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SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT OF PROPHET SAKAWA AMONG ABAGUSII FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN MODERN KISII TOWN

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ABSTRACT

The Abagusii had a famous prophet known as Sakawa, who prophesied that “*Amandegere name Getembe kia’gusuku, no’oyobwate omomura nayae*” [the mushrooms would sprout in Getembe [Kisii town] and whoever has a son/daughter would harvest them]. This had sociological and philosophical connotations and needed deep interpretation and application to the present development going on in Kisii town. The paper focused on how the society despised the sociological thought, which was key to development and economic growth of people dwelling in Kisii town and later regretted once those who interpreted and applied became the beneficiary to socio-economic growth in Kisii town. The paper applied content analysis and observation method in development and economic growth of Kisii town, since the time of Sakawa’s thought through to the present. Kisii Town is like prophet Sakawa’s sociological thought and prophesy that “the mushrooms would sprout in Kisii town and whoever who has a son/daughter would harvest them”; in other words, those who had money could buy land in Kisii town and build storey houses and be sources of economic growth. It is argued that even to the present those who have wealth would acquire any land in any town in Kenya. The sociological thought was vital in 1920’s and it’s quite relevant and applicable in the modern contemporary societies among the Abagusii and other peoples in Kenya, Africa and the whole world. It is recommended that sociological thought be applied to lead people to sustainable development in the country, Africa and globally.

Keywords: *Sociological thoughts, Sustainable development.*

INTRODUCTION

Historically there has been a link between sociological thoughts regarding the growth and sustainable development of a town. Therefore, growth of Kisii town has been linked with prophet Sakawa’s sociological or philosophical thoughts which led to the development of the town and its sustainability. The Abagusii had a famous prophet known as sakawa. Sakawa prophesied that “*Amandegere name Getembe kia’gusuku, no’oyobwate omomura nayae*” meaning [the mushrooms would sprout in Getembe [Kisii town] and whoever who has a son/daughter would harvest them]. This is applicable to current growth in Kisii town where storey houses have been built and the sociological thought was interpreted to mean “nobody can construct or build such a storey house without strong financial stability”. Sakawa visualized that because of lack of industrialization and too much dependable on land, people were able to get that land in Kisii town

and use it for building storey houses for commercial and sustainable development. That is why he believed that individuals' liberty should be preserved and as far as possible, individuals should be given maximum rights. That is why people from all parts/regions in Gusiiland and beyond were allowed to buy land and develop in Kisii town. For the first time Sakawa very closely studied the Abagusii society and gave a sociological idea on development and economic growth in Kisii town. And also perhaps for the first time gave the idea in Gusiiland that education was very significant and education was the only means to an end and not an end in itself, while the individual was an end in itself. That is why those who went to school and got education have a share or plot in Kisii town for economic development. Sakawa was person who had great love for human liberty and believed that there should be proper opportunity for the exposition of human personality without fear of favour. In this respect, he had a judicial concept which meant injustice to be removed. In this way he was bold enough to criticize anything which was wrong in Abagusii society in the whole of Gusiiland. This had a sociological and philosophical connotation and needed deep interpretation and application to the present development going on in Kisii town. According to Johnstone Makori, Sakawa prophesied in 1894 and by then the town was known as "Getembe" the original name used by Abagusii. When the whites came in 1920s and settled in Getembe the name changed as people used to call it "Bosongo" because they could go where the Abasongo [Whiteman] lived and the name "Bosongo". According to the old men and women among the Abagusii. The word "Kisii" is not the original Abagusii word. Omosongo [Whiteman] did not know how to pronounce the word "Gusii"; instead his pronunciation came out clearly as "Kisii" and hence the name "Kisii". When whites settled in Kisii, colonialist made it Boma meaning administrative post and it became to be known as Kisii town up to the present day. It should be noted that Abagusii use the other names of Getembe and Bosongo to mean and applicable to Kisii town.

