Development and Advancement of Western Education in Nigeria: The Ipele - Owo, Experience 1895 – 2000.

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Abstract

This paper on the impact of western education on the development of the people of Ipele-Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State was aimed at finding out the nature and scope of indigenous education before the advent of western education in Ipele-Owo. It examined the growth and development as well as the impact of western education on the people of Ipele-Owo. This paper examined the development and advancement of western education in Ipele-Owo, and its consequence. The study adopted both descriptive and narrative method using primary sources, which were archival materials and oral interviews. Secondary sources were also used such as; books, long essays, dissertations, magazines, thesis and journal articles. The study established the social, economic and political impact of western education on the people of Ipele-Owo. This paper is deemed necessary as a result of the urge by indigenes of the town to recognize the indigenous education system of the people and to separate such from the influence of western education as well as the need to develop along line the western type of education without prejudicing their cultural past. Also, this paper is a scholarly attempt to unravel the uniqueness about the impact of western education on the people of Ipele-Owo.

Keywords: Development, Advancement, Ipele-Owo, Western, Education

Introduction

The spread of Western Education in Nigeria began in 1842 with Christian missionaries coming to the country. However, there was a limited impact of Western Education on the overall literacy level of the nation because the missionary mainly concentrated on Lagos State. The British started their expansion during the tension between Dosumu and Kosoko. This provided an opportunity for the British Empire to bombard Lagos between 1851 and 1861. The British Colonial Government implemented a major educational shift in Nigeria between 1872 and 1882, Adesina (1988) Western Education in Nigeria has made a great impact on its citizens. Nigerians are some of the most educated in Africa. They study at

many western universities. Western Education not only opened the world to Nigerians but also Nigerians to the world. It provided recognition of this enormous country in the global arena. This western education however spread to Owo settlements or towns with the help of the Christian missionaries who came to engaged in trading activities and as well as to propagate the gospel to the people of Ipele-Owo.

The first missionary to introduce Western education in Nigeria was the Wesleyan Methodist Society which opened the Christian mission station at Badagry, near Lagos. The activities of this society were facilitated by an ex-slave of the Yoruba race by the name of Ferguson who had earlier returned to the area. He succeeded in persuading the Yoruba chiefs to bring the missionaries from Sierra Leone into Badagry. This led to the arrival of Thomas Birch Freeman and Graft in 1842 under the auspices of the Wesley Methodist Society to the establishment of the first-ever Christian mission station in the area. The Catholics through the influence of the Portuguese trader were the first missionaries to arrive in Nigeria. They established a seminary on the Island of Sao Tome, off the coast of Nigeria as early as 1571 to train Africans as church priests and teachers. They later extended to Warri where they established schools and preached the gospel. The effort of the Wesleyans Methodist Society was further consolidated by three missionaries of the Church Missionary Society who arrived at Badagry from where they later moved to Abeokuta. These missionaries include; Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, (later Bishop), Mr. Henry Townsend, and Mr. G.A. Colman. Samuel Ajayi Crowther who later became Bishop settled at Igbehin and established two schools – one for boys and the other for girls, while Townsend settled in Ake, another part of the town, where he built a mission house, a church, and a school, Fafunwa (1974) However, this later caused the beginning of rivalry among the Christian Missions in Nigeria.

However, a thorough discussion of the introduction and establishment of western type of education at Ipele-Owo could not be made without mentioning of religion. The spread of western education begin with the advent of Christianity in the town. The idea of reading and writing was the concept of education to the traditional people of Ipele-Owo could be traced to various upshots in the town. From the log book of Saint Stephen's Church and vicarage, western education was introduced to Ipele by the "Aganyis", a set of Ghanians who are rubber tappers. Through these foreigners' bid to secure the natives' rubber plantation interacted and made some converts. Among such earliest converts was late Pa Aiyejimowo. By 1891, it is recorded that Reverend Adetola Emmanuel was invited from Lagos to broaden the minds of the indigenes of Ipele-Owo in the ways of Christian life, which he did by means of teaching, reading and writing. It is worthy to note that all the aforesaid learners did so secretly without the consent of their parents to avoid stiff

persecution. A centre for worship was created for the converts named Ile Isin – worshipping house, while the congregation called the study centre Ile Iwe – house of books later changed to Ile Eko – centre for learning. Both centers was created for the purpose of seeking hide out sought near a bush path on the way to the forest of a sacred shrine of Ijale, earth goddess, where natives do not often visit except the priest and at the period of worship, Odenusi (1984) But later, the venue turned out to be a punishing centre for the sitting and establishment of learning centre for the earliest converts at Ipele-Owo.

