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**Western Education and Elite Nationalism
in Nigeria 1882-1929**

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Dedication

To my beloved mother

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Abstract

The present study will try to examine how Western education in Nigeria, as part of British officials program to govern and administer colonies, led to the emergence of an early elite nationalism between 1882 and 1929. It was a protest against the economic, social and cultural foundations of British colonialism and an attempt to re-establish Nigerian presence in politics, economics and culture.

By 1842, the former indigenous education was largely replaced by the introduction of formal education of the Christian missions. These Christian missions established Christianity and introduced a Western mode of education. In such circumstances, the community of Western educated elite spawned by Christian teaching had asserted their rejection and frustration to the new religion as it was inadequate to their aspirations and ambitions. In 1882, however, British officials had assumed responsibility over all educational matters. The expectation was that these schools would produce a group of English educated elite ready to be recruited in the administrative cadre and become agents of trust and reliability.

However, the ultimate outcome was the production of a Western educated elite greatly motivated to challenge British economic, social and cultural presence. By virtue of their education, English as a common language and a self-conscious African identity, the elite undertook action to promote the culture, language, economic development and political presence of their people. In the late 19th century, they denied Africans' inferiority and defended the distinctiveness of African culture and African personality. In the 20th century, as the idea of a Pan-African unity was rejected, the elite saw to join the National Congress of British West Africa to develop a Pan-West African identity as a motto for their protests. By 1929, the elite had arrived at a clearly defined Nigerian national identity. This study lays the groundwork for examining the context in which the elite moved to shape their discourse of a Nigerian nationhood.

List of Abbreviations

I.M.C: International Missionary Society

C.M.S: Church Missionary Society

E.E.E.A: The English Elementary Education Act

W.A.L.C.A: The West African Land Commission Act

N.C.B.W.A: The National Congress of British West Africa

N.N.D.P: The Nigerian National Democratic Party

W.A.S.U: The West African Students Union

General Introduction

Side by side with trade, commerce and evangelization went great European interest to have a monopoly over the West African coast. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the control of trade on the West African coast was almost taken up by European traders. European powers had shown little interest in taking any measures to exercise any power over Africans due to the absence of any legal right to dictate their control over the lives of Africans. This started to change with the breaking up of inter-tribal wars that threatened the interests of Europeans in West Africa¹ and urged them to take steps to save their interests.²

By the end of the nineteenth century, European powers had expanded their rule over new territories. Britain had taken large territories inland beside its control over certain coastal outposts. These included territories in what is known today as Nigeria: Lagos and Yorubaland in the southwest, the Niger delta, Calabar and territories around the rivers Niger and Benue. This annexation of lands gradually made Europeans and particularly the British replace trade on African slaves with the use of labor and lands for exploitation. It was apparent at that time that European powers had to identify new sources of wealth if they were to guarantee their presence in the West African coast. Palm and peanut oils were all needed in European manufactures and fortunately, for the Europeans these products were available in the West African region.³

Such enterprise presented new challenges for the British builders of imperialism who looked for ways to best exploit the land and its people. This, in turn, made it clear for officials that they should enhance Africans participation in the colonial industries and particularly “native

¹ West Africa encompasses what is today Benin, Burkina Faso, the Island Nation of Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, the Island of Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tomé and Príncipe and Togo. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Africa#cite_note-Paul_R._Masson_2001-6

² Coleman, James, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, University of California Press, Berkely, Los Angeles, London, 1971, p.41

³ Toyin, F & Matthew, M, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p.85

production”¹. British officials sought to use those Africans to work as collaborators to enhance the colonial economy by participating in running administration and working in industrial fields. But the status of the Niger Delta people and particularly their educational level was an obstacle that made it difficult for officials to hand them these positions. The alleged barbaric and uncivilized attitudes of Africans were driving forces that culminated in the introduction of Western education into the whole West African region.

Western education was introduced into Nigeria by the 1840's as the first attempt made by Europeans to introduce those natives to a new form of education different from that experienced by their forefathers. Even though Western education during the first half of the nineteenth century was voluntary, driven in the first place to convert those natives into Christianity, its objectives were highly motivated by a vision of imperial willingness to sustain commerce and bring civilization to those uncivilized African people. Those Africans were perceived to be lacking certain standards of civilization that were needed in the long run by officials to have a command over all sources of materials. This state of mind was based on the belief that imperial powers could not exercise a complete and thorough physical exploitation of the land and its people without mental control of its subject people ².

As such, education was believed to be able to train those Africans to be loyal to their British mentors. It was a new dynamic to develop character³ as well as the mentality of Africans to suit their orientations as servants of British imperialism. It was only education that would transform those barbaric attitudes and uncivilized manners into good and useful habits. It was through the

¹ Coleman, Background to Nigerian Nationalism, p. 46

² Sulaiman, Folasade. R, “Internationalization in Education: The British Colonial Policies on Education in Nigeria 1882 – 1926”, Journal of Sociological Research, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2012, p92.

³ The Canadian Oxford Dictionary defines character as “the collective qualities or characteristics, esp. mental and moral, that distinguish a person or thing.”. It involves the way the individual interacts, communicates and socializes with other individuals.

training of Africans to be civil servants, clerks, farmers, that British imperialism would be less costly and beneficial to the British economy¹.

Western education was by far an attempt to create a class of people, known as the “educated” who were particularly oriented to fill administrative posts. This particular group was given special treatment and education in view of the responsibilities that they were to hold. This group mostly consisted of sons of chiefs of tribes and other important men who showed greater interest to be integrated into the colonial service. This type of education would produce kind of people with white styles, orientations, and manners. They were expected to work as administrators under officials’ commands and be mediators between their masters and local Africans. Elite education was given special emphasis since the elite were to be used as representatives of British officials who ruled their people under the policy of Indirect Rule².

The introduction of Western education into British West Africa³ had far-reaching effects on the way the African people perceived colonial rule. The emergence of the elite in British West Africa played a major role in the mobilization of their people for political independence. The elite were leaders who used Western political values as well as Christian values taught by their mentors to demand a change in the social, economic and political status of Africans. Western education was a guiding instrument for the emergent elite to put down their protests against colonial rule. It was vital in mediating the processes which led to decolonization. Western education was an actor which made independence a reality to colonial Africa. It was a major force that drove nationalism into African political and economic sphere while articulated a dominant nationalist discourse for African nations' struggle for liberation.

¹Njoku, S.I., *The Development of the British System of Education in Nigeria 1882-1929*. Diss. University of Oregon, University microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1969, p 98

² Ibid, p. 101

³ By 1900, all of the four colonies of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Gambia formed British West Africa.

This study is an attempt to show that one of the most significant consequences of British colonial education is that the dominated group it educated to serve its objectives turned against it, and eventually split off from the colonial machinery. The study investigates how the output of Western education resulted in contradiction with its own designers aims. It highlights how Western education in Nigeria was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it served the regime by creating a bureaucratic group needed in administration. On the other hand, it devastated the existing colonial system by imbuing those individuals with the necessary ideological paradigm needed in challenging British colonial rule.

The central argument of this study is that British imperial authorities took a greater interest in Western education as an instrument of economic development after the turn of the century, but these policies proved a failure. British officials were zealous in creating men who were ready to serve imperial ambitions in Africa and at the same time be as servants who showed their readiness to offer their services to colonial rule. But the implemented policies had the opposite effect on the British imperial system. It caused the emergence of a Western educated class who were eager, as E.A. Ayandele put it, “to achieve modernization, bureaucratization, sophisticated economy, and a lifestyle that was closer to that of the white man”¹. The emergent elite created new discourses of liberation for Africans and opened new horizons for subject peoples to form mass nationalism that removed colonial rule. It was the introduction of Western education that brought a systematic attempts by the Western educated elite to form an anti-colonial resistance to the British presence.

The central question for this research is :

-How did Western education, in a sense a part and project to create a Western educated elite ready to serve British ambitions in Nigeria, lead to the emergence of an early elite nationalism?

A number of questions will be answered:

¹ Ayandele, E. A, *The educated elite in the Nigerian society*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press 1974, p.77

- 1- With what stated objectives and in what manner did the British establish and expand education in Nigeria between 1882 and 1929?
- 2- Why did the elite that were formed to serve colonial rule become the first to challenge colonial authority?
- 3- How did the beneficiaries of Western education express the growth of national consciousness?

The study is motivated by the desire to provide an understanding of Western education as a process designed to create modern subjects who would contribute to the welfare of the British Empire. The work will consider how Western education precipitated the emergence of a Western educated elite greatly attached to the colonial order, but equipped to form a response to it. This shaped their reactions and interactions with colonial authorities and their African peers to form a nationalism that awakened a political, economic and cultural consciousness among the masses.

The method of inquiry in this dissertation is historical analysis. As such, my argument will utilize these historical terms:

Western Education is a non-indigenous system brought into Africa by the Christian missions during the early part of the nineteenth century and in which teaching and learning were practiced into a classroom situation. Baker defined Western education as “a part of an imperial /colonial world historical system”¹. This means that Western education was a purely new phenomenon to the African people. He further asserts that “schooling practices are largely constituted by Western knowledge and Eurocentric assumptive world views”. Through incorporating Western knowledge and culture, Western education tended to reproduce a new category of people who were greatly influenced by the new culture.

¹ Baker, Michael, *Situating Modern Western Education within the Modern/colonial World System*, Unpublished Paper, June 2009, p.51

The pioneers of Western education were in charge of educating the “*uncivilized nations*”. Western education was an approach to bring uncivilized nations into closer contact with modern civilization and an attempt to discipline and develop uncivilized and barbaric attitudes ¹. The latter necessitated the urgency of taking steps to go ahead in a civilizing mission project because “modern civilization understands itself as the most developed, the superior, civilization; This sense of superiority obliges it [...] as it were to “develop” the more primitive, barbarous, underdeveloped civilizations;². This status of superiority clearly provided the context for systematic attempts to use education as a tool to produce agents of trust and reliability to European colonialism.

Colonial officials’ attitudes toward education were conditioned by their belief that colonial economy was inseparable of education. This state of mind was common among politicians at that time. In his famous speech to the House of Commons in July of 1833, Thomas Babington Macaulay, a Whig party politician and a historian, had asserted that “It would be... far better for us that the people ... were well governed and independent of us, than ill governed and subject to us[...] To trade with civilized men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages.”³. In this regard, imperial economy was based on cooperation between imperial authorities and locals. Hence, education was emphasized as an instrument to form an organized civil service and the creation of a skilled power labor that was needed in European manufacture. It was further an attempt to produce a type of people who were ready to communicate as well as provide fertile ground for European exploitation.

