

**RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY  
PORT HARCOURT**



CHAMELEONIC NATURE OF EDUCATION AND  
PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION:  
THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE  
*AN INAUGURAL LECTURE*

**BY**

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# DEDICATION

To the blessed memory of my late Father, Elder Daniel Alozie Nwafor.

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## PROTOCOL

The Vice Chancellor and Chairman of this Occasion  
The Deputy Vice Chancellors (Administration and Academic)  
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Visiting Academics and Colleagues  
Administrative and Technical Staff  
My Lords Spiritual and Temporal  
Honourable Commissioners and Local Government Chairmen  
My Family members, Relatives and Friends  
Students of this Prestigious Institution  
Members of the Press  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I humbly welcome you all to this 101<sup>st</sup> Inaugural Lecture titled: **Chameleonic Nature of Education and Philosophy of Education: The Nigerian Experience**. Vice Chancellor Sir, I count it a great honour and privilege to stand before you and this respected audience to deliver the 101<sup>st</sup> Inaugural Lecture in the series of this great University; the second from the Department of Educational Foundations, but the first in Philosophy of Education in this University. In my odyssey to this height, it has been God all the way through the thick and thin of this life. I am the first child among the five children of Late Elder Daniel Alozie Nwafor and his dear wife, Deaconess Janet Amandem Nwafor (nee Nwuzi) of Egwi in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Because my father had a reasonable dose of primary education before his mother's death in 1940, he vowed that despite being a tailor-turned farmer, all his children must be educated – a feat he accomplished before his death in 2011. It is pertinent here to recall his inspiring advice from the Bible that spurred me on: “Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings, and not before mean men” (Prov. 22:29).

Today, Vice Chancellor and my esteemed audience, I am standing before great men and women of no mean repute: men and women who have accomplished much in their various fields of endeavour, and men and women of international acclaim. With due sense of humility and responsibility, the inaugural lecturer has been in the education industry for more than four decades – teaching at all levels of our education system, except at the primary education level. In the course of my professional practice, one has made some observations; engaged in hair-



splitting debates, orally and in writing, on the type of education system we have in Nigeria; the myopic and politically motivated policies, and the poor policy implementation measures and strategies. All through these years, one expected that the various lofty and laudable education policies and reforms Nigeria adopted would take her to greater heights and to be among the top 20 countries in the world by 2030 in terms of socio-political and economic stability, as well as scientific and technological advancement. But this could not be, why?

Mr. Vice Chancellor, permit me to put the question in a local parlance thus: *ohbu sii nmgbekhe amha ishi alha, sohbudi sii ahgubo enwhe nkho?*, meaning “is it that the barber lacks the skills of how to cut hairs, or it is that his tool or implement is not sharp? In other words, what is the real problem with Nigeria's education system? Is it that Nigeria lacks the right and capable hands to plan, formulate and effectively implement her educational policies? Or is it that there are critical ingredients that have always been ignored and treated with levity? These and other mind-boggling questions are at the heart of this inaugural lecture.

## **1.0 Introduction**

For many centuries, scholars and philosophers have shown keen interests in how to make society a safe haven for human beings in particular, as well as the environment in which they live. But their concerns and spirited efforts seem not to have yielded the desired optimal results that cut across the globe on equal basis in such a way that desirable change in all facets of human life could be felt or experienced everywhere. In this regard, a catalyst that would engender the needed social change is imperative; and the appropriate instrument in this connection is education, which seems not to have effectively played its

fundamental role of emancipation of the individual from the shackles of ignorance, superstition and parochialism. Hence, the expectations are that education should equip every society with ideas, theories, knowledge, skills, and techniques that would engender world-wide development of social institutions, which in turn would bring about an enduring stable and peaceful society (one of the cardinal goals of education) i.e., a society where the “good life” reigns supreme; a society devoid of fear of insecurity, a society where life is not brutish, nasty and short; rather a society where material and human capital development are maximally harnessed and utilized.

But unfortunately, Vice Chancellor Sir, these goals and expectations are yet to be attained for some reasons bordering on the complex nature of human environment; the complexity of human personality, different philosophies of life, different educational theories and practices, and different periods of intellectual development (Nwafor, 2016a). All these factors, and even more, are responsible for the difficulty in viewing education from a universally acceptable perspective. For this reason, education has been viewed from many angles. Little wonder then that man all through the ages has tried at one time or the other to improve and transform not only himself but also his environment. This desire and the quest for these endeavours have led man to consciously think and speculate on how to give himself an all-round development through education.

Vice Chancellor Sir, while desiring to embark on this inaugural lecture, I took cognizance of the fact that there are various phases of historical development in education, since it is the only indispensable ladder to climb from one developmental rung of the social ladder to another. *An insightful excursion into the growth and development of education from pre-historic non-literate cultures, the earliest historic cultures (Greek and*

*Roman), the Medieval period, the Age of Enlightenment, the Agrarian and Industrial Revolutions, the French and American Revolutions, down to our present age, show an unambivalent but conscious marriage de convenance between education and culture in different climes.* In this regard, it should be noted that at various historic periods, education puts on the cultural garb of any society in which it finds itself. This globally acknowledged attribute of education has not changed because change is an inherent characteristic of education. Therefore, it is an undeniable fact that education is a product of cultural elements such as ideology, philosophy, norms, values, beliefs, among others. In this connection, one therefore can ask, why should our educational system not reflect our cultural heritage, values, beliefs and norms? Again, should our educational system be entirely Western-oriented? These questions are intended to arouse our consciousness to the critical educational quagmire in which Nigeria finds herself for over a century. Against this background, I therefore contend that there is no form of education in the world that is bereft of an ideology and a philosophical base that makes change desirable and inevitable. Hence, almost all result-oriented socio-economic and political systems have a recognized and identifiable philosophy of education couched in a particular ideology. This is a very critical but the neglected aspect of Nigeria's education system which this inaugural lecture: **Chameleonic Nature of Education and Philosophy of Education: The Nigerian Experience** intends to address.

Esteemed Vice Chancellor, Sir, in this exposé, I will cast a cursory glance on the concepts that underpin this inaugural lecture; the concept of chameleon, education, philosophy, and philosophy of education.

## **2.0 Conceptual Clarification**

This section deals with the key concepts that run through this lecture. They are the concepts of chameleon, education, philosophy, and philosophy of education as they relate to Nigeria's educational experience.

### **2.1 Concept of Chameleon**

Vice Chancellor Sir, the chameleon in the context of this inaugural lecture is a metaphor as seen in every human society: in human beings, nations, social institutions, education, among others. The human society, according to Udoh (2010), is the most complex that shapes the personality, attitudes and perceptions of the individual; but characterized by dynamism and shared interests (Nwafor, 2016b). By implication, nations, institutions and education systems cannot be divorced from the attributes of society, which by and large are chameleonic in nature, often shrouded in the concept of change – the only permanent element in the world.

The various countries of the world are naturally situated wherever they find themselves in what may be described as a historical and geographical accident; not by choice. In each continent, God created not only human beings; He also created other creatures: animals, plants, reptiles, fishes, among others (Gen. 1:1-31). A careful and diligent look at the creatures depict their unique and peculiar characteristics. For example, man endowed with intelligence, was given dominion over everything God created (Gen. 1:28). Man is also characterized by the good, the bad, and the ugly. In like manner, other creatures have some human attributes: some prey on others, some move in groups, while others move alone, e.g., the snake (though a fast-moving creature), and the chameleon, an ugly slowly-moving creature with distinguishing features that other creatures do not have.

Chameleons are reptiles of the lizard family. They display a unique set of morphological characteristics that set them apart from all other lizards, such as gripping feet, independently moving eyes, a ballistic tongue and prehensile tail (Measey, Raselimanana & Herrel, 2014). We shall come back to the chameleonic features vis-à-vis education later after a cursory glance at the concept of education.



**Plate 1: The Chameleon**

## **2.2 Concept of Education**

Education is not only an elusive but also a difficult and contentious concept because efforts have been made to give it a holistic and comprehensive definition and/or interpretation, but to no avail. It is on this premise that Peters in Schofield (1972) is justified when he says that the task of defining education is extremely difficult. The reasons for this assertion stem from the fact that education has a wide scope, and scholars at various times defined it from their individual philosophy of life, as well as from the prevailing socio-economic and political situation. As a result, numerous definitions of education abound (Nwafor, 2016a). The elusive and contentious nature of education has forced scholars and institutions to avoid defining it, rather they

view it from their own perspectives. For example, Nigeria describes education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development (FRN, 2004). It is in recognition of the uses of education that Nwafor and Nwogu (2014) argue that:

It stands to reason that the correct insight, which men and women acquire from education naturally increases their intellectual power and capability and leads them to material and spiritual fulfillment. Indeed, education gives those who embrace it the illumination that shatters illusion, removes difficulties and enables them to realize and appreciate the true value of life.

In this context, education is viewed as emancipator, because it frees the mind from error and misconception, and inclines it to pursue the path of truth, justice and moral uprightness. The goal of education here is produce autonomous individuals, without these virtues social progress would be impossible (Kaufman, 1978).

However, it is pertinent to state that another problem associated with the definition of education arises from the attempt to define it either from descriptive or stipulative points of view. Descriptive definitions are basically denotative, and they tend to answer the question: What is education? The answer here could lead us to etymological definition of education; a concept derived from the Latin word “*educere*”, which means to lead or bring out. Ordinarily, to lead implies to direct or to guide someone on a path or course of action or activity. In other words, it implies two or more persons showing the other(s) what to do, how to do it, and why it should be done. This could suggest to

liberate the individual from the darkness of ignorance and usher him into the light of knowledge and self-awareness. Another definition based on the etymology of education is “*educare*”, which means “to form or train”. By extension, it could mean to develop or mould something into a desirable state. In other words, it implies to teach or to bring up someone to an expected standard. This definition seems to be more adequate than the former because the implication here is that what the learner should know is already determined. Hence, he has to be trained along preconceived goals which emphasize conformity to and acquisition of skills, competencies, knowledge and attitudes. On the other hand, stipulative definitions of education spell out what education should be and how it should be achieved. Hence, education has been viewed as an activity, a process, a product, and a discipline (Nwafor & Nwogu, 2014). In fact, the task of defining and understanding the concept of education, to a large extent, depends on the school of thought one belongs to. In this respect, to save ourselves the tedium and boredom of examining numerous definitions of education, it would be necessary to consider some views on it as expressed by some scholars. To Mill in Okeke (1989), “Education embraces not only direct knowledge from schools and colleges, but also development of character and knowledge” (p.11). From this definition, it could be deduced that education is not limited to the formal educational setting because character and moral development also take place informally in other social institutions. In other words, the roles of the family, the church, peer groups and mass media are acknowledged in the educative process. In this connection, Anderson, Lawson, Schnell and Swift (2001) opine that:

In the very broad sense, education is the process by which the individual acquires the

many physical and social capabilities demanded of him by the group into which he is born and within which he must function. Sociologists have called this process socialization (pp.12-13).