Further facts discovered from the log book of Saint Stephen's Anglican Church Ipele-Owo confirmed that the earliest set of pamphlets containing the alphabets came to Ipele through the visit of the Christian Evangelist Missionary of the Anglican denomination in 1895. The chance of laying or sitting an academic institution at Ipele came alongside the church on the Oke Ogbon - Wisdom Avenue in the year 1898. Also, it can be gathered that by February 2, 1918, a primary school was formerly opened in the town known as Saint Peter's Standard School now Saint Stephen's Primary School, Ipele-Owo, Majasan (1984) As population of pupils

The New Church Mission School which was established in 1944, Saint Paul's Primary School established by the Roman Catholic in 1975 and the Saint John Anglican Primary School grew from the Saint Stephen's at the period of free primary education in the period of Western region in 1955.

A further development in western education at Ipele-Owo led to the establishment of the New Church Modern School in 1962. Later, the foundation and establishment of Ipele Community High School which was basically demanded for and established on communal efforts in 1974. Further urge for another secondary led to the establishment of Ipele Grammar School in 1980 which was also faced out in 1984 during rationalization of schools in Ondo State, Majassan (1984)

However, the relationship that existed between religion and western education was inseparable and though the establishment of western education at primary level faced stiff persecution, at the secondary level the people of Ipele-Owo have realized the need for education. It is also pertinent to mention that even though the road through which western education came to Ipele-Owo was rough, but the first decade of the twentieth century, various citadel of education had gained ground at Ipele-Owo.

Problems of Early Development of Western Education in Ipele-Owo

The indigenes of Ipele-Owo are traditional animist worshippers and western education came side by side with religion, its problems are seen along side with that of religion, social, cultural, and political contradictions.

The initial sitting of the place of worship and learning centre by the earlier missionaries and academic elites at Ipele near a shrine of the traditional worshippers led to the rise of arms against the Christian who are the learners. A learning programme such as; A, B, D, Olowe – a proverb and the Iyeyeriye – most suitable and fitting knowledge for my head, centres and tents were not only destroyed but their persecutors would always make sure a life was lost as a sign of victory for their goddess. The ashes of the ruins of the victims were always deposited at the post of the Ijale oracle to ridicule the learners, Aderonke (2021)

Another problem that faced the development of western education at Ipele-Owo was that of inadequacy of instructors or teachers. There are no adequate teachers or instructors to carryout the teaching process, a few who are ready to serve do not perform to standard and whenever they are threatened, they escape for their lives.

Early converts and learners could not show up their faces due to family, parental and societal hostility. The parent do not allow most of their children to go to school or to be converted since most of them help their parents respectively in farming activities hereby, difficult to abandon the farm for learning centers. Some of them who got learnt secretly were abandoned by their parents and friends because they believed they have gone against the traditions and norms of the land.

Major Impact of Western Education in Ipele-Owo

Communal unity, team spirit, social stratification, obedience to authority, religious activities, political organization and economic activities, all contributed to the impacts of

western education on the people of Ipele-Owo and for each, efforts were made on tracing out some of the impacts of western education on the people of Ipele-Owo.

The necessity of the western educational system in Ipele cannot be overemphasized as the impact can be widely felt in all areas of life, especially in the political, socio-economic, science, and technology sections. In terms of exposure, western education technically exposed Ipele-Owo to adequately compete with other intellectuals in society in various fields of learning. The recognition attained by the people of Ipele-Owo through these

exposures can be seen in their excellent performances, such as the scholarly giants like; Majasan J. A who wrote on, "Geographical location of Ipele-Owo" and Asara M. B who wrote on, "History of Owo" and lots of others, Majassan (1984) The competitive experiences enjoyed with other countries in various fields of learning have been precipitated by the Western educational system.