Genesis of sociological thought and its meaning

Sociological thoughts are as old as man in the society in the planet earth. This is a fact because society is nothing but a complex of human relationships. Because society includes structures [industry, the education system, the family and so on] as well as people, their ideas, their cultures and their interests [Jorgensen et al, 1997]. The elements which constitute the society are ever changing and always varying process of its transformation presents many vital problems which seriously threaten society itself. Sociology is a discipline as conceived by many thinkers which provides a scientific and theoretical base for the solution to social problems [Brown, 2001]. The solution of social problems needs careful thinking and reasoning. Social or sociological thought is therefore, an inevitable part of sociology which deals with social problems in their past and present perspective. This means sociological thought and the nature is thinking about solutions of problems of any society. Thus Sakawa's sociological thought was a way of thinking about solutions of problems among the Abagusii society. Sociological thoughts of Sakawa among the Abagusii was not a new phenomenon. Sociological that started long time ago and the evolution of sociological thought is based on our past experiences. The present sociological thought is the result of long history. The earliest sociological thought can be traced in the most primitive sociological thought found in folk songs, folk tales, and other forms of folk literature among the primitive societies [Aron, 1983]. Folk literature and mythology represent the thoughts, feelings and desires of the people of those days. In this essence, through this, an idea about social system like the one of Sakawa thought of, social structure and social idea of those days can be found out in modern societies. That is why the majority of the peoples in Kenya foresaw the coming of the Europeans. For example among the kikuyu prophet Chege Wa Kibiru had prepared his people to expect 'white strangers who look like butterflies'. He said that these strangers would take the land of Kikuyu, but warned not to fight with these white people, 'for if they do so they will kill you with their fire', meaning guns. Among the Luo the prophets [Jobilo], had issued a warning that 'some white people are coming but they must not be fought. If you oppose them they will kill you with their sticks which vomit fire' [Ochieng, 1986].

The relation of sociological thoughts and sociological theory

It is important to give the relationship of sociological thought and sociological theory. In this aspect, the sociological thought when it assumed a scientific form came to be called as sociological theory. Later on it became the scientific study of society which leads to the discipline of sociology. The theory of science or a systematic body of knowledge depends much upon the system of its theories and their old foundations. Theories include the classification about the concepts and logical reasonable analysis of various methods. As a well known fact the curiosity forms, the basis of effort and knowledge. Therefore, the curiosity of Sakawa's thoughts, encouraged people (Abagusii) and led to many people purchased land and constructed has as a consequence of economic growth and sustainable development of Kisii town.

Statement of the Problem

The paper focuses on how the society despised the sociological thought which was key/important to development and economic growth of people dwelling in Kisii town and later regretted once those who interpreted and applied became the beneficial to socio-economic growth in Kisii town.

METHODOLOGY

The paper applies content analysis and observation method in development and economic growth of Kisii town, since the time of sakawa's thought through to the present.

KEY FINDINGS

The papers key findings reveal that Kisii Town is like prophet Sakawa's sociological thought and prophesied that "the mushrooms would sprout in Kisii town and whoever who has a son/daughter would harvest them" in other words those who had money could buy land in Kisii town and build storey houses and be a source of economic growth. It is argued that even the present those who have wealth would acquire any land in any town in Kenya.

Kisii town started to grow after Sakawa's sociological thoughts. The British arrived in Gusiiland in 1920s, made Kisii, formerly known as "Getembe" or Bosongo" as an administrative post. The British referred to any administrative post as "Boma". The British had to develop new administrative system throughout the country. The administrative centers were nuclei for the administrative personnel. According to Ojany and Ogendo [1988], early examples were locally known as Boma [Homesteads] and were developed inland as British administration advanced inland from Mombasa. They included MacKinnon Road, Makueni Boma, Machakos, Forth Smith [Nairobi], Fort Hall [Murang'a], Mumias, Lumbwa, Fort Tenan, Fort Florence [Kisumu], Kisii, Lodwar, Malalal, Marsabit among others [Ojany and Ogendo, 1988].

Kisii town grew slowly due to the fact that, no industries were located on this site of the town. Because of this fact Getembe [Kisii] attracted few people who settled for the purpose of trading activities on agricultural food stuffs. Where people inhabited is referred to as settlement, therefore a settlement is a place where people live, which contain not only houses but shops, schools, offices, factories, government buildings, place for entertainment and other buildings like courts and so on [Bunnett, 1989].

