

HAUSA PEOPLE OF NORTHERN NIGERIA AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: - This paper discusses about the issues that hinder the development of Hausa people of Nigeria. Their underdevelopment has seriously affected the progress and advancement of their society and the whole of Nigeria in general. Emphatically, this underdevelopment has come with its unwanted consequences on every sphere of the society, its milieu as well as the fact that it takes a heavy toll on the socio-economic lives of the people. It is therefore important that adequate attention is given by researchers in exploring on these issues, raising the awareness for the need to address those issues and proffer feasible redress measures towards the overall enhancement of the society. Hence, it is the intention of this paper to highlight those issues that have hindered the progress of the Hausa community. Conclusively, based on the findings from the studies reviewed, several recommendations were offered that could serve as significant contributions towards solving the developmental challenges of the Hausa people. The said recommendations would lend a lot of benefits to stakeholders, policy makers, academicians and the citizenry in designing the future of the country.

Key Words: Development, Hausa, Nigeria, Socio-Economic

Introduction

This study focuses on one of the integral tribes of Nigeria, the Hausa people. This set of people are key and important in the affairs and development of Nigeria. Hence, their development as a community means a lot to Nigeria as it carries a lot of weight and would contribute greatly towards the overall development of Nigeria. Particularly, Nigeria is said to be the largest country by population in Africa, as well as the country with the largest black population in the world as argued by (Soludo, 2006; Chukwuemeka, 2011). Nigeria carries 25 percent of the total population found in sub-Saharan Africa, thus it can be referred to as representative of Africa itself (Pierce, 2006).

Similarly, Nigeria has three main ethnic tribes which constitute of the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbos. The Hausas are found in the northern part of Nigeria, while the Yorubas are based

in the West, and the Igbos who dominate the region of the Eastern Nigeria (Orugun, & Nafiu 2014). In fact, the Hausas are the largest ethnic group in all of West Africa, and of which 30 percent of all the Hausas can be found in the north, particularly northwest region of Nigeria, an area known as "Hausaland." (Hausa in Nigeria, n.d). The Hausa people mostly reside in West Africa today, and most of them in the northern region of Nigeria. They make up one of the biggest and highly influential indigenous ethnic people in Africa, and whereby their language known as Hausa is spoken by as much as fifty million people, and stands as lingua franca in West Africa (Coles, & Mack, 1991). The Hausas comprise the largest ethnic clan in Nigeria, and this heavy population therefore put them in an inevitable position as partners in trading activities (Limbs & Fort, 2000).

Hence, just as the statement above, the significant relevance of these people towards the development of Nigeria and West Africa in general cannot be overemphasized. Hence, the development of these people remains germane to the contemporary world, and therefore needs to be given special consideration. Essentially, it is worthy to note that several issues have been related with the development of the Hausas.

Issues related to Hausa development in Nigeria

In Obi (2015), it was reported from the figure provided by World Bank Calculation on NBS figure that the poverty rate in Nigeria for 2014 stood at 64.2%, with urban poverty at 52.2%, and rural poverty at 73.4%, while the adult poverty rate was at 48.3%. It was scary that it showed an increasing trend when compared with previous decade (Obi, 2015). More so, Adeniran (2013) has asserted that the rate of poverty at its worst reside in the North –Western region of Nigeria with an average of 71.4 %, North-Eastern states ensuing with about 69.1 %, while, North Central states battle with 60.7 % and less worse at South-South with 55.5 % and South-East with 59.5 %. For the sake of the reader, northern region in Nigeria is the Hausa dominant zone, where the Hausas are originally found.

