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## **UNIT ONE: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY AND ITS BRANCHES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this module you are expected to be acquainted with the definition of general philosophy. You will learn the etymological root of the concept, philosophy and its literal meaning. You will need to understand what motivated man into philosophy and appreciate the three modes of philosophy, i.e. speculative, prescriptive and analytic. Philosophy in the layman's sense as distinct from the technical conception will also be examined. As a foundation course in education, you will come to know the justifications for the study of philosophy of education in a teacher education programme.

Furthermore, you will be led to examine our educational problems through the study of philosophical branches.

The module is divided into seven study units.

1. Unit One: Introduction to Philosophy
2. Unit Two: Metaphysics and Education
3. Unit Three: Epistemology and Education
4. Unit Four: Axiology and Education
5. Unit Five: Some Selected Schools of Thought on Education
6. Unit Six: Philosophy of Education
7. Unit Seven: Philosophy of Nigerian Education

### **PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the course the students of Philosophy of Education should (be):

1. acquainted with the various branches of Philosophy, i.e. metaphysics, epistemology and axiology and their bearings on the theory and practice of education.
2. able to discuss how different views on the major branches of philosophy led to the formulation of world views, or philosophical schools of thought, with their attendant positions on the role of the teacher, pupil, school, curriculum and teaching methodology in the process of education.
3. familiar with the educational ideas and thoughts of grandmaster philosophers representing different ages and times from the classical periods of the Greeks and Romans, to John Dewey; and their contributions to current educational practices.
4. have acquired the skills, techniques and tools of philosophical analysis and apply same in treating educational concepts in daily use in the world of education and in discussing issues and problems that are germane to education.

5. prepared to make meaningful contributions to the nations' education policy making as well as make a critical analysis of the National Policy on Education.

## **INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Everyday we wake up from sleep, we look at our surroundings, we look at the wonders of nature and we ponder. We ponder over the wonders usually displayed by nature and we start to think and ask questions; multitude of questions such as: why does the sun rise from the east and set in the west? Why am I living on earth? Who created me and for what purpose? Why is our educational system bad? What can we do to improve the quality of man? Is there life after death?

Some of these questions have answers while some are begging for answers and perhaps many can never be answered during our short stay here on earth. But man will continue to ponder; continue to ask questions and continue to search for answers and solutions to the questions of wonders that surround man.

2. Thus, every discipline has a philosophy. Consequently, there is philosophy of science, philosophy of law, philosophy of medicine, philosophy of religion, and philosophy of language and of course philosophy of education. You have philosophy of life, philosophy of football, philosophy of music and indeed philosophy of anything one can think of. The question that readily comes to mind is: why is it that we have philosophy of virtually everything? The attempt to answer this question leads us to the examination of the subject of philosophy itself. We resort to philosophy when things are wrong. A glance at life generally reveals that things do necessarily not go on smoothly as planned or anticipated. We are perplexed, worried, disappointed or fascinated. When we find ourselves in any of the states above, we resort to philosophizing in searching for stability of the mind, because none of the situations can be said to point to a state of equilibrium.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- (i) Define the term *philosophy*.
- (ii) Give a number of definitions of philosophy.
- (iii) Give a brief history of philosophy (philosophers)
- (iv) State and explain the scope of philosophy.
- (v) Enumerate some functions of philosophy.

### **WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?**

Philosophy is derived from two Greek words: **Philos** meaning to “love” and **Sophia** meaning “wisdom”. Put together “Philosophia” means the “love of wisdom”.

Wisdom itself means, “the ability to make sensible decisions and give good judgement because of the experience and knowledge that somebody has”. To have wisdom therefore means, the individual must make deliberate effort at acquiring knowledge. Knowledge acquisition through critical thinking and analysis of issues before making concrete judgment; the individual must cultivate a very high degree of questioning ability, a propensity for a high level of speculation and fantasies. The literal meaning of philosophy therefore is “the love for a high degree of knowledge”.

From the point of view of the early Greek philosophers, philosophy, wisdom or excellence meant the totality of knowledge, that is, knowledge in all the sciences as well as all the social sciences as we know them today i.e. physics, chemistry, biology, geography, sociology, economics, religion, etc. all disciplines were seen and understood from philosophical perspective and hence philosophy was referred to as the mother of all disciplines.

Essentially, philosophy is pure reasoning. No trail answers and no found truths. Unlike other subjects like history, geography, chemistry etc., philosophy has no clear contents. It is a skill on critical reasoning.

Philosophy has been defined by different authorities in different ways starting from ancient Greece. Some of the definitions are worth stating as below:

- (i) A way of simplifying complex ideas and statements about our experiences in life in order to make sense out of (make us understand) them.
- (ii) A rational attempt in finding solutions to fundamental problems of man.
- (iii) A constant and endless quest by man in trying to find out many riddles of the universe so that he can find out a meaningful framework for the expression of all thoughts, actions and observable phenomena.
- (iv) What an individual accepts as his guiding principles, which prompt him to act, in different ways at different times, places and circumstances.
- (v) A rational investigation, which examines nature and the reasons behind events happening in the world.

## **EVOLUTION OF PHILOSOPHY**

The earliest Greek Philosophers often referred to as “Milesian” tradition thinkers, laid the foundation of philosophy not only in ancient Greece but also in the present Western World. Through their inquiries, they laid the foundation for solid development in science and other human endeavours.

In pursuance of wisdom or excellence, the primary objective of the Greek was to discover the laws and principles which governed the universe. In doing so, they searched for explanations of life and the creation by the use of pure reasoning through observations, analyses and deductions. From this perspective, it can be seen that it was “wonder” that directed the attention of man to philosophy. Man was fascinated by his very creation, that of the world and other heavenly bodies and the moon, stars and sun, etc that he saw. As a matter of fact, the ancient Greek philosophers rejected the myths, legends and fantasies with which the mysteries of creation and the presence of homosapiens on earth were traditionally explained.

The first group of philosophers to pursue this radical shift from tradition were the Milesian Philosophers. Thales, the protagonist of the Milesian School for instance put forth a hypothesis about the fundamental substance of the universe. He held that water was the primary substance. He argued that when water is heated, it becomes steam, thus all entities that are gaseous, such as the atmosphere, can be called or described as rarefied water. Naturally, water is liquid and Thales believed that all things that can flow are made up of water. Consequently, he held that if water is adequately cooled it becomes ice; therefore, all solids must be condensed water.

Following Thales, came Anaximander who through reflections also came up with the idea that the primary substance of all existing matter was not water but something infinite, full of grandeur, in fact eternal and ageless. Anaximanes, the last of the Milesian Philosophers propounded the theory that the primary substance of all existing matter was air. This quest for wisdom went on from the ancient Greek period through the Middle Ages, to Modern times beginning with the Renaissance, through the period of modern rationalism to contemporary philosophy of pragmatism, existentialism and philosophical analysis. It was through the speculations of the ancient Greeks that we have philosophy which was originally understood to be the totality of knowledge from which other disciplines sprang. From philosophy came for instance, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, theology, logic, etc. Thus philosophy is sometimes referred to as a science of sciences or the mother of knowledge since all fields of knowledge are so to say offsprings of mother philosophy.

The important thing to note is that philosophical investigation which was championed by the Milesian philosophers rejected myths, legends and fantasies. In Nigeria, for instance, we are aware of the myths and legends with which the mysteries of creation are explained. For instance, the Yoruba legend holds that their great ancestor, Oduduwa, descended from heaven. The Daura legend on the origin of the Hausas holds that their founder was Bayajida who came from the East. He settled in Daura, succeeded in killing a snake, which was prohibiting the inhabitants from fetching water except on some designated days. Overwhelmed by the heroic act of Bayajida, the Queen of Daura married him i.e Bayajida. She gave birth to seven children who founded the seven legitimate Hausa states. Suppose you are asked to compare this legend of the origin of the Hausas and the hypothesis put forward by Thales to explain the fundamental substance of the universe, which one sounds more credible and appealing to human reasoning? A philosopher is expected to carry out his investigation by using rational procedures not by intuition or poetic imagination. This is what characterized philosophical investigation through the ages.

We may have begun pondering how all these can be referred to as philosophy or what makes what these early philosophers engaged in, to be philosophical. It must be appreciated that in common, they all appealed to reason in attempting to offer answers to the kind of questions they raised. In most cases, their approach was dialogical, whereby an individual presents a view and another questions it and vice versa. The kind of questions they all asked were only those that demanded for reasons. These are known as second-order questions and are of the nature: How do you know? What do you mean? and why is it so? As you can see, all these questions demand reasons.

Second – order questions can be distinguished from first order questions, which require empirical answers such as what is this? Where is it? And when was it? But, first order questions are empirical or scientific in nature. They need definite and verifiable answers. Philosophical questions only demand for reasons.

### **MODES OF PHILOSOPHY**

Philosophy as a discipline is more of an activity rather than a body of passive knowledge. In other words, we learn philosophy by doing it, i.e. by philosophizing. So philosophy is an activity. We can identify three modes of philosophy. These modes are the speculative, the prescriptive and the analytic.

(a) **Speculative Philosophy**

In the first place, speculative philosophy is the mode of philosophy, which systematically speculates about and upon all things. This mode of speculation is limitless as it deals with the real as well as the abstract. Primarily therefore, speculative philosophy is interested in the search for order, wholeness and linkages in the realm of experience. For instance, let us look at the investigation started by the Milesian philosophers. They wanted to discover the laws that governed the universe. They also searched for explanations of life and creation. What method did they use? They made use of pure reasoning. This was a typical example of speculation. They wanted to understand the mystery of creation through speculation. This mode can be sub-divided into Metaphysics and Epistemology.

(b) **Prescriptive Philosophy**

In the second place, prescriptive philosophy seeks to set standards, grounds or criteria for the judgement of values, conduct and art (Kneller, 1964). It seeks to establish the objectivity or subjectivity of concepts such as good and bad, right, and wrong, beautiful and ugly e.t.c. In other words, do these qualities adhere in things or are they mere projections of the individual mind? Prescriptive philosophy also seeks to establish some fundamental laws for judging which actions are worthwhile and which are not. For instance, why should education be concerned with judgement of values? Education is a value-laden enterprise, as such values abound everywhere in educational practice. These are the basis of any choice and decision making in all matters of education. It will be worth a teacher's time to be familiar with the value basis of the education, which he imparts to the child.

