

TRADE, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN BETTE-BENDI, 1960-2000

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Abstract

This paper examines how past undertakings and later engagements, trade and economic activities greatly expanded to support the overall growth of the Bette-Bendi area of the Upper Cross River region since independence, 1960-2000. The paper posits that economic production in post-colonial Bette-Bendi was the basis for the consolidation of trade, entrepreneurship and social change in the area. Factors that were responsible for the consolidation will be examined in terms of their impact on trade, economic growth and social change in the area during the period under review. The work depended on both primary and secondary sources of data. While primary data were collected from informants from the Bette-Bendi area using structured interview guide, secondary sources consisted of extant secondary literature. Data collected were analyzed qualitatively based on the specific objectives of this study. The research adopts the “vent-for-surplus” theory developed by Hla Myint. The theory posits that colonialism aided development in backward economies through expansion of agriculture and trade, construction of infrastructure such as roads, the railway and other means of communication, and introduction of foreign consumer goods and other inducements which enticed the producer to put more effort in production. The work concludes that, in spite of their rudimentary technology, the early years of the Bette-Bendi post-colonial economy was a diversified and vibrant economy which supported trade, economic growth and social change.



Key words: Trade, Economic Growth, Social Change, Entrepreneurship, Post-Colonial, Bette-Bendi.

Introduction

Using the Bette-Bendi experience as a test case to shed light on what was clearly a larger trend in Africa, this paper demonstrates that economic growth and social change which were begun during the pre-colonial period, received a boost during the colonial and post-colonial periods. The activities of the colonial authorities had profound impact on Bette-Bendi agriculture, trade, growth of entrepreneurship and social change. At the time of independence in 1960, the Bette-Bendi economy was dominated by agriculture which provided for more than 90 percent employment in the area. The practice of agriculture well into the post-colonial period in Bette-Bendi area was organized along household and small-holding lines with production based on traditional tools and farming methods. The ecological setting of the area predisposed them to the production of both food and cash crops of wide varieties. The area produced both grains and root crops such as guinea corn, maize, yams, cassava and sweet potatoes for consumption within the area and for trade with their neighbours. This paper examines how the Bette-Bendi, built on the traditional economic foundations of the pre-colonial period and the capitalist mode of production introduced during the colonial period, improved on the scope of production and marketing to accommodate the internal and external dynamics of their economy from 1960 to 2000. The paper will also examine how Bette-Bendi entrepreneurship which was largely at incubation stage in the pre-colonial era, took root and expanded after independence. Factors that facilitated the expansion will be examined along with the role of the state, that is, indigenous, local, regional, state and federal authorities and their impact on economic growth in the area within the period under review.



Economic growth in this paper is considered to be a transformation process that brings about a desirable change and/or improvement. And change within the context of development is expected to be progressive but not without challenges and drawbacks that may accompany the transformation process. The process of development implies a qualitative and quantitative change in the order of things, which require human, material and organizational variables. On this, Michael Todaro avers that development involves the “reorganization and reorientation of entire... social system... in addition to changes in institutional and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes and in many cases even customs and beliefs”¹. The main objective is the transformation of people, such that they acquire the capacity to appreciate, internalize and utilize new ideas and modalities. In relation to economic growth, it will result in improvement in quality of life and standard of living. Therefore, growth in this study is seen as progress and gradual modernization of human endeavours, and in this case, the Bette-Bendi from independence to 2000².

One is bound to round off this introduction with some highlights on the study area for the benefit of readers who are not familiar with the area of study. Bette and Bendi are both the languages and the names of the two ethnic groups under investigation. They represent two closely related languages of the Bette people of present day Obudu Local Government Area and the Bendi people in Obanliku Local Government Area, both in northern Cross River State, Nigeria. The nomenclature Bette and Bendi also identifies and designates their geographical locations.