Although, the authors assume their definition of education has an all-embracing scope, but they lost sight of who should engineer the process as well as the method by which the individual should acquire “the many physical and social capabilities”. Again, they did not take cognizance of the expected outcomes of the education process. Hence, the gap in the definition above and in many others is what Peters (1966) fills when he pungently argues that education picks out no particular activity or process. Rather, it lays down the criteria to which activities or processes must conform; the processes must engender a desirable state of mind and contribute to something worthwhile. Education for Peters (1966) implies intentional bringing about of a desirable state of mind in a morally unobjectionable manner in the learner.

A careful examination of Peters' (1966) conception of education shows that it is broader and apt than that of Anderson et al (2001) in certain vital aspects, because it portrays education as an activity with many processes which aim at producing a desirable outcome through an “intentional”, but not through a morally reprehensible method. It could be argued that education aims at producing individuals with sound minds and who are physically strong: individuals who are not morally questionable, and whose character and behaviour are desirable. One therefore, submits that where these attributes abound, society would have peace and stability, which in turn would foster socio-economic and political development. Unarguably, development in all its ramifications is the product of education



and the educated man.

Vice Chancellor Sir, some scholars have figuratively described what education looks like. For Aggarwal (2002), education is like a diamond which has different colours when viewed from different angles. The implication here is that people have various perceptions or notions of education depending on the prevailing situation and context in which it is used. In addition, we can view education based on various disciplines, e.g., Agricultural Education, Business Education, Educational Foundations, Science Education, Legal Education, among others. Hence, they try to define education from the perspective of their disciplines. On the other hand, Nwafor (2016a) observes that education behaves like a chameleon, which takes any colour nearest to it at any time. In effect, the dynamic nature of education is what is being referred to here, i.e., education responds to the needs and aspirations of any given society, especially with regard to the cultural values, norms, belief system, habits, the changing socio-economic and political situations, and emerging new ideologies and technologies. Vice Chancellor sir, the chameleonic nature of education is the crux of this inaugural lecture. We shall come back to it in a short while, but before then, let us consider what qualifies anyone to be adjudged as educated – a product of education.

### **2.2.1 Who is an Educated Man?**

Globally, every culture has its own yardstick of assessing an educated man. In contemporary societies all over the world, there seems to be no acceptable view on the concept of the educated man as could be seen from the divergent views expressed by scholars. Their views, no doubt, are reflections of their cultural backgrounds, each of them strive to establish the characteristics of an educated person-man or woman. In this discourse, I would briefly cast a cursory glance at some views

on who is an educated man, as defined by some Western and African scholars, and narrow it down to the Nigerian context. Ordinarily, the concept of “the educated man” is used evaluatively; a kind of commendatory epithet used to describe a person's status in society. This usage depends on the context in which it is used to imply a person who has widely travelled, and could speak two or more languages fluently and almost flawlessly too. Those who subscribe to this erroneous idea based their views on the maxim: traveling is part of education (Nwafor, 2016a). The same is applicable to a person who, because of his long association with the upper class, and has become exposed to the life style expected of the educated class. These two notions do not qualify for the term, because they can be referred to as experiences gained as a result of exposure and association.

Peters (1966), in his seminal approach to the issue of the concept of the educated man, offers four criteria for adjudging anyone as educated, thus:

- i. He/she must possess knowledge and understanding, and not just “a mere know-how or knack;
- ii. He/she must be transformed by what he/she knows – a reflection of a broad- based knowledge and understanding in his/her area of specialization.
- iii. He/she must be concerned about the standard to be maintained in his profession; and
- iv. He/she must have cognitive (mental) perspective of the activities of his /her profession.

Though, on the surface, these guidelines have been attacked because of their inherent lapses. Critics view Peters' (1966) position as too individualistic and elitist, because it excludes non-formal education – the education system that existed in

pre-colonial times (Akinpelu, 1981). In other words, the educated man in the Western sense does not give a complete picture of the educated man (*Uduigwomen & Ogbinaka, 2009*). Hence, this concept of the educated man cannot be applied cross-culturally. For Wood and Barrow (1975), the concept of the educated man that is operative involves things like consideration for others, manners and abilities to do certain things and act in certain ways. Plato's concept of the educated man in (*Uduigwomen et al., 2009*) runs counter to Peters' (1966) because for him, the educated man is one who eagerly pursues the ideal perfection of citizenship and teaches (others) how to lead and how to obey the law of the land.

In the African point of view, according to Ezeani (2015), the educated man is seen as a responsible and cultured person, who applies ethical principles as integral part of his knowledge in solving personal and social problems. This seems to align with Aristotle's concept of man as a social, political and gregarious being, who cannot exist in isolation. The educated man in the traditional African context is one who combines good character with specific skills, a well-integrated citizen of his community (Fafunwa & Aisiku, 1982). This view is further garnished by Akinpelu (1981), when he states that the educated man in African society is one who has good social inter-personal relationship with other members of the community; one who is economically fruitful, who makes positive contributions to community decisions and policies. In effect, the concept of the educated man should not be circumscribed to imply elitism because there are individuals who in their cultural settings are educated in the context of their own society; people who are versed and versatile in different areas of knowledge (Okoh, 2003), but are deficient in interpersonal relationships with others. A truly educated man could be distinguished by the way

and manner he thinks and talks, by the body of knowledge he has, and by the cordial relationship he maintains with other members of his community.

In the Nigerian context, the above traditional African view of the educated man may to some extent apply, because a Nigerian is an African. In the Nigerian society, an educated person is one who has acquired knowledge and skills through formal and non-formal education; a person with high standard of learning, and one who can speak foreign language(s) fluently. This is an erroneous notion of the concept being discussed; because most educated Nigerians despise and condemn Nigerian culture, beliefs and values, but they accept and even adore foreign cultures, even with their obvious negative aspects. In effect, this attitude is a clear, indication of cultural inferiority, which Azikiwe in Enoch (1996) portrays Nigerians as British in thought, but Nigerian in blood. The educated Nigerians are more selfish, greedy and materialistic than their less educated counterparts, who are guided more by their cultural ethics. The perpetrators of heinous crimes in our society today are mainly products of formal education. Hence, corruption in all forms has eaten deep into the fabric of our society. In this regard, Tella (2022) asserts that corruption in Nigeria has reached an unpardonable level. For Achebe (1983), corruption has passed the alarming and entered the fatal stage; and he maintains that Nigeria will die if we keep pretending that she is slightly indisposed.

In the final analysis, the Western concept of the educated man is not only bookish, elitist and too formal, but also cognitive-oriented to the exclusion of other domains of education with emphasis on the individual. This is at variance with the traditional African view which stresses good character development, social integration and communal living, as well

as functional and self-reliant individual within the community; who uses his knowledge to solve both personal and community problem (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003). It is in this regard that there is a disconnect between truly African concept of the educated man and the educated Nigerian, who prizes alien culture, values, norms and beliefs above his own cultural heritage; and swallows everything foreign, line, hook and sinker. Of a truth, Western culture tried to liberate the individual from the shackles of superstition, ignorance and parochialism with an education system that emphasized literary than the technical and vocational components. Hence, a good education system must prepare the individual for self-reliance, i.e., an all round development.

For this reason, a realistic approach to education, according to Sote (2021), should not be about head knowledge of basic information, but also about application of the knowledge that has been designed to activate the head, the hand and the heart. Education for development therefore, must generate both the knowledge and the right attitude to run the society in such a way that it would cater for both existential and intellectual needs of society. Education is expected to engender desirable development for socio-economic and political transformation, but a critical assessment in this regard gives a gloomy picture of the educated class, who cannot condemn evil, rather they compromise it. This could be attributed to the chameleonic nature of human beings which education should obliterate.

## 2.3 The Nexus between Chameleonic Features and Education



### Plate 2: Chameleonic features and Education

1. Belongs to lizard family
2. Slow movement
3. Independent roving eyes
4. Colour changing skin
5. 6 gripping feet
6. Prehensile tail
7. Ballistic tongue

The unique traits of a chameleon could be likened to some essential features of education. First, a chameleon moves very slowly, one limb at a time. In the same vein, educational processes take place gradually; they are time-bound, one stage or level before another. The colour of a chameleon's skin is another important feature which helps it to blend in its natural environment. Similarly, education all through ages adapts itself to any historico-cultural environment by taking the people's aspirations and felt-needs into consideration. In other words, education is dynamic as it responds to socio-cultural demands of society with reference to time, societal demands and

changing circumstances. In addition, a peculiar characteristic of a chameleon is its incredible ability to feel sound. Despite the absence of ears and eardrums, it relies on feeling vibrations to identify threats in its environment (Manibota, 2019). Educational policies also behave in this direction because once they are formulated, criticisms notwithstanding, they are implemented until they meet blind alleys. The response to the criticisms is usually couched in the common phrase “educational reform”, which may not be flawless.

As we noted earlier, chameleons have eyes that can rotate and move in different directions independently, which give them the ability to focus on different objects at the same time, especially in the day time thereby giving them a panoramic view of the environment. Like the chameleon, educational programmes and activities go on at the same time in various disciplines, to achieve set goals and objectives. As diurnal creatures, they are almost blind in the dark. Unlike the chameleon in this case, education is not limited in its focus with reference to times. Its multidisciplinary nature and diversified functions make education a veritable catalyst and agent of socio-economic and political, as well as scientific and technological change. The change in these areas takes place simultaneously without halting the progress or development of one another. However, educational activities may cease to go on in conflict-ridden areas, e.g., wars, communal crises, etc., can usher in a period of darkness or national blindness as was in some parts of Eastern Nigeria during the civil war, and in some war-torn nations like Ukraine, Eritrea, Burundi, Palestine, and so on.

From the above analysis, the most important characteristic of chameleons vis-à-vis education is their colour changing ability which enables them to adapt to their environment. Education behaves in this manner; that is why we have Greek education,

Roman education, English education, American education, Japanese education, and so on. In effect, formal education wore the cultural and philosophical attire of the various countries it came into, except in Africa and by extension Nigeria. It is evident that the pivot of the educational systems of the countries mentioned above is their philosophy of education. This may elicit some fundamental questions such as: has Nigeria a philosophy of education?, and what is the ideological basis of her philosophy of education? Let us briefly examine the concepts of philosophy, and philosophy of education, and relate them to education in Nigeria past and present.