(c) **Analytic Philosophy**

In the third place, analytic philosophy is concerned with the meaning of words. It analyses the meaning of words such as education, teaching, learning, intelligence, indoctrination, freedom, authority, curriculum, e.t.c. In order to separate them into components. It endeavours to show where appropriate and how inconsistencies may come into logical presentation of matter through the use of certain words. Analytic philosophy also examines issues and problems, which are discussed in the world of education. As we are aware, education is a public enterprise, which attracts debates

on burning national issues. J.A. Akinpelu (1981) in his well known book **An Introduction to Philosophy of Education**, identified educational problems such as; falling standard of education, equal educational opportunity, bridging the gap between educationally advantaged and disadvantaged states of the federation. As it were, these issues are debated with a lot of prejudices and biases thereby beclouding the issues at stake. More often, they find political manifestation especially in a democratically elected government as Nigeria's Fourth Republic. A professional philosopher, armed with the tool of philosophical analysis is expected to throw more light logically rather than heat up the debate. In this way, educational issues have the hope of being put in clearer perspective with a view to proffering solutions and the way forward.

## **TWO SENSES OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **(i) Common/Popular Senses**

It is in an attempt to clarify our minds about what philosophy is that Akinpelu (1981) identified two senses in which the term can be used. These are the common and technical senses. Popularly, philosophy is taken to refer to one's attitude to life, which is as a result of one's assumptions, beliefs, attitudes and prejudices to things. In this sense, everyone has his own likes, dislikes, prejudices as a result of one's own experiences, upbringing and background. In this sense, everyone has his own philosophy of life, which guides and directs how he conducts himself. Statements like: "Honesty is the best policy"; "Punctuality is the soul of business"; "No condition is permanent" e.t.c embody personal philosophy or common sense philosophy.

Philosophy in general or common sense, is also equated vaguely with "theory or reasons or general objectives" (Jaeas, 1960,p. 10). Such meanings could lead to questions like: "what is the philosophy of your school? or what could be the philosophy of his actions?"

### **(ii) Professional/Technical Sense**

In its technical sense, Akinpelu (1981) sees philosophy as an academic discipline in which scholars devote their time and energy. It is characterized by logical, consistent, and systematic thinking, so as to reach conclusions that are sound, coherent and consistent in all their parts. To philosophize, therefore, is to engage in a strenuous activity of thought and to pursue it with no other aim than to satisfy the questioning of human mind.

Under this technical sense of the word, philosophy is conceived as *action*; as *content* and as *attitude*. As activity, it involves analyzing, speculating, synthesizing, prescribing or even criticizing issues. As content it involves those issues that make up a course of study and as attitude, it refers to the distinctive attributes or dispositions, which are often required in doing philosophy. These attitudes include, logical consistency, being critical, tentativeness and comprehensiveness.

Personal philosophy embodies individual world view as manifested in the likes, dislikes, prejudices, biases etc of the individual. Philosophy in the technical sense, critically examines issues and problems from impartial point of view, thereby exposing biases or prejudices, whether political, economic, social or cultural. In this sense, personal philosophy falls short of the idea of philosophy; it only embodies some rudimentary aspects of it. Personal view of philosophy does not provide a thorough and hard look at issues, with a view to analyzing them and offering a deep reflection to produce an alternative system, as does philosophy in the technical sense. It focuses attention on those areas of human endeavour where reasoning is apparently the method of investing action.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF PHILOSOPHY**

As highlighted earlier, philosophy which started as a science of sciences and mother of all disciplines narrowed its focus as a result of the emergence of natural sciences as specialized areas of study such as mathematics which is a distinct discipline of its own. Thus, each discipline found its own distinct method. Natural sciences discovered and perfected the method of observation and experimentation, while mathematics uses the method of deduction and calculation. This leaves philosophy with its unique characteristics. What then are these characteristics?

First and foremost, it is the reliance on the use of logical reasoning by examining every evidence in favour or against any claim from a dispassionate and impartial point of view, exposing prejudices and claims that are put forward and in general, giving every bit of evidence as much weight as it deserves. This hard look and critical attitude of mind towards issues and problems is what is called philosophizing. You remember also, that it is this hard and critical approach to issues and problems from dispassionate and impartial point of view that is the main difference between personal view of philosophy and the technical view.

The second characteristic of philosophy is the tentative nature of whatever conclusions that may be reached on an issue. It shares with modern science the belief that no conditions are absolute and certain, as to be immuned to further future correction by new evidence. Akinpelu (1981) quotes Garforth as saying that “there belongs to the very nature of philosophy an attitude of skepticism which regards no conclusion as final and every matter, however, apparently, closed, is open to further questions”. Bertrand Russell, in his definition of philosophy, observed that philosophy like science, appeals to human reasoning rather than the authority, whether of tradition or that of revelation. In other words, this second characteristic of philosophy, i.e. tentative nature of conclusions, brings it closer to science. We all know that conclusions in science are neither permanent nor immuned to further investigation or correction.

### **PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE**

From our discussion, it seems that we cannot comprehend the nature of philosophy without seeing it in relation to science. Our attempt so far has given an incorrect picture that philosophy and science are diametrically opposed to one another. While we admit that they are different in certain respects, they are also similar in others. In order to fully understand

the nature of philosophy and science therefore, we have to state their similarities and differences. Erith (1997, pp.28 – 29) summarizes these as follows:

- (A) Similarities between philosophy and science:
- (i) Both are concerned with increasing our understanding of the nature of man and the universe;
  - (ii) Both are skeptical, critical and constructive;
  - (iii) Both employ the method of logical, coherent and systematic reasoning;
  - (iv) Both complement each other. For instance, whereas philosophy interprets or explains the conclusions of science, science verifies the speculations of philosophy.
- (B) Differences between Philosophy and Science:
- (i) Science employs empirical means – observation, description and experimentation whereas philosophy employs analytic means – the method of reasoning only. Thus, whereas science is empirical, philosophy is interpretive.
  - (ii) Whereas, Science produces facts, philosophy is abstract because it deals with what we do not know. Science on the other hand is concrete because it deals with what we can feel or see, or what we have some degree of knowledge about;
  - (iii) Science is narrower in scope than philosophy.
  - (iv) Science looks at particular aspects of things. Philosophy is more holistic.

By now you have had a clear understanding of what philosophy is, its nature, evolution and characteristics. This now leads us to what philosophy of education is.

## **SUMMARY**

- We have tried to operationalise the concept of philosophy and relate it to man's daily activity of life. First of all, we began by showing that every discipline of study has a philosophy and justified why this is so. Precisely, we told you that life is generally not soft and easy. We are either worried, perplexed, fascinated, disappointed or disillusioned. Scenarios such as these require search for stability of life or equilibrium. This being the state of affairs in human life, motivated man to philosophy. He began by attempting to understand knowledge in its real sense of the Greek *philosophia*, i.e. love of wisdom. This quest for wisdom is in line with man's explorative and investigative tendencies as a rational being and the attempt to understand knowledge in its totality gave rise to specialized subject areas which came out of the mother of disciplines, i.e. philosophy.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

1. Why is philosophy defined as the child of failure?
2. Discuss why philosophy is regarded as the mother of all disciplines of study.
3. How did science, mathematics and logic emerge as distinct disciplines of study from the mother philosophy?
4. In what ways did the emergence of modern science and mathematics as distinct disciplines help philosophy to focus attention to its proper field of inquiry.

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## **UNIT TWO: PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

We have seen in unit one the meaning of philosophy and that every discipline has its own philosophy. We also saw that philosophy examines the fundamental assumptions of other disciplines. Thus, when philosophy focuses its attention on science, we have Philosophy of Science, if on law, we have Philosophy of Law, if education we have Philosophy of Education or Educational Philosophy.

Perhaps the most essential discipline man has ever come across is education. This being so and ever since every discipline has its own philosophy, the philosophy of education to us as teachers, is most apt for study. It is in this context that you are required to spend some time going through the next unit thoroughly. In this unit, you will study the philosophy of education and its relevance in educational system.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Define the term Education.
2. Explain the term philosophy of education
3. Give reasons for the inclusion of philosophy of Education in any teacher Education programme.

### **WHAT IS EDUCATION?**

Education is a discipline that is directed to man as no other animal receives education. We often talk of training dogs, cats, monkeys and other lower animals, but in the case of man, we think in terms of educating man. With man in the very center of the educational process, the discipline deserves no degree of philosophizing than any of the disciplines of study. In view of this, Philosophy of Education is a foundation course in any educational study. But let us examine the word *Education*.

Education has been defined by many scholars in different ways and in different contexts. However, one could state few of such definitions as follows:

1. Education is a process that starts from birth and ends at death.
2. Education is the sum total of the culture which a society deliberately gives its younger generation in order to qualify them and raise the level of improvement it has attained.
3. Education is the totality of life experiences
4. Education is the process of developing knowledge and ability in learners for personal and societal enhancement.

To achieve any of these definitions, the educational system must have some deliberate and well-articulated philosophical bases or policies. This, thus, leads us to the concept of the Philosophy of Education.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

We have studied the definitions of "Philosophy" and "Education". As with our treatment of philosophy, we will now present "Philosophy of Education" by first presenting its common and technical sense of view. Thereafter, we shall present the concept *Philosophy of Education*.

(a) **Common Sense Notion of Philosophy of Education**

When people talk of philosophy of education in ordinary discussion, they often mean the personal view of what the schools should be doing or their own attitude to the educational system. Such discussions often arise when people feel dissatisfied with the product of the school system. In trying to criticize what they find as faulty in a given system, they refer to their own supposedly, more adequate philosophy. In this way, everyone is his own philosopher of education. By and large, this philosophy of education is no more than a vague expression of their prejudice, based in most cases, on the type of education, which they themselves have received. The expression is coloured by their frustration, and is not a product of a deliberate and critical look at the system. These views fall short of an adequate idea of philosophy of education as they only embody parts of such a philosophy. They are generally vague and in any case, are not based on systematic thought of what type of man they want to produce or in what type of world or society he would live, and what type of values he would cherish.

(b) **Professional or Technical Sense of Philosophy of Education**

The professional philosopher of education is in a position to provide a thorough and hard look at the educational system, to analyze it, and after deep reflection, to produce an alternative system. Both processes of analysis and reflection, and the product of their reflection are what the professionals mean by philosophy of education.

## **CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

Educational philosophy attempts to comprehend education in its totality and tries to interpret it by means of general concepts that will guide our aims and policies of education. Having seen what philosophy of education is and the nature of its inquiry, we now want to lead you to the reasons why a prospective teacher should study the subject, Philosophy of Education, as a foundation course in teacher preparation.

### **ACTIVITY**

In your own words, explain the terms "Philosophy, Education and Philosophy of Education."

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN A TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

We have from the very beginning, shown that philosophy involves personal critical thinking rather than taking statements and recommendations from others for granted. In this way, it helps the teacher become more aware of the implications of the various issues involved in education. By engaging in thinking on the subject himself, he discovers other dimensions, which other educators have neglected. He discovers for himself the limits, which formulas and conventional wisdom have in educational issues.

Secondly, as philosophy gives more weight to validity or soundness of an argument rather than to the authority of the person arguing the case, it encourages the teacher to look at educational problems more critically, clearing them of the confusions that personal interests, prejudices and emotions usually introduce to educational discussions.