Historically, both Bette and Bendi are descendants of Ute and Undi who were children of a legendary Pater known as Agba. A.F.R. Stoddart who wrote during the colonial era posited that:

...the Bette-Bendi clan occupies an area of approximately 120 square miles, which forms the central part of the Obudu District of the Ogoja Division in the Ogoja



Province... It is bounded on the North by the Munshi Tribe (in the Abinsi Division and Katsina Ala District of Benue State. N.P.), on the East by the Obanliku clan, on the South and South West by the Boki clan and on the South West and West by Bobang, Ukpe and Otugwang sub-clans of a clan or clans not at the time of writing definitely known³

Both Bette and Bendi were integral parts of the erstwhile Obudu Local Government Area until August 1991, when the Local Government Area was split into the present day Obudu and Obanliku Local Government Areas. As a result of the split, the Bette remained in Obudu and the Bendi were moved to Obanliku Local Government Area. As Joseph Ushie *et al* posited, in spite of the split, both Bette and Bendi still maintain their filial, cultural, historical and linguistic ties⁴. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the economic growth and social change amongst and around the Bette-Bendi area, with a view to establishing how in spite of their rudimentary technology, the Bette-Bendi post-colonial economy was a diversified and vibrant economy which supported trade, economic growth, entrepreneurship and social change.

Colonial Economic Foundation and its Impact on Economic Growth since Independence

British rule was aimed at protecting the communities that produced the much needed tropical raw materials and consumed British manufactures. Upper Cross River, which was part of Eastern Region until about 27th May, 1967, was an important part of the Nigerian market. John Flint opined that it was the fear of losing this part to the French in the Camerouns that led Britain to resort to the protectorate device in West Africa in 1882⁵. The Bette-Bendi area is located in the rich oil palm belt, the products of which were important for British industries. Also, association with the Europeans produced a number of indigenous inhabitants who developed a taste for European manufactures⁶.



Colonial Bette-Bendi economy was also boosted by the European trading companies which remained in business in the region during the post-colonial period. In 1910, Messrs Thomas Welsh went to Bansara and took over the site that was vacated by the rubber syndicate and began to buy palm oil and kernel from there⁷. In June of the same year, Messrs Miller Brothers also acquired a site at Bansara, and both companies were joined in 1925 by Messrs S.W.B. MacIver and Company⁸. But commercial activities in Bansara were actually boosted when two other trading companies namely, the United African Company (U.A.C) and John Holt and Company of Liverpool arrived in the area. John Holt also established a retail shop in addition to buying agricultural produce such as palm oil, kernel, beniseed and groundnuts. This shop was stocked with assorted European manufactures such as soap, tobacco, sewing machines, bicycles, felt hats which were designed to be worn with certain types of European styled cloths etc.⁹. These items changed the people's taste and preferences and created a vent-for-the production of surplus cash crops as a means of earning cash to purchase these luxury items that were hitherto unknown.

The introduction of foreign goods and services influenced consumption patterns among the people and gave rise to the emergence of a new elite class whose economic success was measured by the capacity to build Western-style houses and the possession of items of ostentation such as motorcycles, bicycles, iron beds etc.¹⁰.

Consequently, an emerging economy that depended on British capitalism was created; a market for the sale of British manufactures and the purchase of raw materials for British industries. To realize this objective, certain measures were put in place and these included the need to open up and maintain access roads, the imposition of direct taxation to raise resources for developmental projects. Taxes were difficult to collect since tax payers resisted the tax collectors and sometimes attacked them.



To evade tax payment, many taxable adults deserted their homes and slept in faraway farms to avoid contact with the tax collectors. Also, for the mere reason of tax evasion, majority of the men avoided market places as these were the venues where tax collectors arrested taxable adults. This explains, in part, why majority of the men were entirely farmers while the women were left to trade and allowed with the responsibility of selling farm produce for the families and purchasing all the needed items for household use. It was common to find middle aged men in some villages in Obudu and Bendi who had never gone to Katube or Akorshi markets respectively at any point in their lives because of the fear of tax collectors. Majority of the men that were found in market places were those who could afford the European currencies to pay their taxes and could still meet their other needs. Some taxable adults were compelled to do forced labour and others were made to work as trade agents to be able to raise the tax imposed on them. Commenting on the former, Offiong avers that:

both British and French used what was essentially an indirect method of getting Africans to work for Europeans. They did this by imposing money tax on peasants and the tax had to be paid in European monies. This meant that peasants were forced to leave their homes, sometimes long distances away to work for Europeans since they alone had the money acceptable for tax purposes¹¹.

The need to pay tax and other considerations compelled the natives to make their labour available to the authorities, and they were used to open up roads to link Bette-Bendi villages and their hinterlands to Katube, Akorshi, Ketting and other markets. Some of these roads are: the road linking Bette-Bendi clan with Ogoja, the road linking Ikom through Boki, the Bette-Obanliku road, the Bette-Katsina Ala road to the north and southwards into Alege and Ibong¹². That all these roads radiated from the direction of Katube and other markets, shows that the roads were developed



to facilitate export/import trade. According to Dewhurst, the roads were suitable for motor cycles and bicycles which were available at John Holt stores¹³. The provision of accessible roads network and affordable means of transportation aided the movement of produce to the markets for sale hence the local economy was boosted.

