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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ASOUZU'S IBUANYIDANDA PHILOSOPHY, MIGRATION AND THE QUEST FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA.

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Abstract

Africa's development and sustainable progress is essentially one of the peculiar crave of many around the world today. This desire which is not limited to Africans alone, but many sincere "progressives" around various continents, is predicated on the fact that Africa- the continent blessed with numerous human and natural resources has not seem to meet up with the challenges of the 21st century. The continuous outbreak of diseases, increased poverty, unemployment, low standard of living, infrastructural underdevelopment, low literacy and many more problems have beclouded the 'joy of being' of many Africans. The quest for sustainable development and the possible leeway to the progress of Africa, has continuously preoccupied scholars, as many dimensions to the way forward have engulfed the front burner of the intellectual space. In the light of the above, this paper explores Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy, and the concept of Migration as formidable tools of progressive development in Africa.

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Introduction:-

In assessing human experiences in the twenty first century, one comes to terms with the fact that profound progress has undeniably been made in this epoch than any other in human history. This is reflected in the mind blowing technological innovations, researches and developments carried out in various areas of human endeavor. The transportation sector, telecommunication, and even the medical sciences have witnessed immense progress than what was obtained in the 18th and 19th century.

However, despite the milestone achievements of the 21st century, humans have never ceased to witness various degrees of "negativities" which seems to subsist in our very existence. One would naturally expect that the continuous increase in technology, scientific development and many researches on human existence will only increase persistently a betterment in human life. This is never the case as the complexity in human existence reveals that while we grow positively in technological advancement which undoubtedly has improved the life of man, yet the increase in crime, civil interest, poverty, unemployment, disease etc. remains undeniable.

It is a truism, that the increase in human knowledge invariably enhances the increase in human problems. As the human society advances technologically, the world is graciously transformed into a global village, thereby

enhancing the migration of humans and ideas from one place to the other. This has impacted positively and negatively on many economies, environment, countries and continents.

Africa, one of the naturally blessed continent of the world, seem to have a good share of some of the problems encountered in the twenty first century. In fact the peculiarity of the African experience in the 21st century appears worrisome. This is because the magnitude of problems that engulfs many Africans have consistently remain on the increase. This amongst others include the problem of unemployment, poverty, diseases, civil unrest, infrastructural decay and underdevelopment, and the problem of corruption.

Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy which is a philosophy of complementarity, seeks a mutual complimentary dimension to tackling human existential problems. Since no man can successfully survive in isolation, but needs the community of others to survive and handle situations, the complementary view of the philosophy becomes very necessary.

The concept of migration and its positivity remains propitious to the growth of any society. In this case therefore the migration of human and ideas must be spectacted in its positivity and encouraged, as such has the capacity to contribute to the development of our society.

This paper therefore examines Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy and the concept of migration as essential tools of progressivity in Africa. It observes that in addressing the myriad problems confronting Africa in the 21st century the tools of complementarity engrafted in Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy and the positivity of migration must essentially be utilized.

The African Experience in the 21st Century:-

A critical appraisal of Africa and indeed the life and experiences of Africans in the 21st century comes not without certain unpleasant revelations. Many Africans at the dawn of independence had believed strongly that Africa devoid of the traumatic experiences of colonialism, will greatly rise to her pinnacle of success and great achievements. This hope that propelled the struggle for freedom was hinged on the optimism that an end to the brutality and exploitation of colonial lords will essentially propel the beginning of progress in Africa. It was the hope that sought for the restoration of African communalism, cultural values and zeal for the achievement of the common good.

It is without gainsaying the fact that many years after independence, Africa in the 21st century have remained incapable of actualizing her dreams. For many scholars, Africa's predicament of underdevelopment could be largely attributed to the immense exploitation and rape of this virgin land, by Europe's colonial activities in Africa. In depicting the views of Walter Rodney in this regards, it is essential relaying him thus:

The question as to who, and what, is responsible for African underdevelopment can be answered at two levels. Firstly, the answer is that the operation of the imperialist system bears major responsibility for African economic retardation by draining African wealth and by making it impossible to develop more rapidly the resources of the continent. Secondly, one has to deal with those who manipulated the system and those who are either agents or unwitting accomplices of the said system. The capitalist of Western Europe were the ones who actively extended their exploitation from inside Europe to cover the whole of Africa. In recent times, they were joined, and to some extent replaced by the capitalists from the United States, and for many years now even the workers of those metropolitan countries have benefited from the exploitation and underdevelopment of Africa (xii).

