

RESUSCITATING AGRICULTURE AND OTHER INDIGENOUS INDUSTRIES: THE PANACEA TO NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC QUAGMIRE, PRECOLONIAL TO 2000

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Abstract

There is a gross neglect of Nigeria's indigenous industries and agriculture. Those who engage in them are treated as dullards. In pre-colonial era, Nigeria prospered in agricultural and technological products. In fact, even during the colonial era, it is on record that agriculture earned the country 70 percent of her foreign earnings. Shortly after independence, agrarian economy and industry were deemphasized while crudonomy (economy based on crude oil) was promoted. This paper argues that Nigeria's economic quagmire could be rightly traced to the neglect of agriculture and the indigenous industries which followed the discovery of oil in 1958 and therefore advises a reconsideration of the pre-colonial economic activities as the only way out of the nation's economic problems especially now that crude economy is noose diving. Operating a mono economy based on crude oil is like standing on a slippery ground, and is equivalent to one putting all eggs in one basket. Borrowing a leaf from the Asian tigers, this paper shows how the country can wade through the current economic tide through the development of her agricultural and technological industries rather than a heedless dependent on oil. The paper adopts the historical method of qualitative and interdisciplinary approach applied in the review of extant literature, archival materials as well as oral tradition. The scope covers from pre-colonial period to the post-civil war. The significance of this work lies in the fact that it will be useful to government and public administrators especially in making policies that will combat hunger and reduce unemployment.

Key words: agriculture, hunger, industries, mono-economy, pre-colonial.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture and indigenous technology are the bases of any sustainable development. According to John Ukwuma, before the imposition of colonial rule, communities in eastern Nigeria subsisted on agriculture and that it helped in the establishment of economic and political platforms.¹ Onwuka Njoku in his own part bemoaned the neglect of indigenous industries during the colonial period. In his words,

Indigenous skills and technologies such as iron working, textile and soap making along with their associated industries could have provided the platform for modern industrial development of Nigeria, if they were properly nurtured and harnessed....The ultimate result of this was that during the colonial era, Nigerians gradually lost the capacity to produce even handicraft items they had been producing long before the imposition of colonial rule.²

The aim of this neglect has been aptly captured by Anthony I. Nwabughuogu thus, "through their policies and attitudes, the colonial rulers prevented the maximum utilization of new ideas and structures ... to promote socio-economic development."³ After a critical analysis of Nigeria's effort on industrialization since independence, he concluded with the present writer that every effort on industrialization outside agriculture and indigenous industrialization amounts to a disguised industrialization with a sinister strategic dependence. In view of the fallen oil prices, leading OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) countries

have repositioned their economic policies to meet with the changing tide. Opinions are rife in consideration of alternative economic strategy other than oil.

But in the world we are living today, can oil prices rise again to the levels of last decade? Most probably not. There is already a glut in world supplies, and more oil will come from the tracking of shale resources in the USA and Canada. The USA has promised to start drilling in the Arctic and Atlantic Ocean. In addition, the world is moving fast into renewable energy sources of solar, wind, geo-thermal, biomass, etc in response to international climate change commitments.⁴

The above statement is the worry of Abdullahi A. Yahaya in the Daily Trust Newspaper of August 6 2017, on the stark dependence of Nigerian economy on crude economy. Saudi Arabia, which is one of the world's highest producer of oil has realized the unreliability of oil as a major economic dependence and has made the following adjustments to its national economic diversification. Writing on World Economic Forum of January, 8, 2018, Han Yik reported that Saudi Arabia has said it wants to end its "addiction to oil" with far-reaching reforms, and is now restructuring government departments to drive through plans for a post-petroleum era⁵. This seismic shake-up as he calls it has come on the back of the steep and sustained drop in oil prices. Also as the de facto leader of OPEC, Saudi Arabia has made plans to shift economic concentration from oil. Under the programme, called Vision 2030, the kingdom would be prepared for a future that is less dependent on falling oil revenue over the next decade and a half.