The trade goods that were conveyed on these routes were basic and essential goods like salt and staples which the traders ensured reached all nooks and crannies in the region. Also, because of the lack of urban centres in most parts of the region during the period covered by this study, most of the centres of commerce and markets were found at borderlines where they served as entrepots and bulk breaking centres for traders from the hinterlands who travelled in relays to sell and procure needed items. From these border markets, commodities were distributed along these established routes to interior parts of the region. The major border market in the area was the Katube market which served as the trade centre for trade along all the routes. On the Bette-Bendi route, items such as yams, banana, plantain, bush meat and assorted root crops and vegetables were brought to Katube market for sale and in turn they procured items such as clothing materials, salt, cooking utensils and assorted items that were brought by Hausa and Igbo traders to Katube market. On the Ikom-Boki-Obudu route, the traders brought different forest products in exchange for European goods. It was also through this route that the knowledge of cocoa production entered Obudu through the agency of traders and migrant labourers. The Bette-Obanliku route linked the Katube market with traders from Obanliku, Utanga and the Cameroun area where a lot of bush meat and mattresses were brought from the Cameroun to the market. The Bette-Katsina Ala road linked the Katube market to Tiv and Hausa traders and also exposed the area to both local and inter-regional commerce. It was along this route that Hausa cloths, foods, language and culture entered the Bette-Bendi area.



To this day, some Hausa lexicons have become key words in Bette-Bendi language both in ordinary communication and in business. For instance, *Ukwudi* and *Ukobo* mean money in Bette-Bendi language which are usages derived from Hausa. Also, *Aliga* in Bette-Bendi language means shirt just like the Hausa *riga* also mean shirt. These and many other borrowings could be found in the Upper Cross River region which could be traced to interaction in the market place and has also facilitated economic development of the region. The Bette-Katsina Ala route also linked the Bette-Bendi area to the Jukun warriors who the Bette-Bendi people refer to as the Igenyi. The Igenyi people were slave raiders who were said to travel with their captives through the Upper Cross River region to Calabar. According to Terhemba Wuam:

The Ibi-Calabar route (that is the route from Benue through Upper Cross River to Calabar) was used by the Jukun in disposing the large number of slaves they acquired through wars from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century at the Calabar port. It was also used by Hausa traders to transport ivory and other wares to the port at Calabar. Essentially articles of trade on the route included items such as salt, guns, gunpowder, glasses, clothing items/textiles, tobacco, spirits, beads and utensils imported from Europe and indigenous products from the various groups in the area such as palm produce, red pepper, horses, yams, benniseed, clay pots and slaves among others¹⁴.

The Bendi-Bette-Alege-Obang route linked the Katube market with Otugwang, Bekwarra, Ogoja and Yala markets. From Okpoma in Yala, salt was procured and sold in the different markets. Most of the traders from the interior parts of Bendi and Obudu got salt from Katube market which was supplied from Okpoma. However, all the trade routes were very useful as they contributed to making the region a functional economic block.



Another way the colonial administration helped to boost the economy of the area during the post-colonial era was through the maintenance of law and order. The colonial administrators used coercion to enforce compliance, and Native Courts were established at the clan and village levels to deal with minor offences. By so doing, law and order was maintained and business activities were promoted. This also strengthened the economic and social relations between Bette-Bendi and their neighbours in the Upper Cross River region on the one hand, and the people of the Lower Cross River region such as Ikom and Efik traders on the other. As the barriers created by middlemen along the trading paths were broken down by the colonial authorities, Efik and Igbo traders moved into the region to purchase yams and other agricultural products. Major highways were built to link traders to major market centres. These access roads increased the volume and direction of trade between Upper Cross River and Efik, Igbo and Hausa traders.