Again, philosophy has a humbling effect on those who pursue it, in that it forces one to keep an open mind on any subject, since new evidence may render one's previous opinion less tenable. This is for good teachers who are traditionally regarded as conservative and dogmatic on educational matters. The hallmark of a scholar is humility. Socrates, the father of philosophy asserted that, "*it is not what wise men say that constitutes wisdom; rather the beginning of wisdom is when one knows how ignorant he/she is*". This humble attribute enables us to keep on learning even from our students and stops us from arrogating all knowledge and wisdom to ourselves.

Thirdly, philosophy of education helps at higher level of policy making and goal-setting for education. It increases the ability of the teacher to influence educational policies under which he operates, since by engaging in theoretical discussions of educational issues, he himself can offer alternatives for action. He will no longer be at the receiving end of the educational policies formulated by others. He will now be cooperating with others to formulate more adequate policies, which he will implement in the classroom. As it were, any educational policy formulated will be implemented by the teacher, but he is never part of the policy. Many policies suffer poor implementation because the implementers have not been part and parcel of the policy formulation.

Philosophy of Education offers personal intellectual education to the teacher. The teacher needs this type of education more than any one else. A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning. In this regard, Akinpelu (1981) quotes Rahindranath Tagore as saying: "***A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flames***". This means that a teacher needs to continue to develop himself intellectually if he will assist in the intellectual development of his students.

The study of philosophy of education enables teachers to appraise their progress and shortcomings, against the background of the aims and objectives of an educational programme. This shows that any activity, which has no philosophy, cannot be appraised as a success or a failure. It also helps educators to know their work and therefore do it better.

Finally, philosophy of education helps in the development of a critical mind in the teacher and promotes same in their students. As pointed out in the characteristics of philosophy, it

relies heavily in the use of logical reasoning. The critical attitude of the mind has helped greatly in the advancement of science and technology. As teachers, our objective is to produce students who should be better than us. This can only be possible in an atmosphere of unhindered inquiry, through inculcation of critical attitude in our students. We should make conscious efforts to remove obstacles in the way of free inquiry. Teachers should allow students to observe, explore their environment, formulate their own hypotheses and find ways of resolving their problems through unhindered inquiry.

## **SUMMARY**

- Philosophy of education as an applied discipline utilizes the tools, methods and techniques of philosophy in solving educational problems. Education on the other hand is a vital tool for the survival of man and for national development and reconstruction. Man cannot survive without education. In this light, philosophy and education are one and the same thing which deal with the same subject matters of man, society and knowledge. We conclude this unit by advancing arguments for the inclusion of philosophy of education as a course of study in a teacher education programme.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

1. Examine some common confusions and misinterpretations of the concept of philosophy of education.
2. Distinguish between the common and technical senses of philosophy of education.
3. What are the major justifications for the inclusion of philosophy of education in a teacher education programme?

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Convergence in Cultural Perspective:** New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston Inc.

## **UNIT THREE: METAPHYSICS AND EDUCATION**

In the preceding units, you were exposed to the following

- (a) What is philosophy?
- (b) Modes of doing philosophy
- (c) Characteristics of philosophy
- (d) What is philosophy of Education?
- (e) Relevance of philosophy of Education to the teacher.

We also stated that philosophy can be considered as the mother of all disciplines and that it could be divided into three major areas of

- (i) Speculative
- (ii) Narrative
- (iii) Analytical.

We shall in subsequent units, talk about speculative philosophy and Education in details.

Speculative philosophy is sub-divided into metaphysics and epistemology.

But first let us study metaphysics and education.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this study unit, you will be able to:

- (i) Define metaphysics and its subject matter of enquiry;
- (ii) Identify the basic issues in metaphysics;
- (iii) Deduce implications of metaphysics to education;
- (iv) Explain that metaphysics is part and parcel of man and man is a metaphysical animal.

### **THE MEANING OF METAPHYSICS**

The word metaphysics also has a simple or literal meaning and a technical meaning. It is a branch of philosophy that enquires into the problem of existence. It tries to resolve such issues as: What the ultimate nature, origin and essence of being is; the ground and basis of all existence; the nature of man and the world in which he lives; whether man has a soul and if he has, how does it function, and what happens to it at death? This is why metaphysics is referred to as an enquiry into the world and the world beyond. At our own individual levels two, we must have been pondering about these issues. This makes metaphysics a foundation of philosophy and the pivot of philosophical enquiries.

From etymological point of view, i.e. the root of the word, metaphysics, means “after the things of nature”. It came from two Greek words ‘*mata*’ meaning “after”, and *physika* meaning “nature”. In about 70 B.C., the Greek philosopher, Andronicus of Rhodes, adopted

it when he was editing the works of Aristotle. Metaphysics is thus the study of theory beyond nature which Aristotle called first philosophy. This now leaves us with the literal or dictionary meaning of metaphysics. What is the technical meaning of the word? Technically, we can say that metaphysics is that branch of philosophy, which studies the nature of reality. This reality refers to reality of man as a human and non-human i.e world, God etc. In this sense, metaphysics translates into the theory of reality. Metaphysics investigates reality as distinct from that which is illusionary. As we shall see later in our discussion of schools of philosophy, philosophers did not agree on the nature of reality. For instance, is there any reality beyond our daily experience? Scientific philosophers maintained that what is real is the world of experience. Idealist philosophers on the other hand hold that the ultimate reality is not experiential; rather, it is spiritual.

### **BASIC ISSUES IN METAPHYSICS**

Metaphysical problems are perennial problems, which keep on recurring. Pre-Socratic philosophers like Parmenides of Elea have discussed them; they have been studied by scholastics and even modern philosophers. Even the un-philosophical mind keeps on wondering about his creation, the creation of the physical world, the world beyond and a host of issues that keep on fascinating people. As we saw earlier, we resort to philosophy when things are wrong with us. That is why philosophy is said to be a child of failure. The great books written in philosophy were authored by those who were either worried, disappointed, disillusioned or fascinated by the happenings of their times. For instance, Plato's Republic was written out of Plato's disillusionment of the politics of his time culminating into the death of his master, Socrates. Leibniz's works were as a result of his perplexity and fascination as a result of scientific discoveries of his days. Consequently, Plato's Republic was in search of an ideal society by teaching what constitutes justice and Leibniz's work could be seen as the dawn of a new era of science. We have seen in Unit One how Sheikh Usman Danfodo out of his concern for the dehumanizing condition of women of his time, wrote his book: Nur Al Bab in which he castigated men for selfishness and exploitation of the womenfolk.

Joseph Omoregbe (1999) identified the basic issues in metaphysics as follows: the problem of being, the problem of substance, the problem of essence and existence, the problems of universals, the problem of appearance and reality, the problem of unity and diversity, the problem of change and permanence, the problem of causality, the problem of body – mind interaction and the problem of freedom and determinism. Let us now take the issues one after the other to see what are the issues at stake and the controversies if any.

#### **(i) The Problem of Being**

For Parmenides whatever exists is being. To him, being is one, eternal and unchanging. Aristotle made reference to this being as God who is the pure being. St. Thomas Aquinas in a characteristic Christian metaphysics of being maintains that God is being par excellence. The Scholastic philosophers made a distinction between necessary being and contingent being. A necessary being owes his existence to no other being outside himself. A contingent being is not responsible for its own existence, and does not contain within itself the sufficient reason for its existence.

Philosophers are divided over this metaphysical issue of reality. Some see being as whatever exists, while others take a mystical approach and see it as a hidden, mysterious reality which is both immanent and transcendent, and which is the source of all things.

(ii) **The Problem of Substance**

This metaphysical problem has continued to attract the attention of philosophers. Aristotle distinguished between substance and accident. Substance is whatever exists on its own, while its opposite, accident, is whatever cannot exist on its own but only inherent, in other things. According to John Locke, when we look at things what we see are actual qualities, colour, height, size etc. But we know qualities cannot exist on their own as they must be existing in something which supports them. This is how we come to form ideas of substance.

(iii) **The Problem of Essence and Existence**

J.P. Sartre's main contention is that existence precedes essence, as opposed to traditional western philosophy, which gives primacy to essence over existence. Philosophers are divided over which comes first? Is it existence or essence? This is the standing controversy.

(iv) **The Problem of Universals**

Philosophers in succession hold that things such as beauty, justice, goodness, whiteness, humanity etc are universals. They are universal concepts and not just ideas in the mind. We recognize them in things that exhibit them, and this means that they are real, though they are not physical. Socrates was the first philosopher in the West to articulate the issues of universals. He insisted on the distinction between the universals and the things that exhibit them.

(v) **The Problem of Appearance and Reality**

It is a truism to say that appearance deceives, and that our senses often deceive us. We cannot therefore always take things as they appear to us, nor can we always rely on our senses, since they sometimes deceive us. Parmenides, Plato and Rene Descartes mistrust senses as a means of acquiring knowledge. For instance, Bertrand Russell says, we assume as certain many things which on closer scrutiny are found to be so full of apparent contradictions that only a great amount of thought enables us to know what is it that we really may believe. The controversy here is whether appearance is the same thing as reality or appearance is one thing and reality is another.

(vi) **Problem of Unity and Diversity**

It is true that unity and diversity are observable in the universe. How is it that there is a basic unity in the midst of amazing diversity of things in the universe? The Ionians, the earliest philosophers in the West, were struck by the unity as well as diversity of

things in the universe. These philosophers adopted a monistic explanation and held that all these are basically one though in various forms. In Western Philosophy, three approaches have been adopted, namely; the monistic, the dualistic and the pluralistic approaches so as to explain the problem of unity and diversity in metaphysics.

(vii) **The Problem of Change and Permanence**

One of the earliest problems in Western philosophy is the problem of change and permanence. Which of the two elements, i.e. change or permanence is primary? Heraclitus and Parmenides held extreme positions which subsequent philosophers tried to reconcile. While Heraclitus held that change was the basic feature of the universe, Parmenides held that permanence was the primary feature. Here lies the controversy.

(viii) **The Problem of Causality**

Cause is that which is responsible for bringing something into existence. The statement, “every thing has a cause” is taken to be of universal application. Since there is no event that has no cause, nothing ever happens without cause. Scientists tell us that the universe is an orderly cosmos, not chaotic universe where anything can happen. In other words it is a universe governed by laws and things happen only according to these laws. This is the basic presupposition of modern science, and all that scientists do, is to understand these laws so as to know the kind of causes that can produce certain kinds of desirable effects.

(ix) **Problem of Mind-Body Interaction**

The question of the nature of the human mind and its relation with the body has long been a controversial issue. Different philosophers have conceived mind differently. Plato, Augustine, Aquinas and Descartes conceive the mind as a separate substance that exists on its own without the body. Others like David Hume and Bertrand Russell have denied that the mind is a separate substance that can exist independently of the body. This problem, like other philosophical problems, still remains unsolved to the satisfaction of all philosophers.

