

Nurturing National Progress: The Crucial Role of Philosophy and Education in the Post-Pandemic Era

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Abstract— *Philosophy offers a systematic approach to reflective, logical, and innovative thinking, which involves a thorough investigation of various concepts. On the other hand, national development encompasses a country's ability to embrace its unique identity and take charge of its future. Education, meanwhile, provides individuals with enlightening experiences and specialized training in different fields. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how philosophy and education can serve as catalysts for national progress. Given the Philippines' diverse socio-cultural, religious, ethnic, and political backgrounds, this study seeks to answer two crucial questions: Can the country achieve development despite its differences? If that is the case, what are the critical elements propelling this advancement? By means of historical interpretation and philosophical analysis, this article posits that philosophy and education are essential components in driving the country's progress in the era following the pandemic.*

Keywords— *Philosophy, National Progress, Education, Pandemic.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The process of nation-building is complex and challenging. Throughout history, it has been evident that significant effort is required to unify a diverse population under a stable government and establish a cohesive cultural, economic, political, and social community. This challenge becomes even more arduous when dealing with large and diverse groups of people who are distinguished by their unique customs, languages, or separate identities [1].

In the Philippines, for example, nation-building has been a persistent challenge due to various factors. One of the significant challenges is the country's cultural diversity. With numerous ethnic groups, each having their own language, customs, and traditions, it becomes difficult to achieve national unity and identity despite enriching the country's culture. The uneven distribution of economic development is another hindrance to progress. Despite having abundant natural resources, poverty and underdevelopment remain rampant, especially in rural areas, contributing to social unrest and political instability. Moreover, political corruption and weak governance pose additional challenges to nation-building. Corruption erodes public trust in the government, perpetuates social inequality, and undermines economic growth, thereby hampering progress towards national development.

The creation of an ideal nation is an overwhelming endeavor that demands a comprehensive approach encompassing all aspects of human activity and nation-building measures. This necessitates the involvement of all academic and professional fields. Philosophy and education then play pivotal roles in this daunting process.

This paper aims to showcase how philosophy and education

can drive national development, despite the diverse and heterogeneous nature of Filipino culture. Can the country develop as a united nation despite its socio-cultural, ethnic, religious and political differences? In that case, what are the key elements required to achieve this objective? This paper contends that philosophy and education act as drivers for national progress and are the pillars of Filipino harmony.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY, EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Aristotle's opening statement in *Metaphysics* states that "all men have a natural desire to know." [2] This statement reveals that philosophy is essentially the love of knowledge. It presupposes that human beings are naturally curious and are driven by a desire to know. This idea aligns with the etymological meaning of philosophy, which is derived from the Greek words *philos* (love) and *Sophia* (wisdom). Thus, philosophy can be understood as the love of wisdom, and a philosopher is someone who loves wisdom. In essence, philosophy is a critical inquiry into the nature of reality. Similarly, Dewey views philosophy as an ongoing effort to uncover the general truth that underlies specific facts by critically reviewing familiar things. [3]

The definition of education is heavily influenced by philosophical beliefs about society and humanity. Given the diverse range of philosophical perspectives, there is no singular definition of education. The word "education" has roots in Latin and Sanskrit, with "educare" and "educatum" translating to "nourish, raise, teach or train," while "skis shah" or "vidh" represent "to discipline or to know." Aristotle defined education as the development of a sound mind in a sound body, and Tagore endorsed the idea of all-round development of the mind, body, and spirit. Therefore, education can be seen as a process that instills discipline in individuals, making them self-reliant, selfless, and capable of contributing to the development of their nation.