## **2.4 The Concept of Philosophy**

The term “philosophy” is derived from two Greek words: Philo (“love”) and Sophia (“wisdom”). From its etymology, philosophy means the love of wisdom or knowledge. Hence, it could mean the quest for knowledge. Many definitions of philosophy have been given, but there seems to be no generally acceptable one because each of the definitions differ fundamentally from the various schools of thought of the philosophers or scholars. On this premise, Uduigwomen (2009) holds that the root of the difficulty in defining philosophy is as a result of disagreement among philosophers. Ordinarily, people perceive philosophy as the individual's way of life based on the philosophical beliefs he acquired from his environment. Thus, we can say everyone is a philosopher. This view, however, is myopic as evidenced in the way and manner some people discuss; how they present their ideas logically or otherwise, the type of questions they ask, and how they respond to issues raised in the course of discussion.

Vice Chancellor, Sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is an established fact that right from the earliest historic times, philosophy has been acknowledged as the craving for the



highest knowledge, as different from every day and other forms of applied knowledge as well as religious or mythological modes of thinking. For Mango (2011), philosophy in its most original and general sense is defined as a search for the basic truth, meanings, realities and principles behind superficial and surface appearance of phenomena or events. In other words, philosophy is essentially the search for rational explanation of the mysteries that tantalize human imagination and understanding of certain phenomena, ideas, issues and concepts. In essence, it is basically concerned with questions about analysis of concepts and with grounds of knowledge, beliefs, actions, and activities. Indeed, philosophy is a reflective and systematic way of reasoning to unravel fundamental questions about reality and human existence. In a bid to unfathom the basic questions about the mystery surrounding human existence, Omoregbe (1990) observes that philosophy grew out of religion and mythology, which is not peculiar to a particular society or culture. This implies that every culture has its own philosophy, religion and myths. It is for this reason that Okoh and Sulyman (2023) hold that philosophy is not the inheritance of a particular race, continent, people of particular social status, specific religious practitioners among knowing humans, rather it belongs to every individual or group that thinks, observes and acquires knowledge. It is against this background that I unequivocally hold that Africa, and indeed Nigeria has her own philosophy, which has remained unfathomed; partly because Nigerians refused to think in terms of African culture and its philosophical background, or perhaps they have been deeply entrenched in Western thoughts, culture and lifestyle.

However, from a broad spectrum, Okoro (2002) argues that philosophy, as an intellectual activity, has some attributes such

as concern for meaning which necessitates analysis as a method of philosophy; examination of beliefs, peculiar questioning technique, among others, which are associated with some existential attitudes mainly wonder, doubt and curiosity. According to Lawhead (2002), philosophy can be viewed as: “The human attempt to systematically study the most fundamental structures of our entire experience in order to arrive at beliefs that are conceptually clear, experientially confirmed and rationally coherent as possible” (p.xxv).

The implication here is that philosophy is a human effort to embark on a task that he can never complete because human experience and beliefs keep unfolding, and the quest to acquire verified and confirmed beliefs is interminable. Hence, philosophers endlessly crave to unravel and discover new ideas and undiscovered dimensions of old ideas. Generally, philosophy is concerned with clarifying, evaluating and justifying cultural beliefs by examining them in the light of opposing viewpoints and opposing cultural beliefs, values and attitudes. In this regard, Nigeria turned a blind eye to her indigenous cultural beliefs, values and attitudes which are antithetical to foreign ones, and embraced alien ways of life to the detriment of her cultural heritage. It is no longer an abomination to see our young ones dress in an obscene manner in the name of fashion. They also abhor their mother tongue; while people in positions of trust brazenly abuse their oaths of office, and ultimately encourage corruption in high places. They treat anything African or Nigerian with utmost contempt, neglect, and disrespect. This is the bane of Nigeria's socio-economic and political development. This, no doubt, is because Nigeria refused to look inward; to learn from, lean on her cultural heritage, and draw from the pool of her own traditional thoughts and philosophical ideas. This same attitude has been

extended to philosophy as a course of study in Nigerian Universities.

### **2.4.1 The Status of Philosophy as a Discipline in Nigeria**

Vice Chancellor, Sir, philosophy as a discipline has often been neglected and overlooked in Nigerian Universities. Olu-Owolabi (2011) observes that the perennial problem of the discipline is as a result of the misinterpretation and misconception of its goals and objectives. Consequently, many philosophers have been unjustly criticized and maligned. A typical example is Socrates, the gadfly, who believed that he had a sacred duty to persuade his fellow Athenians to live a morally upright life, but was accused and killed for corrupting the youths, and for religious heresy. One wonders why society and even individuals treat philosophy and philosophers with contempt and disregard, and in some cases with outright hostility or deliberate mischief. In this regard, Igbafen (2006) poignantly expresses his disdain for the discipline thus:

Philosophy, as an area of academic study or inquiry, seldom attracts any significant interest from students and governments for the singular reason that philosophy does not bake bread neither does it build bridges (p.14).



**Plate 3: Bread**



**Plate 4: Bridge**

This, no doubt, is an erroneous assumption of an arm-chair critic premised on the wrong notion that philosophy is concerned with mere abstraction and as such contributes nothing to the socio-economic and political development of society. Those who share this thought are ignorant of the hard and indisputable fact that there can never be any form of development, scientific and technological innovation or invention of any kind without a deep reflection as well as critical analysis of ideas that would be translated to tangible object in any form of physical development or invention. It therefore argue that even if philosophy can neither bake loaves of bread nor construct bridges, it is crystal clear that the processes involved in bread-baking and bridge construction cannot be divorced from the mind of a reflective, critical, and creative thinker. It is pertinent therefore to emphatically state that the thinker's ideas are the building blocks of any meaningful theory on which scientific and empirical researchs are anchored.

Vice Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, when Brinton (1963) states that men of ideas rule the world, he meant something far more than what the ordinary mind could conceive of. Some may construe his observation from political and governance perspectives, but what we can glean from Brinton's assertion is a clear reference to men and women of cultivated minds. He meant men and women whose contributions to human civilization are indelible, and whose names and footprints on the sands of time have been and would be immortalized. In other words, such people are agents of desirable social change. Referring to the roles of such people in society, Martin Luther King (Jnr) in Madu (1998) unequivocally states that the prosperity (development) of a nation depends not on the strength of its fortifications, not in the

beauty of its public buildings, but on the number of its cultivated citizens, its men of character and enlightenment. A deeper critical analysis of Martin Luther King's declaration points to the roles and quality of the products of the educational system of any society, Nigeria inclusive. In reality, what every society or culture needs so much are men and women of integrity and impeccable character, i.e., products of educational institutions, who will stand for the truth, justice and equity even if the heavens fall.

It is however, necessary to note that the wrong impression about philosophy has adversely affected Nigeria. A retrospective foray into the history of Western philosophy in Nigeria's educational institutions reveals that the misconception of what philosophy stands for, and what society stands to gain from it is deeply rooted in the Nigerian society.

In some cases, philosophy is associated with atheistic underpinning which is aimed at attacking and criticizing the idea of a Supernatural Being. This wrong notion is very common among many Christian denominations, except the Catholics, who acknowledge that in the ocean of philosophy every fish has an equal right to exist and swim freely. This misconception could be responsible for the late introduction of philosophy as an academic discipline in Nigeria. In this regard, Olu-Owolabi (2011) notes that both the University Colleges of Ibadan and Legon (Ghana) were established in 1948, but the University College, Legon introduced Department of Philosophy that same year, whereas University College, Ibadan introduced it as a Department in 1974 after 49 years. He further observes that:

Universities of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ife and Lagos (and Zaria) which decided to introduce the subject in the academic programme had problems with policy makers and people in

authority (who) must have regarded the subject as an avenue for breeding insurgents and radicals (p.13, words in brackets mine).

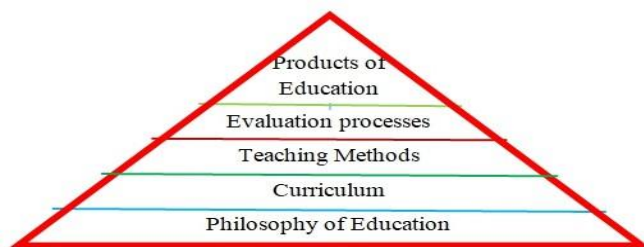
In reality, this misconception has had far-reaching effects on both parents and students alike. In spite of the wrong notions about philosophy, it should be noted that a seasoned and well-educated philosopher is disciplined, broad-minded and tolerant, critical and constructive, as well as creative in thinking.

## **2.5 The Concept of Philosophy of Education**

Vice Chancellor Sir, having examined the concepts of education and philosophy respectively, it is imperative that I beam my searchlight on the combined components of this concept: philosophy of education, an inevitable but often neglected aspect of the education system in Nigeria. We shall consider some basic questions such as: what is philosophy of education?, what are its roles in the educative processes?, and is there a Nigerian Philosophy of Education?

It is pertinent to note that every discipline, and even other human endeavours have underpinning ideas that govern, guide and regulate human actions in those fields concerned. Such ideas are founded on a given ideology and or philosophy. Evidently, all disciplines have a “philosophy of” attached to them, similarly education has its own. In the views of world acclaimed philosophers of education, Peters and Hirst (1970), “Philosophy of Education... draws on established branches of philosophy and brings together those segments of them that are relevant to the solution of educational problems” (p.13). For Okoh (2003), philosophy of education is primarily concerned with the application of philosophical principles to the practical conduct of education. In other words, metaphysics, epistemology, axiology and logic are intricately involved in

proffering solutions to the theories and practices, and problems and issues associated with education. By implication, philosophy of education touches every sphere of education because it performs indispensable functions for all facets of education. In this regard, Nwafor and Nwogu (2011) emphatically hold that: “Philosophy of Education can be best discussed and understood in connection with the theory and practice of education. It is for this reason that educational practices and methods devoid of theories amount to nothing and lack substance” (p.22). They further argue that educational theories are synonymous with educational ideas, since ideas are the building blocks of theories. In effect, philosophy of education is the application of general philosophy, especially to prevailing socio-economic and political, as well as scientific and technological problems that influence educational policy formulation and implementation. According to Feinberg (1995), philosophy of education is a discourse about institutions that are designed to educate, namely schooling and what goes on in the classroom. This implies that philosophy of education concerns itself largely with the content (curriculum) of what is being taught in the classroom as well as the methodology and evaluation procedures used therein as shown in the pyramid of educational theory and practice below:



**Fig 1: Pyramid of Educational Theory and Practice**

In another vein, Wain (2003) views philosophy of education as a discipline of its own, hence its courses are not found in philosophy department. He further argues that it is for this reason that philosophers of education have their own associations and journals. For Carr (2005), philosophy of education has become an institutional and professional area of expertise with its own distinctive mechanisms for protecting itself. As a foundation discipline, philosophy of education oversees other areas of education and provides them with necessary tools and techniques for clearer concept of their roles and operations. In addition, as a “clearing house” for education, it deals with clarification of ideas, issues, problems and concepts in education. The concept of philosophy of education is not a strait-jacket: it is dynamic and responds to contemporary situations, hence Okoh (2003) views it as “a coat of many colours”, and Nwafor (2016a) portrays it as a “chameleon”. These descriptions are not only apt, but also appropriate and self-explanatory. It is important to note that since times are changing, for any educational system to have a sustainable base, it must be strongly anchored on a well-thought out and articulated philosophy of education that takes cognizance of the society's cultural values, belief system and felt-needs. Most advanced countries' success stories stem from their philosophical approach to education, which is grossly absent in Nigeria's education system right from the inception of Western formal education because its importance and roles in the Nigerian context were carefully silenced, even against recommendations for its inclusion.



