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# **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF MIGRANT SETTLERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AKURELAND FROM 1945 TO 2015**

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## **Abstract:**

Abstract Records of migration constitute a greater part of human developmental phases. This, however, gives credence to the fact that societies don't develop in isolation. From time immemorial, various communities have been known to depend on other communities not just for survival but also for social-cultural, economic, political and even infrastructural developments. The interdependence of communities on themselves is usually attributable to various push and pull factors. In the case of Akure, the capital of Ondo state Nigeria, cocoa stands out significantly amidst other agricultural cash crops, as a pull factor for intending migrant settlers. Economic attractions contributed largely to the influx of migrants into African societies and European, right from pre-colonial times. This work is hence, poised to interrogate the socio-economic contributions of migrant settlers to the development of Akure land, especially those who came purposely because agricultural purposes. This research work relied on both primary and secondary data Key words: Communities, Agriculture, Cocoa, Migrants, Development

## **Introduction**

The relationship of ancient people of Akure and migrants is as early as the history of the town. History has it that the people who are known as Akure indigenes were originally migrants themselves. Substantial number of the migrants came into Akure in the pre-colonial era while the colonial and post-colonial era also saw to the coming of more migrants into the ancient town.<sup>i</sup>

Point needed to be made that in the pre-colonial traditional African societies, little attention was given to migrants. According to Musa and Adamu the indigenes/settlers dichotomy became more pronounced in the era of colonialism especially in traditional African societies.<sup>ii</sup> Nnoli pointed

out that during colonialism, the colonialists began to categorize African linguistic groups as tribes and attribute to them differences in culture, environment and abode based on artificial partition of boundaries.<sup>iii</sup> By virtue of this early colonial categorization therefore, one would agree with Osadolor that Colonial conquest had altered the pattern of inter-group relations that had existed between the diverse cultures and people in the Nigerian geographical area.<sup>iv</sup> Nnoli observed that British policy seized every opportunity to spread the myth and propaganda that (people or natives that make up what is now Nigeria) were separated from one another by great distance, by difference of history and traditions, and by ethnological, tribal, racial, political, social and religious barriers.<sup>v</sup>

Premised on the fore-going, Akure like any other Nigerian community experienced the indigene/settler dichotomy. Some of the migrants who came to Akure resided temporarily in the town to carry out one activity or the other while some made the community their permanent abode. The factors responsible for the influx of migrants into Akure included but not limited to some push factors such as, economic issues, escape from socio-political upheavals, hard natural physical conditions such as drought, flood, adventure, expansionist agenda etc. The pull factors included the political organization of Akure town which encouraged migrants to settle within the town.<sup>vi</sup> It is important to note that the settlers were also attracted to the town because of the city's customs and traditions that did not forbid strangers from mixing with indigenes for socio-political and economic interactions. Not only that, Akure had an open-door policy of accepting new comers especially those who dared hard work, looking for economic opportunities. These categories of people, apart from Yoruba settlers in the town include, the Ebira, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani, Igede, Ogoja, Gara, Takum just to mention a few. As earlier mentioned, the town offered more opportunities for laudable achievements. As a result, industrious artisans, farmers, traders as well as ambitious able-bodied men and women looking for security and better economic opportunities in farming and trading activities migrated to Akure and settled down. Another notable factor that contributed to the influx of migrants included the availability of the opportunity of getting white-collar jobs.<sup>vii</sup>

Economic induced reasons appear to be the summary of all the factors highlighted for the migration of people into Akure and these economic reasons are traceable in one some ways to cocoa production. Nearly all the cocoa migrant workers studied, had at least an economic reason

for migration. This finding agrees with the research of Prothero among migrant workers in Sokoto, cited in Kenneth Little's West African Urbanization. Prothero gathered that 52 percent of the migrant workers were seeking money; 16 percent were seeking for food; and a further 16 percent were there to trade.<sup>viii</sup> Significantly enough some of the migrant workers in Akure admitted to the fact that Akure economic development was far in advance of that in which the migrants originated.<sup>ix</sup>