From the various activities of the people of the town which predated the establishment of the Saint Stephen school in 1918 through the planning and foundation of Ipele Community High School in 1974 which plan was conceived and executed on the ticket of the cooperation of the whole clan. The defunct Ipele Grammar School, New Church Modern School both rose through the efforts of the people in the clan but in the area of executing such programmes bias of religion, culture, political, and social diversities was introduced.' Joseph (2021) Also, among the traits of indigenes of Ipele one that excels is their hand of unity and communal readiness which makes them unique from other towns in Owo Local Government Area. This view has shown and thrown much light on the cooperation and interaction that existed in the town.

The traditional cooperative measures such as; Esusu, Aaro, and Arokodoko, all are forms of traditional cooperative measures at Ipele-Owo and were structures and brought up and used by the beneficiaries of the western education especially those who are away from the town in other lands for instance, Lesekan Akinola F.R.S.A (late), former head of department of fine arts, university of Nsukka, Dr kola Majasan – former commissioner for information western state, deputy director W.A.E.C Yaba Lagos to mention but a few.' Joseph (2021) They form various unions, associations, and so on, social groups such as; Ipele Professional Association (I.P.A) and so on, social groups such as the Ipele age-grade both for their own unity as well as for their constant remembrance to issues affecting their fatherland Ipele. On the contrary and such, the impact of western education has contributed to removal of all children from their fathers farms the spirit of the communal farming and had been abandoned only to resurface at interval of ceremonies and foundation laying periods by individuals or groups.

Age grade has been the medium of classifying the people into groups for communal labour, cultural and social activities, level of obedience and other intra-moral purposes. Even though, much elements of those behaviours still persist in the town till today such as children training, group discussion, family and town meetings, respect for elders, changes in the system of administration, enlightenment of the youth and social outlook, mode of dressing, eating, worshipping and so on. The classification of people changed to the needs for political classes, changes in the system of administration, system of electing leaders,

political meetings, religious groupings such as church meetings, evangelism and professional groupings, each profession has its own association and meeting.

With the development and advancement of the western education in Ipele-Owo, a strong force was created for high valued obedience by indigenes as learnt from the simple school rules an regulation to the self imposed local laws and strict adherence to the federal edicts which formed a good part of the behaviours of people of the town as seen in their regular payment of taxes, contribution to local, state or national purses as well as the churches quick responses to annual or emergency subventions. The advent of western education had a great landmark on the quick disappearance of vices which characterized the period from its inception such vices include the followings; hostility or forces of indigenes of the town against contact with outsider was brought to a half even the earliest group of teachers in the established schools' churches were foreigners also many sons and daughters of Ipele-Owo have left home to seek for the golden fleece in other lands.

The removal of the yolk placed upon the Albinos in the town, that in the period before the contact with western education are sacrificial lambs for the indigenes of Ipele to their spiritual idol worship based on the belief that the Albinos and the twins are unwanted souls who are by birth mysterious thus should die as such. Some corrective measures had been brought into the health care aspect of the life of the people. For instance, from pre-natal till post natal care as well as the circumcision of the youth at Ipele-Owo was at the hand of specialized herbalists, Babalawo (herbalist) who were referred as professional ignorant working under the guise of trial and error, (www.google.com) However, it cannot be said that the babalawo

(herbalists) were professional ignorant because first, the medicine they use was made from leaves in the town throught their own knowledge also, this was used by the whites (British) who developed it in a modern way and made drugs from the leaves. Secondly, their works was now modified to be regarded as doctors in modern days, in those days, this herbalists were able to cure some diseases that comes their ways, in general, it is pertinent that the babalawo were the people the doctors still consult in case they have incurable or difficulties in their ways which will be solved by the herbalists, however, they were professionals but in an uncivilized ways. Today, people of the town have drifted to the medical health services through the knowledge acquired from western education. The use of taboos in interpreting situations that occur to the indigenes rather than logical thinking of the occurrence of an event as it paraded the traditional setting of Ipele-Owo has been checked by their contact with western education through deeper knowledge and wider experience acquired before arriving at solution to problems.

Also, it need to be noted that much of the Ipele people culture, norms had been buried, for instance, the traditional bone healing method by the traditional healer have been taken away or changed when school had changed the mentality of the people of the town. The customs, norms of the people have been buried but had been transformed into a modern ways. For instance, people are now studying medicine in replace of the traditional bone healer but in an advance and technological way. Also, most of the traditional healers have changed their job to a more advance means like doctor in order to cater for the welfare of the people.

