance. It is a body of knowledge or truth that grows from man's quest or desire to know. This is why Aristotle pontificates that 'man by nature desires to know'. Knowledge is thus an escape from ignorance. Hence, philosophy and knowledge are one and the same; they are mutually inclusive or related. They reinforce each other, creating the possibility or condition for the other to subsist and flourish.

Philosophy plays a vital role to the development of a nation through the inculcation of wide knowledge that enhances sound judgment and shrewdness in decisions

(both practical and theoretical) in constructing national priorities and objectives. This is done through its rigorous qualitative and logical training of the human mind, and the proper orientation and civilization of the citizenry. By civilization, we simply consider or mean the ability to live with others in peace and harmony. It is that refinement of thought, manners and taste; it is the product of an optimistic-ethical conception of man and the world at large (Schweitzer 1961:24).

A modern form of barbarism it is in deed, and the exact opposite of what civilization should be: a stage of human social evolution characterized by refinement of thought, taste and manners; maximum utilization of available resources: human, material, spiritual and a total absence of barbarism and irrational behaviour (Nwodo 1982:11).

Schweitzer acknowledges the indispensability of civilization to national development and the role of philosophy in bringing it about. According to him, it will be disastrous if development follows only materialistic conception without the corresponding ethico-philosophical or spiritual dimension. Western civilization, he observes is a disaster because it abandoned the ethical and spiritual dimensions of development and followed material achievement. He puts it thus:

A civilization that develops only on its material side, and not in corresponding measure in the sphere of the spirit, is like a ship with defective steering gear which gets out of control at a constantly accelerating pace, and thereby heads for catastrophe (Schweitzer 1961:76).

Parallel to the above is Tempels' view in his *La Philosophie Bantoe* that it is a crime against education to impose on a human race a civilization without a philosophy, without wisdom, without a life and without spiritual aspirations. Philosophy in, and through education, moulds and develops the individual's mind, intellect, spirit and his personality and builds his integrity. It aids the individual in his mode of thought and attitudinal disposition to issues and realities of the cosmos. It enables the individual to reflect deeply about the society in general, himself, his relationship with others, cultivating sympathy and tolerance among people, appreciating others views, positions and ideas towards national development. It changes the individual in his choices, desire, inclination and interest. These changes are in the positive fashion or direction to foster national development. Little wonder, Udoidem writes that philosophy will enhance and improve the moral quality of education (1992:96).

Again, sound philosophy can bring about good politics, good governance and capable leadership and will instill positive mental attitude in the people. These are no doubt quintessence or *conditio sine qua non* to national development. Good politics, good governance or leadership are necessary conditions for national development; they are products of a society that has attained a higher level of development. Our emphases here are politics and governance that reflect just and egalitarian traditions, which enables society to achieve peace, stability or tranquility and progress. It is a leadership that creates conditions or atmosphere for absence of manifest violence, insecurity and injustice.

Good politics and governance is an important factor for the development of any society, and it is the crux of the branch of philosophy known as *Socio-political Philosophy* that is devoted to the deeper understanding and practice of the principles of human rights and liberty, freedom of expression, equality of opportunity, free enterprise, universal education, political obligations and social security. Good political philosophy fosters national peace and unity as well as articulates a political environment that will be conducive for national development. Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, etc are very few instances of philosophers who have conceived and promoted certain ideas or political philosophies as best for running, organizing and developing the society. On the continent of African, African thinkers and philosophers focused their philosophies on political freedom, economic progress and independence as well as egalitarian society. Among the leading African philosophers were Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Leopolds S. Senghor, Nnamdi Azikiwe, etc. The successes of these ideals in their times and well beyond then stand out as reference points to the importance of philosophy to national development.

Philosophy helps the politicians and leaders through its branch known as *Logic* and *Epistemology* in arriving at good judgment through the method or process of critical thinking or reasoning (a crucial part of decision making). For instance, in questioning and scrutinizing one's ideas or assumptions and those of the others, the leader needs logics and epistemology to clearly analyze and discover good reasons or points for his decisions or choices of actions. In policy formulation and implementation, a leader who is well equipped with philosophical cum reflective attitude will examine calmly and dispassionately at all the aspects of the policy, weighs the pros and cons, visualizes the benefits and consequences of such policy or action and makes a decision based on a critical objective assessment of the policy and its consequences on the present and foreseeable futuristic socio-political issues and circumstances in the country. This can only be done or achieved with the help or good knowledge of philosophy. The fact is that there is no good national development plan without critical thinking, except such plan is heading to

catastrophe or failure. Decadence and or national development impasse is a reflection of a closed-minded or myopic leadership, corruption and decoy instincts prevalent in planning procedures among leaders. But all these, a true philosopher would jettison for the quest or search of an ideal society and national development. Plato says:

Until philosophers become kings in this world, or till that we now call kings and rulers really and truly become philosophers, and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands... there is no other road to real happiness, either for society or the individual (1955:282).

