

THE HUMAN PERSON AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: PROGRESSION OR RETROGRESSION

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Abstract

How has the human person fared in the whole gamut of development in Africa? Has the hitherto development theories been holistic enough to cater for the enormous lacks that presently bedevils the person within the African space? The person in Africa has been subjected to an array of developmental quagmire all emanating from the fact that other aspects of development such as infrastructural and economic development have been given priority over human development that should be the pivot point of every development approach. Since ideally, according to Nyerere, *development is by man, for man and of man*, the research seeks to unravel certain problems that are at the heart of the present perilous fate of the person in terms of development in the African continent. Using the method of phenomenology, the research finds that at the base of the problem of development in Africa, is the misplaced position given to the 'person' or the place of the 'individual' in the African continent in the scheme of things by earlier theories of development where the intrinsic value of the person is lost on the altar of material development. The research concludes that any development paradigm that will work for Africa that is not centered at the onset on the value of the human person in its entire approach negates the aim of development. The research posits a new development paradigm for Africa, one anchored on “anthropocentrism”, where the value of the person is not lost to an untamed concentration on “scientio-technological” advancement and socio-econocentricism.

Keywords: *Human Person, Development, Africa*

Introduction

There is a popular notion that the continent of Africa is a land of greatness, one that holds the promise of a better future for the entirety of the humankind. A look at the news on the international scene gives credence to this conviction as Africa has remained a theme of discourse. However, daily experiences of the inhabitants of this continent seem to be in conflict with this belief especially with such reoccurring events as slave trade, colonialism, militancy (terrorism) and most recently insurgency and banditry and the effects have become ever conspicuous.

Again, when one becomes aware and compares the living conditions and standard elsewhere, especially the Western world with that of Africa, one immediately becomes aware that the much eulogized Africa which hitherto was thought to be doing well, is actually on the brink of total collapse; a continent wallowing in illiteracy, diseases,

insecurity, unemployment, political instability, military coups, lack of and decaying infrastructure, collapsing economy, corruption amongst others, are indicative of underdevelopment.

Upon this, there is the realization that the African continent is underdeveloped while the Western world with its litany of positive features of infrastructure, good governance, security, literacy, flourishing economy, working health care system etc, is developed. This realization raises certain questions such as; why is Africa not developed? But most fundamentally, what is development? Is there a universal paradigm for development? What are the indices indicative of development? What development philosophy will best resolve the crisis of the person; the individual who is lost in the over emphasis on infrastructural development by the erstwhile development theories applied in Africa?

Looking at the above questions, one would discover that much of what presently bedevils the African continent in terms of development is the misplaced position given to the “person” or the place of the “individual” in the African continent by hitherto theories of development. The earlier theories of development have not been able to address the problem of development in Africa. This problem is not unconnected with the problem of our social ordering. It is upon this social arrangement(s) that the human person is defined. The concern therefore, is to ascertain what development approach best captures the essence of the African predicament without sacrificing the value of the person in place of infrastructural development. To be sure, Ougua and Odua (2007) explain that:

The development talked about is ontologically based, focused on worldview, reflective of culture, person and value-centred. Development entails the integration and harmonization of the human potential (givens) in various aspects of life in the bid of man to survive this experiment called life and live at his best (p.18).

They explain that, “...the real project of development must not only be man, but must have man at the centre. It means that plans must be designed with man in view and holistic vision of reality or else one will derail” (p.18).

Clarification of Concepts:

On the Human Person

There are quite a number of authors who have delved into the concept of the human person or man as the case may be. For one, Edward Ezedike in his article “The Concept of Human Person in African Ontology: A Critical Reflection on the Igbo Notion of Man” (2019), held that the notion of man is at the centre of all problems pertaining to man. Noting that every philosophy, religion or culture, has diverse perspectives on man, he however, did not hope to add another theory to the already existing ones. His concern is to bring to bear, the Igbo notion of the human person. Accordingly, he explains that both ethical and metaphysical reflections on man, cannot,

... but terminate in a profound respect for the human person. Indeed, as we explore his being, the more does

man appear paradoxical, mysterious, and in one word sacred. What is at stake in our civilization is whether man shall remain or re-become a sacred being. In our modern world torn asunder by materialism and materialistic values, a breathless age where people seem to be constantly racing towards the next material plum, it is important that we rehearse the primordial affirmation of the truth about the worth and dignity of human life.