Similarly, another deplorable indicator accrued to the underdevelopment of the Hausas as reported by Komolafe (2008, April 30) where it is stated that out of the 716 micro finance banks spread across the country: 282 are located in the South West zone; 169 in the South East zone; 106 in the South South zone, 78 in the North Central zone, 48 in the North West zone and 33 in the North East. This skewed spread is likely to affect access to micro financing by the population in the zones where there is low concentration of these banks (Abimbola, & Agboola, 2011)

Again, as noted by Buowari (2015) that 80% of firms do fail within the first 5 years of establishment in Nigeria, and this excessive failure rate of firms has the tendency of causing unemployment, which has consequent negative effect on the state and federation economy. It was earlier observed by Ekpe (2011) equally that the survival rate of some micro-enterprises in Nigeria was low. Coincidentally, according to the report by Ihugba, Odii and Njoku (2013) of firms that shut down in 2009 in the country, Kano and Kaduna states axis from northern appeared to have the highest rate of closure as states after Lagos state (which usually has the largest number of firms in the whole Nigeria). The report identified 176 firms were reported to be closed down in the northern states of Kano and Kaduna manufacturing zone.

It is worrisome that the Hausa people in northern part of Nigeria seem to be lagging in terms of socio-economic development, as the region is considered with the highest rate of poverty and unemployment, least educated as well as more illiterates, more homeless kids and street urchins (*almajirai*), more gender disparity with females being subdued in almost every spheres of the society, higher vulnerability to disease, and many of these negative impacts. This is quite paradox considering the fact that the Hausa people are known to have been entrepreneurially inclined for a long time, and entrepreneurship has been their sole profession right from time immemorial. As Louis and Osemeke (2017) highlighted that since the time of British imperialist activity in Nigeria, the Hausa people have defied the colonists' attempt to westernize their societies in terms of education, lifestyle, system of governance, administration as well as religion.

Colonialism is equally to be blamed for the backwardness of the Hausa people in the society. The reason being is that despite the contribution of the crafts made by the Hausas creativity to the Nigerian economy before colonialism, however, as Ologunwa, (2014) lamented that colonialism had reverse effect on the ingenuity and creativity of the Hausa people to advance in their craft skills and technology.

Essentially, when talking about development, in this sense, development is seen from the perspective of some economic indicators such as the Gross National Product (GNP) that contributes to a country's attainment of developed and underdeveloped nationhood status, which differentiates between the less developed and the developed ones. Similarly, indices such as poverty level, inequality and unemployment, rate of political stability and economic crisis are considered part of the indices that could widen the gap between developed and less developed countries (Obi, 2015).

The Characteristics and Position of Hausas in the Nigerian context

The Hausa culture and the environment is basically based on Islamic settings, though a very small percentage of Hausa could be found as Maguzawa (animist mostly) (Coles, & Mack, 1991).

Today, perhaps 25 million Hausa-speakers live in northern Nigeria (Ogundiran, 2012). The Hausa community and its culture are said to be complex in nature possessing different aspects of life that are on the extremes: whether in urban and rural settings, agriculture and highly specialized craft production etc. The Hausaland has been a melting pot of commercial activities, civilisation as well as a cosmopolitan centre for a long time; where the Hausa traders would travel all over the places from north, to east and also West Africa, and also on pilgrimage sojourn to the Hajj to Mecca.

Importantly, Islam has remained the creed of the Hausas, which has made their connection with the Arabs in Islamic matters and religious activities closer (Gandu, 2016; Ologunwa, 2014). Their major occupation remains trading, agriculture and small-scale commerce (Louis, & Osemeke, 2017). The introduction of Islam into Hausa land has really influenced their material and non-material culture in terms of family matters, clothing, arts, architecture, housing, and human habitation, occupation, and tradecrafts (Muhammad, 1989; Zalanga, 2000).

The Hausas have been heavily involved in long distance trading for many centuries. Traders exchanged gold from the Middle East for leather, crafts, and food. Hausa communities can also be found in other West African nations such as Chad, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast (Hausa in Nigeria, n.d). Hausaland is one major area in the whole of Africa where the seclusion of adult females is strictly practised as a cultural norm. In particular, the emirates of northern Nigeria are at the forefront of enforcing the strict compliance with purdah in contrast to most Islamic societies in Africa, including the Arab north.