Igbo traders took advantage of the trading opportunities and moved into the region en masse and since the area was administered as part of the Eastern Province, they were also appointed into important administrative positions. While some of the Igbo traders constituted themselves into the big agents of European firms, others purchased produce in bulk and took to distant cities for sale. These Igbo traders shortchanged and also treated the Bette-Bendi farmers and traders with levity. Apart from underpaying local traders for the produce, they also made sure that they did not get involved in bulking produce and conveying same to the cities. This, they did in order to secure their position as middlemen on the one hand and to maximize profit on the other. These Igbo traders brought clothing items and other goods which they exchanged for either cash or assorted agricultural products. As business activities grew, katube market eventually became the centre of festivity and recreation as traders trooped into the market in large numbers and young girls



often dressed in colourful traditional attire thrilled the traders with traditional dances for money and different gift items¹⁵. Igbo craftsmen also took advantage of the situation in the market to do business. For instance, a popular Igbo blacksmith, remembered simply as Agbo, who forged different iron tools which were used for farm work and for domestic purposes. Items such as knives, hoes, traps, arrow heads etc., were made by the blacksmiths and traded in the market. Traditional cloth weavers also enjoyed some patronage in the market as traders who sold their produce purchased some yardage of fashionable designs from Hausa and Tiv designers¹⁶.

The above export trend for agricultural produce did not subsist for a long period during the post-colonial era. This was because the discovery of petroleum turned attention of government from agriculture to export of petroleum products, which became the major foreign exchange earner for Nigeria. Agricultural production was adversely affected and to salvage the situation, the Federal Government resorted to the formation of organizations such as the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) and the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA) to work with individual farmers on small holdings and also carry out large scale farming which failed because of corruption. It is pertinent to point out that during the pre-colonial era, food crops were the leading Bette-Bendi articles of trade with the other groups within the Upper Cross River region. This situation was however altered during the colonial and post-colonial periods, when emphasis shifted to the production of export crops such as groundnuts, palm oil and palm kernel.

The above scenario was the economic situation in the Upper Cross River region until the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War in 1967. After the war, the people began to adopt practical approaches to socio-economic growth as businesses failed during the war years and markets were glutted with farm produce. This situation subsequently produced drastic reversals of fortunes as



the vagaries of commerce discouraged further production of crops. Consequently, Bette-Bendi farmers resorted to cultivate more or less for subsistence as it were. Production of colonial-type of cash crops declined. The flow and direction of trade in Bette-Bendi area also changed after the end of the civil war in 1970. This was so because the marketing boards of the post-colonial era did not offer as much prices to local farmers for their produce as did the local Igbo and Hausa buyers. Igbo and Hausa traders scrambled for and penetrated all nooks and crannies, and also entered into trade relationship with the local traders who bulked the produce and sold same to them in the market centers, which they in turn took to other parts of Nigeria¹⁷.

Economic Production in Post-Colonial Bette-Bendi

Post-colonial economic production in Bette-Bendi like in other parts of the Upper Cross River region was based principally on agriculture on indigenous small peasant holdings. Majority of the population was fully engaged in agricultural pursuits for consumption and exchange. The area enjoys an intermediate climatic condition that is suitable for the production of both food and cash crops. And because of the favourable climatic condition, they produced both grains and root crops such as guinea corn, maize, millet, yams, cassava and sweet potatoes for consumption and for exchange with their neighbours. They also produced groundnuts, cocoa, beniseed and shea-butter for export, although this did not continue for long after independence. This was consequent upon the discovery of oil and its becoming the major foreign exchange earner for the federal, regional and state governments, and attention was diverted from agriculture to oil. No case was made for continuing with agro-export tradition. Agriculture in Bette-Bendi was facilitated by the British economic policy which recognized the traditional land tenure system. Land in Bette-Bendi was communally owned, and its use was in the form of usufruct which was controlled by the family, lineage or clan head who acted as trustee to community that



owned the land¹⁸. Also, writing on the Bendi community, Dave Imbua posits that land in Bendi was a collective, rather than an individual property¹⁹. Once land was allocated, the family or individual was at liberty to use the land as they desired but could not sell or alienate it from the community. The official policy of preserving the traditional land tenure system encouraged the production of cash crops such as palm trees, rubber, cocoa, groundnuts etc. on communal lands. Thus, while the cash crops were privately owned, the land on which the cash crops were planted belonged to the community with implications for economic development. And unlike the Efik area of Akpabuyo, where the United African Company (U.A.C.) acquired land for experimentation in rubber and palm plantations, there was no foreign owned plantation in Bette-Bendi area.