Tackling the discourse of man head on from the Igbo perspective, Ezedike explains thus:

Mmadu is the Igbo name for human being. It makes no particular reference to sex. The etymological meaning of this word is very interesting. *MMA-DU* is really a sentence, let there be goodness or, better still, let goodness be. *MMA* means goodness, order, beauty and peace, depending on the context in which it is used. *DU* is the imperative of *DE* or *DU* meaning to be (*Loc. Cit*).

Further, Ezedike holds that, according to an old Igbo Centenarian,

God created all things beautifully. Then at last he created what he called *MMADU*, let goodness be, as synthesis of all that is good in visible creation. Man, later on pronounced this name so fast that it became one word, such that many do not advert it to its original meaning. This interpretation for man given above is common to the Igbos but is heard of only in special cases, like when people are quarrelling. The elders who settle the disputes often recall to the litigants the meaning of their being as men, 'let there be peace and goodness' (*Loc. Cit*).

Man in Igbo world-view possess what one may call spiritual instincts that makes him capable and desirous of the supreme values such as: truth, beauty, peace, goodness, etc. "These values designate a totality of hierarchised values, all which is loved, desired and realized by *MMADU*, man who lived in this world. Above all, man possesses *Chi*, Igbo image of God which elevates him and places him above all visible creation." (*Loc. Cit*) However, according to Ezedike, modern industrial society with its emphasis on money and profit, and productivity, is seen as the only means of attaining these ends. Kaunda as quoted in Ezedike has it that:

Man was intended to be an end in himself. This is surely implied by the Bibles' claim that he is made in the image of God and has been given dominion over all living things. But he has been reduced to a means. The industrialist uses him as a means to wealth. To the demagogue he is the means to power, to the selfish lover the means of gratification. The war-monger uses him as canon-fodder,

to the economist he is statistic, to mass entertainer, he is an instrument to be manipulated. Everywhere man is being used (*Loc. Cit*).

Again, Ezedike opines that anyone who terminates his life or that of another in order to escape from painful circumstances uses a person merely as means to an end. He explains however, that:

As regards necessary duties or those of strict obligation towards others, he who makes lying promise to other for example, would be using another man merely as a means for the achievement of an end. These are all immoral acts from the Kantian perspective (*Loc. Cit*).

Explaining further, Ezedike avers that the above is: “why Kant's 'Categorical Imperative' commands that we should so act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as means only” (*Loc. Cit*).

Ezedike submits that it therefore follows that:

Man must be respected not only because he is goodness, beauty or peace, but also, he is a microcosm of the created universe and in the visible (created) world he has been placed at the summit. Gifted with a spiritual soul and metaphysical faculties of intellect and will, he is capable of a happiness and perfection (*Loc. Cit*).

According to Peter Baumann in his article titled “Persons, Human Beings and Respect” (2007), human dignity seems to be something very important to us. He however avers that:

At the same time, the concept 'human dignity' is extraordinarily elusive. A good way to approach the questions: 'what is it?' And 'why is it important?' is to raise another question first: In virtue of what do human beings have human dignity? Speciesism-the idea that human beings have a particular dignity because they are humans- does not seem very convincing (p.5).

A better answer to this question from Baumann's rumination is that:

... Human beings have dignity because and insofar as they are persons. I discuss several versions of this idea as well as several objections against it. The most promising line of analysis says that human beings cannot survive psychologically without a very basic form of recognition and respect by others. The idea that human humans have a special dignity is the idea that they owe each other this kind of respect. All this also suggests that human dignity is

inherently social. Non-social beings do not have dignity- nor do they lack it. It is because we are social animals of a certain kind that we have dignity- not so much because we are rational animals (p.6).

To be sure, human dignity is indeed very important to us and we should take it seriously. Observing the complex nature of the idea of human dignity, Baumann however opines that:

I am not going to try to define 'human dignity' here. However, before we take a closer look at it, we should distinguish between dignity simpliciter on the one hand and human dignity on the other hand. Sometimes we say of a person that she lost her dignity on some occasion. Somebody might, for instance, act in a very servile way towards his boss. Sometimes (hopefully) we refuse to act in a certain way because we think it goes against our dignity (*Loc. Cit*).

