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An Appraisal of Social and Political Relationship between Hausa and Igbo in Nigeria

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Abstract:

Relationship can be defined as a state of affairs existing between those having relation or dealings. Hausa and Igbo are two different language speakers and from different region but certain factors bring them together. The paper pointed out these factors that correlate the two language speakers such as business, country, politics, religion, system of government etc. The paper also employed interview and unobtrusive observation as a means of data collection. Twenty-five (25) respondents were selected which includes Hausa and Igbo whose ages are above 50 years old as the target population

Keywords: *Language, region, politics, speakers, relationship*

1. Introduction

Relationship has been defined as the way in which two more people or group regard and behave toward each other. Relationship starts when one shares a border, house, shop, ward, business, farm, birth, marriage or country. Historically, Igbo language is among languages of the southeastern Nigeria, the language has dialects and one among the languages having high population in African continent. They have traditional occupations, farming and business. They farm yam and cassava etc., also have annual yam festival. Before the coming of the colonial masters, Igbo people were left behind politically. They have many different cultures, most of them are Christian, some Muslims, and some practice tradition religion. In the 20th Century, the colonial masters changed their system of politics the Obi or king was regarded as EZE. The then Governor General, Lord Luggard introduce the EZE to various parts of the area. The Biafran war which started on 6th January, 1967 and ended on 15th January, 1970 has increased the spread of Igbos into various parts of the country, some move to northern part, southern parts and some abroad.

According to oral tradition, the first Igbo that came to Hausa land didn't understand Hausa and they too didn't understand Igbo, after sometimes, he asked for water to drink saying 'nyem miri' meaning give me water. From there, the Hausa man started calling an Igbo "inyamuri".

2. History of the Hausa

The Hausa is one who speaks Hausa, born in Hausaland, his parent and grandparent are Hausa and has black skin, practice traditional religion, and is proud of Hausa. Hausa as the name implies, belong to the languages of the Chadic family. Greenberg (1960), Schuh and Yalwa (1993), Jagger (2001), Amfani (2012), Bagari (1972), Schuh (1982), Bunza (2014). Westerman (1934) has the opinion that Hausa belong to the Baber.

Jinju (1985:1-10) has the opinion that Hausa has its origin from ancient Egypt. Meaning Hausa people have their roots from Masar (Egypt). He went on to say that as far back, Egyptians are blacks and their leaders (fir'auns) are blacks up to the 24 leaders of the house. To him, this are people that migrated to West Africa and settled at Chadic which at then is full up with water and surrounded by bush and animals and people in the area (Hamada) fought them and this people have white skin in colour as a result they changed their settlements to the present day of living and this ancient Egypt and in history become Hausa. Among their words includes

Misranci (Ancient Egypt)	Hausa	Gloss
Sarauta	sarauta	kingship
Srk	sarki	king
Hnt	hanci	nose
Rac	rana	sun etc

Table 1

In view of the above therefore, we may conclude that Hausa belonged to the languages of the Chadic family.

2.1. History of the Igbo

The history of the Igbo in Nigeria can be seen in five (5) sections

- Region
- Language
- Religion
- Mode of life
- System of ruling

Region: Historically, most of the Igbos in Nigeria are living in the eastern part of the country. Their main occupations are farming and business. They farm yam and cassava, as a result they have annual yam festival. In terms of business, many of the Igbos are not living in their homeland have spreads into various parts of the country and some parts of the world for the purpose of business.

Religion: Majority of the Igbos in Nigeria are Christians and few Muslims and some practice traditional religion.

Language: The predominant language spoken by the Igbos is Igbo and few speaks English i.e. some are bilingual and some are multilingual. In terms of mode of life, the Igbos have high cost of living while the system of ruling is politics where the power is gain through influence (Abdulsalam Ibrahim Ahmad) B.B.C. Hausa reporter.

3. Methodology

The paper employs unobtrusive observation, library research and interview as a means of data collection. The informants were selected through a simple random sampling. The selection includes Hausas and Igbos whose ages are above 50years old.

4. Discussions

Historically, Igbo language is among languages of the southeastern Nigeria, the language has dialects and one among the languages having high population in African continent. They have traditional occupations, farming and business. They farm yam and cassava etc., also have annual yam festival. Before the coming of the colonial masters, Igbo people were left behind politically. They have many different cultures, most of them were Christian, some Muslims, and some practice traditional religion. In the 20th Century, the colonial masters changed their system of politics, the emir or chief was called "EZE" the then Governor General, Lord Luggard introduce the EZE to various parts of the region. According to oral tradition, the first Igbo that came to Hausa land didn't understand Hausa and they too didn't understand Igbo, after sometimes, he asked for water to drink saying 'nyem miri' meaning give me water. From there, the Hausa man started calling Igbo inyamuri. In this regard, this has proved to us that there was a long relationship between the Hausa and Igbo.

Factors that links Hausa and Igbo. Among them includes

- Country
- System of government
- Business
- Politics
- Religion
- Knowledge
- Marriage

4.1. Country

This is one of the factors that associate Hausa and Igbo in Nigeria. Historically, the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorate in 1914 by the then Governor General, Lord Luggard made it possible for the Igbos to live together with the Hausas. The Igbos are living in the southeastern region of Nigeria while the Hausas are living in the northern region. In view of the above, the Hausas and the Igbos have become relatives of living in the same country.