The reforms, announced by the Deputy Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, include creating the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, privatizing the state-owned oil company Saudi Aramco, cutting energy subsidies, expanding investment and improving government efficiency. The economic revolution is being funded off the back of Saudi's traditional strength - Saudi Aramco, her main oil outfit, which overtook Apple as the world's most valuable company increasing its profits by 46% to US\$161 billion.⁶ In the words of Saudi's Energy Minister, Abdulaziz bin Salman, "We are going to be the last man standing, and every molecule of hydrocarbon will come out".⁷ As one of the world's cheapest and lowest emission-intensive oil producers, Saudi Arabia is well positioned to be the 'last man standing'. In her bid for economic shift, she has proposed a vision 2030 which has the following programmes to reposition her economy: Tourism, Renewable energy, food and beverage, transport and logistics, sports and entertainment. Not only on the economic plane, there have also been social transformational reforms – abolition of religious police, women driving, male guardianship laws ditched, segregative restaurants abolished etc.⁸ Saudi Arabia has made these significant shift in preparation for an impending drop in fossil oil which is their traditional source of income.

For Japan, the stepping stone for Japan's economic recovery dates to 1945 following the end of the Second World War. According Economist, Milton Friedman, the best way to grow rapidly is to have the country bombarded".⁹ Japan surrendered August 14, 1945 to the Allied forces which ended the Second World War, and losing well over 2.6 to 3.1 million lives and 56 billion US\$. Though left with almost nothing, their economy recovered at an incredible speed in what has come to be known as Japanese Economic Miracle, in which the economy recovered in an incredible speed strange to history. What happened? Four main factors were responsible for this, namely: technological change, accumulation of capital, increased quantity and quality of labour and increased international trade.

One of the factors that elevated South Korea from a third world status in the 1960s to developed country was their agrarian reform and the growth of the industrial sector which encouraged the production of goods that were sold in the foreign markets. From the 1980s, Export Oriented industrialization was vigorously pursued, closing their market to all kinds of foreign products except raw materials. In addition, family conglomerates such as Hyundai, Samsung, and LG Corporations were diversified and also received state incentives as tax breaks among other incentives.¹⁰ Myong Jae Koh has attributed the most significant factor in the rapid industrialization of South Korea to an adoption of an outward-looking strategy in the early 1960. And it was an economic strategy that promoted growth through labour intensive manufactured exports.¹¹ In fact South Korea is a good example of development through industrialization.

When we consider the sudden turnaround of the economy of Singapore to the most developed country of East Asia, it calls for a careful consideration of the approach that created such a transformation. Thailand also remains a strong agricultural competitor as it is the world's leading exporter of natural rubber, frozen shrimp, canned tuna, canned pineapples and cooked poultry and cassava as well as rice and sugar. Lessons from the foregoing experiences of former oil dependent countries such as Saudi Arabia, Japan or Singapore show a realization by the ruling class of the turn of events in the world market as it concerns their major product. They followed therefore with a strategic plan to diversify their economy.

On July 7, 2018, one of the governors in Nigeria made the following prophetic declaration to his audience: "the tide of development has gradually shifted from Europe and America and has now come to Asia and in the next few years, it would be the turn of Africa to rule the world".¹² Some analysts of the current situation in Nigeria in that gathering may have had a glee at this wishful prophesy assuming those countries in Asia prayed out their development without a concerted effort on the part of government which brought about the change.

One of the worst things that could happen to anyone is to suffer in the midst of plenty. That is exactly the situation with Nigeria. Ranked among the least developed countries of the world, Nigeria has become the pity of many nations both developed and the developing. There is a fiction in which countries of the world wept to God for solution to their problems. As they met God in tears, He proffered solutions and they departed with joy. When it was the turn for Nigeria, she came to God with smiles, but God started crying. In this allegory, God was weeping because He has supplied this country with everything she needs to succeed, but the reverse was the case. Though a fiction, this story dramatizes exactly the situation in which Nigeria, which was supposed to be one of the leading countries of the world, has turned to be a beggar and one of the least developed countries of the world, ever seeking for help from nations that would in actual sense be seeking for her help. This sorry situation was created due to abject neglect of agriculture as major economic indices, in addition to myriads of other social and political problems.