¹ Baker, *Situating Modern Western education*, p.61

² Dussel, Enrique, *The Invention of Americas: Eclipse of “the Other” and the Myth of Modernity*, translated by Michael D. Barber. New York: Continuum, 1995, p.75

³ Thomas Babington Macaulay, “Speech in Parliament on the Government of India Bill, 10 July 1833,” quoted in, Young, G. M, *Macaulay. Prose and Poetry*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957, p. 716-718.

³ Zachemuk, P.S, *Intellectual Life in a Colonial Context: The Nigerian Intelligentsia, 1860-1960*, National Library of Canada, 1991, p.45

Elite: a category of people who has a special capacity, personality and skill ¹.The elite also involves those with good material conditions, intellectual and moral situation that places them above the unlettered bulk of people ². The elite, in this study, refers to a special group of colonized subjects who benefited from a special type of education that would enable them to take positions in the colonial service. They consisted mainly of sons of chiefs of tribes and other people who showed greater interests to be recruited to the colonial service. They were characterized by their European lifestyle, behaviors. The elite, according to many scholars, were semi –double-faced Africans who were able to identify with the new European culture, while demonstrating their great resentment toward the ignorance of African culture and traditions. Their activities mainly forming political parties, organizations were vital in putting the ground for colonial nations’ struggle for liberation.³

Elite Nationalism: a form of nationalism that saw the light during the first half of the twentieth century. It was mainly triggered by the Western educated elite to resist colonial rule. It was first built on the experience of those literate, bilingual intellectuals who were schooled in colonial schools and mastered the language of the colonizer⁴. This type of nationalism took many forms including forming political parties, organizations and peaceful protest movements like that of Mahatma Gandhi.⁵

The literature on the impact of Western education on giving birth to elite nationalism aroused the curiosity of many scholars who outlined the nature of Western education introduced to Africans and the reactions that it provoked.

The work of James S. Coleman “Nigeria: Background to Nationalism” is a case study of the history of national thought in Nigeria. The author argues that Western education was among

¹ López, Matias, “Elite Theory”, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, *Interdisciplinary Network for Studies of Social Inequality*, retrieved from Sociopedia.isa.

² Mosca, G , *The Ruling Class*. London: McGraw- Hill Book Company, 1939, p.22

⁴ Hodgkin, Thomas, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*. University Press, New York, 1957, p. 75

⁵ An Indian nationalist leader who was known for his non- violent resistance against British rule.

the roots of nationalism. He gives a comprehensive analysis of colonial educational policies and the emergence of a new group, under the umbrella of education, who played a great role in the war for liberation.

The work of Chukwu “A Descriptive Analysis of the Historical Development of Western Education in Nigeria” navigates the introduction of Western education into the region. Chukwu echoes the attempts of various missionary bodies and government policies in promoting native education to the extent of planting new ideas, Western ideas that formulated an awareness of the challenges and the prospects of building a new nation¹.

In “How Colonial Educational Practices Helped Shape the Pattern of Decolonization in West Africa”, Julius A. Agbor sheds light on the political, economic and cultural agendas of Western education and its crucial significance in promoting resistance among the Western educated members. He argues that “the pattern of decolonization was a logical consequence of the nature of human capital transfers from the colonizers to the elite of the former colonies, and this shaped the strategic interaction between these two groups”.² He went further to demonstrate that “the system tended to produce elite that were quite independent of the colonizer and consequently had little to lose from a disruption of the imperial relationship at independence”³. His work is crucial in formulating a vision of how Western education clearly created the context for developing a Pan-West African identity among the Western educated members of West Africa and its significance in building their own discourse of nationhood.

Although all the stated scholars outlined the nature of Western education in Nigeria and its impact in rooting up nationalism. The area needs more investigation. There is a need to re-examine the intended ideologies of introducing such policies and how these formulated policies were a failure and a menace to British presence and the reaction of the Western educated –elite

¹ Chukwu, Jude Enuyi Lwu, A Descriptive Analysis of the Historical Development of Western Education in Nigeria, Union Institute and University, Thesis, 1980,p. 20

² Agbor, Julius. A, “How Colonial Educational Practices Helped shape the Pattern of Decolonization in West Africa”, International Journal of Development and Conflict, 4,2014, p.01–23

³ Ibid, p.1

to these foreign influences, in particular, the mobilization and the efforts made inside the country and abroad.

A collection of data is used to conduct this research. Government reports issued in the period between 1882 and 1929 are used to analyze educational policies. Letters and Memorandums are also used to provide an insight of how colonial officers conducted all educational matters.

This research will use a post-colonial approach. The Center /Periphery dynamic will be used in this study. In order to trace the imperial dimensions of colonial education practices, British imperialism is viewed as the Center, or colonizer, and Africans, particularly Nigerians as the Periphery who had been greatly influenced economically, politically and most important culturally by the dominating new European ideologies.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a background to the development of education in Nigeria prior to the coming of the British. The second chapter attempts at analyzing government policies regarding education from 1882 to 1920, emphasizing its objectives and the reasons behind launching Western education. It further examines early Nigerian elite protests to the economic, religious and cultural foundations of British colonialism. Chapter three will spotlight the elite own discourse of nationhood. It traces how the elite formed their Nigerian national identity moving from the participation in a wide spectrum of West African nationalism to overcoming the question of ethnic diversity and then arriving at a clearly defined Nigerian national identity.

Chapter One: Pre-colonial Education in the Niger Delta

Introduction

Before the advance of European imperial powers to the Niger Delta, education had taken an important facet in native inhabitants' life. This indigenous form of education prepared children mentally and physically to be active participants in the communities 'social and political life. Along the development of this form of education, there came an Islamic form of education. The latter propagated for the spread of Islamic doctrine and the Arabic language. These two forms of education were challenged by the advance of missionary education which took preaching the gospel to natives as its first concern. This chapter is an attempt to describe different pre-colonial forms of education in the Niger Delta. It will describe the nature, characteristics, and prospects of these forms of education. It is further an attempt to investigate the nature of missionary education and the civilizing mission project that brought these missionary bodies into the region. This background is prerequisite to understand the full impact of Western education on the people of the Niger Delta, and a way to highlight the process in which Western education created the Western educated elite who created the context for new approaches to resist colonial rule.

I. Precolonial Traditional Education

The earliest form of education in the Niger Delta was indigenous education. Its purpose was to prepare children to be responsible members of their community, to socialize them and to develop their mental capacities to suit their future roles as fathers and mothers. The second form of education was Islamic education. It came mainly from North Africa. The purpose of Islamic education was to strengthen individual's relationship with God and to promote the teaching of Arabic and the Quran as the fundamental units of the Islamic religion.

This section aims to survey rather briefly the environment in which the Niger Delta indigenous education took place and to describe the activities that a child was exposed to in his community. It is further an attempt to investigate the nature and purposes of Islamic education and a way to look at its core principles and characteristics within the Nigerian context.

1. Indigenous Education

An indigenous form of education had many characteristics that placed its discussion as a necessity to reveal the nature and the effects of Christian education in formulating the character of 19th century Niger Delta elite. It entailed for introducing these children to new skills that had to do with their life in the future. In fact, this discussion will add clarity to the way Christian education introduced new ideas, new principles and new visions that revolutionized peoples' thoughts and made them able for the first time to understand and identify new approaches to resist colonial rule.

British Colonial rule in Nigeria did not start till 1861 when Lagos was annexed to the Crown. However, effective government did not commence till 1900. The Niger Delta region was administered by three agencies: the Royal Niger Company, the Oil River Protectorate and the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos. It was until 1885 that British Officials started to have interests to hold real administrative control over the Niger Delta ¹.

Indigenous education in the Niger Delta existed before the advent of Islam and Christianity. It is as old as man himself in the region.² Its purposes were to develop the mental capacities of children, make them responsible members of the community, and to raise them morally and spiritually. It was in the whole a functional education, devoted to making children able to manage their affairs and be useful elements in their community at large.

¹ Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, p. 36

² Obidi, S.S, *Development and Change in Teacher Education in Bendel State, Nigeria 1963-1976*, University of Ottawa (Canada), 1979, p10

As such, the curriculum that a child was exposed to was a medium for the acquirements of these underlined objectives. One of the most important characteristics of the curriculum was character training¹. A child learned different attitudes and manners that had to do with the way he behaves, speaks to older members of society and laws that determined his presence within the community. For example, it was considered as bad to use the left hand instead of the right one and that a girl should kneel down when she serves older members. Moreover, society looked severely to issues of loss of virginity, adultery and stealing of property. Anyone who had stolen the property of others was “ stripped, chained to a tree ... and mercilessly beaten after being taken to the village square to show everyone what he had stolen”². In this respect, parents devoted a lot of efforts to teach their children good manners and morals to uplift them to be good members.

Character training emphasized the notion of respect for elders. Children were taught how to respect elders, older relatives, neighbors, chiefs and cult leaders. Respect for elders was shown by different means of greeting and sometimes verbal greeting and physical gestures were taken into consideration as part of showing respect and admiration. A man's prostration and a woman kneeling were very common among members of the community.

Children were encouraged to observe and imitate other adult members of society as a way to develop their mental and intellect capacities. They learned different skills of counting, played games that developed their power of observation and listened to proverbs that enriched their intellect and ability to manage their affairs. For example, the Ijala chant was among the most used chants among the Yoruba to enhance children's ability to community verbally and to develop their mental capacities. This chant was practiced in cases of salutation to important

¹ Fafunwa, A. *History of education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen & Unwin. 1982.p. 21

² Lieber J.W, “*Efik and Ibibio Villages*, Occasional Publication”, number 13 Ibadan, Institute of education, University of Ibadan, 1971, p.53

persons such as chiefs and religious leaders, and as a way to make children aware of certain aspects of Yoruba history ¹.

Vocational training was given a paramount importance as a way to help children to take positions within their society. Children learned about farming, ways to treat crops and to take care of animals. It was their duty to plant crops, weed the fields, take care of chicken, goats and sheep. In other coastal areas, children were taught how to catch fish, prepare nets, and to repair fishing equipment. Not only boys were undertaking such a training, girls were also trained to domestic work as cooking, washing dishes and preparing firewood. In other instances, girls were appointed to do other tasks. Among the Ibo, an ethnic group in south-central and south-eastern Nigeria, “usually, the new mother is assisted on caring for the new infant by a young girl who runs errands and is in other ways helpful to the mother”². This could help a girl to gain money and at the same time it could prepare her for her future role as a mother. Moreover, a girl could be trained to do other tasks such as weaving, and she could be trained by a mistress to obtain a license to do this job.

