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By

LEKAN OYEDEJI



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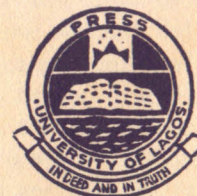
WISDOM: THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF EDUCATION

An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Lagos
on Wednesday, March 13, 1991

By
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WISDOM: THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF EDUCATION

Preamble

AN INAUGURAL lecture is meant to expose a newly appointed professor to the university community, and the wider public. With the inaugural lecture the university means to gain public approbation for its appointment of a new professor. The professor himself wants to let the whole world know that he is an authority in his field of specialisation. In doing so, the professor may decide to present his inaugural lecture in such bombastic, high sounding, jaw breaking, technical jargons as to bamboozle his audience (including most of his academic colleagues). Even in the field of adult education that is generally taken for granted for its seeming simplicity, when one decides to use some of the words that that field has added to the English language, such as conscientization, androgoggy and eldergogy or if one resort to frightening terms (usually associated with adult education but not exclusively for it) such as retirement education, disengagement education, continued-engagement education, re-engagement education or even death education, the audience may be mystified. One could also burst into physiological terms in the field of adult education that can equally mystify even our medical colleagues.

The University of Lagos, being already a well established one with a reputation for scholarship, does not need to seek public approval for the appointment of its professors; the long and tedious process of appointing a professor in this university is enough approbation for those who are familiar with that process. That tedious and long process is worth working and waiting for. I am no longer a new professor as such and cannot be tempted by the desire to impress this audience with high sounding jargons from the jungle of literature in my field of adult education; but I believe that the discourse that I am about to engage in will most

certainly arouse controversy in various directions and may thus awaken in many people the urge to search for solutions to some of the problems I am about to raise.

The topic of this inaugural lecture is as simple as it is complex; it is as philosophical as it is religious; it is as mundane as it is divine; it is as empty as it is educative.

Introduction

The whole world is caught in the web of scientific and technological explosion. In the midst of it all there is ignorance in spite of information explosion; there is also poverty in the midst of plenty. The world is made up of the haves and the have nots as individuals and as nations.

Recently, there was an international seminar on Reparations for the Degradation, Indignity and Exploitation which the Third World Countries (especially African nations) suffered as a Result of Slavery and all that accompanied it. These Third World countries are currently owing the developed nations so much debt that they find themselves in a 'debt trap' within which they cannot readily develop. The developed nations during the colonial period put the Third World countries in a political trap for their own development. When the colonies had a ray of light from their educated and dynamic elites they threw off the shackles of political trap. But the developed nations - because of their cumulative experience in development - sought for and found another trap for the maintenance and stability of their economies and the general happiness of their nationals. It is ironical that the sweat of the African peoples has been used to develop the nations for which we are now indebted. (see Appendix I)

The Nigerian economy has been battered. With a debt of about N520 billion, how do we develop? Where do we go from here? Why did we allow so much debt to accumulate before we became conscious of our position in the 'debt trap'? Political freedom was a hard fought-out battle before it was won. Economic emancipation from the 'debt trap' requires a more determined, more constructive, philosophical, psychological, intellectual, creative struggle. Whereas during the political struggle it was possible to identify and physically protest to or even fight the colonial masters, in the economic emancipation we cannot find the

economic masters. Political control was done through representatives while economic control is done through invisible hands.

In those dark days of political struggle we could blame the developed nations for exploiting the developing nations because of widespread ignorance in the latter. But today, there is substantial enlightenment in each nation to enable it recognise, and resent and resist any and all forms of exploitation. Selfishness, greed and perverted values of the enlightened and those in power at different stages of development are partly responsible for the back-seat position still being occupied by the developing nations, including Nigeria.

Nigeria has an estimated population of about 112 million. All the 112 million people have their brains and minds and bodies to support the functioning of these organs. Each individual is endowed with intelligence, talent and wisdom sufficient for their survival - if they care to use them. In other words, each person's endowment is only latent, requiring development before it can be put to fruitful use. Thus some use it to become very brilliant scholars while some scholars only remain mediocres; some use it to become stinking rich while others remain poor and blame their poverty on society; some use it to develop their piety and move close to God while some are devils incarnate; such opposite polarities are endless.

Nigeria has had a century-and-a-half of Western education since 1842 when the first primary school was established; it has had 132 years of experience in secondary and teacher training education with the establishment in 1859 of CMS Grammar School and St. Andrew's College. We have also had 59 years of tertiary education with the establishment, in 1932, of the Yaba Higher College and 43 years of university education with the establishment of University College (now University of) Ibadan, in 1948 (Oyededeji 1983). (see Appendix II)

We thus have an impressive history of longevity of education but do not have much to show for it in terms of achievement since we are still overwhelmed by about 65

million illiterates and as many as 20 million half-baked semi-literate primary school leavers (see Appendix III). In other words, less than 25 per cent of our population is truly functionally literate; majority of the rest of the population are waste pipes, draining the productivity of the few. Do not misunderstand me when I imply that illiterates are unproductive. But when you realise that only five per cent of the population of the United States of America produces food for the entire nation but that 80 per cent of our own population produces food for the nation, you will clearly understand the relative unproductivity of illiterates. The American farmers are literate and can cope with mechanised farming; our farmers are mainly illiterate and are unable to engage in mechanised farming, even if they had the money and equipment at their disposal.

Why have successive governments in Nigeria not thought it wise to spread literacy to all adults in order to increase productivity and accelerate national development? Has schooling really helped us in the past, and can it alone solve our present problems of armed robbery, assassinations, eliminations, smuggling, drug abuse, drug addiction, drug peddling, corruption in high and low places? The contention of several people is that schooling does not seem to provide solution to these problems because most of those involved in these anti-social activities have been to school.

There are two ways of looking at this contention. Firstly, the "educated elites" are like kings that must not be questioned by their subjects; but in the council of kings everybody has a say and any king can challenge any other king. Those who are literate can easily bamboozle and dazzle illiterates with outrageous ideas, concepts, ideologies, figures of money requiring verification which can only be carried out by other literate persons. Hence illiterates can and are being taken advantage of, not only by individuals who exploit them but also by our governments who are able to get away (and have got away) with many policies and practices not possible in literate societies. The very foundation of democracy requires a people that are capable of reading the manifestos of political parties and of

following the activities of political analysts before they make a choice of party and people to vote into power. It is needless to say that true democracy is impossible in an illiterate country like ours.

Secondly, the reason why anti-social activities are rampant and why, in spite of long history of schooling, we have not developed is that even those of us who are literate are so overwhelmed by illiteracy that our level of thinking hardly surpasses that associated with illiterates.

If all our so-called 'educated elite' were to form themselves into one nation, that nation will be near a super nation and a lot better developed than our present situation. After all our rulers are supposed to represent the collective wisdom of our nation. But only about 25 per cent of Nigerian citizens are capable of articulating their views on issues of concern in the nation. Can we then fault the statement that a nation cannot develop beyond its level of literacy?