(x) **The Problem of Freedom and Determinism**

It is commonly believed that man is free; that he makes use of his freedom the way he likes and is therefore held morally responsible for whatever he does. The theory of determinism however denies that man is really free.

According to this theory, determinism also is known as fatalism. The future is irrevocably fixed and man can do very little to change it. Logical determinists claim that every future event is caused and so it must either occur or not occur and so what we call history is the manifestation of divine will. Albert Einstein, the greatest scientist of the last millennium, argued along these lines.

In presenting the position of freewill, Enoh (2001) argued that it does present a direct opposition to determinism. According to him, the position recognizes that man lives in a world that is orderly and stable and therefore having laws, which control the flow of things. Man cannot therefore be an exception and this subjects him to these forces. To this aspect, his actions are to some degree determined. He then concludes that what gives man dignity as a human being is his capacity to transcend the bonds of such determinism and choose certain cause of action.

From the foregoing discussions on metaphysics, it can be seen that man is a metaphysical being. In other words, metaphysics is part and parcel of man. Man is always fascinated by his creation on earth, the universe, the existence of God and all he sees around.

Although some philosophers see metaphysics as meaningless, it appears real in human life. Metaphysically we have seen that man's imaginative and explorative activities in search of knowledge and wisdom go beyond sense perception. Now, what is the relevance of metaphysics to education?

### **CONTRIBUTIONS OF METAPHYSICS TO EDUCATION**

In the previous section, we have treated some basic issues in metaphysics. They border on human existence, conceptions of the world, the essence and purpose of the world, the purpose of man's existence in the world. In what way do these metaphysical issues shape and affect education? This is now what we turn our attention to in this section. Before Socrates' philosophy, philosophers did not pay great attention to man and his destiny, what he can become and the purpose of his life in this world. It was Socrates who first recognized that more than the stars, moon, sun, trees and other inanimate objects, the subject worthy of study is man. Since then, man became the centre of philosophical studies. In the same vein, the metaphysical issues raised make meaning only to man. It is man that speculates about the problem of being, substance, essence, reality, appearance, unity and diversity, etc with a view to building a coherent picture of the world and his place in it.

These metaphysical issues pose challenges to man which call for solutions by man himself to enthrone him as the monarch on the earth. Education is the best instrument for development. As such, man's concepts about the universe and its essence or purposes are the ones that he translates into education in order to better his life. Educational policy, curriculum of study and teaching methodology, all have their manifestations in metaphysical beliefs. The metaphysical nature of man makes him the only creature that requires some form of education for survival. This explains why man lives more by certainty and other lower animals live by chance. There has never been any society that failed to develop some form of education for its survival. Even long before the advent of colonial masters in Africa, there existed the traditional African Education system through which societies developed men and women. Modern nation states enshrined education in their constitutions as fundamental right of man by virtue of being born human.

## **SUMMARY**

- In this study, we have attempted to show that man is a metaphysical animal. From time immemorial, man has been pondering about his creation, creation of universe, purpose of his life, what meaning he could make of this world, what happens to him after his death? Is there life after death, predestination? e.t.c. These embody man's conception of his life on earth. Man through metaphysics search for coherence in the realm of knowledge and experience. Through knowledge and education, man earns for himself a unique position on earth as the most favoured of all creatures who live more by certainty than by chance like lower animals. The metaphysical beliefs of man are translated into education policy, curriculum content and teaching methodology with a view to capturing the essence or purpose of his life, universe and the type of life man should live and his role here on earth.
- Whereas metaphysics raise unsettled issues in its quest for reality and its nature, man through his ingenuity has used education to pursue his metaphysical beliefs.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

1. Define metaphysics and its subject matter of inquiry.
2. Why did philosophers disagree on the subject matter of metaphysics?
3. Do you agree that man is inescapably a metaphysical being?
4. What makes man the only animal that receives education and who cannot survive without some form of education?
5. What is permanence and what is change?

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## **UNIT FOUR: EPISTEMOLOGY AND EDUCATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit, we studied metaphysics as a branch of speculative philosophy. The relevance of metaphysics to education was discussed and we saw that man was the center theme in metaphysics and hence man is seen as a metaphysical animal. Since man is considered the center point in nature, there is the need for him to seek knowledge so as to know himself properly and the world around him. The type of knowledge required has thus formed the basis for this unit.

In the course of time, the human race has put together a stock of knowledge whose truth has repeatedly been confirmed. To impart a selection of this knowledge to the growing person is the school's most important task. This makes the development of the intellect the primary concern of all educators, even though the social, physical and emotional aspects of human development are also included in the scheme of things. It is perhaps in the area of epistemology, or the theory of knowledge which is a branch of speculative philosophy that the relevance of philosophy for education and especially for classroom teaching and learning activity is most- noticeable. In fact, the search for knowledge and truth is the most common task of both philosophy and education.

In this unit therefore, we shall expose you to Epistemology and its relevance to education.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- (i) Define epistemology
- (ii) Identify various sources of knowledge, their characteristics, ways of cognition and method of verification;
- (iii) Identify various conditions of knowledge, criteria of knowledge and scope of knowledge.
- (iv) State the relationship between epistemology and education.

### **WHAT IS EPISTEMOLOGY?**

The word epistemology is a derivation from two Greek words, **episteme**, meaning knowledge, and **logos**, meaning study. Literally; therefore, it means the study of knowledge. More commonly, however, it is known as the theory of knowledge by which we mean the branch of philosophy which is concerned with posing, reflecting and examining questions related to knowledge or knowing.

In saying this, we should not forget that as a branch of philosophy, that question about knowledge and knowing can only be examined using the tools of philosophy. That is, we do not search for evidence or empirical proofs. All we are interested in is to think about these questions, and reflect on different points of view.

## **EPISTEMOLOGY AND EDUCATION**

The question we may need to ask ourselves is why do we study epistemology? The first answer is that since the business of education is concerned with imparting knowledge, as teachers, we need to be clear over what knowledge is and how it is related or different from beliefs and opinions. As we get to appreciate the conceptual differences between knowledge and these related terms, it will help us to determine what to expect from students.

Secondly, if the central task of education is imparting knowledge, teachers will greatly improve on their methods of teaching once they understand the different sources of knowledge. Further more, since, as it will be found, no type or source of knowledge is perfect and a combination of several improves our grasps of what knowledge is. Teachers may apply this in their teaching by always employing more than one method where possible.

Thirdly, as the teacher in his classroom imparts various types of knowledge, according to his disciplines, it will be appropriate for the teacher to know the type of knowledge he imparts, the sources and how much relevance can be placed on them. It is also important that the teacher should be aware of the ways of cognition (knowing) in his particular subject since every type of knowledge has its source.

We will now examine different aspects of epistemology and attempt to relate each of them to the study of education.

## **SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE**

Types of knowledge vary with their sources, their methods of acquisition and validation.

### **(a) Empirical Knowledge**

This is the type of knowledge we obtain through observation of the things around us, through our senses and through personal experiences from actions in which we are involved. It is the characteristic of knowledge in the science, both natural and social. Knowledge acquired through seeing objects, hearing sounds, tasting flavour, feeling something or smelling odour is empirical knowledge. In short, our endowed senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling are the gateways to scientific knowledge. This is a very important type of knowledge and it is very much valued in today's world of science and technology.

But do senses alone furnish us with knowledge, as scientists would hold? It must be noted that the senses alone without the co-operation of reason cannot furnish us with knowledge. Until reason interprets them and gives them meaning, they are simply raw data without meaning. For example, the direct object of the sense of sight is simply colour, when we look, we can only see colour. That is all the sense of sight can furnish us with. It is reason, which tells us that what we are seeing is a tree, a table, a blackboard, an animal, a human being etc. Again, the direct object of the sense of hearing is sound. The ears do not tell us where the sound comes from. We hear the sound of an aeroplane passing, the sound of gunshot, or that of a thunder. It is our reason that tells us, for example, that the sound we are hearing is that of thunder not that of aeroplane or gunshot. Our ears only register the sound without telling us the

meaning of the sound. The same applies to all other senses. When I perceive an odour, for example, it is my reason that interprets the odour I am perceiving and tells me that it is the odour of a decaying animal or cosmetics. When a blind man touches something, the sense of touch does not tell him what he is touching. It is reason that interprets his experience and tells him what he is touching. All these imply that the senses alone without reason cannot furnish us with knowledge.

What is the implication of this for teaching and learning? Teachers of science subjects should take note of the characteristics of this type of knowledge. In most schools, science is taught as though it is the knowledge of the experiments being performed that gives the students scientific knowledge and scientific attitude of mind. However, it is the students' ability to observe, explore, to formulate hypotheses and devise ways of verifying the truth of the hypotheses that is important. The scientific attitude of mankind, which is the attitude of subjecting any truth we know or hold to verification, is a very important value that teachers should inculcate in their students. Hence, students should be encouraged to observe and find out things for themselves and to record their observations and seek further proofs of the truth of the original discoveries. We have already demonstrated that sense perception requires the cooperation of reason in order to produce knowledge. The blending of rationalism with empiricism challenges the science teacher to come with acceptable teaching methodology that is congruent with this reconciliation. The teacher, in teaching and learning processes, should appeal to both sensation and reason of the learner to produce knowledge.

(b) **Rational Knowledge**

This is the knowledge derived by reasoning that is not by observation, but by inferring new knowledge from what we already know. As the mathematical subjects are good examples of rational knowledge, so also are subjects like philosophy and logic. Given some hypothesis or premise, we can go ahead to deduce a number of conclusions that must necessarily follow. For example, given the premise that a man is a bachelor, it follows as of necessity that he is not married. Or the fact that there is a teacher implies that there must be a learner. From the presence of the teacher, we logically infer or deduce that there must be a learner or some learners whom he teaches. The hallmark of this type of knowledge is that the conclusions being inferred must logically follow from what went before. It is a law of reasoning and argumentation, which applies to most school subjects.

Hence, in mathematics, for example, the teacher should not just mark the answer to a mathematical question correct or wrong, rather should award credit to the logical steps by which the student reaches the answer. This is also the practice in philosophy; it is not so much in the final conclusion that matters as the reasoning process in arriving at the conclusion. We have already treated in unit one that one of the characteristics of philosophy is the absolute reliance on the use of logical reasoning.

The importance of rationalism as a source of knowledge is two fold. First, it demands of us to include in the curriculum, subjects that will develop the rational faculties,

studies, like mathematics. In terms of methodology, teachers should be encouraged to give students opportunity to think for themselves rather than being told everything.

(c) **Revealed Knowledge**

This is the characteristic of religions, especially the revealed ones.