Like girls, boys were sent to another man to train him to do a particular skill. Some were trained to sell different kinds of goods while others learned how to carve wood and treat all types of metals. Their training focused on how to make clay bricks, build houses, know how to work with leather, cloth and all what concerned textile industry. This type of training was given special emphasis due to its importance in preparing boys to have a respectable job. Regarding this type of training, Callaway, in his *Nigeria's Indigenous Education: The Apprentice System* observed that “this vast apprentice system began as part of a wider education process in which

¹ Adeboye, Babalola, “*The Characteristic Features of Outer Form of Yoruba Ijala Chants*”, Odu : University of Ife, *Journal of African Studies*, Vol,01, No,1, July 1964, p.33

² Lieber, J.W., *Ibo Village Communities, Occasional Publication*, number 12 Ibadan, Institute of education, University of Ibadan, 1971, p.48

the indigenous societies of Nigeria passed on their cultural heritage from one generation to the next”¹.

Young boys attained certain high skills and were put under a close supervision of their masters. A skill like native medicine was only affordable to a special type of boys who received special training to master it. This type of training required high supervision on the part of masters and in certain cases, a young child was supposed to leave his home and be in the company of his master. In other circumstances, these much-valued skills were kept secret and were only given to the children of the masters in case they prove their capacity to attain them.

A young child was supposed to help his neighbors and relatives in doing certain work and preparing for ceremonies. He participated in assistance for marriage rituals, yam festivals, religious festivals and king's coronation and his presence was regarded as a necessity to show respect and solidarity among members of the community².

There was no such a thing as training college or trained teachers. Child's education depended on the efforts of his father and mother who provided the ground for their children to be trained. Other relatives and neighbors were also responsible for the child's training. In effect, “The education of the child was a cooperative effort in which all members had an important part to play”³. In this way, parents and relatives were strictly responsible for educating their children because this would bring disgrace on the family if the child proved to be lacking education.

Another body which took responsibility for child's education was the age group. This consisted of members who were in the same age and had their education at the same time. This was responsible for informing apprentices about all the duties that they were to hold and at the

¹ Archibald, Callaway “*Nigeria's Indigenous Education: The Apprentice System*”, Odu: University of Ife, Journal of African Studies Vol.1 No.1, July 1964, p.63

² Obidi, *Development and Change*, p.13

³ Ade, Fajana, “*Educational Policy in Nigerian Traditional Society*”, Journal of Phylon, vol.33, No.1, Spring 1972, p43

same time let them know certain norms that regulated their behavior and actions within the community. Imitation, observation and simple instruction and in certain cases punishment were all used as methods to teach a child to acquire certain norms ¹.

Not only a child received education from the above-mentioned agencies, a child could obtain his education through indirect means. Folklore was an important avenue for a child to receive moral lessons and wisdom. This would familiarize him about many good manners that he had to acquire. This exposure to the folklore of his community helped him to grasp different facets of his society's social life. Folklore was an important means to know about philosophy, religion, and history of his community².

The indigenous education coexisted and developed along with Islamic education³. In fact, the introduction and spread of Islamic education into West Africa did not tear indigenous education into threads, rather, it enforced the existing system by encouraging some of the traditions and practices that had already existed before. New Islamic features were introduced while some basic practices like the composition of the extended family, the authority of its head and rules of succession were all kept unchanging ⁴.

The indigenous education along with the Islamic education had a great impact on the people of the Niger Delta, but both of them were weakened by the introduction of the Christian education into the region. It is worthwhile to have a look at the nature of Islamic education within the Niger Delta context before analyzing Christian education and its impacts on forming the character of 19th century Niger Delta elite.

¹ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p.15

² Njoku, *Development of the British System of Education in Nigeria*, p 42

³ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p.10

⁴ Trimingham, Spencer, *Islam in West Africa*, The Clarendon Press ,1967, p 160

2. Islamic Education in the Niger Delta

Along the function of indigenous education in preparing individuals to be useful members of the community, Islamic education affected the norms and values established by indigenous education. Its concerns were to equip those new converts with principles of the Islamic religion and made them aware of different facets of Islamic doctrine. Looking at the nature of this education will provide the context for understanding the nature of the Christian education and its effects in transforming the lives of the people. In fact, Christian education was fundamental in introducing the elite into the realm of modern ideas that placed them in parallel with their European counterparts to demand justice and equality with the white man.

The introduction and spread of Islam into the region known today as Nigeria had a great impact on the nature and characteristics of the educational system on the whole. Right from its inception, converts were introduced into three subjects that formed the pillars of Islamic doctrine: the Koran, the Hadith of the prophet and the Shari'ah¹. Men from different parts of West Africa learned different facets of Islamic doctrine, its related subjects and started to teach this knowledge to new converts.

The teaching of Arabic took an important part in Islamic education. It was alleged that the spread of Islam could be of no means without the spread and the teaching of the Arabic language. In "A Note on Arabic Teaching in Northern Nigeria", Alkali had opined that "the history of the teaching of Arabic throughout the Islamic world, but particularly in the non-Arab world, has been the history of the spread of Islam"². This was due to the fact that converts were to get hold of the Islamic doctrine, and the latter, mostly taken from the Koran, was written in Arabic. As such, the teaching of the Arabic language was a way through which new converts understood new traditions and practices of Islam.

¹ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p13

² Alkali, Hamidu, "A Note on Arabic Teaching in Northern Nigeria", *Journal of Saharan and Sudanic Research*, No.3, June 1967, p11

Several Koranic schools were built to propagate for the spread of Islam and the teaching of Arabic. The main purpose of these schools was to make children memorize the Koran because it was considered as a tool “ by which power is gained in this world and reward in the next ”¹. Children, along with the memorization of Koran, were also instructed on the main pillars of Islam and the way a Muslim should behave regarding his society and God.

Children, in their first days in school, were asked to memorize shorter chapters of the Quran. This was accompanied by a particular attention to grasp the alphabet of the Arabic language. They were instructed on how to spell their sounds correctly, to write them correctly and to use them to read Arabic words. This stage is very important for children because it made the ground fertile for them to understand the Koran and eventually move to study different subjects related to the Islamic religion ².

In their second stage of learning, pupils learned to understand the meaning of verses that they had already memorized. This was followed by an introduction to Hadith. This stage was seen as too difficult for learners, especially when a teacher who gave instruction had a very weak level of Arabic and this would make learners unable to understand the meaning of verses properly. This justified why most of the parents in West Africa did not allow their children to attend these schools .In this regard, Trimingham asserted that“ majority of the farming folk do not want many children engaged in memorization”³. And instead, children were taken to do farm work and this led schools to close for the whole season ⁴.

Students, during their higher level of Koranic education, were exposed to learn Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Mathematics, School Theology and Commentaries on the Koran⁵. Mallams (teachers) were responsible for providing students with all knowledge of different subjects.

¹ Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, p.156

² Obidi, *Development and Change*, p.17

³ Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, p.158

⁴ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p. 18

⁵ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p.17

These Mallams were highly qualified to take charge of these subjects and eventually when a student finished his studies and became able to understand and make use of all these disciplines, he could get a license to be a teacher, Imam or an Alkali ¹.

Unlike teachers in the Indigenous form of education, teachers in Koranic schools were instructed to be able to make new converts understand the Islamic doctrine. This type of instruction focused on the way a teacher acquired the ability to teach new converts religious matters ². Such type of training was not very strict compared with other teacher training colleges introduced with the advent of Western education ³. These teachers had to show their ability to read Arabic and to a certain degree they must attain some basics of Islamic subjects, but in general most of these teachers were only able to read Arabic and recite some verses from the Koran.

The position of a teacher was very respected because he presented all the good qualities that a man should have. He transmitted Allah's words to his people and made them able to find their path to wisdom. His job was very sacred to the extent that Alkali described him in these words : “He teaches others the duties of religion to serve God, as well as the duties of the world to serve men”⁴. He inculcated a sense of responsibility towards the whole community. He was responsible for delivering religious knowledge in a responsible way, and in a manner that was understood by the masses ⁵.

Teachers were not supposed to receive a fee since it was customary for them not to take money for teaching the Koran ⁶. Their remunerations were given in a form of gifts such as cooked food, millet, maize, kola nuts.... etc. In other instances, a teacher received a gift from

¹ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p 17

² Alkali, *A Note on Arabic Teaching*, p.10

³ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p17

⁴ Ibid, p10

⁵ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p.18

⁶ Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, p.160

his pupil's parents during festivals and sometimes when a child memorized a new chapter from the Koran.

Quranic schools had not drawn up a code of practice and much of students' behavior was uncodified¹. The student's every day in school were not guarded by a strict rule that controlled his behavior. Instead, the system was organized to bring about freedom to both students and teachers. As such, punctuality was not guaranteed i.e. whenever a teacher had something to do, he had a full freedom to declare a day –off. Moreover, if a student was sick, it was common that a teacher visited him.

Islamic education had a crucial role in “making the then existing mankinds highly disciplined, sober, hardworking and socially literates as regards to what they were expected to do and not to do through the inculcation of good behaviours”². It clearly triggered the emergence of a number of scholars and “Jihad Movements” that worked to make the Islamic doctrine widespread among people of the Niger Delta. Places like Katsina, Kano, Sokoto, Bauchi and Zaria were all centers for delivering knowledge on the Islamic faith³. Indeed, Islam clearly provided the ground for the emergence of a political elite greatly influenced by its teaching. Coleman observes that Islamic education triggered the emergence of political elite that “used certain interpretations of Islam to impose centralized government and a rigid class hierarchy”⁴. It also created a link with other parts of Africa and the Middle East due to Pilgrimage⁵.

Islamic education continued to have a great impact in the Northern part of Niger Delta region. This influence was challenged by the advent of Christian missionaries which were to mark a great shift in the nature and scope of education given to Niger Delta people. Missionary endeavor to spread the gospel was a characteristic of 19th century Niger Delta history. This

¹ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p. 18

² Mohammed, Kabir and Binta Yarinchi, “The Role And Impact Of Pre-Colonial Education On The People Of Hausaland Prior To 1903 A.D.”, Gombe State, Nigeria, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, Volume 2, Issue 11, November. 2013, p11

³ Mohammed, Kabir and Binta Yarinchi, “The Role And Impact Of Pre-Colonial Education”, p 11

⁴ Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to nationalism*, p. 39

⁵ Ibid, p.39

along with a whole imperial project to civilize backward, uncivilized natives was a driving force to let Niger Delta people experience for the first time formal education. This type of education brought within its facets the emergence of the elite who started to question some of the alleged beliefs on the inferiority of blacks and the right of them to the leadership of the Church.