Migration into Akure land is also encouraged by the diversification of Akure economy, because construction of new roads, public works, location of Native, colonial and post colonial authority headquarters in Akure, development of cash crops and petty trade all offer employment opportunities. Not only are there host of occupations and ways of getting a living alternative to the traditional system, but all to some extent as Fortes Meyer has pointed out in his study of Ashanti, 'labour, enterprise and skill are now marketable in their right anywhere in the country'. Since the general atmosphere of social change itself is generative of mobility, moving around in modern conditions in Akure is a response to the present instability of all social norms which springs in part of from the cocoa trade and its resultants effects, in particular the advent of a money economy.<sup>x</sup>

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

In the context of this research work, the farming factor, especially as a result of introduction of cocoa would be looked into. Emphasis should be made that the introduction of cocoa did not only attract the cocoa farmers, but also cocoa traders, cocoa processing industries and even clerical and administrative officers (these set of people were initially comprised majorly of the White Settlers). In other words, cocoa production, right from planting up to consumption served as a great pull factor of migrant settlers into Akure.

Migrant settlers' presence could be felt in almost all facets of Akure as a whole. As a matter of fact, their presence and impact are not just limited to the farming communities where the farmers carry out their farming activities. The impacts are also noticeable in the urban areas of Akureland. The roles of the migrant farmers in the political, socio-economic, infrastructural and cultural developments of Akureland cannot be underestimated.<sup>xi</sup>

## **Contributions of the Migrant Farmers on the Political development of Akureland**

Findings revealed that the migrant settlers were actively involved in the political activities of Akure right from the pre-colonial era. Although, during the pre-colonial era, no evidence exists of settlers occupying any position of authority at the level of Deji-in-council and not even at the rural area level. As much as the settlers are not directly in charge of the administration of their communities, they contributed to the political administration of such areas by ensuring that cordiality is maintained amongst the dwellers.

The settlers in the various rural communities including those in Akure town are organized into groups which are basically socio-cultural in composition but at the same time having political undertones. As much as the settlers are not involved in the overall administration of Akureland, the hometown associations (of migrants with Nigerian descent) play numerous roles in the political administration of their diasporas' settlements. Interactions with various migrants groups in different communities revealed that their hometown associations are structured in such a way that there are involved in the political administration of their communities.<sup>xii</sup> At their level, they have their own tribal rulers, though not in any way as strong as that of the host communities' indigenous rulers. Rather, migrant settlers' rulers are subservient to the indigenous rulers.<sup>xiii</sup>

For smooth running of the Akure community, the migrants' rulers are often consulted in taking decisions that could affect the overall interest of the community. To the migrant settlers, their ruler is equivalent to their king in diaspora. Titles such as *Baale Ebira*, *Seriki Hausawa*, are found among the settlers in Akureland. The term king was never used for them. At the rural and metropolitan city of Akure, the migrant settlers' involvement in politics stops at advisory roles to the *Baale* or Deji-in-council as the case may be. The paramount ruler has the exclusive right to determine the political tone of the community which the migrants and their rulers must abide with, else dire punishment is faced.

The involvement in politics by the migrants in colonial era is very similar to what was obtainable in the pre-colonial era. The significant difference was that the overall authority was transferred to the colonialists. In agreement with the position of Llyod the Yoruba, just as it was in Akure town, was in the past, governed by an *Oba*, elected from the ruling lineage by the chiefs, and his chiefs, who were either elected by the members of their lineages or had risen

through the grades of title societies by election through their members and the payment of fees. The British administrators from the beginning of their rule retained this indigenous structure, which they found quite virile. They did of course make the *obas* subordinate to themselves. Interestingly, the king still maintained some level of authority over the town for as long as the interest of the colonial interest was not affected. The colonial authority had no special direct link with the local migrant settlers while the British colonialists, who themselves were migrant workers were never subjected to traditional authority. This created identity crisis for the political development of not just Akureland but the whole of colonized African societies

The post-colonial political administration of Akureland had its foundation laid basically during the colonial era. The local migrant settlers in Akure brought about not too significant political changes into the political scene but the White settlers (Europeans) made tremendous impacts. Though the Europeans ceased being the 'Lord' over Nigerians after the 1960 independence, their colonial administration was retained by the Indigenous government. The pre-colonial political administration where the traditional authority was the all-in-all was never reverted to. The colonialist bifurcated state mentality, still holds sway. This has really eroded the core political administration of the Kingdom.

