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Assignment Title: Rural Sociology Assignment
Course Title: Rural Sociology
Course Code: SOC 316Question
In not more than 3000 words, discuss the cultural changes that have taken place in your local community upon the advent of westernization.

Westernization is a process whereby societies come under or adopt Western culture in areasuchas industry, technology, politics, economics, lifestyle, law, norms, mores, customs, traditions,values, mentality, perceptions, diet, clothing, language, alphabet, religion, and philosophy. During colonialism it often involved spread of Christianity.

Westernization has been a growing influence across the world in the last few centuries, with some thinkers assuming Westernization to be the equivalent of modernization, a way of thought that is often debated. The overall process of Westernization is often two-sided in that Western influences and interests themselves are joined with parts of the affected society, at minimum, to change towards a more Westernized society, with the putative goal of attaining a Western life or some aspects of it, while Western societies are themselves affected by this process and interaction with non-Western groups.

Westernization traces its roots back to Ancient Greece. Later, the Roman Empire would take on the first process of Westernization as it was heavily influenced by Greece and created a new culture based on the principles and values of the Ancient Greek society. The Romans emerged with a culture that would lay the new foundations of Europeand grow into a new Western identity based on the Greco-Roman society.

Westernization can also be compared to acculturation and enculturation. Acculturation is "the process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between cultural groups and their individual members.  The different definitions attached to culture are based on the differences in the orientation of the people.

According to Ekeh (2012), culture is construct used in an attempt to analyzed and integrate events and ideals in broad spectrum of area of society. Jakayinka (2002) states that from wider perspective, culture includes the total repertoire of human action which are socially transmitted from generation to generation. Obiora (2002), say that the transformation of culture is gradual and not sudden. Culture is a continuous process of change. it changes exactly the same way as the human being change. It is dynamic, learned, acquired, transmitted or diffused through contact or means of communication flow from generation to generation. The Nigeria culture is observed to be fading out as a result of the acceptance and adaptation of the mode mist’s solution on to underdevelopment.

Cultural imperialism is a term used to describe the imposition of western culture on the culture of people in developing countries. Cultural imperialism often refers to America’s cultural influence on other countries, for better or worse.A man’s right lies in his confidence and personality which is greatly nurtured by his culture. Man is essentially the product of his culture. It beats and moulds a person into a particular shape. Culture makes one think, speak, dance and behave in a particular manner. It’s culture that makes one Kanuri, Jukun, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Alago, Tiv, etc.

Africa as a continent and Nigeria as a country have their given cultures which are unique in their own respect. This culture may not be absolutely the same among all countries and even within a country, a lot of cultures exist but there are features that differentiate Africans from other people of the world. The issue here is that any person with passion for the African culture today will believe that, the very material, spiritual and aesthetic fabric of African people had been destroyed by western civilization considering the youth in Takum Local Government Area.

Nigeria which is made up of rich and diverse cultural values is beginning to lose most its cultural ideals especially through the adoption of foreign culture showcased through the mass media. Nowadays, it is observed that our youth have abandoned our local attires such as the ‘Adire’ and ‘Ankara’ for alien attires. It is common to see young people (youth)  walking across the streets half nude putting on micro-mini skirts, handless top, trousers and other outfits that are not part of our cultural identity.

Africans and indeed Nigerians have their traditional attires especially Takum local government, but how many youth proudly abide by the culture and wear such traditional attires today? A visit to banks in Takum local government will give you a perfect example. In fact, it is mandatory in the banks that you wear a suit except on Fridays that you are allowed to wear native attire. The question we must answer is whether wearing of suit part of Takum culture or western culture? Must we copy everything western? Can’t we promote our rich cultural and traditional outfit so our local industries can boom?

One of the negative roles the mass media plays in our today’s society is the dominance and propagation of violence particularly on television and video film industry. A lot of the foreign film content on television is mainly scenes of violence. The actors who engage in murder and other violent actors are portrayed as heroes. Home video, which is very popular now with Nigerian films, also carries the same theme. Research has shown that children who watch violence on screen are most prone to violent behavior in adulthood.

After contact, changes in cultural patterns are evident within one or both cultures. Specific to Westernization and the non-Western culture, foreign societies tend to adopt changes in their own social systems relative to Western ideology, lifestyle, and physical appearance, along with numerous other aspects, and shifts in culture patterns can be seen to take root as a community becomes acculturated to Western customs and characteristics – in other words, Westernized. Westernization can include Christianization, Americanization and Europeanization.

Western influence and westernization have led to the extinction of indigenous languages and cultures of many societies in the world. Nigerian cultures and native languages have suffered base on the adoption of western language (English) and values .The Chinese people have been a culturally sensitive people and they have done wonderfully well in preserving their language and cultures from going into extinction more than any country in the world. They never assimilate western language in their every day communication and education; unlike the Nigerian society where English language has been adopted as the official language for education and day to day communication. Western influence on the developing countries of the world has been an interesting area of study. Western culture must always have influence on the Nigerian cultures since the society adopt and accept it as the “modern (best)” culture in the world. Many countries especially some of the developing countries have lost their cultural uniqueness and identities due to western –inspired model ways of doing things. Many countries desire to be progressive and successful in order to meet up with the fast changes of modern times; therefore, the desire and fascination for change and transformation are very inevitable.

In Nigeria, westernization is seen as the effects of western invasion and colonization on some native societies of the world which had both positive and negative impacts. Nigerians have been westernized due to their past British colonial influence and leadership which relegated the Nigerian cultures to the background.

There have been different levels of western cultural domination and destruction of Nigeria’s local customs yet there were also resistance and modification of the native Nigerian cultures. However, some of the Nigeria’s traditional cultures have gone into extinction as a result of western influence and impacts.

There are some good and bad effects of western influence; and their influence could be traced from Nigerian colonial past. During the colonial era, the British used western education as a tool in cultivating their western religion and cultural hegemony in Nigerians. They oppressed the indigenous natives by subjecting them to western values, so Nigerian natives were forced to accept the superiority of western cultures over their own unique Nigerian culture.

Amongst the good effects of westernization are the abolition of some Nigerian cultures, like the killing of twins, slave trade businesses, the cast system and burying of people alive in the evil forest. Though western influence and British colonial rule had put Nigerian some languages and cultures into extinction; yet they have saved the lives of many people who belonged to the above mentioned categories. In the contemporary Nigerian society, western values and influences have affected almost every part of the Nigerian cultures such as:

1. Language: Many Nigerian languages have gone into extinction and are no longer in use. English language has been adopted as the official language and has been used in educating Nigerian citizens. Many people in Nigeria are ashamed of speaking their native languages and as result of this; the new generation of Nigerian youths could not speak their languages fluently.
2. Weddings and Traditions: Many Nigerians have been converted to Christianity and some do not value their traditional values again as a result of their belief in Christianity. The western wedding has been fashioned by many people in Nigeria as the modern type of wedding and they believe that marriage is not complete without the western type of wedding. So they combine the western and the traditional wedding together.
3. Dress Codes: Western fashions and styles have been adopted as a model although some people still wear Nigerian clothes. Western wedding dresses and men’s suites have been adopted for church weddings.
4. Buildings: western designs and skylines had been adopted and seen as a model for modernity.
5. Music: pop music, acrobatic movements, fashion style, dyed hair etc have been emulated from the western culture and at the same time seen as the real trend of modernity in Nigeria; anybody that is not associated with all these does not belong to the modern generation.