Plato's view above is drawn or derived from his clear conviction that the philosopher has the knowledge, intellect and training to govern. Leadership or ruling requires skills and knowledge – good knowledge or idea of man and his complexities and dynamism, the society in general and the economy. A good leader is one who does not only act to preserve the lives of his subjects, but also transforms them as human beings in the most proper sense. A philosopher can be a good leader because he has a good sense of justice and would be able to administer same and act for the good of the community. He is supposed to have good character, a calm disposition and a sound mind. By training he is supposed to have the qualities of a good ruler, namely truthfulness, promise-keeping, high-mindedness, discipline and courage. Undaunted by death, and being a lover of truth, he would be honest and forthright. He would not be petty or mean, being above physical and material pleasures, he would go beyond emotional ties and economic or material considerations. He would be public spirited and wise. All these are what philosophy teaches to enhance or bring about national development.

The import of what we have said above is that politics and philosophy are safe for one another for the good and wellbeing of man and the development of the society. Philosophy enhances good governance and leadership through a good understanding of political philosophy, ethics, logic and epistemology. The fact is that if the members of the society including the leaders have objective standard of right and wrong, good understanding of the concepts of justice and fairness, as well as accountability and the respect for rights and dignity in their common stock of knowledge and relationship with one another can we then talk of national development. If not, national development will stand on the abyss of moral nihilism, with manifest socio-political chaos, disorder and meaninglessness of human life and existence. Omoregbe rightly puts it thus: Remove morality, remove

honesty and public accountability, and what are governments but gangs of thieves and treasury looters” (1993:127). In a society plagued with immorality; a society that is sick with various symptoms of moral diseases; in a society bedeviled by socio-political, economic and even religious problems; and in a society where evil and evildoers permeate and lurk every corner of the political spectrum and enthrone undisciplined, short-sighted and shallow-minded leaders, the lasting cure or therapy for such society is sound moral regeneration and conduct. Strauss stresses that in a political society devoid of morality “we cannot wholeheartedly act morally anymore. We cannot live anymore as responsible beings. The inescapable practical consequence is nihilism and underdevelopment” (1953:6). The fact is that instances of moral impasse like bribery and corruption, fraud, excessive materialism and the tendency to get rich quickly, as often as not by unscrupulous means have the capacity of holding national development to a standstill, and philosophy has proved a potent factor in bringing them under control. Let us at this point examine the other kind of national development (the material development) in relationship to philosophy.

### **Material/ Structural Dimension of Development**

Material development is an aspect of national development that easily comes to mind whenever there is any discourse on national development. It is usually considered as the “be-it-all” and the “end-it-all” of national development especially by the ordinary people on the street, including the ill-educated as well as some educated people. National development, for them is understood only in terms of material, economic or structural advancement, including science and technology, industrialization, gadgets and computers, economic ‘productivism’ and consumerism, etc. For this reason, they consider philosophy as a discipline that “bakes no bread” in the sense that it has no bearing on practical life, or a discipline that cannot provide ‘butter’ to the complaining empty stomach or bring into being the latest in technological innovation and advancement (Onyeocha 1995:1), like skyscrapers or mansions, prestige automobiles, bridges, etc. All these, no doubt, constitute visible or easily observable aspect of national development. Yet, philosophy also participates or contributes in bringing about this kind of development in the sense that material development is simply the practical result, outcome or consequence of theoretical or philosophical thinking and reflection. For instance, there is no doubt that whenever we want to produce or manufacture something; that, which we want to produce or manufacture, must rest first and foremost in our mind or intellect. The intellect or mind is therefore the beginning or starting point of imagination or conceptualization of any idea of any sort without which material development cannot be possible. It is in this sense that Wahba

claims that conceptual understanding of a thing precedes and betokens its practical realization (1985:23). Unegbe pointedly chronicles this idea thus:

Philosophy also plays much role in science and technology in very many less visible manners. An architect in making design on paper deals with abstract concept of what he considers good for his client. Such designs require some philosophical wisdom in conceptualization, in a way of imagination and ideation. Whatever structure that would be put in place must begin with its vision, imagination or conceptualization. Philosophy and ideology always come into play whenever any form of material or structural development is concerned. Philosophy therefore remains at the realm of the spirit of any structural/ material developmental project (2002:111).

Analogous to the above, is Wiredu's explanation that:

Our societies are being rapidly changed by industrialization, and if we wish to understand this change and control its direction, we must adopt new ways of thinking, a new outlook upon man, society and nature. The philosopher can, and must, spearhead this endeavour (1980:61).