Getembe modern Kisii town was located on a good site which became a terminus to connect various towns in Kenya-to Kericho, Kilgoris, Nyamira, Eldoret, Kisumu, Migori and so on. A site therefore refers to the land on which settlement is built and situation or location refers to the position of a settlement in relation to the other places [Bunnett, 1988], as contained in Kisii town which was prophesied by Sakawa.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The sociological thought was vital in 1920's and it's quite relevant and applicable in the modern contemporary societies among the Abagusii and other peoples in Kenya, Africa and the whole world. Sociological thoughts originate from interactions and interrelations of human beings in historical perspective. Therefore, sociological thoughts applied to solve the problems which Abagusii experienced in Gusiiland in the nineteenth century.

It is therefore concluded that sociological thoughts have certain characteristics or features which are relevant in the ancient and in the contemporary modern societies. These include the following; first, sociological thought originate from social problems. They are responsible for solutions of the various social problems which lead to the development of the society culture and civilization. It is important to note that it was used by Sakawa to mobilize his followers at the site of the present-day Kisii town and told them where the future police lines, the hospital, the offices and churches would be built for the purpose of cultural and civilization of “Bosongo or ‘Getembe”[Ochieng,1986].

Secondly, sociological thoughts are not only related social problems alone but they are vitally related to the process of social and human and social life. That is why social utility of Kisii town is considered to be an integrated part of the sociological thought of Sakawa, which is interpreted and applicable into modern Kisii town and sustainable development.

Thirdly, sociological thoughts are seen as a result of social interrelations and inter actions, where Sakawa lit fires along the line in order to show where electric poles and lights would follow [Ochieng,1986].this has been proved to be true by those eyewitnesses who passed away.

The fourth characteristic of sociological thought emphasizes the element of time and place. Sociological thought therefore are much related and influenced by the element of place and time. They cannot be diverse from the time and place to which they belong. That is why the sociological thoughts of Sakawa became true and were a guideline to the sustainable development in the modern Kisii town. “*Amandegere*” meaning mushrooms is a metaphor interpreted and applied to mean storey houses which would be built in Kisii town by those who have capital or enough finances. That is why Kisii town, an administrative post in the colonial period sprout into the modern town and sustainable development.

Fifth characteristic is the influence of personal and social experience. In the development of sociological thought, the thinkers are very much influenced by the personal experiences. In this sense therefore, Sakawa was influenced by his experience and prophesied that Gusii warriors would be disarmed by white strangers if they showed resistance [Ochieng, 1986].

Sixth, sociological thought inspires the development of civilization and culture. As a result of sociological thoughts of Sakawa, Kisii town [Getembe or Bosongo] started to grow very fast since 1921. That is why the modern “Kisii” town is like “*Amandegere*” meaning mushrooms is taken literally to mean storey houses which have been built in Kisii town currently. It growing like mushrooms in all sides from the town centre to the routes connecting Kisii town. The growth is linear that mean following the roads from the town, because the storey houses or buildings are constructed along those routes connecting other towns such as Kisii-Keroka-Sotik/Kericho/Narok; Kisii-Kemera-Tombe-Nyamira route; Kisii-Ogembo-Kilgoris route; Kisii-Suneka-Riana-Migori route; Kisii-Nyakoe-Oyugis-Kisumu route; and Kisii-Nyatieko-Nyagesenda-Sondu-Nandi Hills-Eldoret route.

Seventh, the sociological thoughts give the practical solution to social problems. That is why sociological thoughts of Sakawa were true and applicable to the sustainable development in Gusiland. That is why after the sociological thoughts of Sakawa; the British arrived in Gusiland after his death. The Gusii warriors took their spears to defend their independence but many were killed by the British who fought using guns [Ochieng, 1986].

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended sociological thought are vital for sustainable development when interpreted and applied in the educational, political and economic systems. It is recommended that sociological thought be applied to lead people to sustainable development in the country, Africa and globally.

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