### 2.5.1 Some Roles of Philosophy of Education

Generally, the functions of philosophy of education are very critical and indispensable to both the educative process and the entire education system. It analyses educational ideas through the application of philosophical methods with a view to ensuring that ambiguous and vague ideas are critically examined and clarified. Critical analysis therefore discourages contradictions and inconsistencies in the use and application of educational ideas and concepts. It is for this reason that Okoro (2003) describes philosophy of education as the clearing house for the concepts and language of education. In addition, it plays a prescriptive role as it prescribes desirable principles, activities and practices in education. In effect, philosophers of education make recommendations as to what is worthwhile for the overall development of the individual and society, as well as the educational activities that would ensure the realization of society's educational goals and objectives. Furthermore, philosophy of education speculates on what the educational ideals of society should be and how they could be achieved. Good examples of this are found in Plato's *Republic*, and *Law*; Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, Peters' *Ethics and Education*, Akinpelu's *Essays on Philosophy and Education*, etc. In essence, philosophy of education provides guidance to theoretical and practical aspects of education (Nwafor & Nwogu, 2011). They further insightfully state that:

P h i l o s o p h y                      o f  
education....speculates education,  
by projecting certain ideals on  
education, and by suggesting the  
processes of realizing them in real  
life situation. It involves a high

mental operation which has to do with the ability to see beyond the existing educational system in a society, being able to order or reorder some of the practices and perceiving other possibilities (p.23).

This is a function philosophy of education could have performed creditably, but as Carr (2005) observed, education has insulated itself from philosophy in two ways. First, the modes of reasoning used in institutionalized arenas in which serious and effective decisions are made hardly conform to canons of rationality. Instead, policies are rarely committed to rational arguments. He further holds that another way by which education insulates itself from philosophy is by conducting its debates through a mode of discourse that imposes constraints on some questions that can be legitimately discussed or debated. The implication is the emergence of two separate spheres of professional activity:

- i. A small academic community of educational philosophers who examine educational issues in consonance with the canons of rational inquiry, but whose arguments and conclusions are not given the necessary considerations; and
- ii. A diverse group of politicians, policy-makers, and other educational professionals who make and implement educational decisions, but they do so in such a way that lacks intellectual rigour. The consequences of this intellectual obduracy has always been educational misadventure as has been the Nigerian experience.

A careful but critical evaluation of the current educational reform with reference to the University Curriculum shows that the above observations were the root causes of its problems. Undoubtedly, this has led to a barrage of barb criticisms against the university curriculum over the years, especially the current Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS), which is anchored on a quick sand foundation. This is because no philosopher of education was among the National Universities Commission's so-called “experts” (technocrats and academics from some disciplines) who failed to bear in mind, or perhaps do not know of the chameleonic nature of education vis-à-vis the Nigerian context, as well as what should constitute the curriculum content, especially the 30% local content and how or from where it could be derived. To Nwafor (2023), the local content or “home grown” courses differ significantly among universities within a particular state. For example, he contends that the local content of most “home grown courses” in the universities in Port Harcourt metropolis differ radically from each other, instead of the intended uniformity.

### **2.5.2 Is there a Nigerian Philosophy of Education?**

Vice Chancellor Sir, without begging the question, many countries of the world, especially developed countries have, but Nigeria is yet to have her own philosophy of education. For Okoh (2021), the pragmatic philosophy of education is rooted in the North American history, culture and social experience; dialectic materialism was the foundation of the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republic's(USSR) philosophy of education, while empiricism was the basis of British education. But most developing nations including Nigeria have no philosophy of education they can call their own. Rather they copied blindly and accepted unquestioningly the Trojan horse of their colonial

masters, thinking that would be the best for them. The wholesale acceptance and adoption of Western educational philosophies contradicted the position adopted by Hans Vischer (one of the earliest alien educators in Nigeria), who in Education Ordinance of 1882, states that objectives of education are: to emphasize practical work, and to respect the native tradition and African culture; and to employ traditional influences that would make the people good citizens (Onabamiro, 1983). It should be also noted that Phelps Stokes Commission's report of 1925 recommends that education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitude, occupation and traditions of the various peoples (Nwafor, 2009). Against this background, it seems absurd that Nigerians after independence formulated a philosophy of education that totally failed to “respect the native tradition and African culture”. In other words, the policy makers lost sight of what should be the main contents of Nigerian philosophy of education, which according to Akinpelu (1981); Okoh (2005), Omoregie and Osuji (2014), include: the nature of man and society, the best type of knowledge worth having, and the value system deemed worthwhile. It is therefore necessary to ask, on what basis was Nigeria's philosophy of education formulated? In this regard, Aderelegbe in *Omoregie et al (2014)* states that the objectives of Nigerian education which were formulated into a national policy on education were:

- i. the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and of society;
- ii. the training of the mind in building valuable concepts, generalization and understanding of the world around us;
- iii. the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and

competence, both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in his society; and

- iv. the acquisition of relevant and balanced knowledge of facts about local and world phenomena.

A critical analysis of the above objectives shows that they may sound and seem laudable and lofty, but they are fraught with problems of ambiguity and misconception because these objectives, without any iota of doubt, cannot help us to attain the national goals. These objectives which are not philosophical in any way eventually formed the fulcrum of the 1969 National Curriculum Conference which gave birth to the 1977 edition of the National Policy on Education. It has been observed that the first wrong step in the right direction was the composition of participants of the National Curriculum Conference drawn from “all walks of life” (Taiwo, 1985), which included market women, artisans, etc., some of whom did not know what the conference was all about, neither did they make any contributions. Hence, Adesina, Akinyemi and Ajayi in Nwafor (2014) alluding to the 1969 National Curriculum Conference and subsequent ones that birthed the National Policy on Education, argue that the participants of the conferences imported “lock, stock and barrel” foreign philosophical ideas into the Nigerian educational system. For Daramola and Jekayinfa (2007), the contents of National Policy on Education including its philosophy could at best be described as mere objectives of the system. One therefore argues that the nature of Nigeria's philosophy of education makes the implementation of the educational policy on which it is predicated relatively difficult and unrealistic. In a bid to correct perceived errors in the first edition of our educational Magna Carta, the preambles

of the second and third editions (1981 & 1989) respectively state thus:

It is government's wish that any existing contradictions and ambiguities, and lack of uniformity in the educational practices in different parts of the Federation should be removed to ensure an even and orderly development of the country (p.5).

An insightful view of the above statement reveals a deeper contradiction as “government's wish” to eliminate threats to its educational practices still persist. Where is the uniformity when each state in the federation makes her own educational policies and implement them to suit local situations? For example, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a nationwide education programme, but the implementation strategies have never been uniform. Hence, UBE like its earlier similar programme is brimming with myriads of problems that enervate the whole scheme. Vice Chancellor Sir, the basis of the first three edition of Nigeria's education remains unequivocally the same thus:

Nigeria's philosophy of education, therefore is based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizens and equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the school system (p.7).

Vice Chancellor Sir, the current National Policy on Education is the sixth edition. The Nigeria's philosophy of education as

contained in the various editions gives us an insight into its nature, content and context. The first three editions: 1977, 1981, and 1989, respectively seem to focus on post civil war problems of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction, which stress the need for re-integration. Hence, from my own point of view, what we consider as our philosophy of education is more of a statement of intention (Nwafor, 2016c), because there are no elements of a known philosophy on which it was based. It does not indicate a particular cultural environment with its identifiable belief system, values, morés and norms. According to Akinpelu (2005), philosophy of education should be seen as an attempt to articulate the ideological commitments of the society through a set of programme designed to realize and perpetuate their commitments. Unfortunately, from my point of view, the attempt to articulate the ideological commitments of the Nigeria's educational system has no philosophical foundations for effective and sustainable academic programmes.

Here lies the missing links in the Nigeria's philosophy of education, because it lacks the metaphysical, epistemological and axiological components of philosophy. The 2004 and 2013 editions of the National Policy on Education (the 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> editions) respectively, further reveal some inconsistencies in Nigeria's philosophy of education. For example, the 2004 edition states as follows:

In Nigeria's philosophy of education, we believe that: Education is an instrument for national development, to this end, the formulation of ideas, their integration for national development and interaction of

persons and ideas are all aspects of education, etc., (FRN, pp.6-7).

Here, again the belief or assumption have no philosophical underpinning like the ones in earlier editions. What is the nature of the ideas to be formulated and integrated for national development? From where do we derive the ideas? These are questions begging for answers. In the 2013 edition, another radical departure was noted thus: “Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on the following set of beliefs:

- a. Education is an instrument for national development and social change;
- b. Education is vital for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria;
- c. Education maximizes the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development of the society;
- d. Education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges; and
- e. Education is to be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society (FRN, 2013:13).

From the beliefs stated above, it is very glaring that all the “beliefs” are hanging in the air; they are not anchored on any philosophy at all. From where were the “set of beliefs” derived? The set of beliefs should have a basis, a context and a cultural milieu. Again, from the citations above, it is clear that there is nothing like *Nigerian philosophy of education* because the various preambles to the “set of beliefs” began with *Nigeria's philosophy of education*, implying something that was



bequeathed to Nigeria, but which does not inherently have Nigerian qualities in nature, content and context. In reality, our philosophy of education must have an ideological base, and as such should contain the ideals and aspirations that are in consonance with the culture of the Nigerian society. In other words, Nigeria's philosophy of education should spell out in clear terms the national educational objectives; it must analyze, examine and evaluate, and also assess the extent to which the nation's hopes and aspirations could be realized (Nwafor & Nwogu 2014). These statements of intention above on which the foundations of our educational system were laid are dangerously shaky and they make rooms for inconsistencies and contradictions; and thereby lead to what Okoroma (2017) describes as “policy somersaults”. In such a situation, Nigeria is like a floundering rudderless-ship in a wide ocean! This has immensely contributed to her inability to effectively and efficiently harness and maximally utilized her rich human and natural resources. Why do we have this enervating scenario? The answer to this question is not far-fetched; it is because Nigeria failed to recognize the chameleonic nature of education and philosophy of education.

