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ASSIGNMENT

First off, what is culture change?

Culture change is a term used in public policy making that emphasizes the influence of culturalon individual and community behavior. It has been sometimes called repositioning of culture, which means the reconstruction of the cultural concept of a society. It places stress on the social and cultural capital determinants of decision making and the manner in which these interact with other factors like the availability of information or the financial incentives facing individuals to drive behaviour.

Simply put, cultural change can be defined as the modification of a particular community or society through innovation, invention, discovery or contact with other communities or societies.

These cultural capital influences include the role of parenting, families and close associates; organizations such as schools and workplaces; communities and neighborhoods; and wider social influences such as the media. It is argued that this cultural capital manifests into specific values, attitudes or social norms which in turn guide the behavioral intentions that individuals adopt in regard to particular decisions or courses of action. These behavioral intentions interact with other factors driving behavior such as financial incentives, regulation and legislation, or levels of information, to drive actual behavior and ultimately feed back into underlying cultural capital.

. Westernization is a process whereby societies or communities come under or adopt the Western culture in areas such as industry, politics, technology, economics, lifestyle, mores, norms, customs, traditions, values, perceptions, diet, clothing, language, religion and philosophy.

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.

The advent of westernization has brought about culture change my local community which is Ethiope West of Itsekiri in Delta State.

Westernization has also affected the languages of the Ethiope West people in the state of Delta. Many of those languages have now gone into extinction or are now hardly used. Examples of such languages are the Urhobo, Itsekiri, Izon, Ighala languages. This is not to say that westernization has stopped the use of those languages. However, Westernization has made English language to be adopted as the main language used in the Ethiope West. This also has its negative effects because now, many people from Delta State are now ashamed or not proud of their native language and as a result of this, the new generation of youths from the state of delta ans in Nigeria in general cannot speak their native languages fluently or even speak it at all which is not a good thing.

Another negative effect of Westernization on languages is a problem known as the communication barrier. Communication barrier is anything that does not allow us to receive and understand the messages that other people use to convey their information, ideas and their thoughts. Communication barrier interferes with or blocks the information you are trying to send to others as well. A vast number of Itsekiri people today that speak English instead of their native orancestral language have caused a barrier in communication within the young ones who migrated to Urban areas, people living in rural aread and old men and women. As native African societies continue to do this,most communities will be experiencing a corresponding loss of their traditional culture. There is a need for Africans to teach and educate their children in the midst of acculturation so that the local language of the people will not be completely lost to Western languages.

Westernization has also affected the wedding traditions of the Itsekiri people, many of them have been converted to Christianity and this has made them not to value some of their traditional values again. The western wedding has been made to be the modern type of wedding. The Western wedding involves the husband wearing a black suit, a white shirt with a tie or bowtie and the wife wearing an all white gown. Now people in delta state do not believe that a marriage is complete without the Western type of wedding. So its either, they combine both the western type of wedding and the traditional type of wedding or they do not practice the traditional type of wedding at all.

Still on the topic of marriage, Westernization has also affected our culture in the area of finding partners to settle down with. In the old Itsekiri setup, a young man or woman does not have the responsibility of choosing their partners. It was the right and responsibility of the parents to find a wife for their son and to give their daughter to any man of their choice. The next was for him or her to wait for them to tell him where and when the marriage would take place. The work of doing the investigation, finding money and other things for the wedding is not in the hand of the man or woman. Investigation here means finding out whether the girl's people can give birth without difficulties, a trace of rampant adultery, stealing, and premature death and so on.All these factors that are investigated will aid the parents in making a choice for a partner to their son or daughter.

Due to cultural change, men find their wives on their own without the go ahead of their parents. They are not willing to know or investigate things about who to marry which is very risky;some choose partners without getting to know them well or maybe because of something as basic as a one night stand. They make decisions on where and when the marriage will hold. Which has often times resulted to regrets, divorce, abandonment and even quarrel between the two parties. In Africa, both the living and the dead gather during marriage. It is a conglomerate that no single individual must stand alone. In order to avert frequent divorce cases in Africa, it is imperative for young men and women going into marriage to listen to their parents especially when there is a sense of danger.