In the last few seconds I have used the words 'wisdom' and 'education' almost without being conscious of them but they are, in fact, the key words in this inaugural lecture. Before we go further, therefore, it will be necessary for me to bring to focus these two words.

Concepts of Education and Wisdom

These two words are commonplace and, at first, may seem to require no definition, especially to a distinguished audience such as the one I now have the privilege of addressing. But simple as they may seem, in order for us to have a focus, it is important that I delineate the scope of my use of these two words which seem to hold firmly the key to development in all its forms. Let us start with "Education".

(a) Education

'Education', it is needless to say, is an elusive word and any attempt to define it can only have limited success. We are quite familiar with the common error of equating

schooling with education; in this sense those who never went to school are regarded as 'uneducated'. There is the mistake at the other extreme of defining 'education' as what is left of you after you have forgotten all you learnt in school. In this sense, schooling is regarded as an unnecessary component of education. Thus it can be deduced that schooling is not all there is to education but it is a valuable component of it. Those who have been to school as well as those who missed schooling have some education; in other words even illiterates are educable!

In another sense, one could say that education is experience: sad experiences such as tragedies, failures, shocks, pains, grieves or pleasant experiences such as happiness, comfort, successes, celebrations and joy. It can thus be said that education is a cultivation of the human mind and a development of personality culminating in the attainment of some wisdom.

Plato's parable of the Cave is the most powerful, most appropriate metaphor for education; it dramatises the distressing experience by which we free our minds from ignorance and illusion and accept responsibility for helping others to do so.

In the parable of the Cave, Plato depicted human beings chained by their necks and legs so that they could neither move nor turn their necks. Above and behind them there was fire blazing at a distance and casting shadows of the captives on the opposite wall of the cave.

One of the prisoners was unchained and taken out of the cave into the blazing sun, the brightness of which made him want to withdraw back to the cave; but he later adjusted to the brightness which turned out to be a pleasant reality as opposed to the shadows he was used to. He resisted being sent back to the cave because he had found the truth.

However, just as he claimed the natural right to hold on to the truth which he has discovered, he also has the inescapable duty of going back to the cave to help others see through their illusions.

This parable of the Cave is a basic source of the classical philosophy of education. The process of learning is a lonely, distressing experience through which we attempt

to free our minds from the biases and prejudices of our environment in search of the truth which exists independently of ourselves.

According to John Dewey (1979) all genuine education comes about through experience, like that of the Cave but not all experiences are equally genuine or equally educative. For instance, any experience that arrests or distorts the growth of further experience, any experience that engenders callousness, insensitivity and irresponsiveness is mis-education. Tentatively, it can be said that education is an accumulation of positive experiences for cultivation of the human mind. What then is Wisdom?

Wisdom

Wisdom is a more complex term requiring an insight into its linguistic, religious, philosophical and general concepts.

i. Linguistic Concept of Wisdom

In the English Language, intelligence, common sense and talent, are words that can be confused with wisdom. The three main languages of Nigeria - Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba - also have difficulty in distinguishing among these words. Thus, Wayo in Hausa means ability to give accurate interpretation while Kwakwalwa means rare ability or mind ability; Hankali is the basic ability to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad. In Hausa, then, wisdom means Wayo or Hankali. In Igbo, Akonuche literally means 'mind sense' while Oguquisi means mental ability; Akpauche in Igbo means 'conscience bag' or 'mind bag' while Onyinyeamara or Akaraka means gift of grace; wisdom in Igbo can mean any of Akonuche, Akpauche or Amamihe. In Yoruba the bible has two interpretations for wisdom; Ogbon and Imo. Ogbon to most Yorubas means wisdom but to some it is Imo or Oye. Yoruba proverbs such as Ogbon Ologbon ni a a fiise ogbon, Ogbon odunni, were e e min in, points to the accurate translation of wisdom into ogbon; but it is not totally free of its being sometimes confused with talent Ebun, intelligence

laakaye or even 'smartness' arekereke and common sense ogbon ori. (See Appendix iv)

In German, wisdom equivalent is weihect, in Italian sapienza and in French sagesse. Wisdom in all of these languages (European and Nigerian) seems to correspond to what we can regard as shrewdness or sagacity. Wisdom, in its linguistic concept thus signifies the ability to distinguish between what is advantageous and what is harmful, ability to assess a situation and act in such a way as to bring intention to fulfilment.

ii. Religious Concept of Wisdom

In Christianity, wisdom is that ability required for sound administration of a country's affairs, for good craftsmanship. It is practical in nature; it is like righteousness; it is life itself. Thus Solomon, when asked to make a request asked God for one thing only: wisdom, for judgement over his people and to know the difference between good and evil (Kings 3, 11 - 13). Wisdom thus implies the ability to judge soundly and act sagaciously; it is the capacity to make due use of knowledge. The Song of Solomon, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and some chapters in the Psalms and Kings are known to dwell on wisdom.

In Islam, wisdom is regarded as a detailed knowledge of the creatures of God, who is referred to in Quoran Chapter 2 verse 129 as 'truly wise'. Wisdom is seen as the instrument for attainment of peace and comfort which Quoran Chapter 2: 269 refers to as 'abundant wealth'.

Both Christianity and Islam regard wisdom as originating from God; thus in the Holy Bible God declared:

And God said unto him (Solomon) Because thou hast asked this thing (wisdom) and hast not asked for thyself longlife, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies . . . behold I have done according to thy words. Lo, I have given thee a wise and an

understanding heart . . . And I have also
given thee that which thou hast not asked,
both riches and honour (Kings 3: 11 - 13).

And in the Holy Quoran:

No succour can come from any save God.
Verily God is Almighty, wise (Quoran 8:269).

iii. Philosophical Concept of Wisdom

The ancient Greek word for philosophy means 'love of wisdom.' According to Plato, wisdom is the attribute of the rational faculty in the individual. In Greek thought, the term wisdom stands for abstract intelligence. According to Akinpelu (1981) philosophy is sometimes used to represent the profound sayings and witty words of elders such as 'the words of our elders are the words of wisdom', and these sayings found expression in incantations, proverbs and in oracular revelations.

Aristotle distinguishes between two kinds of wisdom - the speculative and the practical; the former referring to the unalterable and superhuman wisdom which is intuitive and demonstrative, the latter having to do with relation of human experience with details of life - it is an intellectual virtue.

Let me break the boredom of definitions with some thoughts on wisdom. Coleridge, in an attempt to distinguish between common sense and wisdom declared:

Common sense in an uncommon degree is what the world calls wisdom. It implies good judgement, practical wisdom applied to common life.

... (Coleridge, 1963: 728)

In attempting to distinguish between a wise man and a fool, J. Mason states:

The wise man has his foibles as well as the fool; but the difference between them is that the foibles of the one are known to himself and concealed from the world; and the foibles of the other are known to the world and concealed from himself.

