
Influence Of Colonialism On Nigeria

Colonialism is a consistent theme within the history of Africa. It laces through the formative tapestry of the majority of African states today including Nigeria. Lagos was invaded by British forces in 1851 and formally annexed in 1861. Nigeria became a British territorial dominion in 1901. When at the start adopting associate indirect rule approach, in 1906 British united the small Lagos Colony with the Southern Nigeria which eventually in 1914 formed the colony and protectorate of Nigeria. The reason why British wanted to take over Nigeria would primarily be for the search for raw Materials. When it was evident that the European continent couldn't offer the amount of raw materials demanded at the industries, industrialists began to venture overseas.

They exported Nigerian valuables comparable to gold, ivory, rubber, palm oil, wood, cotton and different valuable resources. The search for New Markets conjointly contend an important role within the British Imperialism of Nigeria. The rise within the volume of production following the industrial Revolution rendered European markets oversaturated with finished product. Costs plunged down and profits crashed. The necessity for new markets for the finished product forced the industrialists to come back to Nigeria wherever they changed their product with different useful products such as raw materials. Sixty years of British Imperialism had welcomed both burdens and benefits for the country of Nigeria.

Therefore, British imperialism in modern day Nigeria influenced its history, culture, economy and society as a whole to a great extent. The colonization of Nigeria began with the arrival of the Christian Missionaries in Badagry in 1842, changing the interaction between people. This claim can be supported through the famous statement "It is the Bible and the plough that must regenerate Africa" (Leander Foy). This quote helps to prove the fact that it ought to be pointed out that Christianity was the right arm of imperialism. The Christian Missionaries in many African states cheated the kings in order to extend European rule. It is worth noting that missionaries came with the point of view that the Europeans were superior to the Africans. Their main motive was to do anything necessary to convert Africans who were viewed as uncivilized and barbaric. Thus, a sense of ethnocentrism was present in the missionaries. Missionaries often failed to differentiate between Christian principles and those of the imperialists. It must be taken into account that missionaries not always had followed the righteous path.

For instance, the Nigerian local chief Lobengula was tricked by the European Missionaries in a bid to make the domination of European capitalists in Nigeria. Furthermore some missionaries had developed friendships with local clans and used this to further European causes. Christian missionaries signed treaties which were used by colonialists to take over colonies. Thus, it could be understood that in the name of religion missionaries used to secretly help the British colonizers. This led to loss of political, economic and social powers from Nigerians to the British protectorate government. In this case of power dynamics as the missionaries had greater authority they had manipulated the Nigerians into believing the colonist. Therefore, the facts above restate the role which christianity played in the imperialism of Nigeria and how religion was used to manipulate the interactions between Nigerians and the British Colonists. Britain had also gained power by the use of its military. This claim can be supported by the statement "Britain maintained it's economic hegemony [rule] over the colonies through military power,

along with the indirect rule policy” (World Book Online). This statement helps to establish the idea of how the British had used military and indirect rule to exploit Nigerians. The British adopted the policy of indirect rule whereby they dominated through the native rulers.

They recognized traditional rulers, and wherever there have been additional, they appointed European individuals into such positions. They used native officers to administer the localities. On January 1st 1914, following the recommendations of Sir Frederick Lugard, protectorate of Northern Nigeria and Niger Coast protectorate were merged to create the Colony and protectorate of Nigeria beneath one governor-general resident in urban center. Primarily, government was to be left within the hands of native chiefs, subject to the steering of European officers. Thus a valid idea can be perceived of how the British indeed used their military effectively and dealt with the local government wisely. Instead of the usage of external forces the British had efficiently used the local government to control the region of Nigeria avoiding any chaos or tension. They had gained control over the entire region changing the interaction between people in the country. They also helped Nigerian system developed into an advanced form of local government, under the standard of “native administration,” which became the hallmark of British colonial rule in Africa. Therefore, the explanation stated above leads to a strong argument regarding how the British used military power along with indirect rule to not only gain control of Nigeria but also change the power dynamics and interaction between the people along with the administration.

Imperialisms in Nigeria had welcomed both benefits and burdens. This claim can be supported through the quote which states “Although the British imperialism had some positive effects on Nigeria but it surely did not come without a cost. Countless Nigerians lost their homes, hands and even their lives” (Ewout Frankema). From this evidence it can be inferred that imperialism in Nigeria had both positive and negative impacts. It acted like a double-edged sword. The British imperialism helped reduce local warfare and improved sanitation, healthcare, and education systems were introduced as well. It created a pathway for economic stability as railroads, dams, telegraph lines, and telephones were built in African colonies. However under this frontage of development remained the sacrifice, pain and deaths of the Nigerians. Nigerians had lost control of their land and independence. Hands were amputated if they were not able to meet the certain expectations of extracting resources. Millions either died of disease or were killed due to insubordination. Diffusion of the rich African culture took place. Traditions were taken away and their ways of life were destroyed. The partition of Africa led to the separation of countless families. This eventually created new boundaries leading to present conflicts and the slave trade. The Europeans took away most of their resources especially gold, diamonds, ivory and agricultural primary products. It can be understood that imperialism had surely affected modern day Nigeria in both positive and negative manner.