In pre-colonial times, agriculture was the major income earner as well as a major source of subsistence for the country. Onwuka Njoku confirmed this when he noted that "agriculture was by far the most pervasive of the economic engagements of the Nigerian peoples in the 19th century, as it certainly has been even much earlier..."¹³ He also added that agricultural surpluses encouraged specialization of occupational groups in non-agricultural activities such as iron works, textile weavers, wood workers, and professional long distance traders. The reason for the emphasis on agriculture is that development is culture based. Unlike other factors that may drive development in other places, the case of Nigeria may be different because she

is blessed with arable lands and good soil that could sustain prolific agricultural practices. The relevance of agriculture as an economic factor remains the same in all the ages for Nigeria. It was practiced in almost all parts of Nigeria – whether full time or part time, almost every Nigerian population engaged in agriculture. There was hardly any family that did not engage in it. It is important to remark here that explorers and other foreign visitors noticed this and attested to its pervasiveness and the passion of the people for it. In Igbo land, the Ezza has been acclaimed by some scholars as the greatest yam producers. Colonial officials were further impressed at their prodigy and showed surprise that they could apply manure from dead leaves, animal dungs, and crop remains to their crops. The Ebirra people were good in guinea corn. In Basra, the women were active in picking out cotton and spinning them into threads which were sold to native weavers. Idaho was declared by William Allen and Thomson as the yam country par excellence. Tiv was not exempted from farming. The Ibaji and Zakibiam were also prodigious yam cultivators. Up North, Hugh Clapperton, Henrich Barth, and Denham, all passed salutary remarks on the plantations of cereals, cotton, tobacco, onions and so forth. Down south, the Yorubaland ravaged by internecine wars were not left out in agricultural production. Akinjogbin had remarked that every Oyo man engaged in agriculture¹⁴. They produced crops such as yams, maize, cocoyams and vegetables. At Abeokuta, Townsend remarked that the farm roads were always busy.¹⁵ Nevertheless, while agriculture took the greater part of the occupation of the north, west and middle belt regions of Nigeria, the Niger delta region dominated by salt impregnated swamps, which were unsuitable for crop production, took to fishing, salt making and trading.¹⁶

Agriculture accounted for the largest share of the volume and value of goods and services produced. Agricultural surpluses encouraged specialization of occupational groups or communities in non-agricultural activities, such as metallurgical workers, textile weavers, wood workers, and professional merchants. Agricultural surpluses led to increased population and better standards of living. It also brought about social organization as people began to accumulate wealth.¹⁷

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

The most important agricultural products we shall discuss in this paper Yam, cassava and Oil palm. Among animal products were poultry, fishery, cattle rearing, snail rearing. Non-agricultural based industries included leather, textile and metallurgy. We shall consider how a few of these industries contributed to Nigeria's economic growth in the times past and how they can be revived to assist in solving the nation's economic problems.

Yam

Yam was the most pervasive and extensively grown of all the tubers. There was hardly any part of the country that did not grow yam. In the Guinea savannah, it was grown, in the forest regions; it also found a fertile soil. In the west, yam was revered as the staple and staff of life. And to the Igbo, yam was the king of crops and a man's crop. It was the first of all the crops to be planted at the beginning of any planting season, and was also the first to be harvested around November. Labour requirement for yam was supplied from the immediate family and this encouraged polygamy so as to have enough hands for the farm work. Implements for yam cultivation were simple hoe and machete. The men did the clearing of the bush and the digging of the soil while the women completed the rest of the work which included planting, weeding and harvesting.

During the pre-colonial and colonial times, yam was a domestic trade article. Probably because of its bulk nature, it was not involved in long distance trade. So it satisfied the dietary

requirements of the rural populace. Not much change occurred in yam production during the colonial era, as it was not one of the commercial crops. So improved farming methods did not affect it since it was not one of the raw materials of the British manufacturers. But arable soil and constant local demands contributed to its continued production.

Although it is grown widely in Nigeria, the area where it is grown most is the Benue State (land area of 802,295 km²). In this state especially among the Tiv people, the size of the yam farm or the tonnage of yams produced becomes the social status of a farmer. Because of high level of yam production in the State of Benue, the state is crowned as the Nigerian Bread Basket. The many uses of this tuber call for its improvement as not just only a subsistence crop but a foreign exchange earner.