Westernization has also affected the local community in the area of indecent sexual behaviour. Indecent sexual behaviour is an unwanted conduct of sexual nature or other conducts based on sex affecting affecting the dignity of men and women. Due to the culture change brought by Westernization, women now go along the road, school and churches half naked putting on sexy clothes that show/reveal the private parts of their body which leads to negative acts such as sexual harassment, raping etc. Unfortunately, in the local community, women are taught how not to rape and men are not taught to never rape no matter the situation. This is a two way problem that westernization has caused in local communities in Delta State. Also, the Western culture has made it seem okay for people to change their sexual preferences from the ordinary. Normally a man should be attracted to a woman and vice versa but Western culture has made it to look like it is not a problem for a man to engage in sexual,acts with another man or a woman performing sexual acts with another woman. IN the Western area, these acts are not seen as an abomination but in Nigeria and in Itsekiri, it’s a forbidden act. That’s why when anyone in Itsekiri is seen performing such acts, they are usually discriminated against, ostracized and punished.

Westernization has also brought about cultural change in my local community by introducing technology tot the local communities. This has to be the biggest impact of Westernization. Westernism accompanied by the advanced technology has stepped down the pace of African local technology and oral tradition in my local community. On the bright side, Western technology has improved the lifestyle of the Itsekiri people tremendously in the following ways

>> MEDICINE

Before the advent of westernization. If anyone was to fall sick, the only option would be to go to a native doctor for a diagnosis and local herbs to help the ill person to feel better. The problem was that most of the native doctors drugs didn’t help or even made the condition worse in a person. Another problem is that the native doctors were only known to treat minor ailments like cough, catarrh, joint pain, low blood levels, but when it came to more serious situations like haemorrages, cancers, sexually transmitted diseases, they did not know how to go about it. Now through technology, many medical facilities with qualified doctors and nurses have been put in local areas to treat illnesses. Due to good health care infrastrucuture, right diagnosis are given, the right drugs are administered and lives are saved and this has also reduced the death rate of people in local communities.

>> COMMUNICATION

Quick communication services is one of the main ways technology has improved the life of the inhabitants of local communities. Previously, sending messages from one person to another was always a long process. It is either two people would have to meet at a certain place, a town crier or through the local delivery men who take letters and deliver them to the recipients by walking. Technology however has brought about the establishment of communication lines which allows phones to be used in those areas for calls, texts, video calls which speed up the communication process between two or more people. With quicker communication channels, people in local communities now have access to information in areas outside their communities and also help in passing down warnings to keep the community safe. For example, if there are armed robbers in a particular local area, a popular person in that community can send messaged or post it online so that everyone can be more vigilant and careful which would make the robbers to be easily caught and not steal or kill anyone.

>> AGRICULTURE

Before technology, farmers were only able to feed a few people and needed the help of so many men women and children to perform agricultural activities.It was also hard to start a business because there were not always enough farm produce to start one. Presntly, farmers use technologies such as motorized equipment, modified housing for animals and biotechnology, which allow for improvement in agriculture. Better technology has allowed farmers to feed more people and requires fewer people to work on farms to feed their families.

Changes in equipment have made a large impact on the way farmers are able to farm and grow food. In the past, farmers would have to do field work by hand or with horse-drawn equipment. This work would take a long time to complete, which meant that farms were smaller because farmers could only work so much land. Horses were not very fast, and since they were animals, they would get tired and need rest to recover from their hard work.

Today, most farmers use agricultural technological inventions such as tractors and other motorized equipment to help with field work. Tractors, combines, plows, etc. are much larger and move much faster than horses, so farmers are able to produce more food in a shorter amount of time. These machines still need to be taken care of because they can break down just like a car, but they can run for longer periods of time and don’t need recovery periods.

