

DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH: WHAT WENT WRONG?

BY: YUSUF ADAMU

Growing up as an 'almajiri' boy in the early 60s, I was not subjected to the harsh condition being faced by many 'almajiris', I see today roaming the street in many northern states. I was living in my father's house and only go to attend my Qur'anic School. The beauty of it all, 'almajiris', in those days, the 'almajiri' boy begs in the name of God (Ala'ro). Today, 'almajiris', no longer beg using the name of God. All they would say is, 'we are hungry or we want money. Recently, I was pondering on issues surrounding the backwardness of my dear North'. In every thing regarding development of this region, once great and mighty. While I was wondering on these issues, I was again confused following my brief chat with an 'almajiri' boy in between hours of my long day of worry over so many thing I could not give myself the answer that fetches any relief for me.

In my brief discussion with this lad, I ask him about his background and why at is aged, he was not living in his father's house. His answers points to poverty, which is the only reasons a typical northerner can give in defense of his present circumstance. "I am from Katsina state, my father, Malam Garba Fori, is not working. My mother is a petty trader – selling 'Awara'." He said.

Indeed, this pointed to nothing but poverty. But why are so many northern elites seemed relax with such an army of wanderers on every street in the north. Is it that, we have forgotten about our social responsibilities as a region?

After the Korean War, South Korea was one of the world's poorest countries with only \$64 per capita income. Economically, in the 1960s it lagged behind the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – c u r r e n t l y h o l d i n g elections marred by violence. Since then the country's fortunes have diverged spectacularly. South Korea now belongs to the rich man's club, the OECD development assistance committee (DAC). The DRC has gone backwards since independence and, out of 187 countries, ranked bottom in the 2011 Human Development Index. Thirty -five years ago, China's per capita income was only one- third of that of sub-Saharan Africa. Today , China is the world ' s largest manufacturing powerhouse : It produces nearly 50 percent of the world ' s major industrial goods , including crude steel (800 percent of the U .S . level and 50 percent of global supply) , cement (60 percent of the world ' s production) , coal (50 percent of the world ' s production) , vehicles (more than 25 percent of global supply) and industrial patent applications (about 150 percent of the U .S . level) . China is also the world ' s largest producer of ships, high -speed trains , robots, tunnels , bridges , highways, chemical fibers , machine tools , computers , cell phones , etc. China ' s industrial revolution , which started 35 years ago, is perhaps one of the most important economic and geopolitical phenomena since the original Industrial Revolution 250 years ago. The reason is simple. Less than 10 percent of the world's population is fully industrialized ; if China can successfully finish its industrialization, an additional 20 percent of the world ' s population will be entering

modern times . Along the way , China is igniting new growth across Asia , Latin America, Africa and even the industrial West , thanks to the country ' s colossal demand for raw materials , energy , trade and capital f l o w s .

China's rapid growth has puzzled many people, including economists.

Production of natural rubber is concentrated in a few developing countries, with Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India accounting for a substantial volume of the world's exports. Rubber is easily grown in hilly terrain, and has been successfully established in degraded-deforested areas, leading to improved land use and a reduction of erosion, siltation and flooding. Productivity has been enormously increased through improved varieties (including better quality rootstocks) and innovations in agronomic practices, including exploitation methods (e.g. low intensity tapping with chemical stimulation to optimize productivity), advanced planting material and micro-tapping (to reduce immaturity period), and other innovations such as high intensity planting.

Palm oil production in Asia amounts to more than half of world production, with Malaysia, Indonesia and now Thailand accounting for the major share. Much progress has been made, particularly in Malaysia, in the addition of value to their products through further processing of palm oil into semi-finished and finished products. Oil palm is the most efficient producer of vegetable oils (500 percent better than soya beans), giving it greater resilience to adverse price changes.

There are prospects of even higher productivity now that improved varieties (colonial planting material) have been introduced, with a good possibility that oil quality characteristics will improve. Over the years there has been expansion of oil palm areas and intensification of downstream processing activities, largely with import substitution objectives. Coconut is another major perennial oil crop in Asia, accounting for more than two-thirds of the world's production. Major coconut producers are the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Coconut plantations in the region are characterized by low productivity, though efforts were made in the 1980s to improve productivity gains through the introduction of improved varieties (hybrid planting material), better use of inputs, and inter-cropping (including livestock).

In most countries, at present, marketing structures focus on oil extraction and by-product utilization. Considerable initiatives have been made to enhance productivity through improved input use, expansion of processing facilities and support of extension and research institutions. After the Nigerian civil war, the Igbo's were given stipend to start their lives all over, and today, the Igbo's are the movers and shakers of the Nigeria's economy. The north, in the 60s compare to all the countries mention above is greater. With purposeful leadership, the north is known for its farming and an upcoming revolution in agriculture, commerce and trade. However, so sad that, today, the north is reducing to a begged region. So, the question is what went wrong?