Yam is high in carbohydrate content; it is low in fat and protein and provides a good source of energy. Unpeeled yam has vitamin C. Yam, sweet in flavour, is consumed as boiled yam or eaten with soup as fufu. It could be fried in oil and then consumed. It is also processed into flour. Its medicinal use as a heart stimulant is attributed to its chemical composition, which consists of alkaloids of saponin and saprogenic. Its use as an industrial starch has also been established as the quality of some of the species is able to provide as much starch as in cereal. Ritualism and festivity are also associated with yam, especially in southeastern Nigeria. A yam festival is held every year to mark the harvesting of this crop. The village chiefs and traditional title holders of lands in Nigeria who grow yam make it a religious practice by not consuming yam till it is offered to the gods. During this festival, villagers offer prayers thanking the yam deity variously called *Ahanjoku*, *ifejioku* etc for the blessings of the land.

One of the marriage custom observed in some communities in Nigeria is to measure the bridegroom's wealth by the amount of yams that he can produce. Also, according to tradition, the groom has to present a minimum of 200 big tubers of yams to the in-laws as a proof that he can take care of his wife and the future family. Yam is depicted as a male totem in some areas of Igbo land. Another custom observed is that women are not permitted to go to the yam farms till it is ready for harvesting; however, harvesting of the crop is the prerogative of the women. Yam is quite pricey in the market and no amount produced that will be enough let alone cause saturation. Yam can be exported to other countries to earn foreign exchange and improve the economy of Nigeria. In pre-colonial Igbo society, the quantity of yam a man possessed was a measurement of his wealth. Yam therefore was a symbol of wealth and this situation has not changed. Rather it is our recent orientation towards agriculture – a tedious and dirty means of making money in contrast with the get-rich-quick oil money that has tried to change it.

Ghana is the third largest producer of yam in Africa, after Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire, but when it comes to exportation, they are the leading exporter of yam accounting for the over 94 percent of total yam exports in west Africa.¹⁸ As important as this food crop is to the country, researches have shown that there has been a general decline in yam production in Nigeria over the years. Madukwe *et al*¹⁹; Agwu and Alu and International Institute of Tropical Agriculture reported that both the area under yam cultivation and total yam output were declining. The decline in average yield per hectare has been more drastic, as it dropped from 14.9% in 1986-1990 to 2.5% in 1996-1999.²⁰

Cassava

Cassava is one of the crops of the forest belt. Its origin in Nigeria dates back to the 17th century when it was found among the Warri and Itsekiri, suggesting it must have been one of the introductions of the Portuguese into Nigeria. Its spread to other parts of Nigeria was slow.

According to Njoku (2014, 25), it was in the middle of the 19th century that it spread to Onitsha. This delay in its spread could be attributed to the position of yam in Nigeria, which had become the staple for the people. Cassava was taken as an inferior source of carbohydrate eaten by those who could not afford yam, the major staple. This inferiority status owed partly from the cyanide acid it contained which made it delicate except when carefully fermented for days in processing. So people were skeptical of its toxicity, and did not embrace it immediately. It was processed as garri or fufu, eaten with soup; tapioca (abacha) eaten with coconut or cooked with oil bean seed (ugba) to produce a delicacy called African salad. Unlike yam, cassava was termed the women's crop and was only planted when yam had been planted.

Like yam in pre-colonial Nigeria, it was exchanged in the local markets. In the post colonial era, garri, the byproduct of cassava began to assume a level of importance that was witnessed in improved production processes such as using lister machine to grate the tuber and this encouraged production of cassava in large quantities. Following the innovation of machine grated cassava, its frying was improved as large frying mills were introduced that enabled the product to be produced in large volumes.

Nevertheless, all these innovations only helped to elevate the crop's status in the local markets. The thought of exporting it to neighbouring countries was not considered even when other agricultural crops were earning Nigeria her foreign exchange. It was not until the early 21st century, during the second tenure of President Obasanjo that the export of garri was considered as a viable economic enterprise. This was the time the price of garri locally soared and people were heard complaining of scarcity of an important staple that is now exported when people at home were hungry. Unfortunately, with the exit of President Obasanjo, his successors did not see his vision in this economic activity but rather neglected it. Within the period garri was promoted as export, Nigeria's garri was eaten by neighbouring African countries, Europe and America where Nigerian diasporas patronized it. How garri could no longer be exported can only find an answer in the crude oil export that leaves us at the mercy of the western countries, where the crude is exported and the refined product imported as a foreign product.