Christianity which brought about the advent of western education has totally replaced the traditional belief system of the people of Ipele-Owo. Majority of the people of the town today were Christians, though, muslims take second quota of the population with the arrival in 1947 in the town. However, there are few traditional worshippers in the town but no much concentration was placed on the traditional belief of the people which is Orisha nla. The strict persecuting measures placed against the earliest believers had round the town through the efforts of western education forces to make the people urge for children to go to school. Most of the traditional leaders in the town lamented that none of their children wish or even learnt their religion which they referred to as dirty and crude rather they opted for the western education schools both within and outside the town. Though, some of the children does not neglect or regarded the works of their father as dirty but they went further to study more on the work such as, mechanics, engineers in other to have and acquired more knowledge of repairing cars, or even manufacturing of cars.

The western education had led to the springing up of various churches in the town. Today, there are about twenty-one Christian mission centres already established while two notable Islamic sects had grown in the town. Indeed, each of the religious sect has established a school or learning centre, for instance, the Saint Stephen's Primary School and Saint John's Primary School both are built by the Anglican, the New Church Primary and the defunct modern school were both established by the New Church mission. The Saint Paul Primary school rose from the hand of the Roman Catholic Mission, Majasan (1984) The Celestial church of Christ had tried to set up a Day care school while the joint efforts of the Christ Apostolic Church and the Christ Spiritual Churches had established women training centre in the town.

Western education has shaped Ipele-Owo political culture and ideology through changes in governmental ideas, strategies and mode of organizations. It has re-opened the doors of

collaboration with other towns, countries of the world by enhancing the means of proper communication as far as bilateral relationships and foreign policy objective is concerned.

In the area of science, western education has widely opened the eyes of Ipele-Owo in the health sector, by introducing different orthodox methods of preventing and curing diseases such as Malaria, fever, Typhoid, HIV/AIDS virus, and other diseases as against the traditional means of getting medically administered, Odenusi (1992) In family planning also, the introduction of the birth control system has become a greater tool in enhancing the quality and good family planning. The sophisticated drugs produced scientifically have proven to be much more effective than the former herbal drugs taken without scientific back-ups.

The people of Ipele-Owo had evolved their mode of political grouping even earlier before they came in contact with the western education but instances of modification are being introduced. The former system of shifting the kingship title amongst the eldest titled chiefs has been modified to rulership of titled elites as well as the palace has been initiated for the kings rather than the House shifting of the seat of the ruler-Oba. As against the elders only forming the towns' planning committee, educated and influential citizens of the town are included. On the contrary, most of the new elements such as educated people like; Engineer Adeyeri Bolaji, Mr J.T. Asaniyan and so many others to mention but a few are now creating a revolutionary group bent on eliminating the old tradition as well as trying to dishonor the towns customs and traditions.

The age grade regulation which characterized the pre-western education period even though, still in existence, has been modified. The age grade ceremony that now features in every nine years style known as Ero festival, the age marking ceremony. Other social units, various clubs and associations such as; Ipele Progressive Seekers (I.P.S) and so on which the towns people both at home and abroad have developed to involved themselves for unity and peaceful co-existence.

The earliest traditional means of lending money (Esusu) lending ventures has been modified by the influence of western education to cooperative societies which has its height in the town and had led to the establishment of two banks in the town today, that is, the former Cooperative Bank now Skye Bank and Peoples Bank, New Age Micro Credit, Finance Bank championed by the efforts of all social groups in the town. Furthermore, economic organization growth in the town can be seen in the development and in the establishment of various economic ventures by individuals or groups in the town which includes; the Olowoyinbo cassava product farms, the Gbonire Sawmill, the origin club

industry for starch productions, and the Akibod proposed firm as spelt out in the first Ipele day development activities in 1992, Majasan (1984) Most of the aforementioned developments were championed by education. Elites who have come in contact with the western education such as; Chief Agaun John, Mrs F.F. Ogundimini and so many others who are indigenes of the Ipele-Owo. The inherent negative impact could be mentioned in the mass drift of children from their parents care to seek the golden fleece, lack of interest within traditional farming to search for the white collar jobs even costing most of them to separate from their families. Most of the earliest scholars and their families have travelled away from the town and most of the migrants such as Ebira, Fulani herdsmen and others had occupied the land in Ipele-Owo.