... (Mason, 1963:729).

Wisdom connotes humility. In the language of Colton,

The profoundly wise do not declaim against superficial ignorance; on the contrary, they would rather assist it with their advice than overwhelm it with their contempt; for they know that there was a period when a Bacon or a Newton were superficial and that he who has a little knowledge is far more likely to get more than he that has none.

... (Colton, 1963:335).

In his view of who a wise man is, Gladstone declares:

To comprehend a man's life it is necessary to know not merely what he does but also what he purposely leaves undone. There is a limit to the work that can be got out of a human body or a human brain; and he is a wise man who wastes no energy on pursuits for which he is not fitted; and he is still wiser who, from among the things that he can do well chooses and resolutely follows the best.

... (Gladstone, 1963:333).

Let no one feel that the acquisition of the knowledge of wisdom is not meant for him because, as Bulver puts it:

Whatever our intellectual calling, no kind of knowledge is antagonistic to it. All varieties of knowledge blend with, harmonize, and enrich the one kind of knowledge to which we attach our reputation.

...(Bulver, 1963:333)

In trying to round up this discourse on the philosophical concept of wisdom I came across the components of wisdom as explained by Plato. Perfect Wisdom, according to Plato, has four parts:

1. Wisdom - The principle of doing things aright
2. Justice - The principle of doing things equally in public and private
3. Fortitude - The principle of not flying danger but meeting it
4. Temperance - The principle of subduing desires and living moderately.

... (Plato, in Browns 1963:703).

(iv) General Concept of Wisdom

In most societies wisdom is associated with old age; those who do not live long have very little opportunity for being wise. "Age is not the flight of years, but the dawn of wisdom" (Murphy, 1982:213). It is therefore necessary for each society to strive to elongate the lives of its citizens for the enhancement of the quality of its collective wisdom. In the Lagos Week-End of March 17, 1989, was the story captioned "Wisdom that comes with Old Age". It was about two communities in what is now known as Imo State of Nigeria.

The two communities were those of Umu Agu and Umu Mbe with a population of about 10,000 inhabitants each. At one point in their development, armed robbery became so rampant that they desperately sought solution to the devastating problem. The young elements in the two communities decided to eliminate all elders above the age of 50 because they seemed saturated and unable to find solution to the problem of the two communities.

The Umu Agu people carried out the decision with dispatch. They slaughtered all members of their community above 50 years of age. The Umu Mbe people, on the other hand, found a new settlement and sent their elders to the new abode. In the two cases they had rid their communities of their elders.

Not too long after this event, the two communities had an outbreak of a disease later found to be smallpox and it had killed five people in each of the two communities before they could consult. While the Umu Mbe people went to their elders in their new settlement to seek wise counsel, the Umu Agu people had no one to consult. The elders of Umu Mbe remembered that 20 years earlier the same disease had attacked their community and they also remembered that vaccination immediately brought the disease under control. They advised their young citizens to adopt the same method; that was how the outbreak was brought under control. In the meantime, the Umu Agu people were almost totally eliminated by the deadly disease leaving only 500 behind out of 10,000 people and that only when the Umu Mbe had advised them of the vaccination.

After they had both arrested the attack, they fixed a day for celebration. The people of Umu Mbe sent warriors to bring back their elders and honoured them on the high table for that occasion. It then became clear to the people of Umu Agu that they were unwise to have slaughtered their elders who possessed wisdom which couldn't have been bought in the market place at any price. The story ended with these words: "Wisdom is a valuable collection preserved for the good of man and generations yet unborn". (Kebby, 1989:7)

In an attempt to find a generally acceptable definition of wisdom, I designed a research instrument which was administered on about 300 elders who were 70 years or older. Most of the respondents were interviewed in addition to completing the questionnaire. Those interviewed included eminent Nigerians such as Odu Isaac Mbanefo (93 years, in Onitsha, of friend of the gods fame), Sir Adetokunbo Ademola (86 years, the first Chief Justice of Nigeria), Sir Mobolaji Bank Anthony (83 years), Chief Bright-Oridami (80 years), and Pa J.M. Johnson (father of first Governor of Lagos State, 85).

All respondents believed that wisdom is an expression of truth, a gift from God, ability to see beyond the surface meaning of things. Quickness of the brain/mind to solve problems, alertness, premonition, were seen to be some of its characteristics. They all agreed that wisdom is the application of knowledge and this is corroborated by Bremer in his declaration that:

Our successes on earth depend upon how we organise and wisely direct the knowledge that we have. It isn't what we know that counts; it's what we do with what we know that spells the difference between success and failure in life for us.

... (Bremer, 1971:76).

Bremer goes further to state that:

One might conceivably be a walking library, possess all the known knowledge of a particular subject, graduate from our finest university with honours or be the recipient of impressive academic degrees, but unless one is able to convert these into wisdom and successful achievement through application they are of no practical value.

... (Bremer, 1971:126).

Where Lies Wisdom in Education?

Earlier, in my definition of education, it was made clear that education and schooling are not synonymous, and that schooling (that is from primary school to university) is only one aspect of it. What then is education made of?

Education has three components: formal, non-formal and informal.

Formal Education is the type that takes place within the school system. It is deliberate, planned, financed, staffed, graded and credited with certificate of achievement; it is rigid in philosophy, content, purpose, method and admission requirements. Primary, secondary, tertiary and post-secondary institutions are in this category.

Non-Formal Education is the type of education that takes place outside the formal school system. It is also deliberate, planned, financed; it is usually credited with certificate of achievement; it is however credited with certificate of attendance. It is flexible in its philosophy, content, purpose, method and admission requirements. Included in this category are those organised educational programmes for various categories and ages of people who are either preparing for or missed the formal school system or desire follow-up education after completing the formal school system. Examples of programmes in this category are Day Care Centres, Pre-Primary institutions, Youth Clubs and various adult education programmes.

Informal Education is the type of education that is not deliberate, not planned, not staffed, not graded, not certificated, not rigid in any form. It is in fact, casual, incidental, even accidental education. It goes on from the foetus throughout life in form of home-training and as we interact with friends, relations and colleagues at business meetings, social, political, cultural, religious and other forms of gatherings or, even, at play.

It can thus be seen that schooling is only one of the three components of education. Those who have a Ph.D cannot claim that they are truly educated unless they have had exposure to these other forms of education before they started formal schooling, during formal schooling and since leaving school. Illiterates cannot be regarded as uneducated because they probably have home-training and training in the customs of their community. An illiterate may be more educated in this regard than a graduate! An educated illiterate will, however, perform better if he is also literate.

According to **Plato**, while schools may be necessary to provide rudiments and tools of learning, it is too much to expect them to bring immature pupils to a consciousness of the highest truths. In support of Plato's views, **Gross** declares:

Formal school should culminate not in a finished body of knowledge but in the mastery of a method for the lifelong pursuit of wisdom.