II- Christian Education and the Civilizing Mission

Both indigenous and Islamic education systems continued to operate along many Niger Delta areas. They provided this portion of the population with the necessary knowledge that prepared them to be responsible individuals to their life and the community at large. This great influence was challenged by the advent of Christian missionaries who by the 1840's were eager to let these people know about Christianity and the Christian faith. They endeavored to introduce a new form of education that placed preaching the gospel as its first concern. These missionaries played a major role in forming the character of 19th century Niger Delta elite. Their education had formed an identity for the elite to look at themselves within new orientations and visions different from that constructed by Europeans. Christian education contributed to the awakening of racial consciousness and made the elite experience for the first time new ideas that were revolutionary in nature and scope to the extent that these ideas raised some questions regarding their religious and social status within the colonial world.

This section will describe in details the nature and prospects of the Christian civilizing mission and its dynamics to transform the socio-cultural background of the Niger Delta people. It is further an attempt to look at the way Christian missionaries introduced the first formal education to the region while the emphasis is to present Christian education, its objectives and characteristics.

By introducing these two points, this section will provide the context for explaining the way in which Christian education led to the formation of 19th century Niger Delta elite. This background is necessary because it adds clarity to the place of the Western educated community

within colonialism, their socio-economic status and their relations with European Christian missionaries to be considered in the next section.

1. Christian Civilizing Mission

The notion of a civilizing mission was among the available interpretation of missionary activities in the Niger Delta. The central idea of this program was introduced by Thomas Fowell Buxton in his book “The African Slave Trade and its Remedy”. He advocated that slavery should be eliminated in Africa with the efforts of both Christian missionaries and traders who would trigger the liberation of Africans. Along with missionary efforts, foreign commerce, and British protection, West Africa would, in the long run, be a place for a new industrial power that would sustain and promote civilization.

Christianity was of special importance to the propagation of the civilizing mission. It was confirmed that the formation of an African agency was not devoid of certain efforts to spread the Christian faith. In this manner, Africans were encouraged to have control over their own Church. This, in the long run, would contribute to the establishment of the African Church and make Africans able for the first time to control their own affairs. Moreover, Christianity was conceived to be the only weapon against the heathen because it was seen as the most dangerous barrier Christian missionaries faced on their way to transform the status of Africans and brought them into Christianity. The status of Africans was that of misery that one missionary from Lagos described it as follows: “One universal den of desolation, misery, and crime; and certainly; of all the divisions of the globe it has always had an unfortunate pre-eminence in degradation, wretchedness, and woe ”¹. This picture pre-dominated minds of early explorers, missionaries, and traders of the Niger Delta. Thus, Africa was portrayed as a place of “moral darkness” that needed European missionaries to uplift those people from all aspects of savagery and barbarism.

¹ Eugene, Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, London: Church Missionary Society ,1899, p 45

In fact, Africa presented one of the most strange places for Christian missionaries to discover¹. It was conceived to be a continent of mysterious places that needed to be discovered. This zealous attempts to discover Africa and its treasures was expressed by one editor of the New York Times in Lagos.

It is not unlikely that the most momentous change on the face of the earth in the next century will occur on the continent of Africa. Civilized nations are getting out of patience with its obstinate barbarism and making preliminary assaults on all sides that must sooner or later break down the barrier, that has from the beginning of time guarded the mysteries of the interiors and kept out the regenerating influence of civilization².

Accordingly, through their first contact with Africans, missionaries were inclined to feel that for Africans humanity meant nothing, that their practices of human sacrifice, ritual murder and cannibalism were apparent signs of their backwardness. They even necessitated for Africans to be accepted to convert to Christianity they had to abandon such practices as initiation ceremonies, dancing, marriage payment, polygyny, secret societies, and ancestor worship³. As such, “re-enunciation of the old order of things was a pre-requisite to acceptance of the new”⁴. In the same respect, one of the International Missionary Council in Abeokuta clearly opined “The missionary is a revolutionary and he has to be so, for to preach and plant Christianity means to make a front attack on the beliefs, the customs, the apprehensions of life and the world and by implication on the social structures and bases of primitive society.”⁵.

The suppression of these practices was one way to bring Africans to humanity, civilization, and modernity. The achievement of this task, according to members of the I.M.C., was guaranteed when Africans became aware of such concepts as humanity and its function on the alleviation of Africans from their backward status while emphasis was given to liberating Africans through making them aware of the necessity to attach themselves to the Kingdom of

¹ Asante, Molfi, “*Missions, States, and European Expansion in Africa*”, Taylor & Francis Group, LLC ,2007, p.37

² New York Times, “The Possible Future of Africa,” 10 August, 1879, 6. quoted in Asante, *Missions, States*, p149

³ Coleman, James, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, University of California Press, Berkely, Los Angeles, London ,19 71, p.91

⁴Ibid, p 91

⁵ Kraemar, H, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, London ,1938, p342

God. The latter presented a challenge to missionaries due to Africans strong attachment to old thoughts and practices. In this respect, missionaries were inclined to make Africans grasp the idea of the presence of God. One missionary from the Church Missionary Society in Lagos proclaimed that “The Christian Church is concerned with a great problem, that of the annexation of the tribes and peoples of the Kingdom of God and the proclamation among them of that reign of righteousness and peace which will alone work the true redemption of Africa ”¹.

Missionary work was stimulated by far an increasing rate of illegal commerce on human cargoes. Even though the slave trade was banned by the British government, it continued to operate along many Niger Delta coastal lines. This urged many missionaries to take the lead in stopping the activities of these illegal merchants. This was evident in places like Abeokuta and mainly the Dahomey Kingdom which showed greater activities of such kind ². This demand for missionary man to carve the interior was expressed by King Eyo, a Creek Town king. in a letter to Queen Victoria in 1840's, he wrote:

One thing I want for beg your Queen, I have too much man now, I can't sell slaves, and don't know what to do for them. But if I can get some cotton and coffee to grow, and man for teach me, and make sugar cane for we country come up proper, and sell for trade side I very glad. Mr.Blyth tell me England glad for send man to teach book and make we understand God all same white man do ³.

This demand along many others stimulated many missionary bodies to come and exercise great influence over native population of the Niger Delta. In fact, illegal commerce on the human cargoes was an inspiring mechanism that made missionaries' civilizing mission had great support on the part of the British government.

These underlying principles in missionary civilizing mission were no more than ideas widespread in Europe at the time. These principles mainly based on the superiority of European culture and the idea of progress were all conceived to be standard characteristics of human

¹ William, J.W. Roome, “*Strategic Lines of Christian Missions in Africa*” International Review of Missions, Vol,1, July 1916, p353-354

² Abernethy, B.D, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African Case*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1969, p.28

³ Abernethy, *The Political Dilemma*, p.28

existence. Christian civilization was a strand that held Christianity, progress, European culture and modernity¹. European values and norms were considered of high standards than that of Africans. In this regard, it was considered a moral duty to make these principles wide-spread especially along non-European world and early missionaries were seeing themselves as bearers who had to Christianize first then Europeanize the African people. As such missionaries in their civilizing process were zealous to manifest the idea of progress in the African continent and were agents who made westernization of African people a reality².

As a consequence of this civilizing mission project, missionaries endeavored to give a type of education to the Niger Delta people which could make them Christian first and then help to develop different traits that guaranteed their being civilized and had all the beliefs and norms that made them suited to the new orientations and roles as Christians. This education, in fact, was religious in nature and provided these new converts with knowledge that almost prepared them to understand and practice Christian doctrine.

2. Christian Education

Education was a tool used by missionaries to lead these natives to belief in the Christian faith and most of the schools were established to accomplish this aim³. According to these missionaries, new converts had to be familiar with certain aspects that were necessary to be Christians. These included basic knowledge about the Bible, be familiar with different catechism and hymns, and familiarize these natives with both the ability to use the written and spoken language⁴. In this way, the emphasis was given to learning English as a basic medium of instruction. The latter was conceived to be a useful tool to make new converts understand instructions, but while English was emphasized, the study of the vernacular was also important.

¹ Coleman, Background to Nigerian Nationalism, p.92

²Kraemar, *The Christian Message*, p.55

³ Oviawe, J.O, *Appropriating Colonialism: Complexity and Chaos in the Making of a Nigeria-Centric Educational System*, Diss. Washington State University :2013, p.137

⁴Ibid, p137

Missionaries gave special importance to the study of the vernacular as a way to let these new converts teach Christianity to their countrymen.

Like Koranic schools, missionary schools advocated a number of methods all of which were too religious in nature. Rote learning was the only method used by missionaries. Learners were asked to repeat religious verses and most of these verses were taken from the Bible. The latter determined every piece of knowledge that new converts had to undertake ¹. Thus new converts were undertaking a religious based education that was almost meant to equip them with all principles and doctrines of the Christian religion and this justifies why their education was devoid of any attempts to teach new converts agricultural or industrial skills that they needed in their life.

In this way, all Christian bodies that penetrated the Niger Delta be they C.M.S., Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Presbyterian, Qua Ibo provided a religious-based curriculum². Accordingly, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, one missionary, had this to say in 1856: “We are Ansare. There we teach the Christian religion” ³.

The primary school curriculum was based on the Fours R’s :Religion, Reading, writing and Arithmetic and both boys and girls were exposed to a particular skill ⁴. These were accompanied by a knowledge of Grammar and Geography. In fact, missionary education curriculum was too narrow focused mainly on certain aspects of knowledge that were new to the new converts, while ignored many aspects that had a relation with learners’ environment. And in certain cases, each school had drawn a special curriculum based in fact on the capacity of teachers and their field of interests ⁵.

Missionary curriculum was best illustrated by Fafunwa in his book *History of Education in Nigeria*. He described the Methodists daily timetable as follows:

¹ Fafunwa, *History of Education*, p.89

² Oviawe, *Appropriating Colonialism*, p.138

³ Solaru, T, T, *Teacher Training in Nigeria*, Ibadan University Press, 1964, p9

⁴ Oviawe, *Appropriating Colonialism*, p140

⁵ Ibid, p140

9 a.m.: Singing, rehearsals of scripture passages, reading one chapter of scripture, prayers.