The Hausa community in Kano is based on a patriarchal setting that bears a deep-rooted male characterised head of family affairs, where the men carry the most burden in taking care of the family's financial, feeding, security, health, and also educational needs which was being imposed on them by Islamic right (Zakaria, 2001). Nevertheless, the Hausa community is really an encouraging ground for the women to be actively engaged economically in their homes (Zakaria, 2001). However, despite their adherence to seclusion norms, Hausa women, especially in Kano, sometimes conduct international business

transactions. They often embarked on international business trips occasionally during seasons of Islamic pilgrimages to Mecca, which is considered as a reasonably smart avenues for achieving spiritual exaltation and personal business gains concurrently. Quite recently, it has often become a practice of the Hausa women who are financially stable to get actively engaged in international business transactions with mostly Muslim dominant countries of the Middle-east. (Zakaria, 2001). Equally, Zakaria confirmed that the untold productive economic activities of home confined Hausa women contributes significantly towards GDP in Nigeria. However, Muslim women are often relegated and assumed to be pitiable members of the society with marginal and counterproductive positions (Coles 1991). Although some scholars like Hill (1982) held the notion that Hausa women home restriction in the northern part Nigeria as a "terrible restriction of human liberty", other scholars Callaway (1987) however argued that women being subjugated which is attributed to the Hausa region in Nigeria is a phenomenon that is being pervasive in almost every society.

Equally, another setback prominent in the practice in business affairs in the northern Nigeria is the method of apprenticeship adopted there by Hausa entrepreneurs which does not specify time span within which the apprentice would gain the needed skills and knowledge for self-development needed for self-independence, unlike the Igbo entrepreneurs who have that embedded in their policy of apprenticeship (Halliru, 2013).

Similarly, the employment of female workers in formal organisations was regarded by male workers as bizarre act. In Kano, Muslim men employing are quite careful and hesitant in taking female employees due to the cultural and religious challenge because of that decisions (Zakaria, 2001).

Comparison of the Hausas with other tribes in Nigeria

Prior to British colonial era in Nigeria in the late eighteenth century, the Arabs have had their base in the northern region of Nigeria through the sub-Saharan trade which paved way for them to settle in the region as they found the suitable ground to propagate the Islamic religion. When the Britons arrived in Nigeria, they settled in the south-western part of the country (Yoruba land) before moving down to the south east (Igbo land). The British came with their Western education which the Yoruba embraced. This Western education accompanied by technology and missionaries enabled civilisation in Nigeria than in the Arabs that settled in the North. This makes the Yoruba to be the most educated people with Western education in Nigeria (Osemeke, 2013).

However, the first key social consequence of British colonial rule on Nigeria was the uneven distribution of Western education between North and South (Zalanga, 2000). Equally, the ramifications of indirect rule in Northern Nigeria for the country as a whole was that it involved little development, as well as less social, economic and political transformation in the Northern part of the country, meanwhile the opposite was what was observed in the Southern part of Nigeria. The effect of this exacerbated the differences between Northern and Southern Nigeria that were already in existence during the colonial period.

Equally, given that throughout the world, western education as a source of enlightenment used by the Europe since the era in 18th century, had been a force that is paramount inducing social change and advancement up till to the contemporary time. Therefore, it is seen that the British did a huge disservice to the Hausas in Northern Nigeria by not enlightening them and equipping them with the right mindset and vision of the future as well as the actualization of that purpose. While, they ridiculously made them feel contented with the idea of maintaining status quo and their culture and sense of high political aspiration to guide their vision.

Right from history, the southerners have been viewing the Hausas contemptibly as engrossed in traditions and extremely conservative, unlike them that have got more adapted to the advanced modern knowledge benefited from the colonialism (Limbs & Fort, 2000). Whereas, the Hausas from the north even though they were considered as backward in industrial development, however, they regard the southerners particularly the Igbos as people without some faith and barbaric in their behaviours (Limbs, & Fort, 2000).