For Baumann,

In the typical case, it is a certain way to behave that goes against our dignity. It violates certain (non-moral) standards that we subscribe to or are supposed to subscribe to. The loss of dignity is usually tied to the behaviour of the person in a particular situation and does not go very deep; it admits of 'repair' and is of no further moral significance. We can forget former losses of our dignity (p.10).

According to Baumann however, human dignity is quite different. He explains that:

Whatever it is, it is something that one cannot lose- and certainly not by behaving in a certain way. Human dignity can be violated but it cannot be lost. Racist discrimination violates human dignity but it would be extremely misleading to say that the victim has lost human dignity. This shows that the concept of human dignity is a normative one: It comes with claims or rights that a person has with respect to treatment by other people. Human dignity is like a right in this respect: It does not go away if violated. This kind of normativity is lacking in dignity simpliciter (p.11).

So what is human dignity? Baumann answers thus:

One answer comes to mind immediately: We have human dignity because we are human beings. But what is so special about humans? And even if humans are special somehow- why does that count? Do alligators have

alligator dignity and dachshunds dachshund dignity? And wouldn't it rather be the species than the member that has this special dignity? (p. 12).

Pondering further, Baumann thinks that the above does not seem to lead anywhere. He does not find speciesism as a convincing position. He thinks it is a bit suspicious given that it could pass for what we call racism. "Human dignity is not the dignity of humans and we should treat the term as a syncategorematic expression" (p.13).

For Baumann, the conception of human dignity being advocated in his articulations is one that focuses on the need for respect and on the ability to both pay respect to the other and be reciprocated respect. But he asks:

What about very young kids, comatose persons or seriously mentally retarded people? They surely have human dignity. But what is the basis for that? They might not feel the need for respect and be unable to participate in the exchange of respect. This constitutes a problem for the need- conception and I am not sure whether what I have to say here is fully satisfying. One could make a counterfactual argument and say that in relatively close possible worlds they would feel the need and would be able to fully participate in social interaction. Even if we assume that this is true, the question remains why counterfactuals should matter here. And does all that not rather show that people would have human dignity but do not actually have it? (p.15).

Baumann seems to conclude that there are serious problems with the different versions of the idea that we have human dignity in virtue of a spirito-moral property inherent in man. He posits that:

A more promising alternative starts with the basic fact that we need to be treated by others in a certain way and that we have a need to interact with others in certain ways. That we have human dignity roughly means that we deserve to be treated in a certain way and the reason is that we need that. There is no basis for human dignity somewhere else. The question "In virtue of what do we have human dignity?" has somehow changed its meaning. But the answer still gives us some ideas about what human dignity is and why it is important (p.17).

Aghamelu in his article "The Human Person and Social Order: A Moral Perspective" (2009), discussions on the issue of the 'human person' is a pivotal aspect of human living in the context of certain social structures. The basis for this is that "every human being is a member of a civil society, of a nation, and a state. The human person therefore constitutes a center of reflection as a foremost fundamental social concept" (p.35). However, he

explains that:

No reflection on the human person as the principle and act of social order therefore, should as a matter of rational necessity be separated from the justice and obligations imposed by the common good of society as such, for there exists a reciprocal relationship between the person and the society. The society makes the person and is in turn made by the individuals. Finally, the human person, who is he, what it means, and his centrality and importance for society shall be explored. So the human person forms the fundamental basis for a philosophical reflection about society in Nigeria and Africa (p. 36).

Discussing personhood as presupposition of the social nature of man, Aghamelu opines that:

The social nature of man understood as an integral dimension and expression of his rationality and freedom is fundamental and indispensable to the realization of his essence in the many forms of its manifestation. This makes the question of human sociality very critical in our discussion of the concept of personhood. Personhood is the specific character of human nature that is ordained towards sociality. Specifically it constitutes the social nature of man and the gateway to his proper understanding and realization, perfections and fulfillment (p.37).

For him, the basic end and rationale of sociality of man is to attain personhood in its fullness. Aghamelu thus explains that:

The universal aspiration of man is the basis of the realization of happiness. True happiness of man cannot be attained outside the framework of society and this in turn, within the context of the realization of his personhood. This is the foremost presupposition of the social nature of man. Therefore, human sociality is only meaningful in the context of the actualization of the ideals of personhood, which in turn is the proper ground for achieving the ends of society or social stability, progress, justice, development and peace (*Loc. Cit*).