9.15 – 12 noon: Grammar, reading, spelling, writing, geography, tables

2.p.m, - 4p.m.: Ciphering (i.e. arithmetic), reading, spelling, meaning of words

4 p.m.: Closing prayers ¹.

This type of curriculum, can be argued, was almost a characteristic of Christian education introduced to people of the Niger Delta. Another aspect of the curriculum was that it remained aloof from taking any methods to teach new converts manual labor and physical activities ². These learners were likely to receive agricultural training but the latter was impossible due to the fact that parents were of the opinion that if they were to send their children to schools, these schools would teach their children new skills for trade and this, in fact, remained an obstacle to missionaries to update their curriculum to suit learners' environment ³. Besides this, It was hard for missionaries who asked children to quit agricultural fields and attend school to implement this curriculum with agricultural based –subjects ⁴.

Unlike primary schools' curriculum, secondary schools' curriculum was based on literary subjects similar to that of the primary school but these were offered with the intention to teach apprentices some skills related to trade. These subjects were especially offered to Sierra Leonean emigrants who had attended these schools ⁵. The Rev.A. Mann had established a secondary school in 1872. The latter did not bring any change to the curriculum. Another school was founded in 1879 by the Methodists and this time was a Grammar school. This, in turn, did not affect the way curriculum was implemented ⁶. Main areas of knowledge were English, Orthography, Classics, Geography, History, Grammar, Dictation, Writing, Arithmetic, Algebra,Poetry, and Prose ⁷. These subjects were supplemented with other new subjects in the

¹ Fafunwa, *History of Education*, p.88

² Obidi, *Development and Change*, p27

³ Ajayi, J.F, *Christian Missions in Nigeria:1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite*, London, Longmans ,1965, p141

⁴ Ibid, p141

⁵ Ajayi, J.F, “*The Development of Secondary Grammar School Education in Nigeria*”, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol.2, No,4, December ,1963, p.524

⁶Obidi, *Development and Change*, p28

⁷ Ajayi (1963), *Secondary Grammar School*, p.524

case where teachers and sometimes parents found it necessary to add these subjects to learners to acquire¹. In fact, these Grammar schools were similar to those of the British grammar schools because Latin, Mathematics, and Poetry were all integrated into the curriculum².

Another aspect of Grammar schools to be considered was that most of the instructions relied heavily on the capacity of teachers. These schools lacked trained teachers who showed their capacity to teach school subjects. In addition, due to the focus on secular subjects at the expense of religious ones, these schools found it difficult to supply competent teachers who could offer this knowledge. In other instances, these schools were short on some needed lessons of instruction and these lessons were offered rarely by government officials, doctors, and traders³. This, in turn, was an obstacle to missionaries to carry on their work properly.

This lack of trained teachers who could carry the work of missionaries necessitated the establishment of teacher training institutions. These institutions were built on the belief that these institutions would assist “in the spread of Christianity in the ever-widening missionary field”⁴. In 1859, the C.M.S. established at Abeokuta a teacher training college. This institution later moved to Oyo in May 1896. The purpose of this institution was to “produce vernacular preachers for the Yoruba mission and amateur teachers for burgeoning primary schools”⁵. This college was followed by the Asaba training college which was to help in the training of vernacular preachers⁶. The Baptists established a college at Ogbomosho, and another institution was established at Ibadan by the Methodists. These were formed to produce both catechists and teachers⁷.

These institutions had a very wide curriculum. Most of the subjects that students undertook were personal hygiene, habits of industry and orderliness⁸. Emphasis was given to the raising

¹ Ajayi (1963), *Secondary Grammar School*, p.524

² Foster, Watson, *The Old Grammar Schools*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1916, p150

³ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p29

⁴ Ayandele, E. A. *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, London: Longmans, 1966, p293

⁵ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p29

⁶ Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact*, p294

⁷ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p30

⁸ Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact*, p294

up of teachers with a capacity to teach Christian ideals and doctrines. In fact, academic subjects were ignored due to the opinion that these subjects would raise up individuals who “would carry with them the comforts and ostentation of civilization, not the discipline and humility of Christianity”¹. As such emphasis was given to the development of the spiritual and moral character of trained teachers. At a later stage of training, these teachers may have other subjects which included : Comparative Religion, New Testament Criticism, Preaching and Theology, Old Testament, management and methods of schools, Geography and English History². These subjects were intended to enlarge teachers outlook and to have a broad knowledge on subjects that they were to teach to new converts³.

Broadly speaking, Christian education in the Niger Delta was an attempt to spread Christianity all over the people of the region. These attempts had a very reaching effect in formulating and forming new opinions about the nature of this education and the right of people who attained such education to lead a life similar to that of their masters. In fact, 19th century Niger Delta elite were a production of this missionary enterprise and their activities till the end of the century were stemmed on the basis of finding a place within colonialism. Their efforts were to establish an African Church, to glamorize the idea of Africa manhood and to change some of the pre-assumed beliefs about Africa and Africans. Their orientations and prospects were sometimes looked with mockery from their masters, but their vision was very critical in the history of Nigerian elite because it created the context for building horizons to look at themselves within the British imperial world, and to identify new perspectives about the African race and its implications for freedom struggle.

III- Christian Education, Character Formation, and Colonialism

Contact of the Niger Delta people with Western education generated a far-reaching impact on the way people and particularly the Western educated elite looked at their status within the

¹ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p30

² Solaru, *Teacher Training*, p6

³ Obidi, *Development and Change*, p.32

British imperial system. In fact, right from the inception of formal education into the region, the emerging elite had manifested a spirit of self-identity. They were the catalyst for a shared African identity. This new class, in fact, formed an identity for themselves and tried to draw a new picture for the illiterate masses to be aware of their own identity. It was their activities that generated the first signs of protest against European penetration into the Niger Delta and formulated new questions regarding the position of their race, their status within the established Church and their opinion regarding their hybridized status as it generated many reactions on the part of their British mentors.

This section will provide the context for describing the impact of Christian education on formulating the character of 19th century Niger Delta elite. It details the way this newly formulated class reacted to and made use of Christian principles and values to demand their right to lead a life similar to their British mentors. It is further an attempt to investigate how this class formulated a vision for Niger Delta people and created the context for ways to create a self-identity for themselves, a self-image for them to question all the pre-assumed beliefs about Africa and the African race. Understanding the full impact of Christian education on forming the character of 19th-century elite will shed light on the way state sponsored education, in turn, impacted the Western educated elite to provoke protest against British rule.

1. The Self-Image of 19th century Niger Delta Western Educated Elite

From 1850 onwards, Christianity expanded rapidly among the Niger Delta population. The major evangelistic gain, however, was the emergence of a new elite greatly influenced by missionary teaching and values. They were “a separate and new class with a distinct identity and with stakes, hopes, and visions different from those being nurtured by their British mentors”¹. Since they had received Christianity from the white man, they started to demand their right to leadership of the Church. In their view, it was their responsibility to propagate

¹Ayandel, E.A, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, Frank Cass and Company Limited ,1979, p.133

Christianity in their country ¹. They called also for the establishment of a British form of Civil Service with a majority of Africans ², while demanded the nourishment of trade between Niger Delta people and the rest of the world with an increased African participation ³. Politically, the elite necessitated that they had to be integrated into British constitutional ideals and that there had to be a form of government that best understand the mercantile economy. In this regard, they were of the opinion that the government should appoint representatives who could represent people's affairs. One Western educated elite in the Observer clearly voiced this demand:

We want a Legislature composed of European and Native merchants, men whose interests are thoroughly identical with the country and people, men whose "unofficialism" would permit them to denounce openly and fearlessly those acts of misrule, abuse of power, official terrorism and those nameless annoyances to which we, at present, submit. ⁴

Early elite were aspired to support the civilizing mission project, rather than questioning it. In this regard, Africa and its image did not take much attention. Their main grievance was to create a new social order and to find a place within it. They even showed great support to European presence while endorsed greater support to the application of the civilizing mission ideas. Moreover, they attempted to define exactly both what an African and an English meant and how they could be merged into one entity. In fact, this concern preoccupied many of early elite activities and much pressure was given to provide an understanding of the real sense of an African identity and an understanding of this notion of "Black Englishmen".⁵

A vision of a self-contained African pre-occupied early elite vision and created a type of hostility on the part of the British officials. These early demands were a sight of resentment to their mentors. They were described as persons who are "barely 'civilized', assuming that they

¹Ayandel, E.A, *Nigerian Historical Studies*,134

²Lagos Standard, 9 January in the issue of 26/11/1902, quoted in, Ayandele, E. A. *The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1974., p 98,

³ Liverpool Courier, 23/9/1897., quoted in, Ayandele, E. A. *The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1974., p.99,

⁴ Lagos Observer 3 July 1886, quoted in Kopytoff, *A Preface to Modern Nigeria*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1965, p.222-23

⁵ Zachemuk, *Intellectual Life*, p.146

were already “civilized” and irritatingly impatient to run before they could walk ¹. In 1863, Governor Freeman spoke to the British government of the elite leader's motto of “Africa for Africans “ who are to “ see their benefactors and supporters, the English, either swept from the coast or subjected to the dominion of the blacks”². They even opined that the elite were hoping that one day the British would hand them authority to run their affairs and this, in the long run, would make their aspirations a reality. They aspired to a day when their region became dependent on its people for sustenance rather than relying on the white man. This state of mind was common among the elite of the Niger Delta. As a CMS white missionary put it:

There is amongst some of the most prominent and influential natives of this Coast a strong and frequently expressed feeling that Africa should be for the Africans. They desire that Africa should rise: in which desire they will have the sympathy and best wishes of every right thinking person. They would go farther and say, give us the means of raising her and leave the rest with us. With such persons, the presence of the white man in the country is only partially welcome. They think there is little if any need of his assistance in Christianizing and Civilizing Africa ³.

As such the elite were imbued with the convictions that Niger Delta area belonged to them, the land of their fathers and ancestors and hence they necessitated the urgency of making ties with their unlettered countrymen who needed their guidance to achieve their intended objectives against British colonial plans ⁴. They had the intention of putting into effect the Christian ideals taught by their mentors while having the hope that “Christianity would flourish to the point of displacing African Traditional Religion and Islam, in which literary education would leaven society, and government be administered in the light of ideas and concepts borrowed from the white man’s world. ”⁵.