Theoretically for instance, Deji-in-Council, claims to still maintain the overall political authority over Akure kingdom, but in actual sense, it is not so. The king's authority is subjected to the overall authority of the government- which was actually the creation of colonialism. All traditional rulers from the *baale* of villages up to the *Deji* who is the paramount ruler of the kingdom see the authority of the government as the supreme. Unlike what was obtainable in the pre-colonial era, the authority of the king is no longer final. Any aggrieved indigene/settler/community now has the constitutional power to challenge the authority of the king in under the civil law. The on-going court cases instituted by some communities such as Oba Ile, Isolo and Isikan against the Deji-in-council are typical examples.

Another eroded traditional value which has to do with the administration of Akure is the method of selection and appointment of a new *Deji*. The appointment of a new *Deji* is now subjected to the confirmation of the government, it no longer stops with the Kingmakers who hitherto nominate, confirm and install a new king. They can only nominate and install. The governor of the state having approved the nomination of the kingmakers (he has the constitutional right to do

otherwise) presents the staff of office to the king-elect. Similarly, the state government has been vested with the power to depose the king. A good instance was Oba Oluwadare Adesina Osupa III the 45<sup>th</sup> Deji of Akureland who was deposed and banished from Akureland by Governor Olusegun Mimiko in 2014 for violating criminal law of the Ondo state government.

### **The Influence of migrant workers on the economic development of Akureland**

Before the introduction of cash crops especially cocoa, Akureland could be regarded largely as an agrarian community where farming activities were carried out at subsistence level. Crops such as various species of yam (*dioscorea villosa* sp; *oppositifolia*- Asian Yam; *Rotundata*-White yam; *Cayenensis*- golden yam; *Alata*- Water yam), pepper, fruits, cassava, vegetables etc, were cultivated using basically crop rotation method. Other crafts such as carpentry, blacksmithing, masonry, were involved in by the people of Akureland. Apart from agriculture and crafts, the people were also involved in buying and selling especially by the women. Evidence showed that the people of Akure were involved in long-distance trades to places like Bini kingdom, Taraba and Oyo. Local games (*eran igbe*) and kolanut were the major items of the long-distance trade of Akure people. At the local markets, items of trade included agricultural products, palm-oil, salt, locust beans, farming implements, herbs and several household items.

All factors of production were met at local level. Huge capital was not necessarily needed to start off any form of economic activities. Crude implements such as cutlass and hoe were used as farming tools. Usage of farm machinery and agricultural chemicals (herbicides, fertilizers) were alien. Labour, as it shall be discussed later was basically “free”.<sup>xiv</sup> All these took another dimension with the introduction of cocoa, later colonialism and the outbreak of the World Wars.

Cocoa production at every of its stage, attracted numerous workers. All of the stages from planting to consumption has always been labour intensive. Although cocoa was introduced into Akureland before colonialism, the colonial period expectedly witnessed the coming of cocoa-induced migrants. Colonial Nigeria was incorporated into the British capitalist system as an appendage to meet the industrial raw materials requirements of factories in the Mother Country and for the sale of Metropolitan industrial products and consumables. To meet the first aim, that is, the desire for industrial raw material, Onyekpe postulated that the British government and its colonial state in Nigeria emphasized agricultural production at commercial scale.

The 1940s witnessed greater expansion. British demand for the cash crop rose steeply during the Second World War. In particular there was aggressive colonial campaign in cocoa production. The trade in cocoa in Akure actually experienced a boost in the colonial era due to the fact that cocoa was one of the reasons why the Europeans colonized Nigeria as earlier stated and Akure, a Yoruba town, had a fair share of colonialism in that it falls under what Lloyd referred to as Cocoa belt of Nigeria. British rule and economic development resulted in little displacement of population settings of Akureland. The British economic development created room for larger cocoa production for eventual export hence the need for more hands beyond the traditional use of “free” labour resources of members of the households, friends, in-laws and members of rotational labour cooperative units. The migrant workers came in handy.<sup>xv</sup>

Migrant workers contributions were invaluable in all the stages of cocoa production. The clearing of site, planting, weeding, fumigation, pruning, harvesting, pudding, fermentation sun drying, packaging, storing, standardization, selling up to exporting stage require a lot of intensive labour. Migrants with African descent from places like Ogoja, Taraba, Jukun, Igede, Tiv, Ibo and some with Yoruba ancestry from Oyo, Ekiti and Osun states are found in their numbers at different farming communities working majorly in cocoa farms as paid workers or, on very rare occasions as cocoa farm owners. On the other hand, white settlers, who are more educated and sophisticated handle the standardization, purchase and export stages. The reasons for these are obvious. The produce must meet the standard of their demands in their Mother Country, and the purchases, to ensure that they are not short-changed- the reverse has always been the case.

The influx of migrant workers (Whites and Blacks) into Akure due to cocoa production introduced other dimensions in the economy of the town. First was the advent of money economy or better put, neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is an economic process that distrusts the state as a factor in development; it is a nineteenth century philosophy that has continued to be repackaged, its latest form is monetarism. It believes that market mechanism is the most efficient allocator of productive resources and, therefore, to have an efficient and effective economy, forces of demand and supply must be allowed to play a leading role. This changed economy of Africa from communalism to capitalism and, lately, neoliberalism. All economic activities hitherto embarked upon basically to meet immediate needs changed to avenues of making money. In other words, money became the motivating factor of engaging in economic activities.

The economy became diversified because activities such as the construction of roads, public works, construction of public buildings, opening of offices development of cash crops and trade all offer opportunities of employment. Not only are there a host of occupations and ways of getting a living alternative to the traditional system, but to some extent, labour and skill are now marketable in their own right. Change of employment became the other of the day provided the new employment will offer more cash.

Production for export and sale of imported European commodities increased opportunities in commerce, craft and foodstuff production for an increasing coherent expanding and magnetized economy. As a consequence, new financial institutions such as banking and insurance emerged. Some banks whose establishments predate independence, notably First bank and Union Bank still exist in Akure. Many other branches of banks have since been established in Akure. Examples of such include, Skye, Zenith, UBA, FCMB and so on. Existing social institutions were adopted to organize the regulation of access to land, the mobilization of savings and credit facilities and encouragement of a modern (wage) labour force. The political economy of the colonial state was understandably limited by its rationale, it was intended to subjugate, dominate and exploit the people and their resources. It was deliberately and rationally orientated outwards by the requirement of the British colonial interest. The colonialists concentrated only on economic activities beneficial to the colonial state, and were thereby disarticulated domestically. It promoted the interest of Akure center as their base of activities. The rural areas and adjoining villages, where cocoa is not produced were neglected.<sup>xvi</sup>

The colonial political economy was therefore grossly uneven. It was also dichotomized into the state of public and private sectors, with the former as the instrument for the promotion and development of the latter. The indigenous craftsmanship of Akure people were literally mangled as the people were 'discouraged' from engaging in some crafts. This was done either by importing superior quality or outright discouragement. For example, the introduction of orthodox medicine and establishment of hospital almost pushed Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) and herbalist out of relevance. Another good example is the manufacture of local wears, shoes and cloths. The import of these things also stifled the indigenous wears makers. By so doing, the people's attitude to entrepreneurship and commerce was mangled and they were denied the right incentives to make risk - worthy ventures and decisions worth taking. The big conglomerates of



United African Company, UTC, G. B. Olivant, etc. dominated every facet of the economic and commercial life as at that time, thereby making any attempt by small indigenous marketing firms to acquire experience and expertise, and develop marketing techniques and practice very difficult. According to Ogwo and Nkammbe, one of the consequences of the monopoly which the companies extorted from the people was that it deprived local inhabitants of the benefits of free trade and the advantages of choice in a competitive market. Nigerians were not allowed or appointed to occupy senior managerial positions in most of the aforementioned companies which would have helped them to acquire the techniques and skills necessary to design a roadmap for indigenous marketing system. Those who were employed occupied lower, non-managerial positions that enabled them to perform routine work. They did not carry out planning tasks or take decisions for the companies. They were cleaners, messengers, clerks, bookkeepers and, at most, foremen. The colonial machineries operated a philosophy of small and low-cost administrative structures, with the implication that minimal resources were allocated to the development (through training and research) of the human capital used in running the colonial administration. “The impact of this low investment in human resources was the eventual creation of a workforce only good enough to carry out routine and non-creative tasks or functions.

As it shall be discussed later, the introduction of cash economy eroded to a large extent kinship way of living where kinsmen depended largely on themselves for survival. Individualism was introduced. An individual now yearns to make more money for himself and his immediate family. More generally, a person requires money in order to live in a ‘civilized’ way, to buy good clothes, manufactures products and acquire modern housing. It is also needed for taxes, to pay dues to local associations, to educate oneself or one’s children, and so on.<sup>xvii</sup>

Another economic development was the creation of a new class of people who combine various means of economic ‘survival’. Traditionally, people of Akure were not known to be having more than one source of income. Those who are farmers remain as farmers, those who were clergies, herbalists, traders, craftsmen, traditional birth attendants, civil servants etc stuck to their occupation. However with the monetization of the economy, people started having more than one ways of making money. Civil servants who have the wherewithal and passion go into farming, seeing a trader who is also a farmer became part of life. Some clergymen became successful entrepreneurs and farmers.

With the growth of the economy, new items of trade were introduced. All forms of productions were targeted at producing at commercial quantity. Some Akure people were able to learn from the colonialist how to go about importing/exporting goods to/out of Akure to/from other towns and even overseas. With the end of colonialism, some prominent Akure indigenes went into importing and exporting business which favourable competed with the foreign companies doing same. Ajayi the Tailor, Olu foams, Ola Oluwa group of companies, Ileri Oluwa Enterprises, OLAM Nigeria Limited and many more are some of the indigenous companies involved in exporting goods from Akure and also bringing in foreign products. This created a class of bourgeoisie.<sup>xviii</sup>

Market system and administration also metamorphosed into greater dimension. The market system which was hitherto under the sole control of the traditional council became too enlarged and sophisticated to be managed by just the royal house. Trading activities now began to take place not at just the market center, as it used to be, but at different places such as point of production, lock up shops attached to residential buildings, individual owned shopping complex and even internet enabled on-line platforms. The implication of this is that market system has slipped out of the firm grip of the traditional council, market associations and even to some extent government agencies.<sup>xix</sup>

Markets peculiar to a particular commodity or groups of persons has also sprung up. Dotting Akureland are now markets where some particular commodities are found in large quantities. For example the *Shasha* market is a market where food condiments such as tomatoes and onions are found in large quantities. Interestingly, the majority of those selling these commodities are from the northern part of Nigeria. Another similar market is the *Sabo* market largely operated by the Hausa/Fulani stock. *Mojere* market specializes on the sale of animals such as goats, rams and cows. *Odo eran* (abattoir) is the market where goats and cows are slaughtered for sale. The Ibos are concentrated along *Arakale* and Oba Adesida roads where they deal majorly in the sales of electronics and other house appliances.

### **The migrants and the socio-cultural development of Akure**

The two categories of migrant settlers being considered— local migrants (Yoruba and Non- Yoruba) and the Europeans – who came into Akure in the period under review contributed distinctly to the socio-cultural development of Akure kingdom. The mingling of the people of

Akure with the two categories of migrants brought about some impacts to her socio-cultural developments. This will be analyzed separately in subsequent paragraphs for clarification.

The socio-cultural impacts of the local migrant could be felt in the language, food, dressing, religion and kinship. Akure people have a distinct dialect. It sounds like Ekiti and Ijesha but it is unique and dynamic on its own. However with the contact with other Yoruba groups like Osun, Oyo and Ijebu, the general Yoruba language, which is more acceptable by the majority of the Yoruba race, is now been spoken more by the people of Akure than the dialect. Similar to this - though minimally, is the traces of 'foreign' languages of majorly Hausa in communications in Akureland. Words, such as the underlisted are now commonly used by the people of Akure;

*Barawo – thief;*

*Alubarika – blessings;*

*Jara –extra; etc*

The impact of the local migrant settlers could also be seen in food consumption. The most popular indigenous food of the people of Akure is pounded yam and *egusi* (melon) soup with palm-wine. Various introductions of food into the menu of the people of Akure were traceable to the migrant settlers. For instance delicacies like *fufu* (pounded cassava), *abasha*, cassava leaf soup, *banga* soup cocoyam, potatoes and drinks *kainkain*, (locally brewed gin), and *burukutu* were alien to Akureland. Hardly is there any Akure home where some of the above named foods do not feature now.<sup>xx</sup>

Dressing is another area that has been influenced by the migrant settlers in Akure. It should be noted that the indigenous dressing of the people of Akure was not different from what was obtainable in other Yoruba societies. Traditional *buba*, *sokoto agbada* and various types of *fila* for men while those of women included, *awotele* (under wear), *iro*, *buba* and *gele* were the standards of dressing of the people of Akure. This changed, though not totally, when the people started copying the dressing pattern of the migrant settlers especially the ones they put on during occasions. It should be noted that not only the styles changed but also the fabrics used in making the dresses. It is not out of place to see dresses such as *danshiki*, *Jalamiya* (flowing gown) peculiar to the Hausas being worn by both male and female in Akure. Women now wear skirt

and blouse with different fabrics. There are different kinds of caps, alien to traditional Akure society being adorned by men. Such caps include, *Hausa* cap, Ibo red cap, Idoma cap etc. all these caps have their unique fabric, pattern and shapes.

Religion and religious activities of the people of Akure also felt the impact of the migrant settlers. The people of Akure were obviously traditional religion adherents. gods and goddesses such as ogun, sango, Esu, Obanefon, Saponnna, Obatala, imolu, oya etc were worshipped by different sections and compounds in Akure. Their belief system was if the gods are worshipped properly, they in-turn bless the worshipper. In other words, the people being blessed or otherwise is directly proportional to how they are worshipped. However, with the coming of some Migrants from the Northern part of the country, especially the Hausa stock, Islam was introduced. History never recorded it that Jihad of Uthman dan Fodio got to Akure. The migrants brought it. The first family to embrace Islam was the Akoredes. The patriarch of the family Yayi Akorede encouraged by the Hausa settlers was said to have embarked on Holy pilgrimage to Mecca on foot. Now there is hardly no street in Akure without a mosque. Of course with the coming of Islam, converts were won to the faith and obviously new festivals (Eid Maulud and Eid Fitri) were added to the already existing plethora of festivals in Akureland.<sup>xxi</sup>

Another notable aspect of Akure culture that felt the impact of the local migrant settlers was kinship. The bonding of the migrants and newly arrived ones in adjusting to life in Akure gave facelift to the level of kinship that was in existence in Akure. The migrants have a way of staying aloof from the native people of Akure. They organize themselves in such a way that they do not allow themselves to leave the social milieu of their tribal organization throughout their stay. They hardly took part in local life except to pay homage to the local chief during civic occasions. To get this done, tribal associations were established. The result is that instead of weakening tribal consciousness life in the Akure urban environment tends in some respects to make it stronger. The resultant effect of this on kinship in Akureland was inestimable. The bonding of Akure people was improved from being family/compound based to the entire society. Various associations were formed with aims and objectives patterned along the line of the migrants settlers associations but with slight differences. Most notable of the difference is that the associations formed by the natives of Akure are gender based. Examples of such associations include Yeye Club, Jolly sister club, Igbehin Adun Social club, Helpmeet association, Ifesowapo

Sisters' Union etc. Moreover, one can conveniently say that other associations that are not social clubs, including but not limited to landlords' associations, trade associations, can have their origins traced to tribal association formed by the migrant settlers.<sup>xxii</sup>

The coming of European to Akure and their eventual settling down in Akure before and during colonialism was a veritable watershed in the socio-political history of Akureland. Many unprecedented effects took place. There was virtually no aspect of the socio-cultural life of Akureland viz-a-viz education, religion, dressing, language and even inter-personal relationships that did not experience the contact.

Education has been universally accepted as the bedrock and engine of growth. It is a child's passport out of poverty. The highly prized possession that anyone can have is an education. It is the foundation for higher living standards and an important tool in the long term eradication of poverty. Education provides you with knowledge and information which in turn brings about desirable changes in the way you think, feel and act. The importance of education cannot be over-emphasized. The discussion on education shall be centered on pre-colonial and colonial education. Indeed the most crucial aspect of pre-colonial African education was its relevance to Africans, in sharp contrast with what was later introduced. Walter Rodney identified the following features of indigenous African education which are: its close links with social life, both in material and spiritual sense, its collective nature, its many-sidedness; and progressive development of the child. He maintained that there was no separation of education and productive activity or any division between manual and intellectual education.

Altogether through mainly informal means, Akure educational system like every other pre-colonial African societies matched the realities of pre-colonial African society and produced well rounded personalities to fit into the society. Some aspects of African education were formal: that is to say, there was a specific programme and a conscious division between teachers and pupils. Formal education in pre-colonial African was also directly connected with the purposes of the society. Just like informal education, the programmes of teaching were restricted to certain periods in the life of every individual, notably the period of initiation or coming of age. Formal education was also available at later stages in life, such as on the occasion of passing from one age grade to another or of joining a new brotherhood. Specialized functions such as hunting, organizing religious ritual- as obtainable during *aheregbe and omojao* festivals, and the practice

of medicine definitely involved formal education within the family or clan. Such educational practices all dated back to communal times in Africa. As mode of production moved towards feudalism in Africa, new features also emerged within the educational pattern. There was, for instance more formal specialization because the proportion of formal to informal education increases with technological advance. Apart from hunting and religion, the division of labour made it necessary to create guilds for passing down the techniques of iron-making, working, leather making, cloth manufacture, pottery molding and professional trading.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The colonial system also stimulated values and practices which amounted to informal education. It was an educational system that never grew out of African environment or one that was designed to promote the most rational use of material and social resources. It was not an educational system designed to give young people confidence and pride as members of African Society. But one which sought to instill a sense of difference towards all that was European and Capitalist. With few notable exceptions, colonial education in Africa especially British enclaves was based on learning to read, write and calculate in the English Language. Later addition to the curricular were British Empire history and European geography plus a few practical subjects such as gardening, sanitation and personal hygiene. As African history was considered either non-existent or unimportant, the great men who were studied in schools were kings of England. The great events and historical developments that were taught were European and colonial wars of pacification, the evolution of the British constitution, and the growth of the British Empire. In Literature, Shakespeare and the Bible held the stage. To some extent, Europeans thoughtlessly applied their own curricula without reference to African conditions. As content, the schools equipped the African with little more than an elementary knowledge of the English Language for an economic future in which a senior clerkship was the upper limit of his permissible advancement. In terms of need and desire, there were hundreds of candidates for every school vacancy.

Traditional religion- which centers on the re-incarnation of ancestors and worship of gods and goddesses- became an 'abomination', archaic and ungodly to those that embrace the foreign religion of Christianity and the attendant western education. Periodic and annual festivals celebrations lost their vigour as those who partake in such are seen as candidates of *Hell fire*. The fun-fare of annual festivals reduced greatly. Many people who were traditional worshippers and

later embraced Christianity still practiced their traditional religion. Not openly as before though. Many people whose names reflect their traditional religious inclinations such as *ogun (god of iron)*, *oje (masquerade)*, *Ifa (oracle) etc.* had those names completely removed or changed to reflect *oluwa* apparently the God of the Christians. For example, those with names such as *Ogundare*, *Ojelade*, *Ifabunkunmi* now prefer to have them as *Oluwadare*, *Oluwalade*, and *Oluwabunkunmi* respectively. Not just the retoning of names, many people now bear bible character and English names like Paul, Charles, John etc. As pointed out earlier, the people became ‘confused’ as the traditional religion and practices could not be completely wiped out by Christianity. Majority of the people now practice the two. In fact the *Deji* and the *baales* or *Olus* and the traditional chiefs who are custodians of tradition and culture prefer to refer to themselves as Christians or Muslims as the case may be. Generally, as a result of the introduction of foreign religion, there is no official/formal recognition of traditional religion again. There is hardly any provision for providing ‘traditional religion’ as ones religion in any official document.<sup>xxiv</sup>

The Europeans coming to Akure also altered the Family/Social Relations of Akure people. Extended family and polygamy giving way to nuclear and monogamous family. Akure people just like any Yoruba traditional society were known to be polygamists and believers in extended family system. This was primarily to assist with farm work. People with just one wife were seen as lazy, poor or stingy. Extended family that was wonderful instrument like a social verve, social security in our community has given way to nuclear family. Little wonder that there is no more respect for age; no more respect for values that were held sacrosanct in Akure; younger ones now find it very difficult to greet elderly ones. This also brought about Individualism: We now have children of single parents, a phenomenon that is identifiable with Whites. People no longer communalise, nobody wants to be anybody’s brother’s keeper.<sup>xxv</sup>

### **Infrastructural Development and the Migrants’ Involvement**

Typical of every traditional African societies, Akure community grew in infrastructure as the town developed. Facilities available were as result of demands for them. Most prominent of all the infrastructure was of course the king’s palace which served as the symbol of unity, tradition and administration of the entire community. From the king’s palace, infrastructural development was said to have spread to other places (most importantly houses of various quarter chiefs). There is no record of the existence of any major road in Akure until the colonialist

constructed the famous Oba Adesida road. In terms of health care services there were no hospitals. Health seekers do consult herbalists whose homes are usually used as healing centers. In short, the major infrastructural development witnessed in Akure before migrant settlers started coming were residences (palace and individual houses) and the Oba's market which happened to be the only market in existence then. The pace of infrastructural development in Akure became accelerated when migrants began to settle therein.<sup>xxvi</sup>

With the increase in want of space and land for economic activities, which the city centre could not provide, groups of people began to open up hitherto forests regions for farming activities. Various villages which sprang up along this line include Adofure, Obo, Ala, Ehin-Ala, Wasinmi, Owena, Aleyere, to mention a few. This further enlarged the territory of Akure. Many of the farm camps were initially where the farmers go to farm and return back to Akure city same. This changed with the introduction and encouragement the cultivation of cocoa on a large scale received from the White Settlers. Farmers began to build houses in the villages, first for themselves and later for their labourers. Farmers within the same forest area built their houses close to one another basically for security reasons. The concentration of houses in-turn became a settlement which later assumed the status of a village with their administration under a *Baale* or *Olu*.<sup>xxvii</sup>

With the growth of civilization as introduced by the White Settlers, many infrastructural developments took place not just at Akure urban centre but also the farming villages. For instance, roads were constructed to connect those villages to Akure city. This became necessary for easier accessibility and easier evacuation of farm produce be it cash or food crops to Akure and eventual transfer of the cash crops to Lagos where they would exported abroad. Also to encourage urban-rural drift, facilities such as health centres, schools water boreholes, electricity have been made available in many of the farming rural areas.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Akure urban area, being the seat of government through the ages has been enjoying infrastructural development. The first set of the infrastructure was religion and education related facilities. As revealed earlier, the first set of migrants that came to live in Akure were Christian missionaries. They built churches with accompanying clergymen's residences. The first church established in Akure was St. David's Anglican Church at Ijomu area of Akure. Afterwards many other missionaries, orthodox and Pentecostal have established their churches in Akure. Presently



there is the presence of more than fifty denominations of churches in Akure having not less than ten of their branches in both rural and urban centres of Akureland. Many mosques have also been constructed. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the presence of Islam is also noticed as there are many mosques built around both the urban centres and the rural areas. Construction of schools by both Christian and Muslims, private individuals and by successive governments in Ondo State where of which Akure is the capital right from the colonial era is another contribution to infrastructural development of Akure land. As at 2012, there were eight hundred and eighty (880) public primary schools and 190 public secondary schools in Ondo State at large.<sup>xxix</sup> Arguably, there are more privately owned primary and secondary schools. There are also a number of post-secondary education centres in Akure. They include, Federal University of Technology Akure, Federal College of Agriculture Akure, Ondo School of Nursing and Midwifery Akure, and many more.<sup>xxx</sup>

Buildings for different purposes different from being used as residence, palace, school or worship centers-analyzed earlier- dot every nook and crannies of Akure especially the urban centre. Being the seat of government, many structures such as government house, state and federal secretariat, banks, insurance houses, post office, museum, police station, army barracks, custom barracks, courts, television and radio stations, offices of government agencies and parastatals etc. are found. Also, there are many privately owned edifices such as hotels, factories, shopping malls, eateries, shopping plazas, relaxation spots, events centers, parliament buildings, etc of which the owners, whether indigenes or migrant settlers, cannot be easily verified. The ownership of these privately owned properties was due to monetization of economy which its root in the encouragement that had been given to the cultivation of cash crops by the White settlers.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has been able to showcase that Akureland like every other communities experienced unprecedented development with the coming of settlers in the community. As pointed out no community has what it takes to develop or rather develop fast without the input of other groups. In the case of Akure, Ondo state, cocoa has been identified. In the bid of fostering oneness and positive inter-group relations among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, factors that bring unity

rather than fan the embers of division are to be explored. There are obviously other factors that if explored well, the much desired national cohesion will be achieved without much fuss.

## Endnotes

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