### **3.0 Nigeria's Educational Experience in Phases**

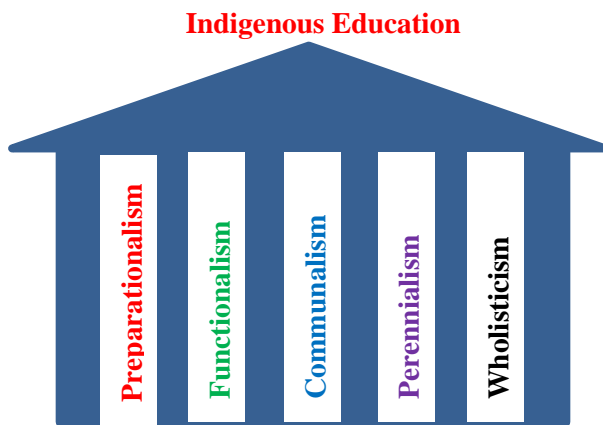
The geographical expression known as Nigeria – a contraption of the British Colonial Government, like every other society or nation in the world, was not bereft of her own culture, values, norms, belief, knowledge, laws, among others before the disruptive and unwelcomed invasion by Western civilization and religion. Let us briefly examine Nigeria's educational experience in phases from pre-colonial to post-independence periods.

**Phase I: Period of Indigenous (Traditional) Education** There was in place an education system that catered for the aspirational needs of Nigerians before the advent of the imperialists. The traditional education was such that all members of the society literally owned things in common and applied the communal spirit to life and work (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003).

In this educational system, children are treasured assets of the community, and every member of the community had a stake in their upbringing. As a result, children in turn developed a sense of responsibility to the community and subsequently grew up not only to appreciate and cherish its history, but also its values, language, customs, norms and beliefs. For Kelly (1991), these are perhaps the greatest attributes of indigenous education as opposed to Western education, which alienated young Africans from their cultural heritage. In other words, Africa (Nigeria) has her own education system that serves as training for participation throughout the life span of the individual in the community.

The nature of the Africa societies which facilitated the education of their young members is what Ezewu, Fashokun, Akpe and Oluduro (1988) identify as basically cohesive because every member of the family unit, lineage or village identifies with the life and activities of the unit.

The five philosophical pillars, which sustained and made indigenous education worthwhile comprise the principles of preparationism, functionalism, communalism, perennialism and wholisticism (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003).



**Fig 2: Philosophical Pillars of Indigenous Education**

In the indigenous education process, children learn through observation and imitation of what their parents, relatives and peer groups do (Nwafor, 2009). Although, it was not systematically planned, yet children acquired skills and behavioural patterns that conformed with societies' expectations in “schools without walls”. There was no particular time set aside for teaching a particular thing because children learnt as the situations arose. The merits of traditional education were social stability, good neighbourliness (good communal life), and unemployment, among others. Also, it prepared the learner to face the challenges of life; it was wholistic in the sense that learners acquired many skills through seasonal occupations, which created no room for idleness, parasitism, and criminal tendencies.

But the infiltration of the Europeans into Nigeria as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century altered the texture of the traditional society.

According to Enueme (2006), the first Europeans who set their

feet on Nigerians oil in 1472 were the Portuguese, who established contacts in Lagos and Benin. It can be argued that the Europeans' civilizing mission did not have the education of the Africans as their major objective, it only became an inevitable instrument for providing the colonial imperialists the necessary manpower needed in both religious and secular circles. Nduka (1964) in this regard asserts that even in the mid-nineteenth century what was uppermost in the minds of the British imperialists was the introduction of legitimate trade in place of slave trade, which was made possible by their superior naval power. Corroborating the above, Ayandele (1966) observes that from the very beginning, missionary propaganda in Nigeria was not just a religious but political invasion as well. Vice Chancellor Sir, with the establishment of the first missionary school in Badagry by Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman in 1842, an avalanche of Christian missions invaded Nigeria. The various missions built schools in many places, especially in the Southern part of Nigeria, while Islamic religion made the North impervious until about 1902 (Ezewu et al., 1988). However, one can argue that the collaboration between Christian missionaries and the colonial leadership; their assistance and the various education ordinances were contrived to emasculate and stifle the existence of Nigeria's cultural heritage. This is predicated on the fact that the mission schools brought with them Western culture culminating in the introduction of formal education with emphasis on literary education, but with little attention to science and vocational education and training. To Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003), a situation whereby parents without much resistance accepted the new education system and sent their children to the schools patterned after European curriculum is condemnable. By their parents' action, the implication therefore was "the gradually

setting aside of the background of the wholistic, lifelong and utilitarian type of education, which they themselves had received” (p.425). At this point in time of Nigeria's educational experience, the indigenous education had begun to nose-dive into regrettable oblivion.

### **Phase II: Era of Colonial Educational Expansion**

This phase historically deals with the era of formal educational expansion, and the introduction of colonial educational policies.

Vice Chancellor Sir, a critical analysis of all the Education Ordinances (1882-1926) shows that African culture was not taken into consideration in the curriculum used by the mission schools. It is in this light that Enueme (2006) argues that the local culture and customs of the African should be the basis of education in Africa. For example, he further reports that among the recommendations of Phelps-Stokes Commission, one suggestion or observation was outstanding and it reads thus:

The adaptation of education to the needs of the people was urged as the first requisite of school activities. Much of the indifference and even opposition to education in Africa was due to the failure to adapt school work to African condition, and school methods which had been discarded in America and Europe were still in vogue in Africa (pp.106-107, emphasis mine).

The stress on “the needs of the people” encapsulated so many things, especially the culture, philosophy, values, belief system, language, etc., as the indispensable ingredients of education in Nigeria. Instead of acting on the observation above, outdated

curriculum and teaching methods were introduced to perpetuate colonial mental slavery of the Africans.

### **Phase III: The Era of Regionalization of Education**

The educational experience of Nigerians lamentably turned sour during the era of regionalization of education (1945-1960). In spite of the lofty educational policies and programmes, e.g., Universal Primary Education (UPE), Nigerian nationalists allowed our educational theory and practice to be couched in foreign philosophy and ideology. They threw away the golden opportunity to inject into Nigeria's education system the various aspects of our culture, values, knowledge, etc., because they focused more on political independence to the detriment of mental decolonization of Nigerians. In the circumstance, education was highly politicized and regionalized. Since the chameleonic nature of education and philosophy of education were ignored, Nigerians now are paying dearly for it.

Vice Chancellor Sir, even at the threshold of Nigeria's independence, the Eric Ashby's Commission Report, according to Ogunsaju (1983), was "the pillar upon which Nigeria's First National Development Plan (1962) was built" (p.256). *The commission that was set up in April 1959, was Federal Government's attempt to identify the future manpower needs of Nigeria.* According to Nwafor (2009), their duty was to conduct an investigation in the field of Post-Secondary School Certificate and Higher Education over the next twenty years (1960-1980). Without any doubt, Ashby's Commission Report, its findings and recommendations made tremendous impact on the educational development in Nigeria. Even though it might be regarded as a monumental milestone in the historical evolution of education in Nigeria, Nduka (1985-1986) radically criticises the Ashby Commission Report because of its distorted vision of Nigeria in 1980, and the types of value the educational

system envisaged by the Commission was likely to inculcate. For him:

...the Commission's vision of Nigeria in 1980 was that it would remain a satellite country with satellite industries, producing oil and agricultural products for the more highly industrialized countries.... Or did anyone seriously believe that granting us independence in 1960 Britain and the Western World desired us to be economically and culturally independent of them (pp.18-19)?

An incisive assessment of the Ashby Commission's terms of reference, findings and recommendations reveals that they were not based on a philosophy that could have any meaningful impact on the socio-cultural life of Nigerians. What would have been the fate of Nigerian educational system if Ashby Commission's recommendations were implemented up to 1980? What would have been the status of Nigeria's value system? Perhaps, it would have been another phase of colonial enslavement, which deliberately turned blind eye to the chameleonic nature of education and its philosophy.

**Phase IV: Formulation of National Policy on Education** Vice Chancellor Sir, the educational experience of Nigeria during the post independence era gives me a greater concern and the reason for this inaugural lecture. After the National Curriculum Conference (1969), Nigeria came out with the much applauded National Policy on Education in 1977 – a policy that has been revised five times, and the current (6<sup>th</sup>) edition is that of 2013. In all the editions, there is nothing

that could be gleaned as an element of Nigerian philosophy on which to predicate our educational system.

However, based on the National Policy on Education, various educational programmes and policies have been formulated and implemented. First, the Universal Primary Education, the 6-3-3-4 system, Joint Admission and Matriculation Board and the Quota system, and Universal Basic Education Scheme, among others. These educational experiences were not without serious hitches right from the drawing board. The reason for the inefficiency of the educational system to realize its objectives is quite obvious: “My people perish for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). They perish because they lack knowledge of themselves, their identity, and their environment; they perish because they refused to know and to acknowledge the chameleonic nature of education vis-à-vis their cultural heritage.

### **Phase V: Educational Thoughts of Some Early Educated Nigerians**

The Nigeria's educational experience took a diametrically different dimension as a result of the attitudes of some of the earliest educated Nigerians, who should have championed the cause of African indigenous education against a colonial education system. They include prominent Nigerians who espoused and put into practice their educational thoughts which leaned heavily on Euro-American philosophies. Some of these educated Nigerians include: Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Aliyu Fafunwa, Tai Solarin, Benjamin Ukeje, Ahmadu Bello, Jibrin Aminu, among others. We shall briefly examine the educational thoughts of a few of them.

Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe, for example, has been described as a profoundly eclectic philosopher who draws his philosophical position from many different sources and fuse them into a



workable synthesis. His philosophy of education as contained in his *Renascent Africa* graphically states thus: “Africans have been miseducated. They need mental emancipation so as to be re-educated” (Azikiwe, 1937:135). This could be a good observation with a good intention behind it, but they raise the questions: How were Africans miseducated and by who? What should be the basis of their re-education? How will their mental emancipation be achieved?, and how will the re-education be implemented? A careful examination of this scenario shows that:

1. Nnamdi Azikiwe's assertion has a ring of politics about it;
2. His assertion is bereft of educational insights and focus;
3. Zik thinks of re-education of the African, but without a particular philosophy and/or ideology on which to anchor it; and
4. He lost sight of how his dream of re-education and mental decolonization could be achieved through an alien education system to indigenous education and culture.

A simple deduction leads one to the conclusion that these questions begging for answers were elicited by Azikiwe's eclectic philosophy. This no doubt may have influenced our National Policy on Education, which I have described as eclectic in nature (Nwafor, 2011). His eclectic philosophy further tied Nigeria's education system to the apron string of alien educational philosophies, capitalist ideology, individualism and materialism.

Jeremiah Obafemi Awolowo's philosophy of education stems from his brand of socialism laced with existentialist philosophy

and anchored on utilitarian principle and universal education as evidenced in his free education programme, i.e., freedom from cost related to tuition. His philosophy of education which aims at equalizing educational opportunity focuses more on indigent children. For Awolowo, the existence of family inequalities implies that many potentially outstanding talents would remain forever buried, simply because they have been accidentally brought to this world by poor parents (Awolowo, 1968). Awo's philosophy is geared towards mental magnitude and economic productivity of the individual and his society. Like Azikiwe, Awo does not show any interest in indigenous philosophy of education, rather he focuses on the socialist ideals of justice and equality, which stipulate that the resources of nature belong to everyone equally (Enoh, 1996). Awo, further argues that "it is useless to lavish a good deal of resources on mediocre elements because their parents are rich enough to afford the alchemist's costly but fruitless venture of trying to transform lead to gold" (Awolowo, 1968: 317). But he rejected the idea of giving loan to indigent students as a basis for offsetting family inequalities, because it will add to the burden of the recipients of the loan, and therefore widen the circle of disadvantage.

Furthermore, Awolowo sees free and compulsory education as the best way to solve the problem of the numerically inferior backward areas, which at the same time will not pose danger to the development capability of the so-called educationally advantaged areas. This implies free education at all levels, which if judiciously implemented, would to a large extent reduce the level of illiteracy in society, and engender overall development.

Another educational thinker, who has practically demonstrated his philosophy of education is Tai Solarin, and who has been described as a non-conformist, iconoclast, social critic, rebel,

farmer and educationist (Enoh, 1999). What a man! A man of many parts. His philosophical position is secular humanism, which gives higher preference to man than God. This philosophy is rooted in existentialism and pragmatism. Philosophically, Solarin shows concern for community, individualism, functionalism and conception of the role of religion. There is no doubt that his idea of education has community bent, but was not explicitly stated since it has capitalist colouration. For him, education must aim at building a new community and producing individuals who can stand on their feet; men who are mentally free and independent, and men who can bring about change. He goes on to argue that:

A change, no matter how infinitesimal is only possible with as much being affected in the education of the people. A country therefore, whose education is not changing is, in itself, impossible of a change (Solarin, 1992:20)

The present educational system bequeathed to the Africans, according to him, induces indolence, parasitism, mental enslavement, which do not awaken the critical consciousness in individuals. Therefore, Solarin argues that the goals of education should revolve around turning out productive individuals and promoting mental freedom. Education, for Solarin, must prepare future generations to face the hard and harsh realities of life, by imparting in them skills rather than the acquisition of worthless information or knowledge that will not be put into productive use, (Solarin, n.d.). Hence, he places high premium on self-reliance, functionalism and dignity of labour. Indeed, Solarin's philosophy of education is the foundation of his school, *Mayflower School*.

Although, Solarin rejects the appearances of colonial educational system, but he also fails to focus attention on indigenous philosophy of education. Even though he makes indirect references to it, e.g., the idea of producing “self-reliant individuals,” “a community of individuals who can stand on their feet”. It could be inferred that he shares similar views of self-reliance and a community of individuals with Julius Nyerere's Ujamaa Philosophy, but lacks the focus to translate them into the mainstream of his philosophy of education.

Vice Chancellor Sir, the last but one Nigerian educational thinker for our consideration in this lecture is Aliyu Bab. Fafunwa, an educational historian of international repute, whose concept of education is very broad to include both formal and informal aspects.

For Fafunwa (1974), education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives” (p.17). He is of the firm belief that every society has its own system of educating its young ones, and observes that Western education, no matter its importance, constitutes only a fraction of the total process of what is learnt (Fafunwa, 1983). He therefore, argues that traditional African education must not be judged by any extraneous consideration or some foreign yardstick but by performance in a given social context (Fafunwa, 1974). Hence, education for him is more than mere schooling, which he accuses of over institutionalization and its attendant consequences of drop-out; a phenomenon that is very rare in the traditional education system.

It is evident that Fafunwa's main concern is on the traditional or indigenous education, and for him, the warrior, the hunter, the noble man, the man of character or anyone who combines the

latter feature with specific skill was adjudged as well-educated and a well-integrated citizen of his community (Fafunwa, 1982). He outlines some characteristics of traditional education such as functionalism, social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual and moral values. In such a system, learners learn by doing, and the sole aims of education are: to develop the learners' latent physical skills; to develop character; to inculcate respect for elders; to develop intellectual skills, among others. Fafunwa's works portray a deep penetrating insight into many facets of education, which time and space would not permit us to delve into now.

Having briefly discussed some Nigerian educational thinkers and their views based on their educational experience and knowledge, it would be necessary to briefly do a critique on them.

#### **4.0 Critique of the Thoughts of Some Nigerian Educational Thinkers**

The educational philosophy of Nnamdi Azikiwe, as has been noted, is influenced by Euro-American philosophies, and what he thinks as philosophy of African education is more of political intentions or statements which have no grain of philosophy in them. His eclectic philosophy of education, no doubt, leads him to assert that the “African education is anachronistic, lacks moral stability, perspective and permanency of values” (Azikiwe, 1939:134). In every culture, simple or complex, anachronism is a common factor from which innovations spring up. It is evident that societies transmit their morals, world-views, and values from one generation to another in line with the dictates of the times. Permanence of values implies stagnation, lack of growth and change. This is not a feature of growth, development and sustainability. However, Azikiwe

sees the attainment of his overall goal (which is political) as dependent on the kind of education individuals acquire in schools. Because of the absence of core philosophy of education in Azikiwe's educational thought, his idea of decolonization seems to hang in the balance because it has no concrete indigenous ideological base on which it can stand.

Obafemi Awolowo on his part seems to adopt socialist principles of freedom, equality and justice, coupled with utilitarianism as evidenced in his educational programme- Universal Primary Education, which aims at liberalization of education, even beyond the primary school level. In pursuing socialist ideals, it is expected that his brand of socialism would be communally-based since he inveighs capitalism because it is predicated on naked self-interest, thereby making the poor to become poorer, and the rich richer. His idea of minimizing family inequalities through equal educational opportunity is contradicted by his abhorrence of giving loan to indigent students as a means of offsetting family economic inequalities. Importantly, in as much as free education can engender development, but the lack of adequate preparation and foresight almost ruined its lofty goal as both manpower and infrastructure were grossly inadequate. Consequently, his educational policy watered down the standard of education to an extent. In effect, Awo's brand of socialism has no tinge of Africanness as expected, and so has no philosophical underpinning to counter capitalism, just like Nyerere's African brand of socialism based on the philosophy of familyhood, i.e., the extended family, known as *Ujamaa*.

Tai Solarin's secular humanism, which shows concern for man, community and the individual, among others, seems quite contradictory. A philosophy of education that shows more concern for the individual cannot "build a new community"

where freedom, equality and justice prevail; a community where natural resources are adjudged as belonging to everyone, because individualism has so much to do with capitalism. Solarin's philosophy of education, though couched in alien moulds, could not entirely depart from indigenous education as he favours the idea of self-reliant individuals and a community of individuals, who can withstand the vicissitudes of life, not as individuals, but as collective members of the community.

Solarin admires Nyerere's concept of self-reliance, hence he accepts the latter's views on it and therefore gears his educational ideas towards the preparation of younger generations for service by ensuring that they acquire both theoretical and practical skills that would make them relevant in real life situations. Nyerere's education for self-reliance (1979) also takes into consideration the two dimensions of education: practical and theoretical, to ensure that his educational revolution based on *Ujamaa ideology* works. Nyerere's idea of self-reliance had dual connotation; "self" in the first place refers to the individual person, as well as to the society of nation (Hall, 1975). Moreso, it has been engrained in the nations' educational curriculum. In other words, self-reliance in Tanzania has become a key to national development, whereas, Solarin's concept is limited to what is practised in his *Mayflower School* alone.

However, self-reliance is enshrined in National Policy on Education as one of the goals of Nigerian education for the building of a united, strong and self-reliant nation (FRN, 2013). This laudable statement is yet to be properly conceptualized and contextualized. The difficulty in doing so lies in the fact that it has no philosophical base rooted in the Nigerian cultural environment and an indigenous ideology. The crux of the matter here is Nigeria's deliberate refusal to acknowledge the

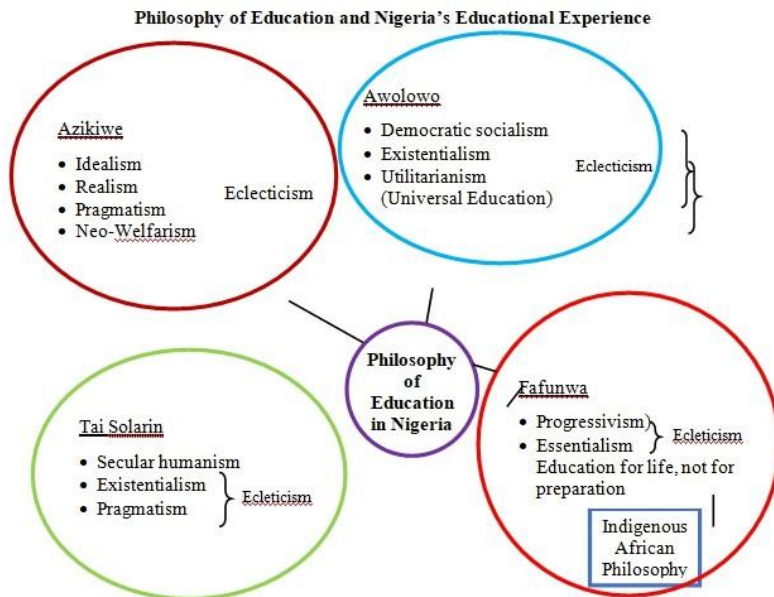
chameleonic nature of education and philosophy of education in the African context.