Perhaps the reason modern generation of Nigerians abandon cassava production may be its herculean process of production. Recent research has discovered that the production of cassava can be modernized using contemporary technologies. The herculean process of planting cassava, weeding and the actual processing can be modernized. A local producer of cassava disclosed how flour, fufu and garri can be produced from cassava through mechanization. In Bolivia, this has been achieved through factory production that processes cassava from peeling, grating to frying and packaging. If such a factory is assisted to be mounted in cassava producing areas of Nigeria, it could be a source of not only local food but export.

Oil Palm

This was the most important of the tree crops grown in the forest belt. Some authors have speculated that it spread to the forest region with the desiccation of the Sahel savannah from which migrants from the north took carried it along and fortunately, it found fertile grounds in the forest belt where it grows naturally in prolific abundance. It also grows in Igala and Idoma areas of the Middle Belt. In pre-colonial Nigeria, oil palm was not cultivated, it grew naturally in the forests and around homesteads. Production of oil from oil palm was tedious and strenuous which made communities form work groups to assist in its production. Everything about the oil palm was useful. The fronds were used in producing broom, the tender fronds was used for various traditional purposes, ranging from declaring a place or thing sacred to making of masquerades. From the fruit, palm oil was produced which was used in various purposes such

as cooking, antidote for poison, production of grocery goods, etc. The kernel was chewed as snacks alone or with breadfruit, garri etc. the kernel oil also had medicinal uses. The stem was used as planks for building houses also tapped to produce a local wine enjoyed by the people. Of all the products of oil palm, the oil deserves a special consideration. During the early abolition of slave trade, which was preceded by industrial revolution, palm oil trade formed the bulk of trade article between Nigerians and the British. It was used most importantly to lubricate the industrial machines of Europe, for manufacture of soap, margarines etc. Palm Kernel oil was used in Germany for manufacture of cakes for feeding cattle, pomade, and glycerin and nut butter. Njoku rightly noted that palm oil did not command much significance in the local markets, partly because the tree was ubiquitous. Another reason that made its local importance insignificant was its dire demand by the Europeans where its use was highly needed. Njoku therefore added that with the industrial revolution, “oil palm turned from a subsistence oriented crop to a market-driven one, and became the single most important export crop from the 19th century to the third decade of the 20th century, when cocoa and groundnut began to challenge its dominance”.²¹

The questions most critical minds have asked are: “why did the export of palm oil decline after independence? why has Malaysia, which took oil palm seed from Nigeria now become the world leader in palm oil production? Or more pertinently, why did the oil palm projects of Imo and Abia state governments die a natural death and those plantations have become the largesse of the indigenes of those communities where those plantations were established?. It is on record that Nigeria is now importing palm oil. What an irony?

The production of palm oil has been relegated to the illiterate elders as no young person would want to climb the tall palm trees. In fact, one of major palm oil producers in Nigeria, the Ngwa people have deserted the occupation due to the problems of its production. But palm tree grows profusely in their region. What they have resorted to is to sale the fruit to their neighbours, the Ibibio who now buys the fruit at a cheap price and takes it to produce in their place and the Ngwa now buys palm oil from them. However, it has been declared by Ariaria machine fabricators that a sickle machine could be produced that could harvest the fruit from the ground thereby eliminating the risk of climbing. Modern mills could also be produced that process and extract all the component products of the fruit. Obinna Jude a machine fabricator at Ariaria International Market Aba said that what is needed is government impetus to produce these machines.²²