These basic characteristics at the foundations of the personhood of man that predisposes man for sociality,

... are deep manifestations of the spirituality of the human person, which defines his appropriate relationship with the world in furthering his happiness within the social context.

This gives rise to the distinction between individuality and personhood or personality within the context of human nature (p. 38).

Exposing the concepts of individuality side by side the idea of personhood, Aghamelu opines that:

Personality would mean the highest possible level of development of the human nature. Consequently, the modern psychological understanding of self-consciousness is rooted in a kind of suffering and a kind of interior paralysis. A kind of self understanding that is not conducive for the achievement of the social existence of man (p.39).

For him, it is discovered that a proper morality of the “self” or “person” requires a positive spirituality. “A spirituality of openness to others, of acceptance of others and of self giving; a 'kernosis'” (p.40). Therefore, the understanding of human nature as rational, subsistence and free necessarily implies a movement towards realization in the social context.

That is, in the mutual sharing of the abundant social and cultural heritage of society. Human person is therefore, not antithetical to charity. It is indeed this spirituality that humanizes it and informs it. Thus we are confronted with the distinction between individuality and personality in the search for a social order (p.41).

Also, Aghamelu attempting an exposition of the metaphysics of the human person holds that:

Personhood or human personality which is a presupposition of human sociality as opposed to individuality has an ontological and metaphysical foundation. In the same vein individuality is also a presupposition of human nature but rather, which is not a principle of unity. The ontological foundation of the individual and individuality is matter. It is the principle of disunity and division (p.43).

Further, he explains that:

In the category of beings, the constitution of spiritual beings is different from that of corporeal beings. For instance, the angels are individual essences, the divine essence, in its sovereign unity and simplicity, is supremely individual. Pure forms or pure spirits are, of themselves or by reason of that which constitutes their substantial intelligibility in the state of individuality (*Loc. Cit*).

As an individual, every human person is a fragment of the specie, a part of,

... this universe, a unique point in the immense web of cosmic, ethnic, historic forces and influences and bound by their laws. Each individual is thus subject to the determinism of the physical world. Nonetheless, each of us is also a person, not limited to the determinism of the physical laws. Each of us is also a person and, as such, is not controlled by the laws of matter (*Loc. Cit*).

Personality as the principle of unity, then becomes the moral principle of human nature ordained by the consequence of human sociality towards achieving unity of social reality. For Aghamelu, "... It is the motivating principle to achieving moral wholeness and social responsibility. It is the actuating force of man's freedom and reason. It is opposed to individuality. But unlike individuality, personality has even a deeper metaphysical root" (p.44).

However, Aghamelu warns that:

This idea of personhood is not understood by every culture. This reality about the potentials of the person is a metaphysical center that is deeper than all the qualities and essences which are found and enumerated by the subject of love. It is this reality to which love goes to and is attracted to in a person (*Loc. Cit*).

Thus, it is the law of love according to Aghamelu, that brings out the metaphysical potentials of the person. Love does not go out to qualities or natures, or essences, but to persons. This explains the question of how man or the person ought to be treated. Accordingly, Aghamelu opines thus:

Love, therefore, which characterizes the metaphysical basis of the person, is deeply rooted in human freedom, reason and responsibility. Human nature is therefore realized in the attitude of love. There is no doubt that this conception of person is western in character, however, its rootedness in the Christian spirituality of love, presents a more pragmatic option for achieving social peace. This is because, in that tradition, God consists in a pure and absolute super existence of intellection and love (*Loc. Cit*).

For Aghamelu still,

This aspect of the western concept of person exposes the poverty of African philosophical conception of person whose metaphysics of God dispenses with love as a social network of human realities and independence. Western conception of person offers the African the most realistic

option of overcoming socio-political obstacles which exist in many forms of corruption, the basis of inauthentic existence and social alienation. The deep metaphysics of personhood promotes the attitude of immanence and presence of sociality that foster authentic social collaboration and unity... Personality as rooted in the spirit holds itself in existence and super abounds in existence. Spirit is the root of moral responsibility (*Loc. Cit*).