To be sure, it is philosophy that establishes the kind of science and technology that is or will be desirable. Put differently, the choice of science and technology is neither a scientific question nor a technological problem to be solved by science and technology, but rather a philosophical question (Unegbe 109). Philosophy investigates into the foundation of science. There is rarely any fundamental problem of science that is not essentially philosophical. According to Herbert Dingle as quoted by Nwodo (1982: 11), "In both origin and nature, science is essentially a particular kind of philosophy." This is so because both science and philosophy are generally concerned with the rational explanation of the nature of the universe and the human experience of it. Nwodo goes further to explain that:

Philosophy permeates the entire structure of science: its method, its theory, and its implication. Its method is philosophical in the sense that it starts with some basic theoretical assumption usually "philosophical in character", and then moves into controlled experimental observations to establish the truth or falsity of the assumption. Similarly, scientific explanations of "experimentally verified theories" are usually extrapolations of philosophical

assumptions that frequently go beyond what the scientific experiments and observations themselves confirm (1982: 11-12).

In consideration of the fact above, Koyre (1968:80) similarly records that “It is not by following experiment, but by outstripping experiment, that the scientific mind makes progress.” This “experimental outstripping” to use Lakatos Imre’s expression, is “connected with vast cataclysmic metaphysical revolutions”, which means that even a widely accepted scientific theory can be challenged if it can be argued that the metaphysical presuppositions of the theory makes no contribution to its predictive success (Hawley 2006:10). In other words, all scientific theories have a philosophical “hard core” essential for the generation of hypotheses and theoretical assumptions. For instance, it is not in doubt that the philosophical principle of *causality* which holds that there is an intrinsic connection between cause and effect; a principle which is based to infer a set of circumstances in the future from a set of circumstances in the present is one of the main presuppositions on which science is based (e.g. in the cause of experience, we notice that certain events follow contemporaneously the other, that is, when event “A” happens, we expect “B” as the effect).

Another philosophical assumption on which science depends is that of *determinism*, which holds that the world behaves in an orderly manner; and that nothing comes out of the non-existent or destroyed into non-existent. The fact that people can predict an eclipse, earthquake, flood, etc depends on these philosophical or meta-scientific assumptions. Russell in his book *Determinism and Physics* avers that scientific knowledge will be impossible without determinism unless by chance. It will not be less *apropos* to also state that modern science is also based on the principle of *induction* which no doubt is also a philosophical principle. All these, point to the fact that science and technology are in many ways so dependent on philosophy for any meaningful progress or success, and to think or imagine otherwise is a contradiction to the foundation of science and scientific achievements.

## **Conclusion**

The first step in national development is the nurturing and development of human element (Human development). Every other aspect of development is auxiliary and contingent. Human development is thus the fulcrum of national development, both of which require a sound and well-articulated philosophy. Philosophy as both an academic field of study and a critical intellectual engagement, offers a deep insight into the being of man, the moral imperatives within which he must examine his cultural bearing and the authenticity of his existence. It helps us to clearly

conceptualize and define the ultimate goals against the background of which our social engagements and developmental initiatives are assessed. The relevance of philosophy is, therefore, situated in the wider context of the pursuit of a holistic development of man and society. Amidst the many crushing cultural fixations of modern and contemporary life and the bankruptcy of a moral substructure, the relevance of philosophy can hardly be hyperbolized. It is a tool for good governance and for the building of a healthy society; it is, indeed, a *conditio-sine-qua-non* to national development.

### Works Cited

- Dewey, J. (1957). *Reconstruction in Philosophy*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Ellah F.J. (1987). *Nigerian Society and Governance*. Port Harcourt: Chief J. Ellah Sons and Company.
- Elechi, M. (2016). "Prudence as Basis for Economic Excellence and National Development: The Aristotelian Paradigm" in *Sophia: An African Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 16(2), 2016, Pp. 1-9.
- Koyre, Alexandre. (1968). *Metaphysics and Measurement*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Nwodo, C.S., (1982). "Philosophy, Excellence and the Nigerian Challenge" in *Kiabara: Journal of the Humanities*. University of Port Harcourt, vol.5, no.2: 4-14.
- Omoregbe, J.I. (1993). *Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Study*. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd.
- Onyeocha M. I. (1995). *Introfil: A First Encounter with Philosophy*. Washington D.C: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.
- Plato. (1955). *The Republic*. Harmondsworth: Penguins Press.
- Rodney W. (1982). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington D.C. Howard University Press.
- Schweitzer A. (1961). *Civilization and Ethics*. London: Unwin Books.
- Strauss, L. (1953). *National Right and History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- The Report of the South Commission*. (1993). Enugu: Forth Dimension Publishers.

- Udoidem, S.I. (1992). *Values and National Development*. Lagos: African Heritage Research and Publications.
- Uka, K. (1982). "Drama and Conscientization", in *Readings in African Humanities: African Cultural Development*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Unegbe, B.N. (2002). "Philosophy and National Development" in *Foundations of Philosophy and Logic*, edited by Udoidem, S.I. Lagos: African Heritage and Publications.
- Wahba, M. (1985). "Contemporary Moslem Philosophies in North Africa" in *Philosophy in Africa: Trends and Perspective*, edited by P.O. Bodunrin. Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press Ltd.
- Wiredu, K. (1980). *Philosophy and African Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.