The concept of development discussed in the paper refers to the idea that individuals should have the capacity to utilize their full potential in a comprehensive way, allowing them to take control of their own destiny. This perspective is shared by A. Escobar, who defines development as a process of self-creation and re-creation that enables individuals to improve their circumstances and reach higher levels of civilization based on their own choices and values. [4] Moreover, development is defined as a means for individuals to achieve their full potential and attain greater levels of prosperity, both in material and non-material aspects of life. [5]

The roles of philosophy and education are crucial in the development of any society. To fully utilize available resources for maximum development, critical thinking and trained intelligence are essential to understand the past, present, and future. Philosophy provides a concrete outlook on life and establishes a value system that guides a society in understanding itself. It cultivates sound minds and eliminates emotional and irrational approaches to situations, instilling a habit of clear, exact, logical, and critical thinking. Education is also indispensable to national development. According to Alfred North Whitehead, a nation that does not value trained intelligence is bound to fail. The wealth and power of a nation depend on the successful education of its citizens and the number of highly talented individuals provided with superior and diverse education. In short, education and philosophy act as catalysts for national development. However, it is important to understand the relationship between philosophy and education before proceeding with further discussion. [6]

III. FASHIONING A PHILOSOPHICAL-EDUCATION ENTWINEMENT

Philosophy and education share a close relationship and are mutually reinforcing. Philosophy provides the theoretical underpinnings of education, while education serves as the practical manifestation of philosophical principles. Dewey concurs with this view and notes that philosophy represents the general theory of education. Similarly, Gentile acknowledges that education cannot be fully comprehended without philosophy. Thus, philosophy plays a critical role in guiding and shaping the teaching and learning process, underscoring its significance in education.

To put it simply, the role of philosophy in guiding the direction of education is crucial. It lays the foundation for both educational theory and practice, making education a practical application and testing ground for philosophical ideas. Essentially, philosophy embodies a system of thought, while education encompasses the instruction and transmission of that thought across generations. While philosophy represents a way of life, education serves as a means of preparing individuals for life's challenges. The knowledge acquired through natural reason is represented by philosophy, while education focuses on the development of reasoning skills and other cognitive abilities.

The philosophical foundation underpins every aspect of education, from curriculum development to teaching methods and school discipline. Additionally, many influential philosophers have also been influential educators. Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, and Gandhi are among the prominent figures who have expressed their philosophical perspectives through their educational methods. For instance, Socrates' method of questioning and cross-examining is evident in his educational approach, which reflects his philosophical beliefs.

Education plays a significant role in preserving the cultural heritage and accomplishments of past civilizations and passing them down to younger generations. The values, customs, mores, truths, and ideals of a society are all transmitted through education. Philosophy serves as the foundation for education, ensuring that its principles and processes align with the nature

of individuals and society. Without a solid philosophical foundation, education is likely to fail. The development of critical and constructive thinking skills, as well as the cultivation of trained and sound intelligence, are crucial for any nation's progress. Therefore, it is vital for developing countries like the Philippines to prioritize improving their educational systems and philosophies to promote growth and advancement towards their developmental goals.

IV. THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION IN DRIVING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION

Development is the process of improving the quality of life for individuals and groups, which can be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively. At the national level, development can be seen in the overall improvement of the well-being of citizens, while at the individual level, it can be seen in the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, increased freedom and responsibility, and improved material wealth. Philosophy and education are vital components in the growth and development of any nation, despite some misconceptions that philosophy is irrelevant due to its abstract nature. This view has been refuted by scholars who argue that philosophy has a practical impact on national development. This paper aims to emphasize the importance of philosophy and education as drivers of national development. [7]

A society that desires development must have individuals who possess critical thinking skills. This ability allows for the examination of actions before making decisions, as a developed society is made up of critical minds. As Socrates stated, an unexamined life is not worth living. Philosophy teaches critical thinking and enables individuals to act based on reason, rather than fear of punishment. Plato believed that knowledge is virtue and ignorance is vice. Philosophy helps individuals develop and act in accordance with reason, which enhances positive human knowledge in society. Plato also suggested that either philosophers become kings or kings become philosophers if a society is to maintain orderliness and discipline.

The development of a nation is not only dependent on economic and political factors, but also on the moral values upheld by its citizens. Without a strong moral foundation, a nation cannot achieve sustainable development. To this end, philosophy plays a critical role in shaping the moral values of society. The philosophy of ethics offers a framework for understanding what is right and wrong, and helps to instill a sense of responsibility and accountability in individuals. As stated by Aristotle, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." [8] Therefore, the promotion of moral values and ethics is an essential component of national development. A society with a strong ethical framework is less likely to be plagued by corruption and irresponsibility, which can hinder economic and social progress. To achieve sustainable development, it is important to prioritize moral and ethical education, which can be facilitated through philosophy.