... (Gross, 1982:28)

The paradox of school education is that it is usually given in a generation different from the one in which it is used. This position is clearly put by **Cropley** in the following statement:

... skills, value and attitudes which children are spending their childhoods acquiring, in areas such as knowledge-getting, interpersonal relations, self development and sense of individuality may no longer be relevant to the world they will live in as adults.

... (Cropley, 1978:12)

While the school disciplines the mind of the child, the mind of the adult is disciplined by the activities of everyday life (**Stubblefield, 1981**). School life is protected as artificial life. Children and youth can afford to behave

irresponsibly since they lack experience and responsibility. According to **Adler** the things that make people mature occur after leaving school - getting married, having children and caring for them, taking care of aged parents in sickness and in health, bearing the death of friends, relatives and parents, holding social, political and business responsibilities. **Adler** further states that:

We cannot be mature without being through pain and suffering and grief. These kinds of suffering children are spared but they pay a price for being spared it. They remain immature, irresponsible and unserious

... (Adler, 1982:92).

Longevity

Thus it can be seen that true education as contrasted to schooling is not possible in one's childhood and youth. It is only adults with their maturity, experience and superior capacity for critical thinking that can grapple with the most complex ideas and abstract reasoning characteristic of education. Human beings spend two thirds of their lives in adulthood. This is truer of developed nations than developing ones where life expectancy is short. In an investigation carried out by my post-graduate students in a gerontology course on life expectancy in Nigeria in 1984, involving a survey of obituaries in five major newspapers covering a 20-year period, from 1964 to 1984, it was found that the life expectancy in Nigeria was 49 years. I am aware that such an investigation is inconclusive but it is not too far from previously derived life expectancy in some African countries in 1970, when life expectancy in Nigeria was 44 years. This is corroborated by the latest life expectancy figure of 51 years for Nigeria in 1988 (see Appendix V).

If a man leaves formal school (university) at the age of 25 years and starts to receive life education thereafter but dies at the age of 51 years, how much wisdom could he have acquired through education in 26 years? It was the

concern over this problem that prompted me, since 1984, to organise interview of 267 elders who were over 70 years of age with a view to determining the factors that were responsible for longevity in Nigeria. Also interviewed were 65 other elders who were between 65 and 69 years of age. This investigation was carried out in order to corroborate the findings resulting from investigation in other lands on the search for cure for aging.

Among those interviewed on longevity were the following prominent Nigerians: late Pa Sodeinde, 106 years; Lady Oyinkan Abayomi 93 years; Odu Issac Mbanefo 93 years (of friends of the gods fame in Onitsha); Oba Yesufu Oloyede Asanike, the Olubadan of Ibadan, 90 years; Oba Adegboyega Taiwo, the Asalu of Ikosi, Lagos State, 86 years; Sir Adetokunbo Ademola 86; Pa Oyewumi Oloyede, 86 (my uncle); Oba M. T. Adekoya, the Adegbojo of Odogbamujo, Epe, 82; Sir Mobolaji Bank-Anthony 83, Lady Lande Bank-Anthony 81; Chief Bright Oridami 80, Prince Babatope Akintoye (retired staff of this University, 75), and Pa J. M. Johnson, 85. When asked to identify the factors responsible for their longevity, they all gave several different reasons all of which can be summarised as follows:

1. God's Grace, Faith in God and Closeness to God;
2. Heredity. There was controversy over heredity even though many of the respondents indicated it as one of the reasons for their longevity. We thought that life-style of parents could influence lifespan of offsprings and that lifestyle of husbands could also affect lifespan of wives; in the case of the latter Odu Mbanefo's two surviving wives are 86 years and 76 years old while the wife that died was over 70 years before she died. Lady Lande Bank-Anthony is 81 and still going strong; the husband is 83. Sir Adetokunbo Ademola's wife is still going strong. She is 83 years old. The lifestyle of wives may also have positive influence on the lifespan of husbands but we were unable to observe this phenomenon;

3. Moderation in, but adequacy of, everything - food, drinks, sex, smoking (if at all), sleep, relaxation and exercises;
4. Medical care and regular check up; and
5. Social interaction and positive attitude with a mind free of malice, vengeance, vindictiveness, envy, jealousy, cynicism, worries, stress, tension and alert, kept busy with creativeness, assiduity, and relaxed.

Those who live to old age in good health and financial comfort are happy people and are respected and consulted in our society, as they have custody of wisdom and some of the most cherished ideas and history of our society. Those who live to old age in poor health and poverty are full of complaints about their neglect by government and society.

Although those who live up to ripe age are half expecting death and are ready for it, they still pray for longer life. All those here present, young and old, pray for long life. In other words we all seem to regard aging as our common enemy. In fact gerontologists regard aging as a wasting disease. But can it be cured? This was a question asked in the Newsweek Magazine of April 16, 1973, which carried results of some investigations into aging and the possibility of postponing the degenerative effects of aging and thus of increasing life expectancy.

First, let us quickly review the degenerative phenomena of old age before we examine efforts that have been made and are being made to postpone them!

(a) Physiological Impairments

Our God-given face remains with us till we are 30 or 35 years of age (Vincent, 1961). At that stage man has the greatest physical strength, his visual and sound acuity are at peak; his brain size is at its largest; his heart's size is also at its best. The age of 30 for most people is the

watershed of appearance, strength and acuity. Thereafter wrinkles appear, the skin begins to thin out, the central nervous system slows down pace of movement, the bones are rigid, the brain size reduces, the hair turns grey and thins out, the visual acuity declines, as the lenses of the eyes thicken and become slowly opaque, the hearing mechanism loses some of its sensitivity, muscles shrink, the heart enlarges and joints become stiff and sometimes swollen; the heart pumps blood with diminishing efficiency while the lungs take in less and less vital oxygen; as the kidney function is reduced by half, the bladder's capacity also diminishes and the body increasingly becomes vulnerable to infection and diseases.

Different parts of the body age at different speeds. You may be 40 years old but your heart might be 50 years, liver 35 years, muscles 60 years and brain 99 years. Or they may be younger than your chronological age. The skin is known to give accurate picture of true biological age. For instance, at 10 years of age a two-inch wound will heal in 20 days, at 20 years it will heal in 31 days, at 30 years it will heal in 41 days, at 40 years it will heal in 55 days, at 50 it will heal in 75 days and at 60 the same size wound will take 100 days to heal. The production of disease-fighting antibodies declines as we age (Sinnex, 1973).

(b) Mental Impairments

Those who are in good health and good physical condition require good memory and concentration to learn; they also need to be intelligent to absorb. These three conditions of learning are impaired by aging; the rate and commencement of impairment may vary from one person to another. There is evidence that intelligence may be impaired from as early as the age of 16 years but this impairment may be pushed forward to 35 or even 50 years of age depending to a large extent upon the type of work one does and the intensity of one's use or neglect of it. Dr. Marott Sinnex (1973) agrees that an outstanding symptom of aging is senile dementia - the impairment of reasoning and conceptualisation.