Agricultural production in the post-colonial Bette-Bendi area grew substantially, and economic activities were diversified within each community and people specialized in different practices. They were differently disposed to the new economic forces because of the differences in their geography, topography and history, and/or because of the natural differentiation and distribution of agricultural resources. For example, the Obudu (Bette) areas around the forest belt like Ibong, Okorshie, Bedia, Ohong, Ubang, Ukpe, Begiaba, Bebuabie etc., were suitable for the cultivation of cash crops like palm trees, cocoa and rubber while other areas in upland Obudu like Bebuawhan, Bebuabong, Kakum, Atiekpe etc., were not²⁰. Dave Imbua maintained that Bendi land was fertile and favourable for the cultivation of food crops such as yams, cocoyam, cassava amongst others, and for the production of palm produce at commercial quantities²¹.

There were also specialist craftsmen and some people took up hunting, fishing and trading. All these boosted the various periodic markets and attracted more trade contacts. Majority of the commodities were purely local, though a proportion of valuable products were brought from neighbouring villages into



the market. Such products as salt, potash and kolanuts were brought into Katube market in Obudu and Akorshi market in Bendi from Yala, Boki and Obanliku respectively²². There was also exchange of manufactured and semi-manufactured products. Cloth was bought from local weavers from among the Tiv of Benue region who also got some of their supplies from Hausa traders in the present day Kano, Igbirra and Sokoto (Ikime 484). Semi-specialization in mat-making, pottery, calabash-carving, leather-working, fishing, animal husbandry, blacksmithing and a few localized specializations also facilitated intensive and extensive exchange relations²³.

The huge European demand for palm oil created new trade flow and the growth of Katube and Akorshi markets which were the main markets then but with ramifications reaching out to other parts of Upper Cross River area and beyond with a consequent boost to internal trade and economic development. Oil mills replaced hand presses in Bansara which was the main point from where produce were exported from the Upper Cross River region. As the demand for palm oil increased, more oil extraction systems were established in other places. Palm plantations increased significantly in response to the ever increasing demand for palm oil. Production of agricultural produce was diversified to include both staple foods and livestock of all kinds. The cultivation of cocoa which was also exported commenced in areas like Ukpe, Kutiang, Bendi and Alege where soil and climatic factors were conducive for the cultivation of the crop²⁴. The introduction of portable currency in place of commodity currency in Obudu and other parts of the Eastern region during the colonial period by Lugard was a factor in the adoption of cocoa and other cash crops in the area. The desire to acquire shillings which became the compulsory medium of exchange encouraged the production of cocoa, groundnuts, beniseed and palm oil for which there was a ready market.



The Bette-Bendi people originally did not have any knowledge of cocoa cultivation. It was introduced to the area in the 1970s, when Bette-Bendi migrant labourers who worked in cocoa farms in Ondo State and Ikom in the Middle Cross River region returned home and introduced its cultivation. With a functional knowledge of cocoa cultivation and the financial benefits of the crop, these returnees became full time cocoa farmers. They were also encouraged by the availability of arable land and a ready market which the colonial enterprise provided. Cultivation and trade in cocoa led to the emergence of middle class farmers and traders in the area who became influential political leaders and king makers. Agim Ugal of Igwo village in Obudu was one such farmer. He worked as a migrant cocoa farmer and later trader in Ondo State from where he moved to Ikom. From Ikom, Agim relocated to Igwo village where he became the first major cocoa farmer in the area. Other notable cocoa farmers and traders from Bette-Bendi who were inspired by Ugal's fortune to go into the business included Gabriel Ugben, Edwin Ufung, Godwin Ukwu and Gabriel Okang who became big cocoa merchants²⁵. They established their warehouses in Ikom and Obudu from where they bulk their produce for onward conveyance to Port Harcourt and Lagos for export. The fortune they made from the trade encouraged some local farmers to devote portions of land to cocoa cultivation along with other crops which were in high demand.

With the introduction of cocoa, a class of middlemen who traded in the crop sprang up in the area. These itinerant traders bought the crop from the farmers in small quantities and sold to visiting traders in the warehouse which was located strategically in Katube market. The building which still stands till this day was referred to by Bette-Bendi people as *Ukenti ikeb*, (house of kernel) because it was originally a palm kernel warehouse and later other export crops like cocoa and groundnuts were also scaled there for export. In the warehouse, the middlemen usually



bulked the crops by packing same into 50kg John Holt bags that were provided by the visiting traders. The traders either operated on a commission basis or sold at higher rate to the visiting traders and made profit which they also used to purchase European goods. Some of the traders from different villages in Obudu who made a fortune from the trade and impacted their communities included Aborbor Agba, Undie Ugbe Ishado, Abigie Ude, Unimke Akpezi, Uzibu Utsu all from Bedia. In Ohong, they included Adie Akwagiobe Ugar, Agwel Agorye, Ukah Undie and Akpanke Utika Ugbe among others²⁶.