Vice Chancellor Sir, the educational ideas of Bab Fafunwa, though deeply historical, favour African traditional education to a reasonable extent as he *disagrees that “education” is not the same thing as “schooling”*, which suffers from over institutionalization with its adverse effects. In his desire to extol the values of indigenous education vis-à-vis formal education, he failed to locate the basis of African indigenous education, and to foresee how it could be reformed to ensure that the **unemployment and lack of functionality which** would prevail in the future are encapsulated or incorporated in the formal education system as is the case in Japan and China, where much emphasis is placed on vocational education and training than on acquisition of knowledge for paper qualifications.

Fafunwa's “well-integrated citizen of his community”, like Nyerere's family of brotherhood, has no place in Nigeria's education system. Hence, individualism fostered by Western culture has rendered “total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society...” (FRN, 2013:14) a mirage. In specific terms, in as much as Fafunwa is a strong advocate of African indigenous education, he did not realize that it should have a philosophical basis which would ensure its sustainability in the face of a fast changing world of science and technology. All these account for the suffocation and near-extirpation of African/Nigerian philosophy of education by powerful alien philosophies embraced by some Nigerian educational thinkers discussed earlier as illustrated below:



## Philosophy of Education and Nigeria's Educational Experience



**Fig. 3: The Influence of Foreign Philosophies on Indigenous Philosophy of Education**

The diagram above shows that Euro-American philosophies have been deeply rooted to the detriment and suffocation of African Indigenous Philosophy of Education, which now looks like an orphan.

### 5.0 Impediments to Nigerianised Education and Philosophy of Education

Vice Chancellor Sir, it has been observed earlier in this lecture that all cultures have their own philosophy and education

system, and that Nigeria is not an exception. There is no doubt that Nigeria has her own education system and philosophy, but there are some impediments to their full evolution to what they ought to be. The impediments, among others, are as follows:

### **Absence of written records**

The most important factor militating against the development of Nigerian philosophy of education is traceable to the problem of its parent discipline in Africa and indeed Nigeria. The absence of written records of the philosophical reflections of African thinkers as well as their non-preservation have been blamed as a serious hindrance to the development of African philosophy (Bodunrin, 1985), and by extension philosophy of education in Nigeria. This being the situation, Nigerian philosophy of education has no pool of written records from which it could draw to provide a fulcrum on which Nigerian education can rest.

### **Attitude of Colonial Masters to Indigenous Language**

Again, the attitude of colonial masters to anything African culture, in no small measure, contributed immensely to the negligence of African philosophy and philosophy of education in Nigeria. In every culture, philosophy is couched in and expressed through a given language. The attitude of colonial masters towards indigenous language as medium of instruction dealt a devastating blow to the development of indigenous thoughts as they decreed that English Language should be the medium of instruction in schools. For Nwafor (2009), the 1882 Education Ordinance made no provision for “local culture and customs (mother tongue inclusive) as the basis of education in Africa. In more specific terms, Fasokun (2000), observes that colonial government's participation in education through the 1882 education ordinance spelt in clear terms that grant-in-aid would be given for the teaching and learning of English

Language to the detriment of the vernacular. In other words, the Nigerian child was forced to learn a foreign language and discouraged to learn the indigenous language by which he can find deeper meaning to his thoughts and/or reflections and expressions. A true Nigerian first and foremost thinks and reasons in his mother tongue before translating it to a foreign language. The early discouragement of Nigerians to learn and think in their indigenous languages adversely affected their ability to conceptualize in concrete terms a philosophy of education that is in conformity with Nigerian cultural heritage and environment.

### **Attitude of Early Educated Nigerians**

In addition, the attitude of some educated Nigerians to indigenous and cultural institutions leaves much to be desired. For example, important figures like Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, and others were not counted among African philosophers past or present. For Bodunrin (1985), contemporary African philosophers include Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold S. Senghor, Julius Nyerere, and Kwasi Wiredu. The Nigerians mentioned above were more concerned with political independence of Nigeria, and regional competition. On the other hand, their counterparts were very much focused on total decolonization of their respective countries and indeed Africa. For example, Kwame Nkrumah, is known for his *Consciencism: philosophy and ideology for decolonization*; the concept of *Negritude* which emphasizes the cultural values of the black world as they are expressed in the life, and works of black men, was popularized in the poems of Leopold Senghor. More importantly, Julius Nyerere's *Ujaama philosophy* that stresses “familyhood” or “brotherhood” encapsulates social justice and equality through community, mutual respect, and so on. It is an ideology that promoted the

importance of communal living, but frowned at capitalism and individualism, and incorporated the philosophy in the Tanzanian education system. If similar things were initiated by our foremost nationalists, Nigeria would not have been in this present educational quagmire.

### **Lack of Political Will**

Vice Chancellor Sir, the Nigerian government, since after the political independence, has not shown sufficient sign of political will to re-engineer or decolonize the educational system. One is strongly of the view that the Nigerian government past and present is ignorant of the criticisms levelled against the country's philosophy of education by experts at various conferences and seminars, but such scathing comments and recommendations were not given the attention they deserved, because government is yet to learn that education and its philosophy have chameleonic characteristics.

### **Curriculum Review**

At the various curriculum review exercises, it has been observed that philosophers of education were not involved. One wonders why exercises of that magnitude should be dominated by technocrats and specialists from other disciplines (Nwafor, 2023). The non-inclusion of philosophers of education is responsible for the myopic goals and objectives of what should be an ideal curriculum, which should be derived from the cultural environment of the Nigerian society, i.e., the value system, norms, belief system, customs and traditions of the people. The recent curriculum review by National Universities Commission (NUC) for universities has raised so much dust in many quarters. According to Edem (2023), some university scholars have attacked NUC because its recent curriculum negates global standards. She maintains that NUC over-reached itself by imposing a set of uniform curriculum on universities in

Nigeria. For Nwafor (2023), the curriculum in question seems to be a disaster because of the 30% local content or “home grown courses”. The question is: how do we ensure uniformity of the “home grown courses” among the universities within a geo-political zone? NUC's needless mad rush to force the Core Curriculum Minimum Standards (CCMAS) down the throats of the universities has almost destabilized the whole university system. One must say with emphasis that our education system cannot, and would never be Nigerianised if we continue to chase the shadows of curriculum reviews, without attending to the core and substance of education.

### **Lapses in National Policy on Education**

The National Policy on Education and the lapses in it are equally obstacles to a decolonized Nigerian philosophy of education. Among others, the section that states that Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on a set of beliefs (FRN, 2013:13) deserves a critical analysis. Are beliefs not synonymous with assumptions? Have these set of beliefs any cultural or philosophical basis? They can be referred to as statements of intention. A true philosophy of Nigerian education should be able to identify the type of society the education system intends to build, the type of products the society wants, and the nature of the education system itself. Generally, the contradictions and inconsistencies in the National Policy on Education are inherently responsible, to a large extent, for the poor implementation of educational policies often referred to as “policy somersault”.

### **Disregard for Mother Tongue by Nigerians**

Nigerians have a great penchant for English Language, whether they know how to speak it or not, thereby degrading the indigenous language. A very important aspect of African culture is language, which gives it identity, and serves as a

means of documentation and preservation. In many homes today, mother tongue has become an anathema! Parents discourage their children from speaking their own dialects. The implication is that these children cannot think in their indigenous language which is richer in meaning than the alien language. For example, the phrase “thank you” has very little meaning for the Etche man or woman in terms of appreciation and gratitude. In Etche, *khanka*, has deep and dual meaning for the expression of both gratitude, and prayer – to live long, which also attracts a response *nkaa mhu nha gih*. Similarly, in Ikwerre, *mekaa*, an expression of gratitude is even accompanied by a resounding response – “dieli”. For Eboh (1993), language is coded with meaning, and we use it while thinking. That is why Africans need mental decolonization. Most Nigerian Western elite do not speak in African proverbs, wise saying, etc., and they cannot bequeath to their children what they do not know. African proverbs, wise sayings, fables, allegories, etc., are all part of African philosophy. On the importance of the use of mother tongue, Emenajor (1996) states that the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around is best done and realized in the languages in which the learner is most familiar. The language the learner is familiar with, however, could also be the language of his immediate environment, the language in which he can engage in a deeper reflection. In essence, if we want a thinking nation, we must go back to instruction in mother tongue, it is the most effective engine of a people's culture. For Olaoye (2013), mother tongue is the key to the heart of the people; if we lose the key, we lose the people, if we treasure the key and keep it safe, it will unlock the door to wealth and affluence.

### **Less Emphasis on Values Transmission**

The concept of value is located in the domain of axiology, one

of the branches of philosophy. There is palpable feeling and concern everywhere in Nigeria that our socio-economic and political development is on the threshold of irredeemable disaster because of gross erosion of our cultural values. Hence, the need for sustainable value transmission through values education (Nwafor, 2008). The moral crisis has reached its apogee. At the international scene, Nigeria is rated as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. One sees the establishment of anti-graft commissions; the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) as a cosmetic approach to the fundamental problem of erosion of values and morality.

However, values do not exist in a vacuum, they exist within the confines of a cultural milieu that gives birth to value systems (Nwafor, 2011). In Nigeria, there are values that cut across ethnic boundaries, which Nduka (1983) describes as key national values such as discipline, right attitude to work, honesty, regard and concern for the interest of others, justice, courage, and national consciousness. Each of these core national values, according to Nwafor, (2008), has other sub-values embedded in them. For example, honesty is manifested in the rejection of fraud, extortion, bribery, cheating, etc., while national consciousness is manifested in avoidance of any anti-patriotic activities such as economic sabotage, election rigging, perversion of justice, among others.

The real problem is that these core national values are not taught in our schools. Our education system failed to give attention to moral development of the citizenry. Rather, too much emphasis is placed on the intellectual development of the learners to the detriment of the society being held in bondage by criminal elements, who once benefitted from the school system.

## **6.0 Concluding Remarks**

From the foregoing discourse, it is crystal clear that education and its philosophy are not a particular inheritance of any geographical entity, rather, every society has its own educational system as well as the philosophy on which the education system is founded. But it was observed that in some cultures, e.g., Nigeria, the British overlords invaded and disrupted the indigenous education and rendered its philosophy dysfunctional and seemingly irrelevant. It is against this background that this inaugural lecture unequivocally contends that indigenous education and Nigerian philosophy of education should not be relegated to the background in preference for foreign education and philosophy of education. It is for this reason that the inaugural lecturer argues that education and philosophy of education naturally are not cast in iron; they are characteristically flexible; hence they are chameleonic in nature because they adapt themselves to any cultural environment in which they find themselves. It was posited that Nigeria's educational experience so far has been characterized by undue dependence on foreign educational ideas and ideologies aimed at the suppression and possible elimination of the indigenous education and its philosophy. Hence, there are many contradictions and inconsistencies in the policy formulation and implementation.