Intelligence is like the engine of a car which requires regular supply of engine oil, radiator water, distilled water, brake fluid, gear oil and regular service to function maximally. For a brain to function maximally too, it requires nourishment - good and moderate feeding and constant use - because it may atrophy for lack of use. The rate of decline of intelligence depends also on the level of initial intelligence. Thus those who were highly intelligent as children and youth may not lose much of it at old age.

Adults already have many responsibilities and continue to accumulate more; these responsibilities make concentration difficult as they tend to compete for our attention. In a learning situation an adult may only concentrate for about 45 minutes before he becomes absent-minded. If an adult has lost concentration one does not expect him to learn much.

There are two types of memory - the long-term memory and the short-term memory. The long-term memory remains intact while the short-term memory suffers impairment. (Oyedeji, 1985).

The inefficiency developed by the short-term memory from about the age of 40 years is not surprising; firstly, because of poor concentration; secondly, because as we advance in age, there is increase in our responsibilities. We meet more people and read more materials, we come across a lot more words than our memory can accommodate. The human brain takes on about six letters of the alphabet in one second and when there are too many words for the memory to absorb, it will have to sort them out, picking the most important ones while others disappear even before having a chance in our memory. The attrition rate increases as we increase our responsibilities.

(c) Any Cure for Aging?

Aging is inevitable but it can be pushed forward. Physically and mentally, we experience impairment. Socially, we may be exposed to good or bad experiences. If we are intelligent and have some perception we are likely to be

able to discern the bad from the good situations and thus accumulate good experiences. Adults who thus accumulate good experiences in their social, political, economic and other interactions do appreciate in sociological maturation and more than make up for the losses sustained through physiological and mental impairments.

Investigations have shown that adults can learn up to any age if their sociological experiences are intensified, if they are not timed in their learning activities, if allowed to participate in the learning process and if the learning is directed towards providing solution to their identified problems or interests.

Psychological Attitude

A high happiness rating coincided with longevity among the members of a study group at Duke University in 1973. Remaining active in some interesting, meaningful social roles has positive physical, psychological and social impact on longevity according to **Dr. Erdman Palmore (1973)**.

Those who lived longest in the Duke University study, have been found to be the ones who refused to give in; if widowed they remarried; if retired they took up hobbies, they took long walks; they usually formed a positive attitude about the prospect of old age in their early years. Chronological years alone are not responsible for bringing about degenerative disorders. **Dr. Joseph Murphy** says that it is the fear of time and not time itself, that has a harmful aging effect on our minds and bodies. He further declared "... the neurotic fear of the effects of time may well be the cause of premature aging" (**Murphy, 1982:212**).

If wisdom is the goal of education, can we attain such wisdom in our educational system?

The Nigerian Educational System

Formal Education

In the period prior to 1955, Nigeria had eight years of primary and six years of secondary education; teacher training was either four years of post-primary or two years of post-secondary. The higher school certificate course also lasted two years in preparation for university education which had both a three-year direct entry programme and a four-year concessional entry programme.

Soon after the division of Nigeria into three regions in the late 40's, a deficiency was noticed in our educational system. All the three former regions realised that there was mass illiteracy and that it affected national growth. Each region decided on its own strategy for reducing the mass illiteracy. The West and the east reasoned that if Universal Free Primary Education (UPE) was introduced (and made compulsory as soon as possible), they would have cut illiteracy at source since the adult illiterates were growing older and they would be eliminated by natural mortality. The then Northern Region decided to adopt a different strategy of dividing the education resources between formal and adult education; it thus emphasised adult literacy programmes in its educational policy and did not launch the Universal Free Primary Education like the other regions.

One principal characteristic of the UPE was reduction in duration of primary education from eight to six years. This reduction was mainly on grounds of equitable distribution of educational facilities to a larger number of school age children in the face of scarce resources. Just about the middle of the 50's also the West African School Certificate Examination replaced the Cambridge overseas certificate; it reduced the duration of secondary education from six to five years. Thus, primary and secondary education which lasted a total of 14 years (8 of primary and 6 of secondary) was reduced to 11 years (6 of primary and 5 of secondary).

In 1976 the Federal Government, in its wisdom, adopted the UPE and put a stamp on the six-year primary education.

The curriculum thus far had been academic in nature assuming that every child who registered for the primary school was capable of and interested in academic pursuit even up to the university level.

The high drop-out rate of as much as 60 per cent that was witnessed in the Regional UPE programmes and the rigid academic curriculum, prompted the review of education which gave birth to the National Policy on Education in 1977, revised in 1981. The policy realised that a reduction of primary and secondary education by three years was unproductive and decided to increase secondary education by one year; thus we have 6-3-3-4 (six years of primary, three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary and four years of tertiary). The curriculum that came out of the policy has been so carefully designed as to take care of varying interests in the Arts, Social Sciences, Sciences, Vocations and Technology.

From 1992 Nine-Year Compulsory Basic Education will be introduced in Nigeria. This is merely a merging of primary and junior secondary programmes into one. Government will thus no longer give official recognition to primary education as terminal.

The current curriculum of primary and secondary education is one of the best that can be found around the world. The merger of the primary and junior secondary education is progressive. But the duration of the senior secondary of three years is rather inadequate, more so that the higher school certificate course has been cancelled. In a way the merger of primary and junior secondary is hardly better than the pre-1955 primary school programme after which the recipients still went ahead to spend at least five years in the secondary school for university entry qualifications. Because of the sheer number of children that will be involved in basic education from 1992, the Nigerian resources will not be adequate to maintain small classes of not more than 35 pupils. The senior secondary is for a select minority that are interested in and capable of preparation for tertiary education; for most of them the first year will be more or less a period of revision of JSS work and introduction to SS work; thereafter they need three

more years of training and 'grilling' to improve on their communication skills and attain a satisfactory level of competence and confidence in the context of self-reliance. I therefore advocate a review of the duration of the senior secondary from three to four years. Four years of tertiary education is adequate if the students have very sound pre-entry preparation.

I believe that children must be introduced to basic education at the age of five years since majority of children are unable to receive pre-school education because their parents cannot afford it. If children are allowed to enrol for basic education at the age of five years, they will complete it at 14. Many of them can proceed to senior secondary for four more years so that those of them qualified can enter tertiary institutions at 18 years. Most of them will be able to complete the four years of tertiary education around their 22nd birthday.