The fundamental reality that underlies the perfection of every aspect of human nature is society. However,

... Though man's nature is essentially rational, the law of reason consists in freedom which alone can be actuated in society. It is social bound. It is by means of his social nature that man finds adequate realization of his potentials and guarantee of eudaemonia, which serves the end of every human experience (p. 45).

To be sure, the love he means for the human person, is not “that love which egoistically abuses the other person and treats him or her like a consumer good” (*Loc. Cit*), like presently obtains with every account of development which relegates the intrinsic worth of the human person to the background, while elevating socio-econo-structural aspects of development. The love Aghamelu means, is,

... love as the esteem that takes effect in the willingness to sacrifice for one's neighbor and for community. Through this kind of spiritual bond, people are capable of practicing social virtues, love of neighbor, fidelity, truthfulness, justice, obedience and of building up cultural domains that individual could not create of himself or herself (*Loc. Cit*).

Given the spiritual or non-material dimension to the human composite, a human person has therefore a destiny beyond mere corporeal existence (Asouzu, 2004). Thus, Care is to be taken in the way the human person is treated. The human person as an individual is in relation with the other, and given the construct of society as a community of individuals, with divergent backgrounds, statuses, and dispositions, but this differences should not in any way open up opportunities for subjugation of one by the other.

The Concept of Development

The term 'development' is in no small way an everyday vocabulary. It is so often used that no one pays any mind to its actual meaning. A good number of those who use the term lack a precise conceptual or factual grasp of what it entails. Could development be employed to refer to a number of circumstances or phenomena with the intent of a common referent? Or could one use it to imply different things at different scenarios? Is development a universal or a relative concept? These questions cogently point to the complex nature of

the term 'development' and the need for a conceptualization.

Beyond this, there is a need to answer the question “what is development?” because, as Kwame Agyeman (2003) observes, “...the issues of development are fast becoming an 'African problem', as though Africans are the only human beings on earth with whom the issues of development must be associated, synonymous, and consume them, or must claim their utmost attention and sole designation.” However, this position does not capture the entire reality, because the issues of development are universal to humanity, and Africans are not the only ones in the class of humanity.

However, historically, the need for a theoretical analysis of the concept of development has been a focal point of academic interest since as far back as 1946, even when the world was not as enamored to the term as it is today, 'development' was recognized as one of the fifty words most frequently used by historians (Ikpe, 1999, p.2.). However, today in all spheres of human endeavor, ranging from politics, economics, technology, education and other aspects, the term 'development' stands out as a major theme. The wide currency of the term notwithstanding, most definitions of development are deficient, partly due to the attendant assumption by most people that they have a fair idea of what it means. Indeed a survey of contemporary literature on development suggests that most people subscribe to the common sense concept of development (*Loc. Cit*), which according to Henry McGurk (1975), “...implies not only a change in time but also change which has direction; development frequently implies advancement or improvement over some more primitive status” (p.28.)

From the above commonsense conception of development one would observe that development involves some change, not every change is development because for any change to be developmental, it must have a direction; it must proceed towards a certain end, and advancement, which is an improvement upon the earlier stage.

A more elaborate attempt at defining development is made by Ernest Nagel (1957) where he defines development as “...a sequence of continuous changes eventuating in some outcome” (p.15.)

What this adds to McGurk's position is that a developmental change is not an isolated event. It must be part of a chain of “...process emanating from the past and gradually building up to the present and the future” (p.2.). That is to say that developmental change cannot be accidental, it must emanate from perceptible capabilities, which exists in a well structured medium. Nagel captures this thus when he wrote that development has its essential components:

The notion of a system possessing a definitive structure and a definite set of pre-existing capabilities; and the notion of a system yielding permanent but novel increment not only in structure but in its modes of operation as well (*Loc. Cit*).

Further, Sidney Hook (1994) conceives development as:

Any change which has a continuous direction and which

culminates in a phase that is qualitatively new. Hence the term should be used to characterize any series of events in thought, action or institutional arrangement which exhibits a directional cumulative change that either terminates in an event marked off by a recognized qualitative novelty or which exhibits in its course, a perceptible pattern of growth.

Again, although there are various definitions and understandings of development, almost all conceptions of the term development possess certain common features. Some of these include the fact that development denotes, usually, though not always, a rise in the standard of living of a people, no matter their size. This rise could be in various dimensions, but usually, complimentary in forms. As such we talk of political development, economic development, cultural development, religious development, etc.