It was further argued that Nigerian education system should be truly Nigerian in nature context and content based on the Nigerian cultural value system, belief system norms, customs and traditions, and on perceived African ideology and not on any alien philosophies and ideologies transplanted into Nigerian cultural and educational landscape; and that foreign educational thoughts and practices should not be the basis of the curriculum reforms now imposed on our universities.



Without equivocation, one would say that a country that is not prepared to diligently identify the source of her fundamental problems, and cannot be what she claims to be, is more like a chameleon in the negative sense; a mercurial entity that would never guarantee stability and progress, overall national development and peaceful co-existence of her citizens.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

Finally, based on the discussions above, the following recommendations are made:

1. That the study of African (indigenous) philosophy be introduced at all levels of our educational system through local proverbs, wise sayings, thoughts of ancient and present sages, folklores, etc., to stimulate latent creativity and critical thinking in the young generation of learners.
2. That strong emphasis on Mother Tongue beyond primary education level be made since it is richer in meaning, and also the means by which the young ones think and conceptualize things, objects and ideas. This can be achieved by re-activating the moribund Language Development Projects in various states of the federation to ensure sufficient production of textbooks on mother tongue, as well as proficient teachers in the languages.
3. That National Policy on Education should undergo thorough and comprehensive review with a view to giving it a real philosophical touch based on Nigerian cultural environment and an ideology peculiar to it.
4. That the possibility of Nigerians to “live in unity and

harmony as one indivisible nation” is a far cry unless we imbibe a sense of peoplehood, with the ability to think and act as a people with a common destiny guided by the principles and spirit of communal living.

5. That as a matter of great importance, values education should be a compulsory course at all levels of education to instill in the learners the core national values in order to stem the rising tide of social vices and criminal tendencies.
6. That the three foundation courses in education (History, Philosophy and Sociology) should maintain their status quo ante, and not merged as a two (2) unit course; and that the courses at the undergraduate level should not be a one semester course, which does not allow students to have a firm grip on those courses.
7. That since every university has its own **vision** and **mission statement** which differ from others, the curriculum should be tailored to address the **vision** and **mission** of each university. When this is done, universities will customize the curriculum they designed in such a way that will serve the society where they are domiciled in compliance with the chameleonic nature of education.
8. That Nigerian Centre for Philosophical Studies (NCPS) be established in each geo-political zone with a focus on the ethno-philosophy of each zone, which when harmonized would give us a Nigerianised philosophy of education, which ultimately would give birth to *Wazobia Philosophy of Education*. This could be a

fitting response to the chameleonic nature of education and philosophy of education in Nigeria.

## **8.0 My Contributions to Knowledge**

It is a well-known tradition in academic, especially at the level of celebrating oneself in an inaugural lecture to state in clear terms one's contribution to knowledge. My contribution, among others, is squarely in the area of the concept of education and philosophy of education. Right from Platonic era down to this twenty first century, many have advanced their views on what education is, or what it is not. It is important to state that every thinker is to a certain extent conditioned and or guided by the age in which he lives. Hence, many great thinkers have conceived education from multidimensional perspectives.

Today, I join the league of great thinkers by categorically stating that: **“Education behaves like a chameleon”** in that it adapts itself to any cultural environment in which it finds itself. **Nwafor, 2016. The Fulcrum of Philosophy of Education, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Owerri; Mega Atlas Projects Limited.**

This view has not been contested, rather it have been acknowledged by others. Hence, this novel idea which has been thoroughly hammered out is no longer an opinion, but a conviction which has become part and parcel of this thinker's self.

Vice Chancellor Sir, until we acknowledge the chameleonic nature of education and its philosophy, our educational system-its practice, policy formulation and implementation will not only continue to be shrouded in contradictions and inconsistencies, but will also continue to somersault from time to time.

In addition, Nigeria education system seems to have lofty and

laudable policies and programmes, but a critical examination revealed that the ideals, goals, aims and values, which should be derived from our cultural heritage are virtually absent. This situation has engendered unbargained and unending crises in our national life. Hence, the need for a more realistic approach to sustainable educational ideals and policies for national development. **Nwafor, N.H.A (2008). Nigeria: A Nation Without Educational Ideas? Trends in Educational Studies, 3 (1), 99-106. Nwafor, (2018). Is there any basis for Education Policy and Practice Without Philosophy? International Journal in Management and Social Sciences, 6 (2), 117-128.**

Finally, it has been glaringly observed that Nigeria's education system grossly lacks a base that can propel it to comparatively global heights. In this regard, our entire education system would continue to experience myriads of problems that would impact negatively on all facets of the socio-economic and political life of Nigeria, if the educational foundation is not solidly laid on Nigerianised Philosophy of Education. (Nwafor, N.H.A & Nwogu, G.A.I, 2011). The Role of Philosophy of Education in Teacher Education in Nigerian Context. **In Nigerian Journal of Philosophy of Education, 22 (2), 21-31**

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for listening.

**N.H.A. Nwafor**

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## **BRIEF CITATION ON PROF. NABOTH HANACHOR ALOZIE NWAFOR; MADEASON, MPEAN, MINPE, MPESGB (UK)**

Professor Naboth H. A. Nwafor was born to Elder Daniel Alozie Nwafor, a tailor-turned farmer, and his wife Deaconess Janet Amandem Nwafor (nee Nwuzi) of Egwi in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria on April 9, 1954. His father, having had a dose of formal education, sent him to school at an early age.

### **Education**

For his primary education, he attended Seventh Day Adventist School, Mba; and Sacred Heart School, Umuechem – all in Etche Local Government Area. He had his secondary education at King's College of Commerce, Buguma. Later, he proceeded to Rivers State College of Education for Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE), from where he also obtained Bachelor of Education with 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Upper Division in English and Literary Studies from University of Ibadan as the best graduating student in the Department.

After a few years, Prof. N.H.A. Nwafor enrolled at University of Port Harcourt where he studied and obtained Master of Education (M.Ed.), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees respectively in Philosophy of Education.

### **Work Experience**

Prof. N.H.A. Nwafor worked briefly with Federal Office of Statistics, but the craving for education forced him to resign, and he took to teaching. First, he taught at St. Joseph's Secondary School, Umuaturu, Etche for one year (1976-1977), and left for College of Education (1977-1980). After National Youth Service Corps assignment, he was posted to Community Secondary School, Odagwa, as Vice Principal. Later, he was

transferred to Community Secondary School, Okoro-Odo. Having acquired a higher degree, he was employed at then Rivers State College of Arts and Science, Rumuola (now Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic), where he taught for some years and rose to the rank of Chief Lecturer in 2003. While at RIVCAS, he held important positions, among others, such as: Co-ordinator, Matriculation Examination Programme (M.E.P), Head, Department of Humanities, and Director, Student Affairs. Still not satisfied with his academic attainments so far, Prof. Nwafor left for Rivers State University of Science and Technology (now Rivers State University) in 2005 and was placed as Lecturer II. This wrong placement did not demoralize him because he recalled a biblical text his father taught him early in life – Proverb 22:29, “Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings, and not before mean men.” Furthermore, his aspiration was spurred on by Francis Bacon's famous assertion that: “Reading maketh a man; writing the exact man, and conference a ready man.” Being inspired by these timeless motivating statements, he therefore determined to work hard in order to attain his desired height in academics, which we are celebrating today.

Prof. Nwafor, while in U.S.T. (now R.S.U) held some responsible positions in the Department and Faculty; Co-ordinator, Centre for Continuing Education (C.C.E) programme, Co-ordinator, Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), Member, Faculty Disciplinary Committee, Faculty Time-Table Officer, and Head of Department, Educational Foundations. Currently, he is the Chairman and Editor-in-Chief, Faculty of Education Conference Journal, and Member, Senate Inaugural Lectures Committee. Indeed, in 2017/2018 academic session, he received an award from Faculty of Education Students

Association as **the most disciplined lecturer**.

He has authored ten academic books, and has over sixty articles in reputable local and international journals. In addition, apart from being External Examiner to University of Port Harcourt, Choba, and Ignatuius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni; Prof. N.H.A. Nwafor has also assessed seven (7) Professorial candidates from some Nigerian Universities.

### **Religious Activities**

Prof. N. H. A. Nwafor is a born and devout Seventh - Day Adventist, who believes strongly in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-13. He imbibed a good dose of Seventh-Day Adventist doctrine and principles during his primary school days, and has served the church at various levels and in different capacities. A few of the positions could be mentioned here: President, Adventist Youth Association, Etche Zone (1984-1988), Chairman, Adventist Men Organization (A.M.O.) of old Rivers Conference (2000-2005), Director of Education, Member, Executive Committee of the then Rivers Conference, and Representative of Rivers Conference at Abidjan on the restructuring of the church in Nigeria (2004). We cannot forget that during his leadership of A.M.O., he planted and nurtured five churches: four in Rivers State and one in Bayelsa State. Two of these churches presently are organized and are doing very well. Currently, he is a member of the Executive Committee, Eastern Nigeria Union Conference of Seventh Day Adventists, member, Executive Committee Port Harcourt East Conference, and an ordained Elder of his local church at Egwi in Etche Local Government Area.

### **Community Service**

Prof. Nwafor is patriotic citizen of his community, whose

opinions on critical and vital issues are respected. He was the ideological spirit behind the Egwi Buhzor Age Grade, as well as a member of the Community's Think Tank Committee.

### **General Comments**

Prof. N. H. A. Nwafor chewed water in his quest for academic laurels. He believes that honour is the lot of those who are diligent at work, noble in character, astute in leadership, generous in giving, humble in victory, courageous and visionary in critical situations. He was the first to obtain West African School Certificate in his community, as well as the first university graduate, the second Professor produced by the same community, but the first among the three professors in the community to deliver Inaugural Lecture. Indeed, Prof. N. H. A. Nwafor is a trail blazer, who stands for truth and justice; a role model and mentor to many, a teacher par excellence, a patriotic community leader, an uncompromising servant-leader of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Indeed, he is a good husband to his beloved wife, and a loving and caring father of his dear children.

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you a man who believes in what he wants and goes for it in spite of all odds; a man of many parts – a rugged footballer, a poet, a philosopher, an erudite scholar of international repute, a humble servant of God, and the first Seventh-Day Adventist professor in Etche ethnic nationality.