The beautiful curriculum of the current system of education is not being fully implemented because of shortage of funds, of teachers, of workshops and of equipment. I wish to propose (as I have done in several places at different times in the past 12 years) that we should not wait until we can accumulate enough funds, train enough teachers, build enough workshops and procure enough equipment; that time is unlikely in the near future. Rather we should make use of our readily available resources to work the programme. Roadside artisans have workshops and equipment; many of them are also competent enough for our individual and corporate patronage. If you and I can trust automechanics with the dismantling, repair and reassembly of our vehicles, they are unlikely to do much damage to imparting such knowledge to students in practical demonstrations. Their workshops and equipment may not necessarily be the best in the world but they can be standardised and accredited for the purpose of rental, while the master apprentices are employed on a part-time basis for practicals. A similar arrangement can be made for other vocational and technical subjects. Theories in these subjects can be handled by teachers in technical and vocational colleges on a part-time basis, while we embark on training of core teachers in the various subjects.

The skills thus learned by the students in the various vocational and technical subjects can be commercialised by producing goods and services for sale to various communities. This is not new. It has been done at Mayflower School, Ikenne, Aiyetoro Comprehensive High School, Egbado and near perfected at African Church Comprehensive High School, Ikere-Ekiti. Skills such as in shoe making, home economics, electricity, electronics, masonry, woodwork, metal work, automechanics, animal husbandry, fishery, horticulture, hairdressing, fashion design and the like can be commercialised successfully in our environment. Money realised from these ventures can be used (as it has been done in the schools cited above) to supplement government subsidy to the schools. All schools must be turned comprehensive and operate as such to implement our enriched curriculum for self-reliance and national development.

The success of an educational policy and of the schools depends a lot on the environment and the home. The influence of the home and of parental educational qualifications and literacy on the academic performance of children in schools is tremendous. In an investigation carried out in 1984 on the impact of parental educational qualifications on student performance in secondary schools, it was found that children of literates performed better than children of illiterates and that the higher the educational qualifications of parents the better the performance of their children in schools (Oyedeji, 1984).

Investigations on the influence of parental literacy status on registration and retention of pupils in primary education showed that children of illiterates are in the majority among those who drop out of school before completion. In the language of Mark Slaus:

To be sure, Universal Primary Education would in time cut off illiteracy at its source. It appears to be impossible, however to achieve even 70 or 80 per cent enrolment in primary schools in an illiterate community. So long as parents are illiterate it is difficult to secure

the registration of children in schools and even more difficult to keep them there for six years or longer. In short the efficiency of the school system is dependent on some percentage of literate parents in a community.

... (Blaug, 1966:394 in Oyedeji, 1983:124)

Parents of children who go to school must not be neglected in the provision of education.

Adult Education

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Education must go on all the time; if it is not formal, it must be non-formal; informal education never stops for life; non-formal education, after leaving school also never stops for life and it is adult non-formal education that is generally regarded as adult education, to which we now turn our attention.

America's leading classical philosopher to whom we have earlier made reference, Mortimer Adler, commenting on adult education said:

Those of us who are engaged in adult education have been thinking for some time of how to avoid using the word 'adult education' because in the minds of the general public they have such an unfortunate connotation.

... (Adler, 1982:89).

Adult education is generally wrongly conceived as remedial education for the underprivileged who were deprived of schooling by economic circumstance. In this sense, those who were fortunate to have attended school thus exclude themselves from adult education since they see it as being meant for the unfortunate, deprived, marginalised, underprivileged, poor, forgotten people who missed schooling or lacked sufficient schooling in their childhood or youth.

According to Adler, what goes on in school is not education but vocational training. He sees education as consisting in the growth of understanding, insight and

ultimately some wisdom. He believes that school training only prepares children and youth for education. Adler therefore advises that the phrase 'adult education' is inappropriate since only adults can be educated while children and youth are only trainable. In his own words we should use:

"Schooling" to signify the development and training of the young and "education" (without the word "adult" attached to it) to signify the learning done by mature men and women. Then we could say that after schooling, education, not adult education begins.

... (Adler, 1982:89).

Plato and Aristotle, two of the greatest Greek thinkers support this view of reserving education for adults. Plato does not think that any one below the age of 35 or 40 years can benefit from or even understand ideas. Aristotle does not believe that children and youth can understand ethical principles because of their immaturity and because they lack moral and political experience.

Adult education helps individuals to anticipate the physiological and mental changes that they must experience at different stages in their life-span. Where such changes occur without being anticipated, they may have serious negative impact on our health. Adult education programmes of various categories are available and are being run by individuals and corporate bodies throughout Nigeria. These include workers education, remedial classes, professional examinations classes, apprenticeships and the like. They seem adequate for the number of literates in Nigeria. Our major problem in this country today is mass illiteracy. It is affecting everybody but very few people in and out of government are aware of its devastating effect on our economy. It is true that education, even of adults, is very expensive. But illiteracy and ignorance are not only more expensive but they are explosive. Literacy is crucial to development as it gives its recipients the tool for follow-

up reading and enables them participate more meaningfully in political, social and economic activities.

A nation should be run with the collective wisdom of its citizens. But we have found thus far that although wisdom is not the exclusive preserve of only literate people, it is easier for literates to expand their wisdom than for illiterates. Wisdom is expanded through dialogues, discussions, seminars, workshops, travels and reading; illiterates are limited in their preparation for and meaningful participation in such activities that can expand wisdom of the few literates since the number of people they can meaningfully interact with is limited by the mass illiteracy.

Apart from the fact that a large percentage of our population is engaged in farming to produce the food we eat - which is in itself a waste - they are mainly illiterate and government derives little or no revenue from them. If we are able to make most of our adults literate they will certainly be more productive and will be taxable, thus helping to increase government revenue to provide better facilities for citizens. The present situation in which government depends on less than 50 per cent of Nigeria's population for the generation of its revenue is most unsatisfactory and distressing. It is distressing because we have all the tools for transforming this nation into a literate country. The experts are available, the strategies have been designed, the existing facilities and personnel are adequate; all that remains is government determination accompanied with legislation.

Every literate Nigerian can assist in the transformation of our country into a literate nation if we all participate in the training of illiterates. This reminds me of the story of a meeting which was to start at 7.30 p.m. in a large hall twice the size of this auditorium. At about 7.15 p.m. some of the participants had arrived at the meeting venue and found that it was dark. They did not arrange for a generator because power supply was constant in the area until that day. On enquiry it was discovered that a cable was damaged in the area and power was not expected that night. Those who

arrived at 7.25 p.m. were equally disappointed that the meeting might not hold.

At 7.28 p.m. a few of the participants started to drift away in despair but met a few others just arriving for the meeting. The new arrivals were also disappointed but one of them persuaded everybody to return to the hall for the meeting. When they arrived at the venue he appealed to all present not to withdraw just because of power failure because the meeting was a very important one. Participants were impatient even to allow him complete his statement of appeal. He then quickly indicated that he was going to do something about the darkness.