TECHNOLOGICAL INDUSTRIES

Metallurgy

Ichaba and other Africanists believe that the Metallurgical industry has been well established in many Nigerian communities before the earliest external contacts viz. trans Saharan trade, Trans-Atlantic Slave trade and the advent of the British colonialists in the 19th Century.²³ Evidence of iron work in pre-colonial Nigeria could be established from the various archaeological discoveries in Nok, Ife, Igboukwu and Benin, and abundant historical records. The industry played pivotal roles in agriculture, food production, urbanization, warfare and socio-cultural developments. In spite of these, there has not been a concise effort in appraising the nature and state of the industry in terms of continuities, adaptations and changes. Opposed to the diffusionists are the advocates of the independent invention of iron technology in West Africa. They noted that the date of iron working in Taruga, central Nigeria (700BC) predates the advent of iron in Meroe (500BC), one of the corridors that the diffusionists argued as the highway for the arrival of iron in West Africa. Different Nigerian communities in response to their societal needs could have developed this technology based on the resources available in

their environment.²⁴ Recent archaeological works in the Nsukka area of South Eastern Nigeria have also produced dates of about 500B.C for the iron technology in the area. This discovery when properly articulated could challenge the monopoly Taruga has enjoyed over the years as a leading centre of iron working technology in West Africa. The Nsukka discovery also clearly indicates that with thorough archaeological and historical research works in Nigeria, more light could be shed on the origin, nature and impact of this industry. This argument substantiates the possibility of independent development of the technology in Nigeria.

Much more than the argument about the origin of iron in Nigeria is the implications of the metal which in the present dispensation could be utilized for even economic growth and development. In pre-colonial Nigeria, knowledge of iron improved agricultural production with its multiplier effects on the society, and state formation. Iron technology gave communities that possessed it superiority over neighbours that did not possess it. In Yorubaland, it even had spiritual significance.

Cloth Weaving

In his research, Njoku has found out that textiles were among the most universally traded local manufactures in pre-colonial Nigeria, and that most of them were made of cotton, silk and raffia. He also found out that the four major regions of Nigeria which participated in this industry were the north, south, east and west.²⁵ In Yoruba land, Abeokuta, Owo, Ekiti, Oyo, Ogbomosho, Iseyin, Ilorin, Ijebu and Okene were prominent in cotton textile production. Production here as in other regions was mostly carried out by women. Most of the cloths produced were dyed blue while others were dyed striped blue and white. Njoku confirms that by the 18th century, Ijebu cloths were exported to Brazil where they were prized for their durability and attractive designs.

Among the Igbo, Ndoki, Akwette, Anioma, Nsukka and Abakaliki were centers of cloth production. Nigerian woven cloths had elaborate designs and perforations. The ones from Anioma were specifically white symbolizing the people's belief that white is associated with purity. And so in festivals, ceremonies, and cultural events white remained the dominant attire in most Nigerian localities even till date. Akwette was the major cloth production area in south eastern Igbo land and have been described by Olaoye in Njoku as the "most famous of all places associated with the use of women's vertical loom in Nigeria".²⁶ It is even verifiable that Akwette cloths forms part of the collections in British Museum which they collected from Nigeria in the early 20th century. In Akwette, every woman knows how to weave as this trade was inculcated in them from childhood. Weaving in this area became an important of the people's culture as it was also a major income for families. Akwette cloths were traded mostly in the Niger Delta area and beyond.

In Nupe, weaving industry also prospered in addition to their iron works. Here it was a craft for both sexes. Among all the centers of cloth production in Nigeria, Kano deserves a special mention. In the 19th century, Kano was the most important textile producer not only in Nigeria but also the whole of west and central Africa. Kano received the prestigious title as the Manchester of West Africa. Her cloths were far distributed at Ghat, Tripoli in North Africa, and Timbuctu in West Africa, according to Henrich Barth, Kano's cloth sales amounted to forty thousand Pounds annually by 1850. Kano cloths were distributed in many countries including Cyprus, Arabs, Ashanti, Chad and in other places. A European visitor to Kano in the 19th century attested that cloth industry gave employment and support to families. In his *Travels and Discoveries* (vol. 1, 512) Barth nevertheless contrasted Kano cloth enterprise with the large scale factory system supported by the industrial revolution in Europe, and concluded that while

the machines in Europe degraded men to the meanest conditions, he described Kano as one of the happiest places in the world. Unfortunately, this glowing description of Kano did not survive the British advent in the 19th and early 20th centuries as the country was flooded with British spurn cloths of Manchester which were now cheaper than Nigeria's hand-made cloths. No single industry was situated in Nigeria by the British colonial masters except the assembly plants of Raleigh bicycle and that of Ford which were fed with the manufactured parts from London. Yet Nigeria produced latex from rubber which could have attracted citing a rubber synthetic industry in the country or a textile plant which could have improved on the local productions.