To achieve development, it is crucial to have a unified sense of self. This means that individuals must have critical and constructive self-awareness in order to grow. This echoes the wisdom of Socrates, who famously said, "An unexamined life is not worth living." This highlights the importance of critical

self-understanding. In the same way, the state is an extension of the self, as Aristotle saw it as "a giant person." As an extension of the self, the state also requires a critical understanding of itself to achieve meaningful national development. Philosophy is a powerful tool for self-understanding, and Paul Ricoeur argues that "philosophy is a form of critical pedagogy aiming to bring about a democratic economy, just society, and good life." These elements are essential for national development. Philosophy provides a platform not only for reflection on our traditions and history but also for determining our identity and future prospects. When we understand who we are, we can extend that knowledge to society, eventually creating a sense of true national pride. Arguably, knowing oneself leads to finding a sense of meaning and understanding one's purpose. [9] The influence of Western values on Filipinos has left them uncertain of their purpose in life, making it difficult for them to differentiate between beneficial and detrimental influences. This lack of clarity can impede their country's journey towards stability and integrated development. The solution to this quandary lies in philosophy, which can help individuals gain self-awareness, find direction, and ultimately overcome confusion.

A robust education in philosophy plays a crucial role in a nation's development. While values education in primary and secondary schools may serve a functional purpose, philosophy education at the tertiary level is expected to be more speculative. This is because philosophy can serve as the foundation for all university activity, as Lyotard argues that "philosophy must restore unity to learning." He further explains that philosophy can unify separate sciences and link them to a rational narration or meta-narration, thereby creating a language game that links the sciences to the becoming of spirit. [9]

Philosophy concerns itself with ideas, which are crucial for self-awareness. Adler underscores the significance of ideas as fundamental and essential to comprehending our society and the world we inhabit. Philosophy then is not a doctrine but an activity that focuses on the logical clarification of thoughts. As Wittgenstein states, philosophy is the process of elucidation, which is essential in making propositions clear and giving them distinct boundaries. Without philosophy, our thoughts remain vague and ambiguous. Thus, philosophy serves as an eye-opener that brings clarity to our thinking. This demonstrates how philosophy can be beneficial to both individuals and society in terms of development. [10] Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge the significance of philosophy in achieving our aspirations for national progress.

Due to the rapid pace of globalization and technological advancement, it is imperative that we constantly examine and re-evaluate our culture in light of contemporary realities. This is a philosophical necessity, as culture is dynamic and adaptable. The result of this examination should be a synthesis of past and present elements, creating a more humane and civilized culture. In this regard, philosophers can serve as physicians of culture. By using analytical, constructive, and logical tools, they can purify cultural elements that have become outdated and irrelevant. For example, certain beliefs about sickle cell children or burial practices of kings may be

challenged as human constructs rather than inherent truths. Philosophy fine-tunes culture for positive development, which is a crucial component of national progress. As such, it is vital to recognize the importance of philosophy in shaping our cultural and national identity.

The development of a nation relies not only on philosophy, but also on education, which can be considered as a twin sister of philosophy. Whitehead supports this view by stating that in modern society, valuing education and intelligence is an absolute necessity. Without it, a nation is doomed to fail. In today's fast-paced and technology-driven world, education is crucial in providing individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to adapt and thrive. It is through education that individuals are equipped with the tools to make informed decisions, think critically, and solve problems. These are qualities that are essential in building a strong and prosperous nation. Therefore, investing in education is a crucial aspect of national development. This investment not only benefits individuals, but also the society as a whole, as it enables the creation of a highly skilled workforce, enhances economic growth, and contributes to social and cultural development.

Undoubtedly, the Philippines is blessed with abundant natural resources; however, the optimal utilization and efficient harnessing of these resources require a significant number of well-educated and highly skilled individuals. Without a considerable number of knowledgeable citizens, the country will struggle to achieve a coordinated and positive development. Therefore, the government must prioritize education if it wants to achieve meaningful national development. It is crucial to provide proper training, education, and specialization opportunities to the younger generation. By doing so, their expertise can be directed towards nation-building and development, ensuring sustainable growth and prosperity.