The religions which most of us are familiar with are Christianity and Islam, through the Bible and Quran. This type of knowledge was revealed to the prophets of these religions who faithfully recorded the knowledge for mankind and imparted the contents to their followers. The method of the original acquisition was by vision or trance, possible only to those who are holy enough or those to whom God or Allah had chosen to reveal Himself. This type of knowledge is not open to observation, or empirical tests, nor can be proven by logic and human reasoning. It just has to be accepted by faith. We have already presented to you in unit one Bertrand Russell's definition of philosophy as a no-mans-land. He stated that all definite knowledge as to what has been ascertained belongs to science, and all dogma as to what surpasses definite knowledge belongs to theology. Similarly, we have shown in unit one under the characteristics of philosophy that conclusions in philosophy are tentative. This implies that philosophy shares with modern science that no conclusions are so permanent as to be immune to further correction or inquiry. This is where both scientific and philosophical knowledge differ from Revealed knowledge. This type of knowledge is considered as the final word of God Almighty, which cannot be subjected to empirical tests or rational analyses.

An aspect of the curriculum where revealed knowledge is common is religious studies, whether Christian or Islam. Now, the very nature of this subject requires that we do not pretend to support what we teach with proofs or reasons. Doing this can lead to serious consequences. The teacher needs only to present the materials as given and make the students see them as knowledge that is beyond human understanding and which on account of that is accepted by faith.

(d) **Intuitive or Insight Knowledge**

It is knowledge that is acquired directly by an immediate contact of the mind with the object without going through the process of reasoning. It comes as a flash into the mind. It can come in form of inventive intuition when in a flash, a certain bright idea comes to our mind as a kind of vision. Archimedes was reported to have had a vision of the law of floatation in a flash while taking his bath. He was so overwhelmed by the vision that he rushed naked to record such a very important insightful knowledge before it escaped his memory. Musicians and artists do enjoy such intuition occasionally, and the result is beautiful piece of artwork or music. For example, the celebrated Hausa musician, Alhaji Muhammadu Shata, of blessed memory, was reported not to have written his beautiful songs. On the stages, he produces his songs. His choice of words, praises that appeal to his listeners and patronisers come to him as a vision. He produced many songs, which by his own admission, during his life time, that he could not exactly say how many of such songs he made. All he could

remember was that there were many of them. In intuitive knowledge we do not prove or even acquire what we know, we simply discover it without labouring for it or reasoning about it. It comes simply and suddenly as an insight.

Now, can insightful or intuitive knowledge be considered knowledge and what are its implications in education? First, insightful or intuitive knowledge can be considered knowledge once the insight or intuition can be proved empirically or substantiated with adequate reasons. If these cannot be done, what we have, may only amount to a feeling or opinion and never knowledge. As for the second question, we concede that this type of knowledge has great value in education. This is particularly so because most scientific discoveries have been the products of insight or intuition. The educational value of this is that as teachers, we should always encourage our students to always listen to their inner voice or flash of ideas. Putting these down and trying to prove them either empirically or rationally should be the next step. In all, such flash of ideas could form a useful source of classroom discussion or even students' experimentation?

### **CONDITIONS OF KNOWLEDGE**

In an attempt to answer these questions with regards to what constitute knowledge, A.J. Ayer (1955) gave three conditions of knowledge as follows:

1. What one said to know be true
2. That one be sure of it (ability to justify)
3. That one should have the right to be sure.

The words that stand distinct in Ayer's conditions of knowledge are: certainty, and justification for knowledge. Knowing is being in the appropriate position to certify or give one's authority or warrant to the truth of what is said to be known. The man who has a true opinion is the man who has the right to be sure. I know, therefore, is related to I guarantee. Similarly, Austin (1961) says:

*If you say you know something, the most immediate challenges take the form of asking: Are you in a position to know? That is you must undertake to show not merely you are sure of it, but that it is within your cognizance.*

What is the implication of this? The implication of this is that a person who knows has cause to be sure, certain, and to guarantee what is known. To know is stronger than to believe or hold an opinion. This is because knowledge enlarges and enriches one's ideas, choices, alternatives and initiatives to make an action deliberately. Roderich Chisholm (1963) on the other hand says that a person can be said to know something if he believes it, if he is justified in believing it, in the sense that his believing it is reasonable or acceptable.

From the foregoing, it is clear that belief is not the same as knowledge because knowledge must be based on conclusive evidence and it must be certain. Belief, in contrast, is not based on conclusive evidence. For instance, if I hear over the radio that someone is dead, I cannot say that I know that the person has died. I can only say that I want to believe that he is dead, since I heard that over the radio, since my evidence is the news broadcast from the radio. This

is not conclusive evidence. Knowledge, however, entails belief in the sense that a person cannot say that he knows something but that he does not believe it. I know it but I don't believe it, is an incongruous statement for anybody to make. It makes sense however, to say I do not know it but I believe it. Belief can pass into knowledge. What was formerly an object of belief can become an object of knowledge. This happens when what was formerly believed becomes justified. There were many beliefs, which became either justified true knowledge or refuted as false through ample evidence. For instance, before Copernicus, the earth, it was believed, was the center of the solar system and all other heavenly bodies revolved around it. Copernicus' work refuted the belief with the discovery of the sun as the center of the solar system and which all other planets revolved around. Today, it is a justified true knowledge.

What are the implications of all the conditions of knowledge earlier examined for teaching and learning? The first implication that readily comes to mind is the inculcation of a strong knowledge base, which can be proven, justified and which is true and acceptable. Secondly, the teacher should help the learner to distinguish between knowledge and belief, knowledge and opinion. Children and young adults hold many beliefs and opinions which they can neither ascertain their truth nor reach conclusive evidence of such beliefs or opinions as to become objects of knowledge. Teachers in the process of teaching could help learners to become objects of knowledge. Teachers in the process of teaching could help learners to overcome such problems through questioning and probing. Such questions, especially hypothetical ones, could trigger some thought processes and reflections on the part of the learners which could lead to a reversal of such opinions or beliefs in light of new evidence which are conclusive and justified. In science teaching, the inculcation of free inquiry, formulation of hypotheses, by students, and attempt to resolve the truth of such hypotheses helps in building strong knowledge base. This holds more promise for developing scientific attitude in young learners than the routine verification in the laboratories that characterize the teaching of science subjects in schools and colleges.

Thirdly, the school stands out as the most formidable agency in the transmission of specialized knowledge to the learners. This type of knowledge can be distinguished from common knowledge of every day experience. Such common knowledge includes, for instance, such knowledge as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. Or the knowledge of how to eat or take bath. This type of knowledge does not require going to school as they can be acquired through interaction, imitation and initiation. But the knowledge of the "higher you go, the cooler it becomes, i.e. temperature drops by 1°F after every 300metres of ascent" is specialized knowledge. It is this type of knowledge that requires the rigor of evidence, certainty and justification and truth of what is claimed to have been known. The point to emphasize here is that teachers in schools and colleges in the process of transmission of specialized knowledge should ensure that the conditions of knowledge highlighted are fulfilled and justified for reasonable acceptance by the learners. This may not only foster strong knowledge in learners, but the knowledge so acquired will have more lasting memories in the minds of the learners.

## **CRITERIA FOR KNOWLEDGE**

Bamisaiye (1989) in her contribution to what constitutes knowledge, enumerated five criteria for knowledge: viz: existence, certainty, validity, veracity and utility. What does each of these terms convey in relation to knowledge?

1. **Existence:** This means that knowledge should have existential reference. In other words, what should constitute knowledge should be that which exists. The geography teacher for instance teaching the relief features of Africa should make reference to such features that exist. If he makes reference to Kilimanjaro mountain, it is with the understanding that Mount Kilimanjaro exists somewhere in Africa. What does not exist should not constitute knowledge.
2. **Certainty:** This means that knowledge should be validly proved. We have treated this condition of knowledge earlier.
3. **Validity:** This means that knowledge should not be self-contradictory.
4. **Veracity:** This means knowledge expresses truth. Falsehood does not constitute knowledge. It is the truth inherent in knowledge that makes it reliable and certain.
5. **Utility:** This is to say knowledge is either useful in its direct benefit to the knower or in its potential for creating further knowledge.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION**

This now brings us to the relationship between knowledge and education. Throughout this unit, we emphasized that knowledge transmission is the chief and most important business of schools. Furthermore, we pointed out that schools are the officially designed public institutions for the transmission of specialized knowledge. Is knowledge the same as education? It is illogical to say for instance that Mr. X is educated but has no knowledge.

Does this make knowledge synonymous with education? The answer is, knowledge is a condition for education, but it is not a sufficient one. Knowledge is neutral, i.e. knowledge can be used either positively or negatively by the possessor of knowledge. Education on the other hand always implies a positive state of the mind. To be worthwhile is what constitutes education. What is not worthwhile is not education. Education always implies improvement, betterment etc. Many activities in life, including criminal activities like armed robbery, pick pocketing, fraud, 419, etc require use of knowledge. Undoubtedly, these are typical examples of negative use of knowledge to harm us for the selfish interests of those who perpetuate such acts. Such could be typical cases when we say that a person or persons have the knowledge of advance fee fraud, but miseducated, or a person who is undoubtedly knowledgeable, but morally bankrupt. One can also be called an intellectual giant, but miseducated. Since there are as many negative uses to which knowledge can be applied, there are also many positive ways of using knowledge. Knowledge becomes education where it is used positively for the benefit of the individual and the larger society. On the contrary, where knowledge is used to harm others and its potentiality to do harm, it is not qualified to be called education. That is

why a knowledgeable person is not necessarily an educated person. Until the knowledge is evaluated and adjudged to be positive and worthwhile.

The criteria of knowledge have several important implications to the content, process and evaluation in education. In terms of content, it suggests that no item on the curriculum must be included that has no existential reference. Similarly, when curriculum experts talk about relevance, they are suggesting that knowledge is of no worth unless it can be made use of. Concerning methods, the criteria of knowledge demands of teachers to always be certain about what they teach as well as make themselves as explicit as possible rather than being contradictory. In the same way, they ensure that the criteria of certainty validity and should always be certain of what they say or write clearly. It is, for instance, not an achievement to write in a very difficult manner when the same can be done simply and clearly.

## **SUMMARY**

- We have tried to show in this unit that knowledge which is transmitted by teachers through their various disciplines of studies could have a variety of sources. Each source of knowledge has its own characteristics, unique concepts, and ways of cognition and truth criteria. This in turn informs why each discipline is taught in a different way. The teacher should know the characteristics of his subjects, its sources, its method of acquisition and the method of verification.
- This is very helpful to the teacher in inculcating strong knowledge base in students, stimulating the learning of his subject and ensuring that the conditions of knowledge are fulfilled. The most important business of the school is the transmission of knowledge to the learner for his own benefit and for the benefit of the society. This behoves on the teacher not only to transmit knowledge to the learners, but also to guide the learners to put the knowledge so acquired into positive use.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

1. Distinguish between epistemology and education.
2. Why did philosophers maintain that senses alone without the cooperation of reason do not furnish us with knowledge?
3. What is the implication of the blend of Empiricism and Rationalism for the teacher in the teaching/learning process?
4. Is knowledge the same as education?
5. What are the implications of the conditions of knowledge for teaching and learning?