Until recently, development has been identified with economic and industrial growth. However, there is now a more "...broadened concept of development" (UN Secretary General, 1979), which puts man at the very heart of the development effort. Now development implies that there must not be disparities within a developed society and the citizens of such a society. The citizens of such a society must have their basic human needs satisfied. Kwame Gyekye in his work *The Unexamined Life (1996)*, dismisses a narrow conception of development measured solely in economic terms as both inadequate and unwarranted. He insists that development is a behavioural concept and must be distinguished from growth which is a physical concept. He buttresses further that:

For human society, development is to be seen in terms of adequate responses to the environment in all its complexities to the existential conditions in which human beings live, move and have their being. Thus, as regards human society, development is a behavioural concept, which can express itself politically, socially, economically, culturally, morally, psychologically, etc (p.16).

Like, Gyekye, Olusegun Oladipo's (2009) position elaborates the fact that development is nothing but human development. He succinctly puts it thus:

Development... has two broad dimensions – namely, the tangible or technical aspect; and the intangible or moral aspect. The tangible aspect of development is concerned with material progress... The primary goal of this process of course, is human well-being... The intangible or moral aspect of development on the other hand, has to do with improvement of "the quality of human relations between people"... Although the tangible aspect of development is the most visible, the intangible is very crucial (pp.94-95).

However, there is no gain saying the obvious import of the intangible dimension of

development which has been played down by most development theories or policies on the altar of the seeming more important aspects that stresses on the corporeal.

The Human Person and Development in Africa: Any Progress?

Having come thus far, it is easy to see that human well-being is and should be the primary goal of any development approach. However, in Africa this is not the case. The central role of man in the entire scope of development has been sacrificed for the extreme concentration on infrastructure and economics. Development implies improving the quality of people's life and not just a mere improvement of the environment. However, it is noticeable that the development plans for Africa have often centered on the physical environment and not the people. This is why Ade Ajayi (1999, p.13) recalls Harry Truman's famous inauguration address to the American people to buttress this point. He held thus:

We must embark on a bold new programme for making the benefit of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.

However, because the plan of the European nations was exploitation for foreign interest, their activities in Africa were geared towards developing the areas, not the peoples; a plan of development to create dependence. To be sure, "...the development plans, processes and conceptualization have been externally driven, and it is a type of development that either leaves behind, or in some ways even create large areas of poverty, stagnation and marginality" (*Loc.Cit*). Therefore, it has been impossible to achieve development for Africa because the people have generally been excluded whereas for development to be achieved, its process has to be internal (Igwubor, 2017, p.16.). There is no doubt that for development, external assistance may be required, but this must begin by inquiring into the nature of the Africans (*Loc. Cit*). What this means is that external agenda for development must not and cannot be imposed on Africa, rather, "...the necessary task of internal exploration and proposing a cultural agenda on the basis of which internal adaptation and meaningful change can take place is required" (*Loc. Cit*).

Factly speaking, the primary goal of development is and should be human well-being, both in its material and moral dimensions but not essentially in physical infrastructures. Physical things are mere tools of development whereas the main development is development of the people. A distinction should be made between development and the tools of development. Development should neither be mistaken for modernization which involves catching up with the more developed societies nor such ratings of growth in terms of GDP per capita. This is why Julius Nyerere (1974) makes it clear that people are the objects of development. As regards this, he writes thus:

Roads, buildings, the increase of the crop output, and other things of this nature, are not development: they are tools of development. A new road extends a man's freedom if he travels upon it. An increase in the number of school buildings can be, and are being used, to develop the minds

and understanding of the people. An increase in the output of wheat, maize or beans is only development if it leads to the better nutrition of the people. An expansion of the cotton, coffee or sisal crop is development only if these things can be sold, and the money used for other things which improve the health, comfort and understanding of the people. Development which is not development of the people may be of interest to historians in the year 3,000: it is irrelevant to the future which is being created (p.26.).

Therefore, a good theory of development must be founded on the realization that “development of the people can only be effected by the people” (p.28.) as initiators of plans and programmes for their own well-being, and the cryptic observation that “development depends on freedom” (*Loc.Cit*). Like Ogugua and Oduah have made it abundantly clear, “...the real project of development must not only be man, but must have man at the centre. It means that plans must be designed with man in view and holistic vision of reality or else one will derail” (p.18).