Participants then waited for his miracle. Five minutes later he returned with two bundles of candles and one box of matches. He was greeted with derision. He separated the candles, lit them and placed them in 16 positions in the hall. Participants burst into roaring laughter, wondering what the gentleman thought candle light could achieve in such a big hall. When the laughter continued unabated, he then asked the audience whether they had noticed any difference between the hall before the candle light and the hall since the installation of the candle light.

Most of the participants were honest enough to say that the hall had become partially lit since the candles were installed. He then reminded them that the difference they observed was provided by him alone and appealed to as many of them as were willing, to also go out, procure candles and light them to lighten the darkness in various corners of the hall.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the task of transforming Nigeria into a literate nation is that of all of us who are already literate. The released prisoner in Plato's metaphorical Cave was in darkness but he was led to experience light. Let us all also lighten the darkness around us by joining together to wage war against illiteracy and ignorance. The light we thus provide will not only help those in darkness; it will also widen the narrow light to which we are restricted in the midst of overwhelming illiteracy.

Conducive Environment for Education and Wisdom

United Nations Organisation, through its UNESCO agency, is committed to Education for All by the Year 2,000. Many nations are responding to it with fanfare with the launching of the International Literacy Year 1990. In Nigeria, several conferences have been held to map out the strategies for attaining Education for All by the Year 2,000. I am not in a position to assess our readiness for attaining this goal at this time. But I am worried that there are as yet no serious changes in the status quo to show that we are about to transform our society. True, more money has been allocated to some levels of education but this increase in funding has not matched the increase in enrolment at all levels of education.

No nation is known to have developed beyond the standard of its teachers. After all the personnel in various arms of government and in the private sector have been produced by our educational institutions. However beautiful our plans for attaining Education for All by the Year 2,000, if we forget to pay attention to teachers at all levels we may remain stagnant. Teaching is a more serious profession than the public views it. The nation is heading for calamity (God forbid) if we do not arrest the generally hostile attitude to teaching and teachers. In my experience as Dean of Education in the past three-and-a-half years, an overwhelming number of students who are being trained as teachers are in education because they were unable to gain admission to other faculties. Their parents also give them support. Many of them try various means of transferring from education during the course of their studies. They usually bring their parents to prostrate or kneel down to beg for the release of their children because they never liked teaching. Unfortunately, too, our colleagues in the university, join parents to appeal to faculty of education authorities to release their children to other faculties.

I consider this a very serious matter requiring the application of wisdom by the entire nation in order to avert a serious breakdown of our educational system. Many who cast aspersions on the teaching profession often forget that they

were once taught by teachers and should owe part of their attainment to the contribution of some of their teachers. Members of the public and those in government should focus attention on educational institutions not only for criticism but for a critical reconstruction. In all organisations there are bad eggs. Educational institutions, including the tertiary, are no exception since we are all products of our environment.

Without any further delay, government should review the conditions of service of teachers at all levels to attract to the profession highly capable, dedicated, committed persons in order to improve on the quality of our personnel because it is on this improved quality that our development depends. Brain drain is a reality in our universities but it does not seem government is aware of its magnitude and of its envisaged consequences on our economy. Such consequences are not likely to be immediate, but they are building up.

Our primary and secondary school teachers deserve better treatment since we also rely on them, on a part-time basis, for various adult education and literary programmes. No doubt many of them are not committed but such teachers can be removed once the conditions of service are made attractive.

If teachers are qualified and happy the enriched curriculum in the primary and secondary schools can be worked to produce self-reliant citizens. By now the whole nation has become persuaded that transfer of technology is an illusion. It seems that we are also convinced that we should adopt intermediate technology. The vocational and technical subjects on the curriculum provide a challenge for relevant technology. Locally sourced materials such as completely knocked down vehicles, bicycles and other metals can be used to produce tools and equipment for agriculture, schools and hospitals. Similarly the used plastic objects that litter our environment can be recycled and used to make toys and other recreational materials.

We need to reorder our priorities so that we can make more money available for education since it virtually controls development. We need to free many of our intellectuals from the burden of teaching so that they can have time

to embark on relevant research projects. Lecturers who teach upwards of 10 hours a week cannot undertake serious research along with such a heavy work-load. Professors are supposed to teach only three hours a week so that they can continue research in the field in which they profess. Even as dean I now teach seven hours a week. Heads of Departments teach as many as 18 hours a week. How much research can we get out of these overburdened intellectuals? If more money is made available to employ more lecturers on improved conditions of services, each lecturer will have enough time to embark on research. These research results in various fields constitute the wealth of a nation from which it can draw its wisdom for development.

Department of Adult Education, University of Lagos

I must not end this inaugural lecture without some comment on the Department of Adult Education which was established in this university in 1977, primarily to train graduates of varying disciplines to teach adult education in other universities or to serve in industries. A year after its inception, it was found that undergraduate students also needed some principles of adult education to enable them understand adults when they are called upon to participate in adult remedial or literacy education programmes. Hence the department now has a four-year degree programme like any other discipline but its post-graduate students have nearly always outnumbered the undergraduates. In the current session there are 45 M.Ed students, six M.Phil and 12 Ph.D students in the department.

Since its inception in 1977 the department has produced 12 Ph.D's and one M.Phil. I have had the privilege of supervising 9 of the Ph.D theses thus produced. The department has also produced over 200 M.Eds. The original aims of the department are already being fulfilled. Some of those who obtained the doctorate degree from us are now on the staff of Anambra State University of Technology, Bayero University, University of Port Harcourt and in other tertiary institutions. Some of the others have been absorbed by the

banks as training officers and by MAMSER and DFRRI. At present we have Ph.D students from varying backgrounds: from the Nigerian Army, from our College of Medicine and from ministries of education.

The workload in the department has made research difficult but we have made noticeable impact in various scholarly and professional conferences related to adult education. I must say with all humility that in 1990 I was appointed one of the five UNESCO Literacy Ambassadors for Nigeria. This was in recognition of the activities of the department of which I am a member.

Acknowledgements

I will like to seize this opportunity to thank the numerous Nigerians, young and old, especially those above the age of 70 years that have been interviewed on the subjects of longevity and wisdom; and my various colleagues and my students who were either interviewed or helped to interview respondents for their co-operation and promptness. I must not leave out the graduate assistants and NYSC members in the office of the Dean of Education for their thoroughness not only in administering the research instrument but also for the interviews they carried out and the collation of data and the useful discussions and observations on the data. I am deeply grateful for their dedication and commitment and I am happy also that I have sensitised them to developing interest in the subjects of longevity and wisdom.

My gratitude cannot be limited to the immediate past on an occasion such as this. Several people have made contributions to my life thus far. These include my parents, sisters, brothers and other relations and my immediate family, to whom I am profoundly grateful for their encouragement and co-operation which enabled me to spring up from a lowly beginning to this academic height.