The elite worked a lot to make into effect Christian ideals taught by their mentors because it was believed that only through Christianity that the African would find his real identity and his real status as a human being. In the economic side, they asked for encouraging international

¹Ayandele (1979), *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p.134

² CO 147/4, H.S. Freeman to Duke of Newcastle, 31/12/1863, quoted in Ayandele (1974), *The Educated Elite*, p.102,

³CMS G3/CA2/01, J.B. Wood to Secretaries, 27/9/1881, quoted in Ayandele (1974), *The Educated Elite*, p.106

⁴ Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p.134

⁵ Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p.134

trade, utilizing European technology, and enhancing the use of English language as the Lingua-Franca¹.

Christianity was a driving force behind elite's potential to glamorize their dreams. It was the religion that brought freedom, happiness, salvation, peace to them; It was the only force of economic, technological and scientific revolution. Christianity was the only religion that guided individuals to the mental, social, moral and political achievements². It was only Christianity that shaped elite's potential to have a vision of their being humans, of their being able to attain the same rights and privileges as the white man. It was the call of Christianity to enslave people and to make them equal to each other regardless of racial and cultural origins that made elite's demands had a very strong voice. Not only Christianity made the elite aware of their rights as individuals but it introduced new ideas that were new and revolutionary to their life. Ayandele advocated that Christianity was very instrumental in putting the ground for elite's identity formation. He asserted that Christianity "inculcates concepts of the nation-state, of the status of the individual in society, of government, and of the source and use of power and authority, of obedience, citizenship, and the rights of the individual."³. These underlying principles were used by mid-century elite as an umbrella to achieve their demands and to form an identity and ambitions to resist British imperial image of Africa and Africans.

Along the effect of Christianity in formulating the character of early Niger Delta elite. The Englishman Henry Venn, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society from 1842 to 1872, played a major role in the Niger Delta elite advancement to the leadership of the Church. He was a supporter of Christian teaching and the way churches in Africa imbued its apprentices with national and racial identity to suit their future role as holders of "God of Missions". He believed in the call of Christianity to free humans and their right to national identity. He further

¹ Ayandele, E.A, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p.135

² Lagos Times, 9/11/1881, 28/12/1881. quoted in Ayandele, E. A. *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*. London: Longmans, 1966, p.44,

³ Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p134

believed that independence for Africans was a matter of time and that Niger Delta elite could get their freedom if they took positions as Church leaders, teachers, clerks, cotton-ginners, traders, and artisans ¹. The Church, in fact, provided the elite a strong position to propagate for their ideas. It was only in the Church that they could have a voice over unlettered masses to convince them of their future challenges to attain certain rights from the British.

Even though Niger Delta Western educated elite were imbued with such ideologies, they were convinced by the 1880's that attaining their rights was still far away because the number of experts was very small to make their ambitions a reality. One editor of the Lagos Times had this to say:

We are not clamoring for immediate independence, for the sufficient reason that we are not prepared for it; but it should always be borne in mind that the present order of things will not last forever. A time will come when the British colonies on the West Coast of Africa, Lagos included, will be left to regulate their own internal and external affairs ².

The Elite were gaining access to leadership of the Church. They were appointed as superintendents by the Methodists. Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther was among the pioneers who were to preach the Christian cause. Isaac Oluwole, Charles Phillips, and James Johnson were appointed as half (assistant) bishops and were given high privileges among members of the Church³. This participation of the Church affairs led the elite to think of a church that was purely African because British intervention in the Church affairs was regarded more as a liability than an asset. The establishment of an African Church was regarded as an avenue to make the first step in showing to Europeans and the British that they were able to manage their affairs and that they have a deep history, rich culture and an awareness of the responsibilities that they were to hold if they took positions of authority. This was emphasized due to the belief that leadership of the Church was one way to the attainment of economic, religious and cultural

¹ Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p.135

² Lagos Times. 9 March 1881, quoted in Uche, L.U, *Mass media, people and politics in Nigeria*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1989, p.93

³ Uche, *Mass Media*, p.137

rights¹. The latter was only attainable when the Western educated elite became aware of the role of the Church in putting the ground for their participation in the social, political and economic life of the region. It was in the light of all these that mid-century elite formed an awareness that “The people who are incompetent to sit as rulers in their own spiritual affairs can scarcely be said to be qualified to sit as Civil Legislators”².

Even though the elite were given certain prominence in the Church affairs, they were still in the view of missionaries a group who lacked too many things to attain certain positions within the Church. Their presence in the Church, according to many missionaries, presented a threat to them and to the British in case the elite started calling for their rights. In 1885, the head of the CMS in Lagos commented on the apparent threat of the emerging Western educated members:

The African has been petted and spoiled and told that he is so good, that he greatly believes it even when he is living in gross immorality. There are many sad cases here in Lagos, such as would startle the friends of Missions. Don't increase our difficulties by proclaiming the goodness of this wicked place.³

Even though the elite benefited from missionary teaching, these members were still in the eyes of their mentors people who were still uncivilized and undeveloped to take the lead of their own affairs and it was even alleged that the elite were only likely to take other occupations rather than participating in the Church affairs.

Further, the Reverend T.J. Halligey, superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission, declared in 1888 that for Africans

the ministry is a respectable profession—not a Divine call. This new Yoruba Mission will not be worth much until Europeans can labor there. After all my experience on this coast, my deliberate conviction is that if Africa's evangelization is to wait for Africa's sons—I refer only to the West Coast—the millennium will have to be indefinitely postponed. Alas! that it should be so, but so it is. West Africa has not yet produced her Apostle.⁴

¹ Uche, *Mass Media*, p.137

² Ayandele, E.A, “*Holy Jonson: Pioneer of African Nationalism 1836-1917*”, Frank Cass &Co LTD,1970, p.105

³ CMS G3/A2/03, J.H. Hamilton to R. Lang, 4/6/1885, quoted in Ayandele (1966), *The Missionary Impact*, p.25

⁴ Methodist Mission Archives, London, T.J. Halligey to Osborne, 26/2/1888, quoted in Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact*, p.33,

The elite hence were devoid of any capacity to manage their own affairs and were still in need of European and particularly British guidance to follow the path of civilization and modernity to be able to stand as responsible persons of the region's affairs.

Others like one missionary who spoke of the African agents of the Church Missionary went further to say:

One cannot help feeling...whether, with the majority of the agents, conversion of heart has ever taken place; and whether they are not actuated by the lowest motives...a Christianity which lives only on the lips, and has no place in the life is only a mockery and not that which can be propagated for the good of men.¹

In fact, this vision of the emerging elite affected a lot the presence of the elite in participating in the region's affairs and it even made a big gap between them and both British officials and the unlettered masses. Moreover, other missionaries went further to claim that the Western educated elite were not mature enough both mentally and intellectually to claim any right to participate in the socio-economic life of their people. They were described as children who know nothing and could not come into maturity. In a rather strong voice, one-woman missionary had this to say about the African Church leaders in Lagos, she opined that "The present generation will remain so, like some children who are pampered and spoilt and put forward before they have begun to learn control or self-discipline or self-denial"².

The unlettered masses also shared the view of missionaries regarding the emerging elite. They rejected to accept ideas advanced by the elite and started to form new opinions about them. They regarded them as blacks with white minds who were eager to attain white men's religion, clothes, language, mentality, marriage and burial customs³. There was a kind of hostility on the part of indigenous leaders toward the Western educated elite because they were seen as a danger while in the Southern part of the Niger Delta they were regarded as bad as the

¹CMS, G3/A3/02, T. Phillips to Lang, 11/1/1883, quoted in, Cohen, A. *The Politics of Elite Culture: Explorations in the Dramaturgy of Power in a Modern African Society*. California: University of California Press, 1981, p.122

² Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p.139

³ Ibid., p.139

white man¹. Elite's lifestyle and attitude, in fact, hindered for many decades any ties with their unlettered countrymen and it even generated mistrust and suspicion to their relations. In other cases, unlettered masses found it difficult to understand some of the ideas proposed by the elite due to their newness to their life and intellect.

The elite were in their ideological orientations loaded with contradictions. They considered themselves as representatives of the Christian faith and were ready to fight for it. On the other hand, they were greatly influenced by ethnocentric sentiments. Majola –Agbebi was a Yoruba Christian elite and was eager to preach Christianity and its underlying philosophies, but he was a member of the Ekitiparapo which was a Yoruba clan that waged the Kiriya war of 1877-1893². This attitude, in fact, was an obstacle to the Western educated elite to form a strong opposition to colonial rule and in forming protests to raise the awareness of unlettered masses of their rights.

It was due to all these forces that by 1890, the Western educated elite were deprived of acting in any dynamics of protests and it was clear that, as E.A.Ayandele put it, “the independence of the myriads of states and kingdoms, which were to be welded into Nigeria, were to be crushed by the British imperial juggernaut”³. This justified the acceptance of the elite to the scramble as the inevitable event that would carve Africa into pieces and hence they were of the opinion that if they were to choose a master for them, the British would be the best⁴. For example, when in 1888 the French were about to sign a treaty to form a protectorate in Lagos, the elite rushed to send their deputations to Abeokuta to persuade rulers to reject French presence and demand British control with the belief that the British would support their ambitions.

As such, the presence of European agents, particularly the British one, would guarantee a revolution in the social and economic status of Niger Delta people. The development of the

¹ Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p.139

² *Ibid*, p.140

³ *Ibid*, p.144

⁴ *Ibid*, p.143

British imperial presence was seen as an avenue through which Niger Delta elite could strengthen their cause and benefit from their socio-economic progress as a civilizing agent. The British presence was very crucial that a one Niger Delta, Christian Western educated lady commented in 1885:

I maintain that the present efforts of European countries to acquire and increase their possessions and protectorates in Africa, and to develop their commercial interests therein, are calculated to be an advantage to Africa and the Negro Race generally. Firstly, because it is a civilizing agent; secondly, because it enriches the country; and lastly, but not the least, because it aids the propagation of Christianity.¹

It could be argued that by 1890, the elite were deprived of any role to take the lead of future ambitions. It was common among politicians that the elite were not fit to these positions on the basis of their “insufficient mental development”². They were described as “the trousered Africans with European veneer”, “half-educated mischief mongers and wretched clerks”³. Further, McCallum described them as “a set of partially educated English-speaking native loafers who pose as advisors to the chiefs and fatten on the misrule of their employers”⁴.