For Rodney and many who share this view, the exploitation of Africa's resources by the imperialist constitute immensely to its underdevelopment and non-progressivity. In fact for proponents of this view, Europe and its allies have consistently truncated the progressive development of Africa, so as to continuously exploit its resources.

A further leap into the causal link to Africa's underdevelopment also reveals the problem of inept leadership. Many hold that leadership crisis in Africa contributes immensely to its underdevelopment. Makoni observes that "African societies and nations are facing a leadership crisis, which arises mainly from the abandonment by leaders, of the basic mission of leadership, in preference for themselves being erred". One cannot but assert that leadership crisis contributes largely to the problems of Africa. Many African countries have consistently experience civil unrest due to the self-interest of their leaders and the denial of the common good of the nation.

The truth that personal gains characterizes leadership approach in Africa is an open secret. More to this is the fact that many African societies have snowballed into crisis zones, plagued with hunger, diseases, violence etc. Leaders of various categories have failed to tenaciously keep to terms of leadership which is service. The prevalence of corruption and various degrees of ill-practices have not only destroyed the confidence of citizens on their leaders, but have destroyed the structure of progress, in many African countries. It is essential observing that leadership failure necessitates systemic failure and destroys development of any state. This is because leadership is the wheels through which any society can strive, develop and progress.

Africa in the 21st century is beclouded by infrastructural decay, leadership crisis and political instability, ethno-religious crisis, unemployment, infant mortality, poverty, outbreak of diseases and many more problems.

Amidst the numerous natural and human resources, many Africans have wallowed in penury, as their leaders enjoy affluence. In depicting Africa's experience in the 21st century, Dlamini avers thus:

...poverty eradication has proved difficult, if not impossible, and that the development process has benefited a few at the expense of the vast majority of the people who remain on the fringes of human existence. In relative terms and over several decades of independence, their material condition has worsened rather than improved, such that according to informed opinion, the absolutely poor already number a staggering half a billion people...in Swaziland, an estimated 70% of the population live below the poverty datum line of a dollar a day(11).

Economic development in Africa has been alarmingly poor. Private businesses have remained on the decline, as the problem of power and insecurity have increasingly truncated its progress. Strauss notes that:

The number of people suffering poverty keeps going from 280 million in 1990 to an estimated 330 million in 2012...of the 20 countries in the world with the worst food and security 19 are in Africa (8).

Furthermore, Ibrahim observes that "many challenges remain, especially in the worst areas like that of health. This sector has been difficult to achieve. It is still not 'for all' but rather characterized by glaring inequities among socio-economic groups and classes"(9). Moreover, young Africans continuously experience the frustration of unemployment. Identifiably, Africa's economy is composite of trade, industry, and agriculture, etc, however, these areas appear to be on the decline as its challenges remain overwhelming.

Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy:-

Ibuanyidanda or complementary philosophy is one of the current trend of thought that is targeted at solving human existential problems. It is the brain child of Innocent Asouzu. Innocent Asouzu is an outstanding figure in contemporary African philosophy.

The concept and philosophy of Ibuanyidanda, draws its inspiration from traditional Igbo setting and views which has a complimentary system of thought. Etymologically the word "Ibuanyidanda" is drawn from three Igbo words "Ibu" meaning load or task, "Anyi" - not insurmountable for, and "Danda" – a specie of ants. A conglomeration of these depicts literarily, that no task is insurmountable for danda.

Ibuanyidanda philosophy therefore is a philosophy of complementarity. It believes strongly on the mutual complementation of efforts. It is interesting to note that the danda ants from where inspiration is drawn for this philosophy, have the capacity to carry loads and accomplish task that appear bigger and heavier than them. This implies therefore that no task remains insurmountable through a complementary effort.

Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy is an ontological philosophy that seeks to unravel and explicate the notion of Being. In doing this it holds strongly that Being can be understood and explained adequately from a comprehensive –complementary ambience. Adopting this approach, the new complementary ontology wishes to grasp the notion of Being from the preceding condition of its intrinsic interrelatedness devoid of polarization and exclusiveness (Asouzu 10). For Ibuanyidanda-complementary ontology, "Being" which is "to be" is the capacity to be in mutual complementary relationship with all things that exists. A thing cannot "be" and be alone- that is, such cannot exist in isolation. The existence of anything whatsoever is meaningfully appreciated in its relations to other things.

The notion of Being in Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy is wiewed on the views that anything that exist serves a missing-link of reality. There is a mutual complementary relationship with all things that exist. It is essential to note

that Ibuanyidanda Philosophy denigrates all forms of polarization and exclusivity. In the pursuit and explication of reality, the new complimentary ontology projects that, reality can adequately be understood and appreciated where the various units of constituents are taken into consideration. It emphasizes the importance of constituent units that make up a whole. In taking into consideration the various units in their point of contributory relevance, Ibuanyidanda complementary Philosophy attempts to explain reality from a wholistic perspective.

Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy therefore is a critical and systematic philosophy which seeks the understanding of reality and indeed all existential matters from the spectacle of complementarity. It is the harmonious complementation of units in their moods of peculiarity.

Suffice it to state therefore that Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy as a pragmatic philosophy, attempts to address human existential problems through a complementary approach. This method of complementarity handle all opposites, bringing such into a mutual productive co-existence. Asouzu observes:

It is a complementary comprehensive type whose method, system and principles consider all existent realities as missing links that serve each other interminably. It is by reason of this its characters that it has the inherent capacity to neutralize all those extremist forces of divisiveness that can infringe on the unity of being and consciousness (55). As an ontological philosophy with practical relevance, its applicability can be attained in all existential situations.

The Concept of Missing-link and Human Relation in Ibuanyidanda Philosophy:-

In the explanation of Being within the context of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy, Being has been projected as that which could be understood on the account that anything that exist serves a missing-link of reality (Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda 10). Within this context therefore, being subsist on the "capacity to be grasped within the framework of mutual complementary relationship of all existent realities" (Besong and Inameti, 39).

Its understanding and appreciation, lies in the mutual correlations of the various units of its constituent. All constituent unit remain vital and sufficiently contributory to the meaningfulness of the generality. One cannot therefore imagin the existence of anything in isolation, as its existence could be meaningfully interpreted in relations to other things.

The Concept of Missing-link:-

The word missing-link stands paradigmatic in the elucidation of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy. It could be examined as the diverse unit that make up an entity within the framework of the whole and as they are complementarily related (Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda, 77). These units remain essential as fundamental frames through which the generality of a whole could be appreciated. This is why Asouzu holds strongly that the interpretation of being in isolation is immensely difficult and will tantamount to the problem of bifurcation and polarization. For him therefore all forms of bifurcation and polarization of views, and ideas in the explication of reality must essentially be avoided. Mutual harmony must be given the pride of place in all ontological instances.

Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy has strong relevance and applicability to human relations and mutual co-existence. It is truism that man is never a self-sufficient being, but one who lives in the company of others and whose essence(s) can only be attained by same. Plato depicts this when he avers that "the individual is not self-sufficient, but has needs which he cannot supply by himself" (117). In like manner, Aristotle observes that anyone who lay claims to self-sufficiency and non-relevance of others is either a sub-human or a superhuman (60).

The complexities and challenges of human existence can only be surmountable through a mutual complementary effort. "the mutual complementation of the individuals bring to their united endeavours an enhanced effect, substantially greater than the sum total which their separate individual efforts in the interest of their purpose could achieve" (Ratcher, 103).

One cannot but assert, that the best of human can hardly succeed reasonably in isolation. For Scott Gordon, the world as well as the society is a continuous plenitude, where existent things can never stand alone without any kind of relationship (215).

In solving human existential problems, the necessity of mutual cooperation and co-ordination remains paramount. Every unit and factor must be duly considered, as all units have contributory role if the solution of such problems is to be attained. Moreover mutual co-existence and dependence must essentially improve among humans.

A concise view on Migration:-

Lexically, the word migration is conceived as “the movement of large numbers of people, birds or animals from one place to another (743). Broadly, it could be seen as a continuous exodus of people, animals, objects, and ideas from one location to another with the intention of settling in the new location. It is important to note that besides human beings, animals or ideas can migrate from one place to another.

Suffice it to state that the concept of migration is burdened with great possibilities and ‘positivities’. Humans who migrate from one location to another are of great economic relevance. This is because they constitute the work force of their new location. The meaningful infrastructural, economic and technological development of any area could also be largely dependent on migrants who reside in such area. In like manner therefore, the movement of ideas from one location to another must be seen and utilized as great tools of development.

Ibuanyidanda Philosophy and the Quest for Sustainable Development in Africa:-

The cry for sustainable development in Africa has continuously remain loud. This is consequent to the overwhelming poor standard of living among many common innocent Africans. Sequel to the myriad of problems encountered in many African countries as depicted in the poor economic progress, dilapidated infrastructures, little or no industrialization, disease outbreak, poverty and civil unrest. Many have sought for the possible way-out of this Africa’s malady.

It has been observed in this paper that the problem with Africa in the 21st century, is largely hinged on leadership failure. This is because the success or failure of any civil state is dependent on leadership, as leaders have the capacity to drive any group of persons towards the desired goals and purposes.

In the Africa we know, many African leaders are corrupt and consequently place their private interest above the common good of the people. The problem of egoism and ethnocentrism characterizes African leadership. This predominantly have a boomerang effect which catalyzes violence, crisis and civil unrest.

Cleavage to ethno-religious lines also account to the many factors that instigate crisis and violence in many African countries. This is the case because many African leaders denigrate members of other ethnic or religious groups, thus concentrating on their areas of interest. When this happens aggrieved and marginalized sections of the country outrightly begin agitations so as to be attended to, thus causing instability in the polity.

Moreover, the case of corruption, where many embezzle public funds with impunitive measures truncate the notion of common good and distorts development. The challenge therefore is to chat a way forward for Africa to attain its desired development and compete favourably with other continents of the world.

Asouzu Ibuanyidanda Philosophy provides a new ambience to tackling Africa’s developmental problems. It observes that “the root cause of the problem of the African we know is to be sought within the context of the inability of the contemporary African to manage the ambivalence of his situation well” (Asouzu Methods and Principles 232). Many mismanage the ambivalencial situations of everyday life due to the poor conditioning of the mind. Asouzu asserts that:

The contemporary African thus approaches the demands of modernity with a form of sub-primitive mindset. In Africa, almost everyone behaves in the same paradoxical manner due to mismanagement of the demands of a change situation. Many who find themselves in important leadership positions strive to use these as opportunities not only to enrich themselves but also to enrich a selected network of close relatives and friends... (234)

In moving forward, African leaders and indeed African populace, must consciously sharpen and equip the mind to adequately handle ambivalence situations of life, rise above all forms of ethnocentrism that instigates polarity, bifurcation and exclusivity. Every unit and group in various African countries must be seen as missing links, and perceived as units who can contribute complementarily to the progress of the whole.

It must be stated here, that the beauty of our existence lies in the heterogeneity than in the homogeneity of our being. Our peculiarities, uniqueness and differences are profound strength which must be harmonized and galvanized for the progressivity of our individual nations and Africa in general. Ozumba observes that to integrate is better than to disintegrate, therefore seemingly opposed variables must unite without contradiction, to achieve progress and epistemic wholeness (6).

In tackling the problem of ethnocentrism which stimulates disharmony and polarity amongst many Africans, Asouzu projects the **Noetic dimension** of Ibuanyidanda. For him, “the main objective of such a noetic propaedeutic is to make the acting subject adaptable and receptive towards understanding and sharing meaning, in a way that transcends artificial boundaries it creates around itself” (Asouzu Ibuanyidanda 81). The mind therefore must be consciously trained to transcend the tendencies of ethnocentrism, exclusivity, polarity and selfish tendencies. The mind must constantly be in control of all human existential situations. The training of the mind enhances a Transcendent Ontological Reflection, which enables it conceive all unit of existence as missing links with contributory relevance to the sustainability and progressivity of the whole. “For the mind to attain the level of refinement expected of it, it has to learn to view units as complements within a comprehensive universal setting” (Asouzu Ibuanyidanda 83).

When the mind is trained to surmount all exclusivity, polarization and ethnocentricism, it begins to appreciate opposites as contributory units to the existence of the whole. In this sense therefore leaders and indeed Africans must appreciate the existence of others for the progressivity of the African continent.

Suffice it to state, that the progressivity and development of Africa in the 21st century lies in the mutual complementarity of our efforts. Africans at all sphere and levels must be committed to developing the continent for the optimal actualization of the joy of our being.

Conclusion:-

In concluding this paper, suffice it to state succinctly that African continent have immensely strived below expectations, even in the 21st century. Amidst the wealth of natural and human resources, it has consistently maintained the record of inhabiting the largest number of indigent people. Technologically and economically, Africa is yet to be renowned. The quest therefore has loudly been to chat a leeway for Africa’s progress and sustainable development.

In Asouzu Ibuanyidanda Philosophy, the complementary approach suffices as indubitable tool of tackling leadership crisis and galvanizing efforts, ideas and information towards the progress of Africa. In like manner, migration of humans, ideas and methodologies stands relevant to Africa’s recovery. Therefore Ibuanyidanda Philosophy and the concept of migration remain as undeniable propitious tools of Africa’s recovery, progress and all round development.

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