Two major events stand out distinct in my personal and professional life and I wish to publicly thank the dramatic personae in the two drama. When I was in standard six I had attained a formidable physical height of 5' 10"; I was thus

far above the maximum height stipulated for entry to secondary school. In anticipation of my not being allowed entry into secondary school, I attended a Typewriting and Shorthand Institute after the school hours in my final year. I attained 50 words a minute in typing speed. I did also not give up an entry to a secondary school. I took entrance examinations to six secondary schools - Kings College, Government College, Ibadan, Ibadan Grammar School, Ogbomosho Grammar School, Ondo Boys High School and Olu-Iwa College, Ijebu-Ode. I was dropped at the interview stage in all the schools. But in September of that year, my Headmaster received a telegram from Olu-Iwa College asking me to report for a further interview. The telegram read: "Send boy for interview as there is doubt about his height". The school authorities have misplaced my interview record and did not want to lose me since I was 4th on the merit list. At the interview, it was concluded that the school could not risk its closure with the admission of a 'giant' like myself. The kind, time-honoured principal, Late Mr. N. K. Onadipe, however, gave me concessional double promotion from standard six to class II Secondary. Thus I was given an opportunity (which I thought had eluded me) for secondary education which certainly assisted in the preparation for my academic pursuit. I will like to thank Late Mr. Onadipe, though posthumously for his kindness.

The second event occurred after I left the University of Ibadan in 1965 and was teaching at Adeola Odutola College (former Olu-Iwa College). I received a telegram for interview for a position of a teacher of social studies at the United Nations International School. The interview took place at the University of Lagos and I naively thought that a U.N. School was to be established in Lagos. I later discovered that two of my former teachers at the University of Ibadan - Professor A.B. Aderibigbe and Professor J.F. Ade Ajayi - had slotted my name into the interview list, unknown to me. I knew that they were my mentors, counsellors when I was President of the Students Union in the 1963/64 session and it seemed that they were not uncomfortable with my pragmatic radicalism.

When their recommendation for my appointment was threatened by other candidates in New York, a cable from Professor Ajayi put paid to the issue; it read "Oyededeji is the best candidate in Africa". It was most lavishing but I only discovered it in the file months after my arrival in New York for the very crucial position of the first black teacher among 120 others from 70 different countries of the world at the United Nations International School. I taught there for four years and thus had the privilege of post-graduate education in New York. I wish to thank profoundly both Emeritus Professor Aderibigbe and Professor J. F. Ade Ajayi, one-time Vice-Chancellor of this university, for erecting this milestone in my life.

Conclusion

The Vice-Chancellor Sir, principal officers of the University of Lagos, Deans of Faculties, Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies, my Lords Spiritual and Temporal, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, may I end this inaugural lecture with another story. It is the story of a wise old man that lived on top of a hill where he was consulted by young and old from far and near. He was known to be so wise as to have solved all problems that were taken to him. He provided psychological cure even for ill-health.

One day, two youngsters decided to test the wise old man and prove to him that he was not infallible. They took between their palms one young bird each and went up the hill to meet the wise old man.

After an exchange of greetings and comments on the weather, the young boys asked the wise old man to tell them if the birds that they held between their palms were dead or alive. Ordinarily one would have expected the wise old man to dismiss such a question as frivolous and send the young boys away; but he listened to them and asked them to repeat the question which they did.

It was a tricky question. If the wise old man responded that the birds were dead the young rascals would have opened their palms and the birds would fly away and the wise old

man would have faltered; if he said that the birds were alive the young boys would crush the birds between their palms and open their palms to show the dead birds to the wise old man. Either way he would have been fooled by the boys.

But being a wise old man that he was, he drew from his wealth of experience and had a premonition of their mischief. He then said to them: "My boys, my boys, the lives of those birds are in your hands".

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, whether you will live longer than you now are or whether you will grow in wisdom is a matter of attitude. Your life is in your hands.

I thank the university authority for appointing me a Professor of Adult Psychology and Adult Literacy, and I thank the distinguished audience for the honour done me by your presence and for your attention.

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APPENDIX I

EXTERNAL DEBT: 1988

Country	Debt	per Capita	Population
Tanzania	\$ 4,729 million	\$160	24.7m
Zaire	\$ 8,475 million	\$170	33.4m
Nigeria	\$ 30,718 million	\$290	110.1m
China	\$ 42,015 million	\$330	1,088.4m
India	\$ 57,513 million	\$340	815.6m
Cameroon	\$ 4,229 million	\$1010	11.2m
Brazil	\$114,592 million	\$1160	144.4m
Morocco	\$ 19,923 million	\$830	24.0m

(a) The update of the 1987 World Bank Atlas

(b) The World Bank World Development Indicators:
World Development Report 1990.

APPENDIX II

Beginning of Western Education in Nigeria

Type of School	Name of Institution	Date Founded	Location
Primary School	Wesleyan Missionary School	1842	Badagry
Secondary School	C.M.S. Grammar School	1859	Lagos
Teacher Training	St. Andrews College	1859	Lagos (now in Oyo)
Tertiary	Yaba Higher College	1932	Lagos
University	University College (now University of Ibadan)	1948	Ibadan

Source: Oyedele, Lekan. UPE in Nigeria: Its Implications for National Development, Lagos, University of Lagos Press, 1983.

APPENDIX III

ADULT ILLITERACY 1988

Country	Illiteracy %	per capita
Zaire	39	\$170
Nigeria	58	\$290
China	31	\$330
India	57	\$340
Cameroon	44	\$1010
Brazil	22	\$2160
Algeria	50	\$2360
U.S.A.	less than 5%	\$19,840
Japan	less than 5%	\$21,020

Source: World Bank Report 1990 op. cit

APPENDIX IV

LINGUISTIC CONCEPT OF WISDOM

Word	Possible Translation to Nigeria's Major Languages		
	Hausa	Igbo	Yoruba
Wisdom	Wayo, Basira	Akenuche Amamihe Akpauche	Ogbon Imo
Intelligence	Basira, Kwakwalwa	Oguguisi	Laakaye Oye
Common Sense	Hankali	Akpauche	Ogbon ori
Knowledge	Ilmi	Amamihe	Imo
Talent	Kwakwalwa	Akaraka Onyinye amara	Ebun
Thought	Tunani	Echiche	Ero

Source: Interviews with specialists/linguists.

APPENDIX V

Life Expectancy

Country	1970	1985	1988
Nigeria	44	50	51
Tanzania	45	52	53
Ghana	49	53	54
Switzerland	73	77	77
U. K.	72	75	75
U. S. A.	71	76	76
Sweden	74	77	77
Japan	72	77	78
China	61	69	70
Cameroon	49	55	56
Morocco	52	59	61
Brazil	59	65	65
Cote d'Ivoire	46	53	53
Lesotho	49	54	56
Algeria	52	61	64

Source:

- (a) The update of the 1987 World Bank Atlas.
- (b) The World Bank World Development Indicators: World Development Report 1990.

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