Although the picture was gloomy for the emerging elite to achieve their ambitions, all of them did not lose hope to achieve their goals. This was apparent in their views toward British presence and its consequences. This urged them to be more powerful and particularly financially capable of monitoring their affairs. This eventually led them to establish eight independent churches between 1888 and 1902⁵. The elite considered the Church to be the only source of leadership that would strengthen their cause. Hence, the Church remained the only expression of the psychological, political, cultural and ideological manifestation of self-government⁶. In the Church, they could glamorize the idea of self-government, make blacks

¹ African Times, 1/8/1885. quoted in Cohen, Robert. “*Elite Theory and the Formation of Elites among the Bura Intellectuals of Nigeria*.”, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983.p,222

² CO 147/113, Henry McCallum to Chamberlain, 12/5/1897, quoted in Cole, Patrick. *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, p.120

³ Lagos Standard, 16/2/1898, quoted in Mann, Kristin, “*Marrying Well: Marriage, Status, and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos*”. African Studies Series. Vol. 47. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p22

⁴CO 147/132, McCallum to Chamberlain, 5/5/1898, quoted in Imogene, D., *Social Mobility in Emergent Society: A Study of the New Elite in Western Nigeria*, Canberra, Australia, 1976, p.122

⁵ Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p.145

⁶ Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p.145

proud of African heritage and history and make the elite able to broaden the scope of leadership and participation in the region's affairs ¹.

Conclusion

The missionary educational enterprise had a great impact on forming the character of 19th century Niger Delta elite. It generated the emergence of a class greatly influenced by European culture and structured in a way that revealed their new orientations toward seeking improvement in the social, political and cultural arenas. Their main grievances were to find a place within colonialism and to establish purely African institutions that worked for the welfare of the African race and its progress toward attaining some facets of European modernity. These education policies did not go without questioning on the part of British Officials of the time. They were convinced by the 1880' that Christian education was unsatisfactory to build the character of a native who was to fill a position in the administrative cadre. Right from 1882, British Officials were eager to introduce a new type of education to people of the Niger Delta. This newly implemented education scheme was a characteristic of the early twentieth-century Niger Delta history that was to bring revolutionary and unexpected outcomes in forming the elite who resisted the religious, economic and cultural foundations of British colonialism.

¹ Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, p.147

Chapter Two: Colonial Rule and the Western Educated Elite's Protest

Introduction

Along the influence of Christian education in forming the character of 19th century Niger Delta elite, this educational enterprise was challenged by the introduction of state-sponsored education. British officials were interested in broadening the scope of British colonial system by recruiting Niger Delta people in the colonial service as a way to both sustain economy and maintain law and order. This intervention in education policies was one way to make Niger Delta people able to suit their future roles as servants of British colonial plans and as cooperators who would enhance colonial economy and the prestige of the British empire. This chapter discusses the nature of education policies introduced by British officials after 1882 and their intended objectives in creating a Western educated elite. This chapter further examines how these education policies led to the emergence of an early elite nationalism that provoked protest in the religious, economic and cultural life of their people.

I. Colonial Rule and the Rise of a Western Educated elite

Over the course of Nigeria's colonial history, the nature of colonial expansion and exploitation and the way Niger Delta people responded to it generated many effects on both the presence of colonial rule and the status of Niger Delta people. Colonial exploitation of the land and people continued to penetrate the interior and to transform life of the people. In this regard, the ideology of empire changed from being a tool to build a commercial and evangelistic base for the British to an enterprise that placed creating a modern society as its first priority¹. The emergence of the elite, thus, was a consequence of this revolutionary changes brought with the advance of colonial rule that worked for introducing the elite to the realm of British empire to

¹ Zchemuk, *Intellectual Life.*, p1

be “as protégé of the British, as veritable agents and instruments of British cultural, religious, intellectual, political and economic manifestations”¹.

1. Education Policy from 1882 to 1906

Once British officials had asserted responsibility over the educational project of Niger Delta people, a new phase in education policy saw the light. It was a period of transition and implementation of education policies that clearly had as an aim creating agents of trust and reliability to British presence. This section therefore examines colonial education policy between 1882 and 1916. It is necessary to spotlight the main education policies of the period to reveal different facets of these policies. This section is an attempt to shed light on its aims and objectives and the way these education policies gradually provided the context for forming an elite agency that was to provide colonial rule with the necessary tools for exploitation and expansion.

This background is necessary because it, on the one hand, provided the context for understanding the impact of Western education in forming the character of the elite who resisted the religious, economic and cultural basics of British rule, and on the other, it puts a fertile ground for understanding elite identity that was based on their shared Africinity.

For nearly forty years, all educational matters were in the hands of missionaries. The presence of government, however, was mainly to provide a small amount of provision to all missionary bodies². In the year 1882, however, things started to change. British officials passed the first Education Ordinance. It was introduced forty years after missionary bodies entered the colony and nearly twenty-one years after the British government took hold of Lagos³. This act marked a real shift in the relationship between British officials and all missionary bodies since

¹ Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies.*, p.133

² Obidi, *Development and Change*, p 34

³ Njoku, S.I., *The Development of the British System of Education in Nigeria 1882-1929*. Diss. University of Oregon, University microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1969, p 69.

it marked a great move in the way officials received education and its usefulness in bringing changes to the way people received British presence and how they could be transformed into agents of trust to the British ¹.

In this regard, the development and progress of British interests in the Niger Delta, in fact, was believed to be accompanied by native's character and morality. It was alleged that "standard of morality of the uneducated native is very low"². This opinion was widely shared on the account that British presence was guaranteed only if native ways of thinking and behaving was modified. The status of these people presented a threat to British officials due to their lack of discipline and neatness. Their status was one of great misery that one official pointed out:

The European ...comes into contact with this low standard of morality every day of his life – if not the intimate contact of the farm or the house, then the most remote contact of the street. We have seen that this contact is not without its ill effects on adult Europeans; on young children, the evil effects are still greater³.

The introduction of education to the Niger Delta region, thus, was conceived as an important step toward providing civilized agents ready to serve British officials plans. British Officials denounced for an immediate move to pay attention to form an elite agency that would be ready to serve British colonial plans. The elite were to be positioned in the administrative cadre and so ought to be characterized by certain traits suitable for their new role in life. It was to the benefits of the elite to be educated so that they could reach mature status regarding themselves and the community at large. In this regard, Lugard in his "The Rise of Our East African Empire" suggested

the formation of a native Cadre Service, the members of which by prolonging their studies during the earlier years of their service under special arrangements, and specializing in such subjects as would qualify them for the higher posts, would form a class from which the Government could with confidence select probationers for the Civil Service.⁴

¹ Ayandele (1966), *The Educated Elite*, p299-301

² Loram, Charles. T, *The Education of the South African Native*, Longman, Greens, and Co ,1917, p34

³ Ibid, p34

⁴ Lugard, F, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, Routledge, 1893, p. p89

This elite agency in this way was to receive highly treatment and consideration due to the responsibilities that it was to operate within the colonial service. The Education Ordinance of 1882 was directed at both the Gold Coast and the Lagos colony. It appealed for the establishment of a General Board of Education consisted of the Governor of the colony, the members of the Executive Council and four other persons nominated by the Governor ¹. The general board had the function of setting up local boards and whether the grants offered by officials were used in the progress of education ². It also worked for examining school's financial affairs ³. In this regard, the equipment of schools with the necessary staff received special attention since this group would guarantee the application of these policies and provide a monthly evaluation of the progress of education.

The acquired knowledge was based on subjects that Colonial Officials preferred. The teaching of vernacular and region's history was ignored and lesser activities were devoted to relating child to its environment. Hence, the teaching of vernacular and religion was excluded from the curriculum and Officials paid little attention to put its teaching into effect. This emphasis on the English language as the medium of instruction led many people to demand more emphasis on the vernacular. This was clear in a letter sent by inhabitants of Lagos. The letter focused on implementing the vernacular to the curriculum:

We add the vernacular with the full conviction that Education imparted only in a foreign language, as certainly the English language is here, cannot but prove a failure, and that the government should rather encourage the progress of Vernacular Education as is being done in her Majesty's Empire in India...⁴.

Inhabitants 'call for the teaching the vernacular was grounded on the belief that an education that is based on the English language as the medium of instruction was almost strange and new to their environment. They contended that English language teaching would alienate them from

¹ Philipson. S, *Grants in Aid of Education in Nigeria; Review with Recommendations*, Lagos, the Government Printer ,1948. P69

² Ibid, p69

³ Njoku, *The Development of Education*, p 69

⁴ C.O.147/51, The Native Inhabitants of Lagos to the acting assistant colonial Secretary, translated by Mr. Olowe ,26 October ,1908, No 06, quoted in, Njoku, *The Development of the System of Education*, p75

all aspects of their culture and would, in the long run, dismiss their culture, history and past. Moreover, due to the influence of Pan-African movement, there was a resurgence in reviving all that was African. In fact, British Officials did not take inhabitants demands into consideration and English language use was emphasized. Government officials were of the opinion that inhabitants were eager to “discourage the teaching of English by the teaching of native languages and dialects and to seek to perpetuate them as written languages”¹.

The Education Ordinance of 1882 also called for the appointment of an inspector of schools to evaluate all the activities of schools, to evaluate its work under government responsibility and to offer grants to the schools². This Ordinance brought in the system of “payment by results”. This system provided that all grants should be given according to the schools “organization and discipline, average attendance of the pupils enrolled at each school, and results of annual examinations”³. As such, grants were carried out by Her “Majesty’s Inspector” who was responsible for the annual results of the schools and his evaluation was very important because his evaluation would give extra credit to the school staff and this, in turn, would increase their grants.

English was used as a medium of instruction and most of the subjects taught depended on the capacity of these apprentices in speaking and writing the English language. Paragraph 5 of clause 10 in the 1882 Ordinance concluded:

the subjects of teaching shall be the reading and writing of the English language, arithmetic, and in the case of females, plain needlework. The grammar of the English language, English history, and geography, especially of the British empire, may also be taught or not, at the option of the teacher, provided that if taught, they shall be taught as class subjects⁴.