However, a large number of the industrial companies established during the colonial period were concentrated in the Southern Nigeria. This has made the Southerners to be accustomed and better exposed to modern civilization than the Northerners (Osemeke, 2013). Similarly, the instance after independence of Nigeria in 1960 and it took English language as the official language, it was apparent that comprehension and mastering Western education would place those who acquired it at a vantage in the society because most of the business transactions were carried out using English Language. Eventually, the discovery of this phenomenon by the Northerners, they equated it that the Southerners that have ditched their cultural heritage embracing new faith in Christianity due to the influence of western education, hence, the Hausas objected and declined the western education revolution (Adigun, 1995). They had the belief that absorbing western education would amount to less devotion in their Islamic belief. Therefore, the effect of that perception made most of the

Hausas to be the less educated in terms of Western education in Nigeria (Louis, & Osemeke, 2017).

It was said to be that the Hausa people of the north valued ruling or occupying prestigious political position as the climax of their social status, while, relegating economically or entrepreneurial derived achievement to a level before that. Yet due to the preponderance of culture of patron-client relationship within the Hausa community, hence, achieving progress in business was dependent upon patronage to people in power, rather than entrepreneurship (Smith 1965). However, it was a different case with the Igbos where they valued real economic entrepreneurship success as the highest rank of social status, which accentuates a particular individual's skills and achievement orientation (Zalanga , 2000).

Even though, the Hausas were more literate in earlier times unlike the other tribes of Igbo (Zalanga, 2000), however that did not give them the leverage to advance more in terms of development and economic activities in recent times. The colonial bureaucracy was larger in the South than in the North, meaning more employment opportunities in the South because the headquarters of federal departments were in Lagos, and the federal central bureaucracy was in Lagos. The Southern government secretariat was also located in the South. The legislative council and Supreme Court were also in the South, in Lagos. The headquarters of all foreign companies were in Southern Nigeria.

When we talk of Igbos from Southern Nigeria, they can be seen to possess some unique attributes that put them apart such as: confidence in their self- efficacy, with zeal and being optimistic when pursuing success; striving for fast results, urging them to constantly evaluate their performance to ascertain whether they are on the right track or not; choice to go for moderate risk, aiming mostly based on a calculated risk, but which otherwise perceived as unsurmountable goals by others; eager to take on responsibilities, being in charge of own resources in pursuit of accomplishing their goals; very energetic making them exert the incredible effort required to venture into business; having the vision that push them to explore more opportunities, not capitalizing on past successes or failures; good in organizing skills, enabling them to designate duties among people in executing their actions towards the vision; zeal succeed, though money making is part of the motivation, but its not the prime aim; being committed in their activities and overcoming obstacles that seem insurmountable to others; tolerance of ambiguity to sort out information in making decisions; being flexible, with the ability of to adapt to changing customer demand (Orugun & Nafiu, 2014).

Furthermore, the economic activities of Igbos all over the country have accounted for the excellent interpretation of their skills. The Igbos were able to capture and conquer the economy in South Western Nigeria from the British after they left due to their shrewd mind, business skills and strategies nurtured through progressive business mind, not through compulsion. In particular communities such as the Oguta/Egbema area in Imo State of south eastern Nigeria, children who are descendents of that community within the age of five form their peer groups up to the age of maturity. They therefore carry out several social work for the community, while they strive to compete in various ways within their peers as they all aim for the best. It is an advantage as the competition supports the ground for entrepreneurial activities. The intended aim is to improve the status and well-being of the members. They gather resources together and try to assist their age group members facing some financial constraints. In some cases, the members create a platform of providing a soft loan to the group for anyone ready to venture into small scale businesses which is usually paid back in instalments with the accrued affordable interest (Onodugo & Onodugo, 2015).

Equally, according to a study done in Nigeria by Maliga (2013) involving the ethnic groups in Nigeria, the study found that Igbos being the 3rd largest ethnic group in Nigeria controlled 74% of the business stakes in hundreds of trillions of naira Lagos State which is the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria. While, the Hausas investments own are just 5% by Hausa/Fulani, then 15% owned by Non-Nigerians, meanwhile other ethnic Nigerians apart from the three main tribes of Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba, owned 5%, and 1% went to Yorubas. Equally based on the statistics it showed that in Lagos Igbos investment is not less than N300 trillion; it is double of that in Abuja at about N600 trillion; In Kano and Kaduna, Igbo investment run up to N10 trillion respectively, while in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States, Igbo investment run into N5 trillion respectively; In Plateau State, Igbo investment is hovering over N15 trillion. One of the major arguments being used to explain why African countries, including Nigeria, have not been able to develop, or more appropriately, have been acquiring development hiccups, is that this set of people have not been given enough chance to participate in the development process.