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## **UNIT FIVE: AXIOLOGY AND EDUCATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In Unit One you learnt that man is the only creature that receives education. Other lower animals are simply trained. In the same vein, it is only in relation to man that we talk of values, ethics, aesthetics because man is a valuing animal. He values certain things higher than others. He cherishes, appreciates, wants, desires or needs certain things. For instance, we value education and pursue it as an intrinsic value, i.e. value for its own sake and for instrumental purposes, i.e. for the material benefit it offers him in terms of social mobility, recognition, status, fat salary and other material benefits. These things make meaning only to axiology and its component parts i.e. aesthetics, ethics, morality and their bearing on man.

Secondly, attempt will be made to relate axiology with education.

Thirdly, important aspects of axiology and their applications to the discipline of education will be presented.

Fourthly, the value basis of education will be discussed.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Discuss axiology as a branch of philosophy and its bearing on education.
2. Identify important aspects of axiology and their application to education.
3. Outline the importance of axiology to man.
4. Identify the value basis of education.

### **MEANING OF AXIOLOGY**

Axiology is the study of values. It is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with various criteria, which underline the choices we make, or with the factors, which affect our desires, interest, needs, likes, performances, (Enoh, 2001). As highlighted earlier, man is a valuing animal. He prefers some things to others. Man has likes, dislikes, preferences. What do we value most? We value things like good health, happiness, humanness, family, marriage, e.t.c. Some of these things are values intrinsic. For instance, happiness is not a material value, but we all inspire to be happy in life. Similarly, good health gives value to life. We also value material things like money, good house, sometimes leading to primitive acquisition of wealth. Axiology as a branch of philosophy that tries to evaluate the various basis or grounds of our interests, choices, preferences, wants and desires. As a rational animal, man reflects on these wants, desires and preferences. Sometimes reason may compel man to abandon some of his interests, desires and wants. For instance, the pursuit of pleasure. Pleasure may lead to destruction. It is transitory and short lived. A typical example is the pleasure a drunkard enjoys in the act of drinking. Immediately the glittering pleasure disappears and the man comes back to senses, displeasure and unhappiness set in. On the other hand, happiness is

more permanent and worthy than pleasure. What are the components of axiology? Axiology is divided into two components; ethics and aesthetic.

Ethics is a normative science of human conduct. It describes the way things ought to be. Ethics can be equated with logic. Ethics deals with the norms of right conduct. The concept of man reveals that man is a rational animal and is also capable of human desires, emotions, attitudes and passions. Philosophers are divided on whether morality is a function of reason or a function of passions. While some hold that morality is a function of reason, others maintain that morality is a function of passions. Joesph Omoregbe (1993), a contemporary philosopher faulted the early philosophers on the basis of morality. He contends that morality is the integrated function of both reason and the passions. He argues that the right understanding of man's nature is necessary for the right understanding of morality. From this perspective both the supra human beings and infrahuman beings are outside the sphere of morality. The supra human beings are outside because they are disembodied spirits without passions, while the infrahuman beings are outside the moral sphere because they are non rational. Both rationality and passions are essential ingredients of morality. Man is the only being that combines rationality and passions; hence, moral sphere, is uniquely human. Man is therefore a harmonious blend of passions and reason. What then is the purpose of ethics?

### **THE PURPOSE OF ETHICS**

Ethics is the systematic study of the norms of human behaviour. The purpose of studying these norms is to ensure that human behaviour conforms to them. The study of ethics can be likened to the study of logic. The study of logic does help one to think more correctly and avoids fallacies and the study of theology helps one to deepen one's religious outlook. The same applies to ethics. The study of ethics helps to elevate one's moral standard. A training in ethics should enable us see the defects in our own and other people's conduct and to understand exact nature so that if the desire is there, we are better able to set things right in our own conduct and make profitable suggestions to others. It does not follow, however, as of necessity that those who did not study ethics might not attain a high moral standard, or the study of logic is a precondition for correct reasoning, implying that those without the knowledge of logic do not think correctly. Plato's famous saying that "*knowledge is virtue and ignorance is vice*" is worth revisiting here to buttress the importance of the study of ethics for the upliftment of high moral standard. He who knows is more likely disposed to doing the right thing than he who does not know.

Aesthetic deals with the norm of beauty. In other words, this branch of ideology is concerned with appreciating beauty in nature and art. It attempts to evaluate the various criteria of beauty that is a justification we make for preferring a certain work of art to another, (Enoh, 2001). It is in the very nature of man to appreciate beauty in the work of art, in man, music etc. It is in the light of satisfying man's quest for beauty that the display of works of art are organized at local, national and even at international levels. In the same vein, beauty contests have become a common place in our modern world to satisfy the crave for beauty and its appreciation. The next question is what is the relationship between axiology and education?

## **AXIOLOGY AND EDUCATION**

As we have seen earlier, axiology is the study of value and value in turn is what we want, cherish, desire, need, appreciate or our preference. Viewed in this perspective, education is a value, both intrinsic and extrinsic. It is intrinsic because it is preferred rather than lack of it. It is positive and implies a positive state of mind, it is commendatory. To say that one is educated is to imply that one has attained high position of honour and respect not for any material thing or instrumental thing. Education is also a value extrinsic when viewed for its material end. It elevates one, gives recognition, prestige, provides avenue for social mobility, status, fat salary and a host of material benefits associated with education. The most important however, is the intrinsic value of education for according to R. S. Peters (1966) it is a worthwhile activity. The importance of education to man cannot be over emphasized. This explains why it is linked with human survival, as man cannot survive without some form of education. One of the distinguishing features of man from other lower animals is the acquisition of education as man is the only animal that receives education. Man has so many attributes, which include being a social animal, a rational being which has implications for axiology. It is through education man gets fulfillment of these qualities of humanness. It does not follow as of necessity that man will always behave rationally or take into consideration others in the society. This brings about the role of education. The chief and most fundamental function of education is to shape man by drawing out and developing what is distinctively human in him. Education aims at the perfection of the individual through the location, manifestation and development of his potentialities as a human being.

## **ETHICS AND EDUCATION**

Ethics as we have seen earlier is concerned with the study of human conduct, human behaviour and action. It is concerned with what is good as distinct from what is bad, what is right and what is wrong? What is duty and what is obligation? How are all these related to education? Firstly, let us begin with the popular saying of Plato that knowledge is virtue and ignorance is vice. We educate man to enable him understand the positive and negative aspects of life and be responsible for choosing any. This is because Socrates and Plato argue that evildoers are suffering from ignorance. Knowledge helps to unveil us of darkness of ignorance. Man, as we saw earlier in this unit is the most favoured of all creatures because he is the only one that receives education. This makes him more to live by certainty than by chance. Knowledge enables man to control his environment through his interaction to suit his purposes.

Education helps man to appreciate other people in the society, community of nations and the human race as a whole. Man is educated to benefit himself and benefit the society. This helps man to develop social attitude and values which are important in the sustenance of the individual and the society. The development of positive social values and attitude helps to improve his personality and character which are the hallmark of all educated person. Man is a social animal who is not capable of solitary life. By implication, he lives in the society and abides by the societal demands. Every society where man finds himself is built on the principles of morality as its foundation. Since man is capable of being good and bad, he needs to be prepared to do good at all times through education. This is what makes education a

value laden enterprise because it aims at the betterment of man in order to live a better life in the society.

## **AESTHETICS AND EDUCATION**

This component of axiology as we saw earlier, attempts to evaluate the various criteria of beauty that are our justification for preferring certain works of art to others. How is this component of axiology applied to education? As we all know, our degree of appreciation of beauty differs from person to person depending on the quality of perception of the individual. The quality of education, to a large extent, gives meaning to our appreciation of a piece of work of art or culture for example. For instance, the colonial masters and indeed writers did a great deal to project the superiority of their works of art and culture to the detriment of African works of art and culture. However, since independence in 1960, there has been a commensurate effort to reconstruct Africa's past glory, works of art and culture. This has gone a long way in injecting renewed hope and appreciation in the African works of art, culture and beauty.

## **SUMMARY**

- In this teaching unit, we attempt to introduce you to axiology as a branch of philosophy that deals with the study of values. The component parts of axiology, ethics and aesthetic were presented with their applications to education. Education itself was found to be a value – laden enterprise because it aims at the betterment of man. Man as the recipient of education was also found to be a social animal and not capable of living a solitary life. Man therefore, inescapably lives in the society and by implication must comply with the societal demands. Since human nature is neither totally good nor totally bad, education comes in to prepare him for a useful living in the society. Education prepares man for societal living and every society where man finds himself. It is built on the principles of morality as its foundation. This is the meeting point between axiology, ethics and aesthetic on one hand, and education on the other hand.

## **ASSIGNMENT**

1. Define axiology and its component parts, ethics and aesthetic.
2. What educational implications can you deduce from the study of ethics and aesthetic?
3. Why is man considered as a valuing animal?

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## **UNIT SIX:       SELECTED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ON EDUCATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the previous units, we studied philosophy and the different branches and in particular the relevance of these branches to education. In this Unit, we shall introduce you to philosophy of education. You will also learn that philosophy of education enables us to:

1. Trace the evolution of educational ideas from the earliest to the present day and thus compare the educational policies of different peoples of different backgrounds and adapt or apply some of the policies and practices in our educational system.
2. Study and appreciate various educational philosophies which eminent men and women have propounded over the ages and to see whether we can apply them and
3. Study our present educational philosophy and practices in Nigeria and make overall critical assessment on it.

To do this, we shall first study a few schools of philosophy and some notable philosophers whose contributions towards the growth of educational ideas remain immense.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the term school of thought in philosophy
2. State and discuss some schools of thought
3. Name some notable proponents of some schools of thought and their contributions.
4. Examine some schools of thought and their educational implications.

To start with, let us examine the term “school of thought in educational philosophy.”

School of thought is regarded as a group of notable people who have common point of view or principles on some issues. The principle or idea is often borne out of well thought- out and most often pain-stakingly researched work over a number of years. To the group, the idea or opinion shared or the common point of view is the incontrovertible truth, the truth, nothing but the truth. This common opinion is often held at a very high esteem by the society and respected since such opinion has a very rich contribution to the educational system of that society.

Thus, the study of such school of thought is very vital in teacher education because it exposes us as teachers, to various educational tenets and their implications. Therefore in the following sections, we shall examine some few well-known schools of philosophical thought in education and their principal proponents.

## **IDEALISM**

From the ordinary meaning, idealism is a belief in a perfect life or situation etc. even when it is likely that such a situation can never be achieved.

This school of thought believes that “ultimate reality is spiritual rather than physical, mental rather than material.” In its radical form, idealism believes that reality is nothing but an activity of an individual’s mind and thoughts.