The articles imported in exchange for palm produce, cocoa and groundnuts were majorly consumer goods. Some other items of local significance like firearms, hot drinks such as rum which they used to induce traders to drink till they lost their sense of reasoning also made the list and then business bargain was struck; European style clothes and different luxury goods which were mostly items with snob appeal that gave the users a feeling of superiority over those that could not afford them, the use of which eventually affected the balance of power and the consumption pattern of the people. The introduction of European currency affected the local currencies in that it put an end to the use of local currencies which gave rise to price inflation in Bette-Bendi and beyond. European manufactured goods were paid for with European currency rather than exchanged with produce such as palm oil, cocoa or palm-kernel.

Economic Growth and Social Change in Bette-Bendi since independence

Production and marketing of food crops in the region expanded during the post-colonial period as the export trade declined in value and volume consequent upon the discovery of oil. The production of crops such as cassava, rice, yams and assorted vegetables increased from the late 1970s to 2000. Katube market became the popular market where traders from Abakaliki, Aba, Calabar, Ibibio, Tiv and other areas visited to purchase food



items which they carried in trucks to different parts of the country. Katube market also became a transit point for banana, oranges, plantain, camwood, kolanuts, bush mangos and different spices which were transported from Boki, Bendi and Obanliku areas into Katube market for onward movement to northern parts of the country. Trade in banana and other forest products changed the nature of the Bette-Bendi economic landscape. A class of ‘wealthy’ banana merchants by local standards comprising both men and women sprang up in the area. Bette-Bendi banana merchants included Adie Andor, Justina Ishamali, FerliciaIshamali, Regina Adie Andor and a notable Igbo trader, Monday Okonkwo among others. Some Boki women also joined in the trade to take advantage of the lucrative business in banana. These traders were successful in the business as they built houses, bought cars and some even bought their own trucks to increase the fleet used to convey their goods to other parts of the country for sale. Some of these houses though dilapidated, could still be found in Obudu today. Igbo transporters also pervaded the transportation landscape of the area as they brought Lorries which the traders took on “charter basis” to convey their wares. Transportation companies such as *Nwaeze Transport Ltd, I.A. Transport Company, Schooly Motors* etc made vehicles available to convey items of trade from Bette-Bendi area to other parts of the country²⁷.

This bulking of banana, plantain, pawpaw and oranges also increased trade contact between the Upper Cross River region and northern part of the country as Hausa traders were increasingly drawn into the area with their own articles of trade. The trade increased the population of Hausa and Igbo traders and their relatives who took up residence in proximate areas around the vicinity of Katube and other markets. This brought about the rapid growth of Obudu Urban Centre within the location of Katube and Akorshi markets, and the urbanization in itself became the major driver of the Bette-Bendi economy. Also,



between the 1970s and 1990, apart from conveying banana and other products to northern parts of the country such as Maiduguri, Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, Zaria and other major towns, the traders also bought beans, tomatoes, onions, goats and Hausa cloths for resale to local traders who retailed same at the local markets²⁸.

Food items such as yams, rice, processed cassava, maize and groundnuts were also conveyed in trucks every Katube market to Calabar, Aba, Port Harcourt, Abakaliki, Onitsha and other parts of the country. The traders often came into Obudu on the eve of the Katube market day and slept in the homes of their friends and customers to enable them get to market on time the next day. On the market day, they bought the needed items from the retailers directly or through their agents whom they trusted with cash. These local traders made profit from their roles as middlemen or agents of the big traders. Some of them grew and later became big merchants themselves. Among them are: Adie Agiopu, Ubua Atuake, Ashata Andoya, Idiga Odey, David Atsu, Ugah Iduku²⁹.

Conclusion

Economic policies and activities after independence were different from the colonial economic policies which were based on exploitation and expropriation. The Bette-Bendi economy just like the larger Nigerian economy encouraged capitalist production and distribution in which agriculture, trade and marketing were expanded. Production for majority of the people was centred around agriculture, and others engaged in new ways of generating wealth such as craft production, blacksmithing etc., to improve on the economy. There was provision of social infrastructure in Obudu Urban such as education, health, and other basic infrastructures like electricity, roads, communication, which boosted economic activities following the intrusion of merchant capital and market domination, during the colonial period leading to the accelerated changes during the post-independence era.



Endnotes

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