Technology in agriculture has also been a source of change to the way in which farm animals are raised and where they live has changed as well. Through research with animals, scientists have discovered what types of housing make the animals the most comfortable. In today’s times, dairy cows typically live in barns that provide soft mattresses, sand beds or water beds.  There are also nutritionists to feed them special diets, and fans and sprinklers to keep them cool when it is hot outside.  Making the animals comfortable is important because farmers want their animals to be healthy, but also for the dairy cows to produce more milk yield.

Pigs are also now typically housed indoors.  Since the switch of housing pigs inside, the diseases usually found in pigs (trichinosis) decreased from the pig population.  This disease was common in wild boars, and could be transmitted to domestic pigs if they came in contact with wild boars.  When pigs were not held in confinement for housing, this was quite a bit more common than it is today.On top of the animal agricultural industry changing throughout the years, crop production has improved as well.  Biotechnology in agriculture is the manipulation of a living organism to improve the quality of human life through advances in crop and animal production.  Seed technology has changed over the years through the help of both biotechnology and genetic engineering.  In the past, crop harvests have been destroyed due to harsh weather conditions, but now scientists can change crop outcomes by modifying seeds in the first place.

>> TRANSPORTATION

Before the advent of technology through Westernization. Going from one place to another was not an easy task in local communities. Majority of people then could only move from plae to place through walking while a few who had transportation animals like donkeys or horses would use those for transportation. But even with the animals, many people and things could not be carried on it because the animals would get tired easily. Bicycles were also a common means of transportation back the. Now transportation has become better through technology because of the invention of cars, buses, motorcycles which can take a large number of people and other material things from place to place and in a shorter period of time compared to before. New transportation technologies has also enabled people to be able to get jobs in places far away from their local communities because they know that through cars and both public and private rtransportation buses, they can leave home and get home quickly.

Another way in which westernization has changed the culture of my local community is in the area of education. Originally, the school was in the home and what was taught by parents to their children was their tradition, their native language, good morals and ethics and domestic chores. However, western culture has led to the establishment of schools and universities for further expansion of the knowledge of the yutes which is beyond what they were just taught at home. In my local community, there are now primary schools, secondary schools, tertiary institutions, institutions that prepare you for promotional examinations or international examinations for those who have the means to send their children abroad. In all these institutions, more knowledge is passed both in theory and practical so as to broaden the knowledge of the youth which would make them useful to their community after their school. However, the establishment of schools does not trump the values that are still learnt at home, those are equally important as well because as the saying goes. “Charity begins at home”

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**CONCLUSION**

Westernization or western influence has been a persuasive and accelerating force across the globe today. The British and Americans want non-developed societies to adopt their western values, industries, technologies, law, politics, lifestyles, languages, diet, alphabets, religion and philosophy to the detriment of their traditional cultures. They simply want these societies to change toward a more westernized society, in the hope of attaining western values. Though they introduced modern facilities, industries, education and technologies, many countries of the world have lost their cultural uniqueness and identities due to western trend of modernity .As a result of this, many indigenous languages and cultures in local communities are now on the verge of extinction because of globalization and western influence. However,other communities and areas like those in China have exerted its strength and love for Chinese Confucian cultural values by resisting western languages from replacing the Mandarin. Till today, Mandarin is used in every day conversation as well as the written form of the Chinese language and is spreading over the world. The Chinese government has also given many scholarships to foreigners in ensuring that mandarin spreads to all countries of the world and this is a great challenge to the western language (English). Though China is emerging as one of the strongest economies and economic powers of the world, the leaders have shown great love for their language and culture by educating its citizens using mandarin language; thereby expressing the idea that cultures are preserved through language. If one’s language dies, automatically the culture will go into extinction. In Nigeria, the case is different because of her colonial background; the citizens have been forced to adopt and be educated using the English language. Also, English language is the official language for learning and every day communication which made some of the Nigerian languages to die off. As a result of this, many traditions and customs are lost to modernization and western influence. Many countries have a lot to learn from the Chinese society in order to project their cultural uniqueness and richness. Nigeria should learn from China and try to revive her rich indigenous languages for the education of her citizens since cultures and traditions are preserved through a country’s language.