4.2. System of Ruling

Despite the Hausas and the Igbos were living separately, the arrival of the colonial administrators (Lord Luggard) amalgamated the two regions i.e. northern and southern region in 1914 and since then to date it stands as one country Nigeria governed by one leader. If we are to stop here, it is enough for us to say Igbos and Hausa have become onefamily, living in one country and led by one leader.

4.3. Business

This is one of the factors that bring together Hausa and Igbo. As said earlier, most of the Igbos donot stayed in their homeland as a result of business and Biafra war which also increased the spread of into various parts of the country. Although the business varies, it involves buying and selling or production of a product. Among the businesses includes palm oil, gari, motor spare parts, electrical and electronics, building materials, yards, motor cycle spare parts, animals such as donkeys, cows, goats, among others. The Hausas too take animals such as goats, cows, donkeys from the northern parts such as Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno, Adamawa state etc. to the eastern, southeastern and southern regions of the country to sell. As a result of this, Igbos sometimes send their money to the Hausas in the northern region to buy them goods. In view of the above, the Igbos has a ward or settlement in Kano, Kano State called SABON GARI. It has been

confirmed that over 90 percent of the residents were Igbos. Additionally, business of firm making also added more salt to the relationships. It appears Hausas and Igbos engages in firmmaking. Some of these firms include;

- Mixture of perception among Hausas and Igbos
- Sarauniya (Queen Amina)
- Tsintsiya
- Karangiya etc.

More importantly, Hausa firms portrayed Igbos culture, administration such as Baban Chinedu. Likewise, Igbos firms portrayed Hausa culture and administration etc.

4.4. Religion

Apart from being in the same country, governed by a leader, business, the next thing is religion. Business between the parties made it possible for Igbos to accept Islam. If I am not mistaken, one day Igbo Muslim appeared in British Broad Casting (BBC) Hausa Service on behalf of the Igbo Muslims living in Enugu, Abia, Imo, Umahia, Ebonyi etc. saying that their Muslims relatives from the northern part (Hausa) are not marrying their daughters and sisters while they are same. Abdulsalam Ibrahim Ahmad BBC Hausa reporter reported. Later, after this call the Hausas started marrying their daughters and sisters, Muslim scholars from the northern part from time to time pays them a courtesy call in order to strengthen the relationship.

4.5. Politics

Another factor that links the Hausas and Igbos is politics. The coming of Igbos to northern part of the country gave birth to politics. All Igbos living in town and cities of the northern region have a leader or chief in that emirate. He is responsible for the affairs of the Igbos. For instance, in Kano Emirate, there is sarkin Inyamurai (Igbo chief), in Maiduguri, Potiskum, Sokoto almost all towns and cities of the region. Not only sarkin Inyamurai but also sarkin Yarabawa (Yoruba leader). Likewise, in their region such as Abba, Enugu, Onisha Umahia etc. there is sarkin Hausawa (Hausa leader). Another example, was the politics of the 1st republican, a poet (Yusuf Kantu) shows in his poem

“Da kin cee da/mu kaafir/rai,
Mu yi kauraa da inyamurai,
Har kun karaa/naa doogar/rai,
Domin kun ga/munsa koor/ree,
Har a gabanmu/sai kuka zee/maa”
“Ga inyamur/rai yau gaa/kuu,
Sun zama cikin mulkin/kuu,
Zaa su shigaa cikin mulkin/kuu,
Koo kun manta/addinin/kuu,
Wanda saboda/shi kuka hoo/maa”
(wakar Yusuf Kantu).

The above lines/stanzas pointed out the degree of relationship that existed between the Hausas and the Igbos in the first republican. Apart from this, the politics of fifth republican, all progressive Congress (APC) and People Democratic Party (PDP) also linked southeastern politicians – Rochas Okrocha, Chriss Ngege, etc. of APC with northern politicians of APC – Murtala Nyako, Nasiru El-Rufai, Baba Buhari, Aliyu Maga Takardan Wamako (Sarkin Yamma) etc. On the PDP part includes Atiku Abubakar, Buba Galadima, Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso etc. with their counterpart – Uche Secondors, Olise Matu Godwin A. etc.

4.6. Education

Education is said to be a factor that associates Hausa and Igbo. This has come where the northern elite and politicians are building lecture halls and examination halls etc. to institution in the eastern part of the country. Likewise, the eastern politicians and elite do same in the northern part of the country. For example, The Kano foundation in Kano by was built by Rochas Okorocho. This is a commendable effort.

5. Findings

The paper revealed a long and strong relationship between the Hausas and the Igbos in Nigeria.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, a Hausa is one who speaks Hausa, born in Hausa land, parent and grandparent are Hausas, has black skin, and is proud of to be Hausa. Politics, business, education country etc. are among the factors that relate Hausa and Igbo in Nigeria to belong to the same family which will never be over emphasized. Additionally, the Hausa relationship was not only restricted to Igbo, Nupe, Kanuri, Yoruba, Kambari, Wamgara but also Indians and Chinese.

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