Conclusion

Africa has a chequered history in science and technological development which has led to the fact that long after the end of colonialism, she is yet to reconcile her agro-based family economy with the advancements in the socio-scientific and technological economy that is currently sweeping through the African society. This obvious fact notwithstanding, we must know that:

Not all Western developments are wholly positive and relevant to African society. We therefore opine that Africa should advance in development with caution. All aspects of development in Africa should be analytic in approach and morally holistic in projection. Above all, the morality of scientific cum technological pursuit in Africa should be aimed at inculcating the cultural values that project human interest and welfare (Onyibor, 2003, p.96.).

The growth of paradigm of modern development assigns highest priority to increasing aggregate Gross National Product with little regard to equity in the distribution of its fruit. The same paradigm also emphasizes planning from the top downwards and resource transfers from foreign sources in ways, which weaken local and national self-reliance and perpetuate relationships of dependence (*Loc. Cit*).

This approach leads to undue destruction of cultural values because it is uncritically biased in favour of modernity which it accords an all important respect as superior to tradition. Moreover, for Onyibor, “... by concentrating on aggregate gain in industrial outputs, export trade and financial earnings, growth oriented strategies prove both wasteful of resources and environmentally destructive” (*Loc. Cit*).

Small wonder Onyibor thinks that the growth oriented concept of development both in

socialist and capitalist economies, “...stress heavy infrastructure and technological power, mass consumption and luxury for the upper classes and in this orientation, the mode of development rests on a psychological distortion which ...legitimizes the manipulation of desires in order to transform new wants often created by advertisers or by the demonstration effect of conspicuous consumers into veritable needs” (*Loc. Cit*).

The ideology of growth oriented development postulates that human beings are good and fulfilled when they have goods. However,

... a qualitative difference exists between having a decent sufficiency of goods and compulsively wanting to have ever more. An insatiable desire is a disease which strips its victims of human freedom and ultimately of their ability to feel compassion for others. And even more basic reason can be found for rejecting the value assumptions of growth-oriented patterns of development. In practice these patterns generate more misery for the masses and greater privilege for the wealthy few (*Loc. Cit*).

It therefore follows that African development must avoid the above situation and resolve the tension between the need of people to have enough and their aspiration to be more fully human. It therefore follows that “there is a great merit in prescribing that sound development ought to be grounded in traditional, indigenous and non-elite values” (*Loc. Cit*).

However, we are not unmindful of the fact that both economic and social developments are means to a larger end, i.e. the fostering of human development. “But an integral human fulfillment rest squarely on obscure sense of identity and cultural integrity, and on a system of meanings to which one can give enthusiastic allegiance. These values are so vital that economic and institutional modernization need to be judged in the light of their contributions to these values” (*Loc. Cit*).

Contemporary social criticism of modern development in developing countries harps on the loss of identity, of a sense of community, and of deeper personal meanings, as the price paid for technological development. Surely, any form of development which alienates people in affluence must be a wrong approach, it is anti development (*Loc. Cit*).

Even though we must not idealise mass poverty, nor should we uncritically glorify cultures, which have perpetrated human misery on African societies, we must however,

... insist that material improvement should not and need not be obtained at the price of a general improvement of the spirit. This conviction lies behind the search for changing strategies, which takes the traditional values of living communities as the foundation upon which to build a human form of development (*Loc. Cit*).

The path of African development therefore lies in the reconciliation of tradition, modernism and progress that will create enabling environment for the emergence of

Africa in the modern technological and scientific world. This will also help Africa develop capacity for self-determination in issues that pertain to its culture.

To be sure, the greatest problem facing African society today is how it can secure scientific and technological development without sacrificing the cherished values of our traditional communalist set up. For sure, we must admit that a well rounded development in Africa as everywhere else,

... requires the infusion of humanistic values into the complex of actions involved in our utilization of science and technology for practical purposes. This is because development in Africa will be enhanced through the cultivation of a rational scientific outlook. In other words, science and technology are crucial factors in this regard (*Loc.Cit*).

However, this does not remove the centrality of the human person in any developmental discourse that will work for Africa.

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