Invariably therefore, perfection, the philosophers believe, exists in the world of ideas. They regard the belief that the universe is real as basically a religious point of view. They believe in the dualism of nature i.e. that spirit and matter constitute the universe, that this dualism exists in every thing.

Thus, all that exists in the universe is a manifestation of the spirit.

These proponents believe that man is a spiritual being who exercises free will and is responsible for all his actions and inactions. Man can therefore not be studied simply as an object because he is a spiritual being.

### **SOME OF THE PHILOSOPHERS THAT POSTULATED IDEALISM**

1. **Plato (428 – 347 BC)** who maintained that objects in the physical world are mere resemblance of the perfect forms in the ideal world. These perfect forms are the objects of true knowledge. Thus, the aim of the teacher is to recognize these perfect forms and instruct others in that line.
2. **George Berkeley**, the 18<sup>th</sup> century Irish philosopher, postulated that the human soul is immortal and is created by God, to whom it finally returns after its earthly sojourn.
3. **Immanuel Kant**, the 18<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher was of the view that man is both free and determined. That man should act as though his actions were to become natural laws and applicable to all men in similar circumstances.
4. **George Hegel**, a 19<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher, regarded man as a fragment of the “absolute”, and thus there is something divine about man.

### **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF IDEALISM**

Idealism has a broad rather than detailed view of education. It only suggests general aims, attitudes and values for education but does not prescribe how these may be achieved.

1. Idealism sees the pupil as a spiritual being whose purpose in life is to express his own nature and to develop in accordance with his own rate of potentiality. The mind of the child therefore is conceived as something towards which reference should be made. Education should therefore cater for the child. He should be allowed his personal freedom, because man is a fragment of the universe.
2. The teacher is very vital and has an important place in the proper education of the child. He is worth emulating.. Teachers should therefore be role models.

3. The teacher draws and brings out approved knowledge for the pupil i.e. knowledge that is approved to be true.
4. True knowledge lies in the idea of reason ( Plato).
5. Hegel is of the opinion that knowledge is valid only to the extent that it forms a system- this statement is regarded as the *Hegelian Coherent Theory of Truth* i.e. knowledge is unified not fragmented. Thus, teaching must be systematic and unified. This has implications for curriculum development.
6. The purpose of teaching is to stimulate the pupil to discover the meaning of the information he is given.
7. To the idealist, values are absolute and unchanging. The child should learn to live by internal principles, which put him in harmony with the greater spiritual home to which he belongs.
8. The good life is possible only within a highly organized political environment. The school should therefore be democratic.

### **REALISM**

Another School of thought worth discussing is realism. But what is realism? To be able to understand the term properly and the contributions to educational theories, you should go through the discussion below carefully.

Realism, also known as *materialism*, is the direct opposite of idealism. It is a school of philosophy which believes that all that exist, is resolvable into matter or has the characteristics of matter, which is the ultimate reality. It argues that the universe is not an illusion but actually exists in concrete form, independent of being known.

As against the idealist theory, the Realists maintain that something is real when it is experienced thus they say “seeing is believing”.

Realism with time has developed into three categories called *Aristotelian*, *Thomism* and *Scientific Realism*.

Some of the well-known philosophers who contributed immensely to the development of these theories of realism are as discussed briefly below.

1. **Aristotle (384 – 322 BC)**, a Greek Philosopher, regarded as the father of Realism was a product of Plato. He is believed to have originated the philosophical thought called Realism in which he expressed that human experience and materials in the universe exist in themselves independent of man’s thoughts/mind or perception. He developed what is now known as Aristotelian Realism, which focuses on the existence of God and Spirit. This theory also argues that causality and the order of nature are features of things and not the imagination/thoughts of the mind.
2. **St Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274 AD)** reconciled the Aristotelian Philosophy with the theology of the church and later created a new Christian philosophy known as “Thomism” which maintains that material world is real and that both matter and spirit were created by God.

3. **Natural/ Scientific Realism**, whose proponents are John Locke, David Hume, etc. was developed between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The philosophers uphold that the world is real and that science could be used to investigate the reality. They also admitted that change is real and takes place according to natural laws.

The Scientific Realists do not believe in the existence of free will since according to them, the individual's actions are determined by the immediate physical and social environment.

## **REALISM AND EDUCATION**

We have dwelt with Realism as a School of thought and some of its branches treated. But of what significance is Realism as a school of thought to education?

From our study, the significance of Realism to education can be summarized thus:

1. Education should enable the child to be intellectually well balanced in harmony with his physical and social environment.
2. Education should make provision for the child's interests and curiosity i.e. education should be child centred.
3. Education should be geared towards assisting the child in discovering reality.
4. The role of the teacher in the training of the child is very crucial. Since the teacher determines what the child should learn, the teacher himself must be knowledgeable and be a role model.
5. Value is permanent and objective, established by reason or sanctioned by God to whom all must give account.

### **ACTIVITY 1**

Have a close study of the National Policy on Education and bring out the features bothering on Idealism and Realism in its philosophy and objectiveness.

## **EXISTENTIALISM**

In the last two sections, we have studied Idealism and Realism. We discussed that whereas Idealism holds that ultimate reality is spiritual, rather than physical, mental rather than material, Realism holds that ultimate reality is not an illusion but exists in matter.

In this section, we shall present a brief discussion of Existentialism.

Existentialism ordinarily implies a theory, which emphasizes that human beings are free and responsible for their actions in a world without meaning. In other words, the world has no order, no meaning and no purpose. The only essence to him is his existence. Therefore, what the individual thinks or does should be decided by himself. This determination involves the individual himself in thinking e.g in reflecting, calculating, and all other activities in the individual's endeavour. It submits that an individual exists in concrete form. This being, has freedom to choose or not to. This freedom entails commitment and responsibility. Thus, if an

individual makes a choice he is responsible for this choice, if he fails to make a choice, he will of necessity take the risk and responsibility following his inaction.

The existentialists believe that reality is what the human being experiences and that through human beings, the fundamental truths of existence can be discovered. Thus, the human being must make a deliberate and serious examination of his existence on earth. He should also recognize that life has its beauty, its joy and sorrow, happiness and sadness, success and failure, growth and decay etc and that man must make the best out of any situation.

Notable earliest proponents of this great movement are the 17<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher, Blaise Pascal, the 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophers Soren Kierkegaard (Danish), Friedrich Nietzsche (German) and the 20<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher, Martin Heidegger.

### **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF EXISTENTIALISM**

We have read the philosophical thoughts on existentialism and some of its proponents. But of what significance is the contributions of existentialism to education?

The contributions of this school of thought, among others, include:

1. Education should provide for an individual to be able to be responsible for himself and the greater society.
2. Education should be able to equip the individual to be able to adapt to the natural phenomena of life.
3. Education should create in the individual an awareness, which stimulates him to explore the nature of his being.
4. Education should develop in the child, the spirit of uniqueness.
5. Education should develop in the child, moral obligations which create awareness for him to recognize the vanity and nothingness of being.

### **PRAGMATISM**

Pragmatism, which was developed by the America philosophers Charles Sandes Peirce and William James in the 19th century, has its central focus on the practical and scientific utility of knowledge.

Pragmatism has been known by various names and time as instrumentalism, functionalism, experimentalism and progressivism.

Pragmatism as a theory holds that knowledge is only meaningful if our senses can experience it. In other words, this theory believes in practical ideas and experimentation.

Basically, pragmatism addresses the following about man and nature:

- (1) That nothing is permanent and the only thing that is permanent is change.
- (2) That values are relative.
- (3) That man has both biological and social nature.

- (4) That man is very intelligent and calls for the use of his critical intellectual ability.

Some of the 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers who worked tirelessly to develop this theory further include: John Dewey (American), Ferdinand Canning and Scott Schiller (British), Henri Bergson (French) etc.

### **PRAGMATISM AND EDUCATION**

From the foregoing, the relevance of pragmatism to education becomes obvious. We shall however, state a few of such.

- 1) Education should serve as an end and a means i.e. Education should improve man and serve as a means of doing things. In other words, education should serve as a tool for mobility and instrument for practical and successful living.
- 2) Education is life, hence it should be sort for/ and provided at all times adequately.
- 3) Teachers should always develop relevant scientific and practical approach/ methodology in imparting knowledge in their students.
- 4) Educational system should constantly reflect the rapid changes in the world of knowledge.
- 5) Education, which should be child-centred, should be systematically provided in such a way that it constantly challenges the intellectual ability of the learner through experiments.
- 6) Since man is a social animal and unique in nature, education should provide democratic setting to accommodate the individual differences in human nature.

### **ACTIVITY II**

Compare and contrast the tenets of Existentialism and Pragmatism in Education.

### **SUMMARY**

This unit has exposed you to some important schools of thought on Education ranging from Idealism, Realism, Existentialism to Pragmatism.

It also considered the works of the proponents of each School of Educational Thought and their educational implications. Conclusively, we learnt that

- Idealism as a belief in a perfect life submits that “ultimate reality” is spiritual rather than physical, mental rather than material. Proponents here are generally religious. They submit that spirit is superior to matter that:
- Realism which is a direct opposite of idealism maintains that the universe is not an illusion, it actually and concretely exists, independent of human claim. That change which is real takes place according to natural laws.

- Existentialism, looking at the vanity of life, postulates the theory that drew emphasis on the fact that human beings are free and responsible for their actions or inaction. The only essence to man is his existence.
- Pragmatism as a school of educational thought has its central focus on the practical and scientific utility of knowledge. That knowledge is only meaningful if our senses can experience it.

The educational implications from the above schools of thought as enumerated in this unit are quite significant in enhancing the teaching and learning processes in our educational institutions. Since there cannot be one and absolute way to solving a social problem, the knowledge and application of a combination of various theories from time to time with regards to various situations that come our way, cannot be over emphasized in an ever changing world. This is why features of the various schools of thought are reflected in the National Policy on Education and the various curricular packages.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

1. In your own point of view justify the inclusion of philosophy of Education in the curriculum of your studies.
2. List some selected schools of thought as studied in this unit. Select two and elucidate their educational implications on the Nigerian school system.
3. Write short notes on the following.
  - (i) Dualism exists in everything.
  - (ii) True knowledge lies in the idea of reason
  - (iii) The universe is not an illusion
  - (iv) Ultimate reality is spiritual
  - (v) Values are relative.
4. Education should be child-centred. Discuss.
5. State some of the Educational implications of pragmatism in our present day educational system.
6. Since man is a social animal, how do you use your knowledge of individual differences to accommodate him in your classroom work?
7. What do you understand by the term “*school of thought*”? Mention some known proponents of two schools of thought and discuss their contributions to our educational system.