Unfortunately, the country's leaders have not deciphered the real motives of the erstwhile master in further retaining Nigeria as their producers of raw materials and consumers of their manufactured products which flood Nigerian markets even at a cheaper rate than locally produced goods. Rather than improving these local industries, they died a natural death as production of raw materials were emphasized over the manufactures. Is it not ironical that the five refineries in Nigeria could not be operational just that the crude would be exported for their expert refining, while the finished product would be sold to Nigeria? How long will the leaders' thoughts and imaginations be infantilized or remoted? How long will the country's leaders realize that they are being cheated in the international trade terms when the plethora of indigenous industries could be resuscitated and the country delivered from the pangs of western pawns who have held the Third World countries hostage for so long? Up leaders of Africa! Revive the continent's local industries! Shun the multifarious financial assistances, because the nation's and continent's local industries can produce what is needed to survive and even compete favourably with the developed countries.

In the Niger delta, it has been discovered that cotton grows in some areas. A development of this plant can solve the problem of cotton, an important raw material for weaving. The traditional weaving looms can also be mechanized and modernized to produce in large quantities. This way, the high cost of textile materials can be ameliorated. It can also serve as a foreign exchange earner for Nigeria.

A REVOLUTION IN WAITING

The palm oil can be processed to produce vegetable oil, shoe polish, assorted lubricants, palm kernel oil, as well as myriads of dairy products. Even the bunch is burnt to produce a type of black soap that costs Nigeria whooping sums in importation from neighboring countries such as Ghana. The space requirement of this paper could not permit the discussion of the invaluable resources of raffia palm (mmanya nkwo) which sap could be processed for spirits and wines comparable to expensive German breed of wines. Most of the petroleum products in Nigerian markets today are of local productions. In some littoral and hinterland states, some petroleum products, locally refined, especially kerosene flood the markets and citizens buy and use them. Besides, other byproducts of petroleum such as jelly, asphalt, and synthetic products that Nigeria import can be produced in Nigeria rather than importing them from China, USA and European countries. Nigerian universities offer courses in Petroleum engineering, chemical sciences where these processes are taught and rather than establishing companies where these graduates can work in Nigeria, they are given visas to work in foreign countries. Leaders cannot claim ignorant of this irony. This explains partly the reason bunkering will continue to be a lucrative venture in Nigeria.

Akwette cloth are infinitesimally shipped abroad to Nigerians and whites alike who distinguish the durability of that product from the light Lancashire textiles. Nigerian artworks lace the

British and foreign museums and are displayed for stupendous sums in such recreational outfits which earn their countries huge sums from tourism. But in Nigeria, arts are discouraged while Nigerians travel abroad on holidays to relieve their stressful days with a glimpse of those artworks.

The processing of garri and the harvesting of oil palm fruits can be modernized to enable young school leavers consider them as veritable occupations. Machine fabricators have claimed to produce sickle machines that could harvest palm fruit from the ground, a process that would encourage even the educated to engage in its production. One of the distractions of that fruit is the herculean nature of climbing the tall trees which poses a grave danger but with a machine that can harvest safely from the ground, it could be a veritable occupation. The garri processing factories are begging for government intervention as the petty entrepreneurs could not finance it.

Rather than making expensive tours to foreign countries in order to learn their production processes, it would be more beneficial if the local indigenous entrepreneurs are encouraged and their crude methods modernized for effective production of goods in dire need in the country and for which the country spends whooping sums to import.

Conclusion

Nigerians are willing to revolutionize as its evidenced in the various local initiatives in the refinery, cassava production, weaving and iron works. It is no longer debatable that development is culture based. The Asian tigers made use of the natural opportunities to them to develop. In the case of Nigeria, there exist abundant natural resources that could be exploited for Nigeria's development. The industries and agricultural products are waiting to be exploited. Local initiatives have contributed but their contribution could not achieve the desired result without the state intervention. As the former governor of Abia state predicted, the right time for the economic revolution of Nigeria can only be as far as the time for the right revolutionary leader to spark off the agricultural and industrial revolution of Nigeria.

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