¹ C.O.657/17, Annual Report on Education Department, Southern Provinces, Nigeria, for 1926, quoted in Njoku, *The Development of the British System of Education*, p.76

² Obidi, *Development and Change*, p 35

³ Njoku, *The Development of the British System of Education*, p.70

⁴ C.O.147/51, The Education Ordinance ,1882, Clause 10, paragraph 05, p3, quoted in Njoku, *The Development of the British System of Education*, p70

This emphasis on English teaching was one step forward to make these apprentices appropriate themselves to the new context of colonial life and to make them in close contact with different facets of British culture. The education of the elite, therefore, was to prepare Niger Delta elite “to man the local administration at the lowest ranks and to staff the private capitalist firms owned by Europeans ”¹. It was clear that officials were not eager to introduce an education in its real terms. Instead, their objective was to create a body of local clerks and highly trained officers who could serve British colonial plans in the region.

The Education Ordinance of 1882, however, did not accomplish its objectives since its goals were too narrow, and were in a way or another similar to the English Elementary Education Act of 1870 which was directed at a particular context relevant to the British child ². It did not only fail to relate apprentices to their environment, but it did not produce enough force that could be recruited in administration. British Officials then felt the necessity of reviewing the 1882 Ordinance and on May 30th, 1887 another Ordinance saw the light. This act was a response to the 1882 Education Ordinance that went wrong in dealing with the problems facing British monopoly of the region. This was the first successful attempt made by British officials to control education and to bring the activities of missionaries into more government scrutiny³.

This act was devoted only to the Lagos colony, and like the 1882 Act, it formed a Board of Education consisting of the Governor, the Legislative Council, the Inspector of schools and four other persons who were appointed by the Governor ⁴. Other goals included: supplying schools with grants-in-aids; to open up and maintain schools; extension of grants-in-aids to infant schools, primary schools, secondary schools and industrial schools depending on the school’s annual results. These underlying objectives were only attainable if these schools placed

¹ Alberto, L, Paulina, *Emperor’s English Language of Technology of Rule in British West Africa*, available at: <http://www.history.upenn-edu/phr/archives /97/alberto.html>.

² Osokoyo, I.O, *History and Policy of Nigerian Education in World Perspectives*, Ibadan: AMD Publishers,2002, p.122

³ Sulaiman, Folasade. R, “*Internationalization in Education: The British Colonial Policies on Education in Nigeria 1882 – 1926*”, *Journal of Sociological Research*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2012, p92.

⁴ Njoku, *The Development of the British System of Education*, p70

emphasis on securing religious and racial freedom; issuance of a certificate to teachers; admission of children into schools regardless of their social background and offering of scholarships for secondary and technical education.¹

In view of the above, the 1887 Ordinance made it necessary for the colonial government to exercise all educational matters. It emphasized the role of education in bringing about prosperity to the central government. Hence, the Board of Education was responsible for evaluating the school 's progress and in maintaining open eyes on all the school's activities ranging from the subject taught to the rate of enrollment and ending with the annual examination results. This was driven in large to broaden the scope of education scheme to reach all parts of Niger Delta and to guarantee that people attain the most from these education policies.

Like the 1882 Ordinance, the 1887 Ordinance placed creating an elite agency as its first concern. The elite were taught how to be autonomous, how to be responsible for their affairs, and the way they should think of their future progress. In this regard, Lugard further asserted that elite education "must be to fit the ordinary individual to fill a useful part in his environment, with happiness to himself, and to ensure that the exceptional individual uses his abilities for the advancement of the community"². The presence and security of colonial rule hence was guaranteed when the elite acquired norms and habits of discipline that were needed in their task of administration. This elite agency was believed to be an influential tool in bringing prosperity and progress to the colonial presence and one way to guarantee that individuals who were recruited had all the necessary skills to offer their services when needed.

The 1887 code was a response of British officials to religious teaching promoted by Christian bodies that deemed unsuited and harmful to the status of this educated class. It was alleged that missionary education was unsatisfactory for bringing type of people needed in the colonial service since it focused on teaching its apprentices religious subjects and ignored other

¹ Sulaiman, *Internationalization in Education*, p92

² Ibid, p.425

skills. As such religious instructions were strictly controlled by the British officials and offered only in case the child's parents allowed such a subject ¹. In this respect the Education Ordinance of 1887 and particularly number 07 of clause 13 stated that no grants should be made in case these schools offered any religious teaching without government and, or the child's parents consent: "...by the rules of the school, no child receive any religious instruction to which the parent or guardian of such child objects, or be present when such instruction is given, at the schools"².

In effect, forming this elite agency was a way to recruit a special type of people who showed their interest in government prosperity while guaranteed security and loyalty to their British mentors. Hence, such education aimed to "enlarge their outlook, increase their efficiency and standard of comfort , and bring them into closer sympathy with the government, instead of making them unsuited and ill-contented with their mode of life"³. This, in turn, would assure peaceful contact between natives and government authorities because this type of education would "make them efficient, loyal, reliable and contented –a race of self-respecting native gentlemen"⁴. Keeping law and order in this way was a matter of paramount importance and it was only through the elite that officials guaranteed both security and loyalty to their presence. It was the presence of this agency that would provide colonial rule with the necessary ground for exploitation and attainment of wealth.

In 1903 and 1905 respectively, government officials enacted two important codes devoted solely to the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria ⁵ and like the 1882 and 1887 codes, much of the grants were given according to the school's final examination results that were to be assisted by an inspector ⁶. The education codes of 1903 and 1905 stressed the necessity of forming an elite

¹ Njoku, *The Development of the British System of Education*, p.71

² Ibid, p71

³ Lugard, *Instructions*, p.426

⁴ Ibid, p.426

⁵ The Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was a British protectorate formed in 1900. It was created by integrating some territories of the Royal Niger Company with the Niger Coast Protectorate and in 1906 Lagos was annexed to the Protectorate to form the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

⁶ Njoku, *The Development of the British System of Education*, p.72

agency ready to serve in the colonial administration. Their main concern was to find the necessary workforce needed to make the operation of colonial government much easier. Agricultural training and manual labor received meager expenditure in officials' program to spread education. This was due to the belief that these skills could only be useful if apprentices were to stuff in agricultural firms, but within the large spread of industrial sectors and the necessity of finding new sources of wealth, the focus should be on providing of individuals ready to fill administrative positions.

By 1906, both the Education Departments of Lagos and of Southern Nigeria were merged into one department. There was a new phase in official's program to modernize education and update its content to make apprentices more suited to their future role as servants of British colonialism. The unsatisfactory nature of education led them to think of new policies to revolutionize its content and bring it to closer contact with elite's environment. Their program in the coming decades focused on stressing the fact that only through education that colonial government could raise competent, trustworthy individuals ready to serve British ambitions.

2. Education Policy from 1906 to 1916

The development of education went hand in hand with the growth of the number of Western educated elite who had clearly sought to form an expression to their grievances. A class had developed that was conscious to provoke discontent against British economic, social and cultural presence. The first phase of education policy revealed the presence of the elite and their role in developing a Pan-African identity that clearly would make a shift in education policy and urged official to update the content of education to suit people's environment. Elite' early nationalism was an outcome of these policies that revolutionized elite' thoughts and made them to question the validity of British presence and its vision of Africa and Africans.

Once the two education departments were merged into one, the demand for education rose sharply due to the rise of colonial industry and institutions. Within a few years, British officials

issued the Education Ordinance of 1908 which was put into effect in 1911. Among the provisions that the code provided were read as follows:

That all teachers should have teaching certificates; that the vernacular should be obligatory in all schools; that all teachers should go through a Teaching College in order to qualify for a teaching certificate; that the Legislative Council should elect the Board of Education, leaving no room for appeals...¹

Unlike pre-1906 codes, the 1908 code made it obligatory to incorporate the teaching of the vernacular to the curriculum. The code asked teachers to let apprentices translate English text into the vernacular and incorporate the vernacular into reading. This move toward incorporating the vernacular was in large due to great pressure from the Western educated elite who were by this time greatly influenced by Pan-African appeals of reviving African culture and languages.

Attaining information was of special importance to the 1908 code and drilling was used as a technique for mastering such information². Subjects taught were given an appropriate amount of time to be mastered, and the progress of teaching depended heavily on the mastery of the previous subjects. Henry Carr, the Inspector of schools in the colony of Lagos, stated that “the teacher ought not to yield to the temptation of attempting too much. A few things well taught will give far greater satisfaction ”³. It was alleged that these apprentices were still unable of holding too much knowledge. They were expected to learn smaller things till they mastered them well. The mastering of certain lessons was emphasized and government teaching attempted at enhancing the quality of teaching rather than loading apprentices with too much amount of knowledge. In this respect, type of knowledge received was oriented to prepare these individuals to work within a particular sector to provide its sustenance and collaboration to the work of government officials.

¹ CSE :192/B/V, “Shanahan to Superior General,” Calabar, 21 January 1908, quoted in, Omenka, N. I, *The School in the Service of Evangelization: The Catholic Educational Impact in Eastern Nigeria 1886-1950*, Leiden, New York, 1989, p.88

² Njoku, *The Development of the British System of Education*, p.73

³ Carr, Henry, General Report for the Year 1899 on the Schools in the Colony of Lagos, London: H.M.S.O.,1899, Appendix 1, School Reports, 1898-1899, quoted in Njoku, *The Development of the British System of Education*, p 90.

This code, according to the Southern Nigerian Colonial Report of 1908, was based on the E.E.E.A¹. It made provisions for the teaching of different subjects that the English child was exposed to. Accordingly, this type of education exposed apprentices to the realm of British culture and ideas. The elite were taught different subjects that strengthened their relationship to British lifestyle and manners. Mr. E. G. Rowden, the Director of Education, explained the changes brought with the 1908 code. He vigorously praised the utility of the new code:

The most important changes introduced under the new code are designed to realize the modern conception of education by enlarging and enriching the ordinary school curriculum of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Provision is accordingly made for colloquial English, drawing, Kindergarten, object lessons, nature study, and physical exercises and musical drill. It is also required that some definite form of moral instructions shall be given in every school.²

The 1908 Ordinance also called for the establishment of a Provincial Board of Education that could control government and assisted schools. This board comprised of the Provincial Commissioner, the Principal Medical Officer and the Director of Education. Since this time, there was a delay in initiating any educational Ordinances till 1916 due to the opposition in certain provinces. In 1914, the two Protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria were amalgamated and merged into one entity called Nigeria³. By this time, Frederick Lugard was appointed as a Governor –General of Nigeria. He was famous for his criticism of educational policies in the two provinces, North, and South and urged for an immediate move toward bringing new measures to update the content of education. He introduced the Educational Ordinance of 1916 in an attempt to provide an education that was “based on good character and usefulness to individuals and the society at large”⁴.

¹ Southern Nigeria, Colonial Reports. