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THE VALUES OF TRADITIONAL ECONOMY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the values of Traditional Economy in Nigeria. This paper attempts to access the efficiency of this most traditional and ancient economy system known as "Traditional Economy" on Nigerians and Nigeria economy. It is observed that Nigeria as a Nation has deviated from her cultural root, that is Traditional Economy benching on emulating developed countries such as United States of America (USA) system of economy that is a product of their culture. It is as a result of this fact that this paper is set to access the values of Traditional Economy. This study also investigated the peculiarities of Nigerian Traditional system and discovered that the system gives room for families, tribes or ethnic groups to embark on production according to their customs and beliefs. More so, there are availabilities of markets in almost every community in the country which helps in buying and selling to meet people's satisfaction. Some of the advantages discovered in the system are preservation of people's cultural heritage, provision of National food self-sufficiency and eradication of poverty among Nigerian population. While some of the challenges of this system include; insecurity of lives and property, over relevance on oil by Nigerian Government at the detriment of the Agricultural sector, Environmental deterioration and prohibition against selling of family land among others. It was therefore recommended that, government of the country should make concrete effort to preserve useful and enduring element of this traditional system just like other aspect of cultural heritage, Agriculture should be modernized and maximum security should be provided by the government to all Nigerian. It then become obvious that there are diverse Traditional Economy and almost all the countries of the world both non industrialized and advanced has one form of Traditional Economy or the other, and conclusion was thereby drawn.

Keywords: Traditional Economy, Cultural Heritage, Values, Sustainable Development, Nigeria.

Introduction

In Economics it is generally believe that, traditional system of economy is the cradle to all other forms of economics. A country that desires a sustainable development has to go through certain fundamental and functional stages of growth and development before attaining the stage of utopia. It is observe that Nigeria as a Nation has deviate from her Traditional Economy, benching on emulating European system of economy that is a product of their culture. These are the basic principle that every society must follow in other to achieve her set goals. There are five stages of Economic growth model as postulated by Walt Rostowin (1960.12) which all societies must go through as they anticipate better lives for all. Based on his view, each phase of growth model has its own peculiarities and must be valued. He also took a historical approach in suggesting that developed countries have tendered to pass through these five (5) stages to reach their current degree of economic development. These stages are; Traditional Society; this is an agricultural economy of mainly sustenance farming, little of which is trade. Secondly, is the Preconditions for Take-off; agriculture becomes more mechanized and more output in trade. Savings and investment grow although they are still in a small percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Thirdly, Take-off stage; at this stage of growth, manufacturing industry assumes greater importance, although the number of industries remains small, while agriculture assumes lesser importance. Fourthly, Drive to Maturity; at this stage, industry becomes more diverse. Finally, is the Mass Consumption; at this stage output levels grow, enabling increased consumer expenditure. This is a shift towards tertiary sector activity and the growth is sustained by expansion of a middle class of consumers.

Brief History of Nigeria Traditional Economy

At this point it is important to understand that before colonization most African Countries have a peculiar economy system known as "peasant" or "primitive" while some called it Traditional Economy. Abiodun (2015) asserted that, Africans through their socioeconomic activities, it was established that, there were traditional economies in African societies. There is no doubt that most of these African countries have been highly westernized, there are still some elements of this primordial or ancient economy system which is still in existence despite much treats of extinction. In fact, some of them have merged both the Traditional Economy and Modern system together.

Before the discovery of petroleum in Nigeria in the 1970s, almost all the communities in the country engaged in farming activities, using the primitive and primordial methods of their ancestors. According to history, Nigeria Traditional Economy was based on subsistence agriculture and this has been possible because of the wide range of climate variations which has helps in production of varieties of food. These food crops include; beans, sweet potatoes, millet, plantains and rice. A significant portion of the agriculture sector in Nigeria involve, cattle herding, fishing and lumbering. Considering the Northern part of Nigeria during the pre-colonial and their current situation, the Traditional Economy system is much of great valued. These Hausa/Fulani people considered Traditional Economy as part of their cultural heritage. That is, hunting, food gathering, fishing, and cattle rearing which is now an integral part of the overall economic structure of the Nation. Similarly, the Western and Eastern part of the country were not left out of the Traditional system. People in these regions lived in

small, modest households (Clans) whose members firmly sold some cash crops to perform various kinds of non-farm work for cash income. These regions during pre-colonial period were primarily based on agriculture and trade. History also reveal that two third of the men in these regions were farmers and what they produced depend largely on the ecological zone, the main food crops in these areas include yam, plantain, maize, beans and cassava. While their women seldom engaged in active farming, they rather engaged in gathering of firewood, assisted in harvesting or transporting and selling of farm produce. The level of agricultural system in Nigeria generally as at then was nothing more than a primitive system. Among all the Hausa ethnic groups, this system is still operation up till date. This traditional system is generally accepted by Nigerians because of it simplicity and food sufficiency. It has availed the populace to self development. Okafor as cited in Abiodun, (2015.67) supported this view; with the assertion that traditional societies depend on very simple tools, and specialization is only limited in that household always produce what is need in the house.

Concept of Traditional Economy

Brandon (2018.24), defines Traditional Economy as an economy system where customs, traditions, and believes that helped to shape the people's culture also helps to shape the products and services that are offered. In this view, these traditions and beliefs also become the foundation of rules that are used for the distribution of goods and services which affects the manner of their distribution. Traditional Economy system has also been defined by Infopedia (2019.129), as a system based on a traditional approach. These economies are based on ancient rules and are most basic type of economy. The focus of this definition is that Traditional Economy is only on the goods and services that match people's customs, beliefs and histories. It also stated that in Traditional Economy the barter system is prevalent and has no concept of currency or money.

Similarly, Samuel (2018.11) noted that Traditional Economy is a type of economy wherein customs and beliefs of the people in every generation is highly emphasized. He further described Traditional Economy as a system wherein all the resources are effectively and completely allocated based on its inheritance.

Therefore, looking at these definitions, one can concludes that people's customs, traditions, beliefs and histories have a distinctive way in controlling their economy. More so, since Traditional Economy is predominantly based on heritage, the skills to produce goods and services are hands down to each new generation. That means, the skills and traditions, gained by the elders within each family group become the expressions of how the economy operates in the future. Furthermore, countries where Traditional Economy operates are rurally-based, primitive and depend majorly on agricultural product. Mean while, a Traditional Economy can function effectively along a Modern system of economy or any other economic system and it evolve over time, for example, America had Traditional Economy before the immigration of Europeans that began in 1492. America and Eastern Russia have traditional economies that relied on fishing and hunting of caribou for their existence, (Kimberly 2020.17).A Traditional Economy is basically an economic system where mean of production, roles, wealth, labour and property rights are determined by customs and beliefs.

Characteristics of Nigeria Traditional Economy

Characteristically speaking, Nigeria Traditional Economy centres on agriculture, fishing, animal rearing and hunting. Hence, all these were carried out through the simple and primitive mode of production. In fact, this is one of the reasons why some advanced countries referred to Nigeria as nonindustrial nation. The following features would be considered as what make Nigeria Traditional Economy system unique.

I. Nigeria Traditional Economy is basically a system where the societies are designed based on families, tribes or ethnic groups. Samuel, (2015) affirmed this view in his work that, in traditional society, various ethnic groups have different specialization and how they practiced their agricultural system among themselves. For instance, a TIV man from Benue state, Nigeria, who are predominantly farmers would only have his children and wife or wives and properly his tribal men to till the land by traditional skilful method of yam farming. Any year there is bomber harvest of the yam, he sells to buyers from within or outside his locality.

II. In Nigeria Traditional Economy system, farmer's outputs were considerably small. Generally, the Traditional Economy was all about fishing, farming and cattle rearing and were majorly carried out in small units of production. Since this is so, the productive unit requires few people in production process because it is guided by tradition.

III. One of the common features of Nigeria Traditional Economy are availabilities of day and might markets in almost all the villages or communities of the country. Markets were located where buyers and sellers meet to buy and sell goods. Nigeria traditional system is rurally based where goods produced by rural dwellers after consumed part of their produce transferred the rest to the market where it would be sold. Theoretically, Traditional Economy is based on barter trade but in Nigerians context, market had become necessary condition because it is practically impossible for the family which in most communities constitutes basic economic unit to produce all its needs on the farm. According to Anna, (2018) Traditional Economy often has some form of money that is used to exchange value. In lieu of the above explanation, the surplus or excess over farmer's needs is exchanged or sold for what he could not produce. Okafor in Abiodun, (2015.72) describes market in Traditional Economy as only a place for buying and selling, also used as judicial point and communication centres. There are varieties of foodstuff, fruits and livestock sold in these markets for example, yam, cassava, plantain are commonly found there.

IV. Furthermore, marketing activities involve the exchange of goods and services. In Nigeria Traditional Economy, there are limited numbers of producers who usually applied a personal skill in carrying out all the farm activities from the beginning to the end. This is as a result of the fact that they depend on small tools and also there is lack of division of labour which could have helped in large production.

More so, there is no monetary reward for individual member that participated in production process. A peculiar feature of Nigeria Traditional Economy is that, there is no significant reward in production. That is, wages or rewards are not often paid as regards to the labour. It could be observed that no commensurate reward attached to what an

individual offer in the process of production. Abiodun (2015.17) Opined that; a father who employs the services of his children and wives in the act of production which include, farming, fishing and cattle rearing does not deem it fit to reward them for their labour. In Nigeria the man believes he cares for their basic needs.

v. Lastly, the Nigeria Traditional Economy system is flexible and there is a high sense of adaptability. Obviously, an individual learns his production skills in the ordinary business of growing up among family members. Usually, work and task are assigned to the appropriate persons without much regards to differences in skill or productivity. Meanwhile this economic system also accommodates other system such as the mixed economy which is presently practicing in Nigeria. This system is based on multiple economy system. As opined by Anna, (2018.2) a Traditional Economy is not a single system but thousands of different systems with diverse traits, advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, base on his assertion, it is possible to have different forms of Traditional Economy system which can be found in developing and can exist within the borders of an advanced economy.

Value of Traditional Economy to Nigeria Development

The Traditional Economy system is the most traditional and ancient types of economy in the world. Because of it numerous advantages many countries both Developing and Developed still partially subscribe to this economy system. In line of the above, Prateek (2020.66), asserted that, vast portions of the world still function under a Traditional Economy system. Thus, the following are the benefits of Traditional Economy over other forms of economy system such as the Command and Market economy system.

First and foremost, this economy system has helped to preserve people's culture which include; people's way of life, aspects of their community, society, family, and work that people placed much value on. It has been observed that Nigeria valued their cultured heritage, these include, religion, kinship, custom and morality. For example, the Hausa-Fulani of the Northern part of Nigeria lived a traditional nomadic or semi nomadic life and are mostly Muslims based on age-old customs. They are cattle rearers and moving from one geographical location to the other for grazing. They have their local market where their cattle are sold in exchange for money to purchase other items and foodstuffs. Their men are responsible for cattle grazing and defending the herds from predators while the women role includes milking and gathering of firewood. These cultural heritages have also help in sustainable development in the country.

Secondly, it has become imperative to acknowledge that, this system has helped to reduce or eradicate poverty among Nigeria population. That is, it has stronghold in the country's economy; for without it the country will always depend on foreign aid to feed her population. The advance in Traditional Economy could be a catalyst for national output via its effect on rural incomes and provision of resources for transformation into an industrialized economy. Based on the impact of Traditional Economy on citizens Timmer as cited in Oji-Okoro (2011.14), opined that agriculture indirectly contributes to economic growth via its provision of better caloric nutrient intake by the poor, food availability, food price stability and poverty reduction. This economy system helps in food production and hence supplies sufficient

amount of food to the Nation and further reduces the amount of waste that typically would have occurred.

Thirdly, each person in the farming productive activity understands what they are expected to do or what their job is; most importantly, there is division of labour. Therefore, it means job creation is also an important aspect of this system, as huge population of Nigerian lived in rural areas and predominantly engaged in agriculture that are making use of poor farming techniques to meet their family's needs. A high percentage of Nigerian relies on subsistence farming for their livelihood. The system is simple in people's lives that depend on farming products to meet the need of life (Ogundele, 2015.107).

Fourthly, this economy system has significantly contributed to national food self-sufficiency by accounting for over 90% of total food consumption requirement. (Oji Okoro 2011.10). It has helps to maintain a healthy and peaceful population and also a source of food and nutrient for households. Generally, in Nigeria, there are availabilities of markets in our societies where surplus goods produced by rural farmers are sold for exchange of what they could not be produce. The economy system is basically production of goods for people's survival. This has help individual and the country at large.

Fifthly, Nigeria Traditional Economy has help individual, tribes, ethnic groups relate with their various natural environment. Louis (2017), has rightly pointed out that; "Tradition economies work with the natural environment ". In Nigeria there are different climate variation which has help in production of goods and services that are available in a specific geographical area. This also gives people opportunities to meet up with their basic need and consequently creates a self-sustaining economy. The system has further facilitated ethnic group to produce goods and services in which they considered having a comparative advantage. For example, the Igbo people of Eastern part of Nigeria have a fertile land, heavy rainfall annually, and big rivers, hence they major in agriculture and fishing respectively for livelihood.

Finally, Traditional Economy system is value in Nigeria because of it impact on the national development. The contribution of agriculture to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) can never be overemphasized in spite of the oil, agriculture remains the basis of the Nigerian economy, providing the main source of livelihood for most Nigerians. In 2018, agriculture; that is food (crop) production, fisheries, and livestock development, contributed around 21.2% to Nigeria Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while 28.75% came from Industry and 52.01% services sector,(Plecher2020.6). This shows Traditional Economy system is very vital and valuable to all and sundry.

Challenges of Nigeria Traditional Economy System

Over the years there are diverse challenges confronting the economy of this great country among these are discuss below:

The Insecurity of lives and property in this country has inhibited the sustainability of this Traditional Economy system. Nigeria and Nigerians are presently faced a lot of security challenges such as kidnapping, farmers/herdsmen clashes, Boko-Haram insurgency, banditries, communal crisis, conflict, robbery cases, election protest and violence in almost

every part of the country. People of this country cannot go about their daily economics activities because of the fear of the aforementioned problems. This has consequently reduced productivity of the farmers who already lived on subsistence farming. According to Ilemona and Abdulkareem (2018.18), the effect of insecurity is very obvious as it presents itself in the destruction of few available infrastructures, needed for the industrial growth and development of the nation. It must be acknowledge that no country in the world can develop without the needed prerequisite for growth and development therefore, peace and security is a determinant to any economy system and sustainable growth and development. Another serious factor limiting the effectiveness and efficiency of this Traditional Economy system in Nigeria is the impact of environmental deterioration. Note that, Nigeria has no shortage of arable land overall, but there is an extreme shortage of farmland in the most densely settled areas of South eastern states and some part of the North. According to Maton et al (2017.5),an estimated 1.5 to 2.5 million heaters of irrigated land, 3.5 million to 4.0 million heaters of rain-fed agricultural land and 3.5 million heaters of range land are been lost every year to decertification, which is currently threatening about 1.2 billion people in 110 countries and is likely to affect 1.8billion by 2025, if the situation continue unabated. Meanwhile this shortage of farm land in some localities and limited access to land in other areas among other factors have restricted the size of available farmland cultivated per family and other economy activities in a traditional society.

Furthermore, over reliance on oil by Nigeria government over the years Nigeria Government has neglected the agricultural sector of the country. Obasesan (2019) asserted that, the most provocative policy of Nigerian government was the difference on oil resources as a source of foreign exchange earnings to the detriment of Agriculture. This abandonment has lead to great influx of rural people into the larger urban centres. Agricultural production stagnated to such an extent that crops such as palm oil, groundnut and cotton produce by Nigerian in large quantities before the advent of oil, were no longer contributing meaningfully to the national growth, that is, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

More so, prohibition against selling of family land in some areas or communities in Nigeria has great consequences on Traditional Economy system. It must be noted that this system is based on people's beliefs and customs, hence there are principle not to sell their ancestral land. Some of these communities have abundant cultivable land but refuse to sell or lease the property. It then becomes difficult for others that possess the impetus and capital to have access to the land. This is one of the greatest challenges inhibiting the validity of Nigerian Traditional Economy System.

Finally, Traditional Economy system seemly associated with third world countries where there are lower standard of wealth, and living of the people. Samuel (2015) opined that people in Traditional Economy are not highly specialized in living a wealthy life. In the same vein, Anna (2018.74) observes that in many Traditional Economy if you get rich you will be expected to share the wealth with your community. It can then be said that Traditional Economy retard innovation and individual development. There is high level of poverty associated with this traditional system of economy. This is because they are only really on the ancestor's custom and tradition.

Recommendations

1. Traditional Economy system will help in building a united, strong and self reliant nation which is one of the developmental goals in Nigeria. In order to accomplish these goals the government should initiate educational programmes and establish educational institutions for citizen to be able to know the important of this system and acquire relevant and prerequisite skills
2. Traditional Economy is a pre-eminent factor in development though not a sufficient factor in itself; therefore, the federal government should motivate the citizens.
3. It must be noted that traditional societies are entangled by norms, beliefs and customs which are hampering the development. Therefore, in other to have sustainable growth and development, it is hereby recommended that these economies emulate the culture of modern societies which are characterized by accumulation of capital and industrialization which are imperatives to development.
4. Traditional Economy has not help Nigeria Economy significantly; therefore Agricultural sector should be modernized. Since most of the rural communities in Nigeria still practice Agriculture in the traditional ways.
5. There should be everlasting solution to the problem of insecurities in the country if Traditional Economy is to achieve one of its goals of provision of national food self sufficiency and eradication of poverty.

Conclusion

At this juncture, one could realize the fact that Nigeria Traditional Economy system is based on norms, culture and beliefs which have not helped the country based on the set goals. This economy system is nomadic in the Northern part of the country by design as that allows each family group to follow migration or seasonal patterns of food production. More so, this economy system has its own uniqueness when compared with others, a single system but thousands of different systems with diverse merits and demerits. Some of the features of this system are, there is no wastage among the people; consequently, it is rurally based hence it allows division of labour among members who participated in production process. Looking at the merits of the system it could be observed that, this system is centered around the family which is in consonant with most customs in Nigeria, also it metamorphoses into a different type of economy system over time; this has further help in sustaining growth and development in the country. In contrast, there are many disadvantages of this economy system as discussed above.

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