According to John Smith, the need for highly skilled individuals is crucial in today's society, where technological advancements and complex social structures are prevalent. The demand for individuals who possess specialized knowledge and skills is imperative for the progress and development of the country. In a world where natural resources alone are not enough to sustain growth, it is vital that the government focuses on providing quality education and training to its citizens. Without a highly educated and skilled workforce, the country will struggle to fully harness and utilize its resources. Therefore, investing in education and specialized training programs is essential in achieving coordinated and sustainable development. [11]

To fully exploit and utilize natural resources, a nation requires sophisticated machinery and technical expertise. As such, the significance of education in national development cannot be overstated. Neglecting education is not an option for any country. Education must be given the utmost priority and should be taken to its highest level. The most competent young individuals should receive training in fundamental fields of knowledge and develop critical thinking skills and strong character traits that will enable them and the nation to adapt and thrive in the ever-evolving modern world.

To achieve desired national development, it is important to utilize all available talents without any waste. Education is a crucial tool that can refine and enhance superior talents, providing benefits not only to the individual but also to the society. Extracting and nurturing individuals with high abilities and talents is essential for a nation to boost its development and modernization. As observed by Chinwuba and Nwosuex, excellence in education across all sections of society is vital for acquiring the necessary mental dexterity to cope with the economic, political, moral, cultural, and global challenges that no nation can withdraw into isolation from. They also emphasize that talent and education are a precious resource that brings luster to both the possessor and the surrounding environment. Therefore, investing in education and nurturing talents is crucial for national development and progress. [12]

Another historical figure, Horace Mann, shared similar views on the importance of education in national development. Mann, a 19th-century American educational reformer, believed that education was essential to creating a democratic society and promoting social and economic progress. His advocacy for public education led to the establishment of the first public schools in the United States. [13]

Horace Mann, a leading education reformer during the antebellum era in the United States, believed that education was crucial for creating an equitable and prosperous society. He advocated for universal public education to restore equality to a fractured society and create career opportunities for women. Mann's emphasis on education as a critical aspect of national development highlights the need for countries to invest in education to nurture talent and provide access to education for all individuals. This investment can lead to a pool of skilled and knowledgeable individuals who can contribute to the growth and development of their nation. In the Philippine context, education and philosophy play a pivotal role in creating a unified and robust nation, and allocating significant resources towards education can act as a catalyst for meaningful and positive national development. With a well-educated populace equipped with necessary skills and knowledge, the Philippines can address the challenges presented by economic, political, and social factors and strive towards progress and prosperity. [14]

V. EDUCATION, PHILOSOPHY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA

The post-pandemic context for one makes the task of national development even more challenging. The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated existing social, economic, and political inequalities, which can further widen the gaps between different groups and hinder national unity. To address these challenges, it is crucial to promote a more inclusive and equitable approach to national development that prioritizes the needs and interests of all groups, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion, or political affiliation. This requires a deep understanding of the historical, social, and cultural contexts of different groups and a willingness to engage in dialogue and compromise to reach common goals.

In light of these challenges, it is imperative that we invest additional efforts at both the individual and institutional levels

to achieve national progress. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that the process of nation-building is a complex and arduous task, as history has demonstrated. It requires a complex and difficult process of unifying people under a government and creating a stable cultural, economic, political, and social community. This process becomes more arduous when the people to be united come from diverse, large groups, each with its own unique customs, language, and separate identities. Thus, building a strong and unified nation requires deliberate and sustained efforts towards fostering tolerance, understanding, and respect for diversity, as well as promoting inclusive governance that addresses the needs and interests of all groups. This paper then presents an approach that emphasizes the importance of education in achieving national unity in the Philippines.

Plato emphasized that the ideal educational system is one that can produce the highest level of excellence and perfection of the soul. [15] This suggests that education must be carefully and intentionally designed in order to achieve specific desired outcomes, particularly in relation to national development and integration. Ultimately, a well-planned and thought-out educational system can be instrumental in fostering positive and meaningful progress in society.

