

ABSTRACT

The African continent is considered today by the majority as the origin of the human beings. Most of the Africans are originated from the indigenous people of Africa. The various stages from primitive societies to modern societies are visible in today's African society. Therefore, most ideal region for the study of socio-economic evolution of the primitive societies is Africa. By studying the socio-economic changes in Africa from primitive societies to modern societies, a broad knowledge can be gained in respect of evolution, expansion and transformation of indigenous primitive societies.

African continent consists of 53 states and 61 countries including small islands. Almost in all these countries indigenous communities lived from ancient periods. Information and data concerning common characteristics relevant to these communities were collected from the internet and secondary and tertiary sources. A special attention was given to the primitive societies in Nigeria, on which an empirical study was conducted through surveys and interviews with indigenous people and their chiefs. Information and data relevant to the primitive societies were also collected through visits and observations.

Theoretical foundation for this study was based on the theories and views advocated by sociologists and economists on the evolution and transformation of societies and economies. A special reference was made regarding the theories formulated by economists such as: Karl Marx, Rostow, Jorgenson, and Boeke etc. and sociologists like Comte, Tylor, Morgan and Durkheim etc. It was examined how far the social and economic changes pointed out by these social scientists were visible in the African societies in their evolutionary process.

As compared to societies of other quarters of the World, African primitive societies had taken relatively a longer time to transform in to modern societies. Even at present different levels of societies, such as primitive societies, traditional societies and rural societies are visible in African countries. In addition, semi-urban societies and urban societies exist in these countries. The factors affected the changes in some primitive societies and the reasons for not changing some other primitive societies were examined in this study.

Some of the African societies were westernized due to European colonization and some were Arabized or Muslimized due to trade imperialism of Middle

East countries. But the benefits accrued from Westernization or Arabization were not sufficiently flown to primary level societies and rural sector and as a result evolutionary process of such societies had shown a very slow progress. Thus, it was attempted to prove the hypothesis 'the evolution of primitive societies was delayed due to the non-flowing of benefits accrued from Westernization and Arabization to those societies'.

It was revealed from this study that primitive and conservative traditions and attitudes prevailed in the primitive societies and in rural societies which transformed from primitive societies were affected to a certain extent to the backwardness of the economies of these countries. The hypothesis 'backwardness of the primitive and rural societies in Africa is a major reason for the slow growth of the economies of these countries' is also examined in this study. In addition, riots and tribal clashes between various tribes and also with modern societies, originated from ancient times are still arisen from time to time and that also contribute to the backwardness of the respective economies.

In addition to above two hypotheses the following two hypotheses were also examined in this study. The hypotheses, 'Characteristics pertaining to primary society in theories advocated by Economists and Sociologists were visible in the primitive societies of Africa' and 'Dualism concepts explained by Economists can be seen in African societies' were proven by this study.

Majority of the poor countries belong to the African continent. In this study attention was focused on modern social and economic development in these countries to highlight the impact of low growth of primitive and rural societies on the backwardness of the aggregate economy. It was evident from countries like South Africa, more the countries are modernized higher the rate of economic growth. Through transformation of attitudes, techniques and occupations of primary and traditional societies, social and economic development can be accelerated in these countries.

A development strategy to modernize the backward societies has been proposed at the end of the study. It is expected to achieve economic development and human development through the proposed pushing strategy and pulling strategy.