To the Igbos in Nigeria, as put by Aboyade (1976), they hold the notion that every able bodied and mentally fit person, is gainfully employed and strives to attain optimal self-accomplishment. On the contrary, laziness and reluctance to obtain maximum utilization from the human force are widely reprehended by the values and traditions of the Igbo society. Hence, the Igbo man could be described as sociable, ever dynamic and adaptive, advocator,

competitive, one who finds pride in hard work, with self-stimulation, audacious, confident about his/her opinion primarily, upright due of his individualistic disposition, who strives solely on his own to excel in life. An Igbo person forfeits his comfort zone in his quest to achieve his aim in earnest, not minding the nature of the job, from doing petty jobs or providing services that are considered lower class people jobs, and try to generate his income to be able to create his own venture (Ugochukwu, 2016).

Hence, when comparing Hausa with the other tribe of Igbo, it is quite obvious that the Igbos have been advantaged with some qualities and positions in the society that place them at an advantage over the Hausas from the north and in the advancement towards development.

Conclusion

In essence, for any society keen on making progressive efforts towards development, it is imperative that the said development is all inclusive where it embraces and touches on all members of the society in the pursuit of the developmental plans. The supposition is not to offer affirmative action as was usually the succor given to the disadvantaged group. This was the case that was observed in countries like Malaysia that was offered to the Malays to develop them equally wise to the level of other races in Malaysia. However, in the Nigerian case, the Hausas are believed to be equally capable and competent to purge ahead in the developmental efforts of the society and contribute their quota in the way to attain socio-economic advancement and well-being. Thus, the upliftment of the Hausa people and their community to be at par with other societies in terms of education, training, occupational opportunities, industrial exposure and so on be given due consideration.

Whereas the opinion of Barkow (1972) that the whole population in Hausaland constitutes about half of female composition and due to their comparatively low economic activities in the standard open market may cause societal retardation and degradation, even though was opposed by Zakaria, (2001) that the domicile economic transactions carried out by the Muslim Hausa women which are often ignored can shun the standard formal market and make massive inputs to the economic development of that society. Hence, the female populace of the north are one huge human resource to explore, include and empower for the development of the society. Therefore, policy makers can borrow a leaf from the Malaysian context on how to strategise to include and embrace the women folks in the administrative

affairs of the society for them to wax stronger in channeling their energy towards more productivity and society enhancement.

Ultimately, as opined by scholars recently, Muslim nations are experiencing an increase in women's economic opportunities not because of change in ideology basically, but for the exact motive that the non-Muslim nations had been working towards them. It is clear that in a competitive free open global business environment, it is hard for a country to achieve economic significance when almost or over fifty percent of its potential labour force or potential entrepreneurs are restricted in contributing their economic potential, or excluded from entrepreneurship (Zapalska, Stodder, & Wingrove-Haugland, 2017).

Entrepreneurship is one key variable that its development could serve as panacea to the plight and provide the needed succor towards the improvement of the Hausa society. Equally, the method of apprenticeship adopted there by Hausa entrepreneurs which does not specify time span within which the apprentice would gain the needed skills and knowledge for self-development needed for self-independence need to be revised. The method used by the Igbo entrepreneurs who have that embedded in their policy of apprenticeship could serve as a guide to employ by the Hausas as well (Halliru, 2013).

In essence, the Hausa people constitute a highly significant portion of the Nigerian population, hence the future of Nigeria and its development depends largely on the development of these people. Therefore policy makers, stakeholders, academicians, researchers and governments alike need to give emphasis on the advancement and developing these people.

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