Aristotle recognized the crucial role of education in the process of nation-building, which is why he devoted books seven and eight of his *Politics* to discussing the state and its educational system. [16] This is significant because if the aim of our educational system is to promote national integration, it can effectively achieve this goal. Education can play a significant role in providing a skilled workforce, knowledgeable leaders, and an informed citizenry that are necessary for sustaining a society. Therefore, a well-designed educational system can be instrumental in achieving positive and meaningful national development and integration. Education is often regarded as a possible solution to address ethnic and other forms of divisions in pluralistic societies where different groups may struggle to form a unified national identity. However, relying solely on education to achieve national integration is not a guaranteed panacea. The effectiveness of this approach is based on three key assumptions. The first assumption is that education has the capacity to influence political attitudes and values. The second assumption is that such influence may lead to a shared consensus among different groups in society. Finally, the third assumption is that this process can be intentionally controlled and planned to achieve the desired outcome. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the success of education as an integrative tool depends on careful planning, management, and implementation.

This indicates that there is a need for the Philippines to gain a deeper understanding of how educational systems can impact the process of national integration. Effective nationalism cannot be achieved solely through education, but it is important to ensure that education does not impede its progress. Education that perpetuates ethnic divisions and fosters feelings of insecurity and distrust can have harmful outcomes. The rapidly expanding Philippine education system holds the potential to

reinforce these negative effects instead of promoting integration and unity, as highlighted by the scholar cited in this passage.

To achieve national integration and development, it is essential to instill collective attitudes and behaviors that foster a sense of community. Merely coexisting under the same government or within the same geographical boundaries is insufficient, as emphasized by the idea that simply being in the same physical location does not guarantee a meaningful connection or relationship between individuals. Therefore, the cultivation of a shared identity and sense of belonging is crucial to achieving genuine national unity and progress. To achieve national community, it is necessary to live and work together while sharing common values and interests. This idea of an "I-Thou relationship," in which individuals view one another as equals rather than objects to be used and exploited, is crucial to this concept. Segregated schools and societies, whether they exist de facto or de jure, do not contribute to the development of national community. Separating or isolating groups may temporarily mask underlying issues, but it does not provide real solutions. Segregation is often employed for political convenience, either to placate powerful groups or to reduce inter-group tensions. However, segregation does not address the underlying causes of the problem and only delays finding real solutions.

To delay finding a solution typically leads to eliminating the possibility of reconciliation or making it more difficult and emotionally distressing. If the separation persists, it could result in the dissolution of the nation or necessitate a reinvigorated effort towards national integration. If education is to serve national integration, schools must be integrated and operate as a representation of the nation, where individuals from diverse backgrounds come together to cultivate collaborative habits and reach a consensus on communal values. When students from diverse ethnic backgrounds attend integrated schools, they are more likely to view each other as equals, reducing perceived differences and increasing camaraderie. Graduates of integrated schools who occupy leadership positions can use their shared experiences to help reconcile conflicts. Rather than erasing ethnic identity entirely, schools should prioritize national identity. Education is a crucial factor in promoting integration, which is necessary for national development. Schools cannot achieve what society is unwilling to do, as they tend to reflect rather than transform existing social realities. While schools can inspire new aspirations, they are often influenced by the prevailing social conditions. A society that exacerbates ethnic differences and tensions cannot achieve healing through education alone. Thus, an education-based philosophy of integration must be embraced by society as a whole to create a shared identity that is both preserved and strengthened. Failure to do so could lead to dire consequences, as the African proverb warns: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

VI. CONCLUSION

Philosophy and education are critical factors in the development of any nation, as Plato observed that a nation cannot achieve meaningful progress without either its leaders becoming philosophers or being led by divine providence to

become genuine philosophers. This assertion emphasizes the importance of philosophy in promoting unity and development within a nation. To fully understand the significance of philosophy in nation-building, it is essential to trace its evolution from ancient Greece to its present-day role. This will undoubtedly establish philosophy as the driving force behind human civilization and national development. Likewise, the essence of a nation can be attributed to education. Education is a critical factor in the advancement of any nation. It is often said that neglecting education is equivalent to neglecting a nation's soul, whereas prioritizing education leads to a heightened national spirit. Developing nations, in particular, must recognize the significance of education as it holds the key to their progress. Neglecting education can lead to stagnation and a lack of development. Education is not just a problem to be solved, but rather an essential aspect of life that serves as a repository of knowledge and a source of vitality. It is the bedrock on which societal progress and individual growth are built.

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