The development brought by the British are basically western norms which were new to the Africans. These eventually benefitted the life-spans and increased the literacy rate in Africa. However, due to the great extraction of resources by the British Africans never got the opportunity to learn how to use their own resources for development. These evidence and facts also show how the British changed the dynamics of power. Africans occupied solely the inferior positions of the colonial administration and never got the opportunity to voice their opinion in the government of their own countries. Those employed by the colonial administration felt proud and more superior to the others and it eventually led to social inequality in the colonies changing the dynamics of power and interaction between people. Therefore, we can understand that there are both positive and negative short term consequences which have affected modern

day Nigeria historically, culturally and socially.

Nigerians were indeed treated in an unjust and brutal manner under the British rule. This claim can be supported by the evidence "In the Village of Satiru, when the natives rebelled against the Europeans Lugard responded by sending a column of 500 infantrymen, eventually slaughtering 2,000 indigenous Nigerians" (Thomas Lewis). Through this quote we can clearly understand how brutally the Nigerians were treated under the British. The Nigerians were always oppressed and never got the opportunity to fight back. The British had started abusing their power. Due to this extreme violence Nigerians themselves were not safe in their very own country compelling them to take action which eventually led to independence. Thus, the evidence stated above reinforces the fact how the British had used their authority in an abusive manner which changed the interaction between people in Nigeria.

The independence of Nigeria was solely made possible because of the combined effort from the civilians and their determination for autonomy. This statement can be proven by the evidence "In 1960 The Independence of Nigeria was driven by Nigerians themselves with the help of their Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa" (Greene Kirke). Nigeria gained independence from the United Kingdom on 1 October 1960. Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir led an Executive Council which entirely consisted of Nigerians. The British recognised that the independence drive had started to gain traction after World War Two. From 1959 to 1960, Jaja Wachuku was the first black Speaker of the Nigerian Parliament. Wachuku replaced Sir Frederick Metcalfe of Great Britain. Political parties, however, tended to reflect the makeup of the three main ethnic groups mainly Christian, Muslim and Igbo. The first post-independence National Government was formed by a conservative alliance of the NCNC and the NPC, with Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, a Hausa, becoming Nigeria's first Prime Minister. It can be clearly perceived that the combined effort from all the Nigerians and ethnic groups was behind Nigeria's independence. The interaction of oppression and abuse by the British towards the Nigerians had united all the ethnic groups eventually inspiring them to change the dynamics of power and take authority in their hands. Thus, it can be interpreted that the climb to self-governance was made possible by the Nigerians and the independence had vitally affected the distribution of power in the country.

There are both positive and negative long-term impacts of imperialism in Nigeria which mainly encompasses the social, economical and political aspects of the country. This claim can be proven by the evidence "Impact of imperialism in Nigeria includes both the good and bad. Imperialism in Nigeria had brought education, health care, increase in commerce etc." (Austen, Ralph A). Imperialism in Nigeria led to the great ethnic conflict. As the British did not take the Nigerian tribes into consideration it caused many colonies to separate friendly ethnic groups or tribes and combine hostile ethnic groups and tribes, leading to violence and war down the road. On the other hand, modern education in Nigeria therefore dates back to 24 September 1842 with the arrival at Badagry of the Rev. They established scholarships for secondary and technical education and introduced the concept of government schools. Colonial administration brought modern health care facilities to Nigeria. The colonial administration established plantations and industries in Nigeria. Their efforts resulted in the rapid development of commerce in Nigeria. For example, the peak period for railway building came after the First World War with the railway across Niger being built by 1914 welcomed great development to the region. Through the facts and evidence it can be comprehended that in terms of present-day imperialism did have some long-term positive impacts on the country.

For instance, though the British legal system was forced on the natives, the legal system now forms the bedrock of Nigerian legal system. Even the civil service system was introduced by the colonial administration. The establishment of the public service and its paraphernalia was done by the colonial masters who also established the public corporation like the Nigerian port Authority. The Nigerian economy grew into a more civilized trade due to European influence, however taxes and European emigrants took a grueling toll on the new system. Thus, it can be comprehended that both burdens and benefits are present in the British Imperialism in Nigeria. Prior to imperialism Africa was most popular for the slave trade and was looked at as a source of labor for plantations, which of course was conducted by Europeans however even before imperialism began Europeans were heavily involved in the construction of African economics. Imperialism was different in that it was a more African influenced economy. No longer were Africans people the products but the products were being made by African people. Africa was looked on as a sources of new resources some introduced by Europeans themselves.

Colonial rule led to the introduction of new crops that transformed both the landscape and the social order of the subject lands. Imperialism in Africa had changed the interactions between people. It had helped the country develop and stabilize its economy. The long term effects of imperialism in Nigeria coincide with the consequences of globalization. In present day President Buhari's 2015 election saw the country's first peaceful transfer of power to an opposition candidate. Elections raised hopes that some of Nigeria's most pressing problems—including weak governance, corruption, the Boko Haram insurgency, and persistent intercommunal conflicts—could soon be under control.

Despite President Buhari's vision for reform, the country's security challenges are surging as the factors that fuel violent conflicts remain largely unaddressed. Imperialism certainly had affected the dynamics of power and interaction between people in Nigeria. Thus, with all the evidence and explanation stated above a perceptible argument can be formed that British imperialism in modern day Nigeria influenced its history, culture, economy and society as a whole to a great extent.