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## **UNIT SEVEN: PHILOSOPHY OF NIGERIAN EDUCATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In Unit two, you have been introduced to the Philosophy of Education. You have seen that Philosophy of Education was basically about putting in place policies that are geared towards making education for a given society worthwhile. In this unit, we will discuss how it imparts on the education given to the young ones in Nigeria. It is mandatory that you procure a copy of the current National Policy on Education for this course.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, students should be able to:

- (a) Discuss the educational system bequeathed to Nigeria by the colonial masters.
- (b) State why colonial system of education was abandoned.
- (c) Trace the evolution of the 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 system of education.
- (d) Articulate the five major national goals through which Nigeria’s philosophy of education draws its strength and inspiration.
- (e) Discuss how education can address these goals positively.

### **EVOLUTION OF NIGERIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

Prior to independence in 1960, many eminent Nigerians had variously expressed dissatisfaction with the system of education provided to Nigerians by the British Colonial masters.

Among the prominent Nigerians were notable nationalists and educators. “Issues of relevance, comprehensiveness and focus as far back as the 1940’s”, (Kabiru Isyaku, 2002) were some of the criticisms that trailed the educational system then.

Specific issues in the criticism against the British system of education for Nigeria according to Nwangwu (2003) include:

- It laid emphasis on academic.
- The educational opportunity was restricted at the upper level of the system.
- British grammar school system of education was transimposed in Nigeria without due consideration to the culture, environment and the aspirations of Nigeria as a country.
- It laid emphasis on religion with bible and catechism forming the major substance of reading, writing and scripture.
- Examples in Arithmetic and English had no relationship with Africa as a continent.
- The medium of instruction was colonial language – English.

- The system encouraged rote learning, which does not produce critical mind.

These lapses necessitated Nigeria to develop the vision of a country it aspires to be and then fashioned out the type of education that can be used to realize it.

### **THE PHILOSOPHY OF NIGERIAN EDUCATION (NATIONAL POLICY ON NIGERIAN EDUCATION)**

Criticisms enumerated above culminated in the 1969 National Conference on Curriculum Development. The aim of the conference was to fashion out the philosophy of Nigeria's education that would respond to the needs and aspirations of Nigerians. The outcome of the conference was the emergence of the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1977. The NPE was anchored on the current educational system, which is the 6 – 3 – 3 – 4. i.e six years primary, first three years junior secondary, followed by another three years senior secondary and the last four years tertiary education.

According to the policy document, the five national goals through which Nigeria's philosophy of education draws its strength are:

1. A free and democratic society.
2. A just and egalitarian society.
3. A united, strong and self-reliant nation.
4. A great and dynamic economy.
5. A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

It is an obvious fact that education is the primary vehicle in meeting the goals of any nation hence, further, the policy prescribes that Nigeria's philosophy of education is, therefore, based on three major principles: -

- (a) The development of individual into a sound and effective citizen.
- (b) The full integration of the individual into the community, and
- (c) The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system.

### **DISCUSSION ON NATIONAL GOALS**

As can be seen, The Philosophy of Nigerian Education is fully in line with the various theories of philosophy of education earlier discussed in unit five. How then do we marry the national goals with the National Philosophy of Education? In order to make the philosophy of education work harmoniously with Nigeria's national goals, education in Nigeria has to be tailored towards self realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress. To fully understand this, let us examine the National Goals briefly.

1. **Free and Democratic Society**

To start with, what do we mean by a free society?

A free society is a society where the individuals do not suffer restraints or interference i.e the individuals are not prevented from doing what they want to do. However, in exercising, this freedom the individual should consider the interests or freedom of others, for, the limit of the freedom of one individual marks the beginning of another's freedom. Thus, freedom entails that the individual must be able to exercise self-control i.e control on passions, desires, e.t.c. Although we expect the individuals in a society to have freedom, there can never be Absolute freedom. Absolute freedom would lead to anarchy. This is why in any society, there are laws which tend to limit individual's freedom to ensure more freedom.

**FREEDOM AND IMPLICATIONS ON EDUCATION**

1. Although the individual is free to make choice, the child who by nature is not equipped to be able to make alternative choices, should be guided to enjoy a freedom that is consistent with his age and maturity.
2. The teacher should assist the learner to be independent and self reliant since no nation can be self reliant without the individuals cultivating the spirit of self-reliance.

**DEMOCRACY**

Just like freedom, democracy has the following characteristics or attributes (Omoteso B.A. et al, 2003)

1. All men possess certain inalienable rights.
2. All humans are to be regarded equal in certain respects.
3. Democracy implies faith in human intelligence
4. Democracy preserves and enhances individual freedom
5. Democracy grants the right to peaceful dissent

**DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION**

1. Education must be free and available to all.
2. Education should be provided in a comprehensive manner in schools so that each child shall have equal opportunity to develop his talent.
3. Schools should be open and democratized.

**ACTIVITY 1**

Is freedom justifiable in Educational provision in Nigeria? Discuss.

## **A JUST AND EGALITARIAN SOCIETY**

Another aspect in the national goals which forms the basis of the Nigerian Philosophy of Education is the clause which talks about “a just and egalitarian society”. A just and egalitarian society entails justice and fairness. We can never talk effectively about justice or egalitarianism without talking about fairness. In other words, in what ever we do or say, we must be fair to all. The principle of fairness to all is the principle of equity. Equity demands fairness to all at times. But, life is such that it is practically impossible to be fair to all. This being so, for any action executed, there must be acceptable justification by the majority of the society. There lies equity. For example, is it fair to have the same JAMB cut-off points for all candidates from all the states seeking admission into Federal Universities in the country irrespective of whether the candidates are from (1) Educationally advantaged and disadvantaged states? (2) Different Social backgrounds? Do you have acceptable justifications for your responses? Will these justifications be acceptable to the generality or majority of the people. If so, there lies equity.

Another aspect in the clause is equality. All men are equal before God. All men should therefore be treated equally and as important. No man should ever be treated as a slave. But can every person be treated equally at all times, reasonably? If there are sufficient reasons, equity demands that people should equally be treated differently and unequally, for a failure to do so, amounts to injustice.

In proposing the two important elements in the principle of equality, Ocho (1988) submits that.

- (1) those who must treat people differently must produce reasonable and acceptable reasons.
- (2) All people should be considered as of equal importance and their opinions treated equally seriously.

## **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

Since all aspects (social, economic, e.t.c) of life that are characterized by injustice can only be corrected through education, the philosophy sorts to challenge the Nigeria nation and all stake holders in the education industry to:

- (i) Recognize individual differences and needs.
- (ii) Make deliberate efforts to equalize education by ensuring that educational opportunities are available to all, equitably.
- (iii) Provide free and compulsory (basic) education to all citizens.
- (iv) Inculcate in the learner the spirit of fairness in his endeavours.
- (v) Ensure there is employment for the citizens at the end of their training or schooling.

### **ACTIVITY II**

Is equal educational opportunities for all possible in Nigeria? Discuss.

## **A GREAT AND DYNAMIC ECONOMY**

Another laudable intention in the national philosophy of education is building “a great and dynamic economy.” “A great and dynamic economy” can never be achieved in a mono-economy like ours. A nation that depends on exportation of oil as the major source of revenue without adequate production can never be a great economy. A nation that depends on buying and selling, strives on importation of fake and adulterated goods, indulges in foreign borrowing, stashes her money in foreign accounts etc can never boast of a great and dynamic economy. However, one of the national goals implies that the Nigerian State shall put in place, a favourable environment through democratic process that will bring about positive changes. The economy will be liberalized. Production encouraged. Agriculture and other sectors, other than oil, encouraged to improve the national economy. The enabling environment that would encourage individual (private) and foreign investment in all the sectors of the economy, certainly would build “a great and dynamic economy”.

## **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

The role of education in building a great and dynamic economy, can never be over-emphasized. Accordingly, our educational system should:-

- (1) Design programmes that will encourage self-reliance for the beneficiaries.
- (2) Teach civic responsibilities that will orientate the attitudes of Nigerians towards uprightness, hardwork, honesty and satisfaction.
- (3) Provide conducive teaching/learning environment through democratic processes.

## **BUILDING A UNITED, STRONG AND SELF-RELIANT NATION AND “A LAND OF BRIGHT AND FULL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CITIZENS”**

We have discussed three clauses or intentions in the National Policy on Education which include building “a free and a democratic society”, “a just and egalitarian society” and “ a great and dynamic economy”. We also discussed the educational implications of each of these intentions. This brings us to the next stage, which is “building a united, strong and self-reliant nation” as well as “a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens”.

To build a United country entails that every Nigerian should contribute to the development or up-liftment of the country. The document envisages a united country where every Nigerian would be his brother’s keeper irrespective of religion, ethnicity or social background. It envisages a country that will be strong in defending its territory, a country that defends the rights of her people and upholds the integrity and dignity of its citizens able to provide basic amenities and provide social securities.

Presently, many Nigerians do not have faith in the country because they have no confidence in the entity. The leaders in particular have no confidence in the country and themselves hence they stash away Nigerian wealth illegally acquired in foreign countries.

To a very large extent, the Nigerian economy is still directed and dominated by the West and the Americans even after decades of the so call “political independence”. We have lost faith in ourselves, we have become more than ever before, mutually suspicious of one another. No

respect for culture, industry and honesty. Our values have been misplaced and we still go about borrowing.

The land is bright but not full of opportunities. Unemployment reigns in the land. Crimes of all sorts have taken over the streets. Many Nigerians cannot go to the university because of their inability to finance it or access it.

## **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

Accordingly, the National policy of education has put in place far reaching intentions that will make Nigerians to be proud of the entity-Nigeria. In this connection, education should provide the individuals the opportunity to be educated and be self-reliant and proud of Nigerian. A national language should be developed which will make all Nigerians to have a sense of belonging and oneness – a language that will also transmit our culture and transmit enduring values that all Nigerians will be proud of.

Arising from our discussion on the national goals, the philosophy of education in Nigeria should therefore, as enunciated in the National Policy on Education [ NPE, 2004 ] be:

- (a) The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
- (b) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of individual and the Nigerian society.
- (c) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, and
- (d) The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society.

Finally, the quality of instruction at all levels has to and must be tailored towards inculcating the following values:

- (a) Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual.
- (b) Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions.
- (c) Moral and spiritual principles and inter-personal and human relations;
- (d) Shared responsibility for the common good of society.
- (e) Promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development for all children, and
- (f) Acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance.

## **SUMMARY**

- In this unit, we studied the evolution of the philosophy of education and the various clauses that are intended to make Nigeria a great nation. We also saw the need to democratize our educational system. Various strategies that will bring about early realizations of these laudable intentions were discussed. Thus, to make the philosophy of education work in harmony with Nigeria's national goals, we learnt,

education must be tailored towards self realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity as well as towards social, cultural, economical, political, scientific and technological progress.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

1. Briefly trace the evolution of the philosophy of Nigerian Education
2. Outline the national goals and articulate how education can assist in the realization of these goals.
3. Write a short note on politics and democracy in Nigerian philosophy of education.
4. What were the inherent short-comings in the educational system bequeathed to Nigerian at independence? What are the changes if any, since then?

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