Also, the Agricultural sector has witnessed a lot of boosts through the introduction of fertilizers, pest-controlled chemicals, and storage facilities that have been lacking during the pre-colonial era. In the food sector, Technological advancement has been one of the impacts of western education to the people of Ipele-Owo. Technology has been at the forefront of global development, it has driven the world at a pace of transformation and absolute difference. The people of Ipele-Owo technical know-how today was largely influenced by the western educational system through the influx of technological blueprints for human capital development in all spheres of life. The teaching and introduction of courses like; Engineering, Architecture, and other technologically induced courses in schools or universities today has elevated the people of Ipele-Owo in the quest for huge development to enable them to meet up with the current pace of the western world in the technological race.

The acquisition of new skills especially communication skills which opened wide horizon for social interaction, for instance, the introduction of telephone made it easy or helped to communicate easily without travelling around which brought about wide horizon for social interaction. Also, western education has helped to promote cooperation among the people in the same community and among different communities in the area. The establishment of schools had led to relations with Akoko, Akure, Ifon and so on.

Western education had brought about the diversification of occupation from traditional farming to new skills and profession to be achieved. Machines such as, bulldozers or traitors and so on were introduced which helped to produce in surplus to enhance income and also, foods like rice, foreign beans were introduced and acquired which serves as additional food production to the people of Ipele-Owo.

However, the western education had some negative impacts on the people; it led to class distinction not based on the traditional age grade but on privileges. Privileges or enlightened people were now fully allowed to participate in the politics or serves as the political leader of the town. They were allowed to participate fully in the politics of the town not mainly concerned about the age-grade people who were not enlightened. This had caused or led to conflict between the privileged and unprivileged people of the town.

Also, neglect of some traditional names that connote traditional meaning for Christian names. The disruption of the indigenous political system of leadership is one of the impact of western education on the people of Ipele-Owo. The establishment of western education brought about changes in the political system of administration particularly rulership (Obaship) system and governance.

Today, many people of the town especially those outside the town seeking for greener pasture cannot boost or speak Ipele dialect without mixing it with English language. The traditional language of the people had been neglected while emphasis had been laid so much on the foreign language (English). Also, not much respect was given to the traditional aspects of culture such as; festivals and marriage institutions. The system of conducting festivals or celebrating marriages has now been modernized with the help of the western education which had led to the neglect of the former mode of respect for traditional cultures. Before the advent of western education in Ipele, a traditional family coronation or rites would be perform for a lady before she can be married into the family, also, a lady cannot be pregnant before marriage but today, all these have changed in the course of western education, a lady can be pregnant before taken as a wife into the family and without performing the family rites for her, Timothy (2021)

Furthermore, western education had helped the people of Ipele-Owo to identify some of the culture which many people of the town need to protect or neglect as the case may be in order to suit their mode of administration. It also helped the people in the area of new dimension, peaceful co-existence and unity. It has enlightened the people to know the difference between their right and wrong bahaviours and attitudes in the society. However, the people now formed various modern organizations, unions and associations where they meet and solve any issues arising in the town and where progressive impacts were made to contribute the development of the town.

Finally, western education had played in intellectual development and advancement. The indigenes evolved a pattern of development viz-a-viz the ways of thinking, reacting to situations and this have changed from family life to the school system. Another aspect is

the study of local environmental situation of the wider distance even abstract materials have been included in the school system.

Conclusion

The essence of western education in Ipele-Owo is very vital today, as it has improved and shaped the organizational structures. This paper has however stated that the foreigners (Ghanaians and later British) through whose efforts made western education to extend to Ipele-Owo in contrast to the general status accorded to the missionaries even though they took control at later time. The various religious bodies and communal efforts brought about the establishment of primary schools and secondary schools in Ipele respectively. From the various activities which predated the establishment of Saint Stephen school in 1918 through the planning and foundation of Ipele community High School in 1974 which plan was conceived and executed on the ticket of the co-operation of the whole clan. Furthermore, there was the existence of indigenous educational practices in Ipele-Owo which was based on the development of the child to suit the society which he belonged. The advancement of western education in Ipele-Owo brought about a form of re-organization to the already existing pattern which has both negative and positive impact on the people, though, the positive impacts were felt so well virtually in every aspect by the people of Ipele-Owo. There is a need, however, to inculcate in the upcoming generations the great feeling for a wide range and increase in development for adequate contribution and proffering of empirical and technical solutions to the emerging problems through science and technology.

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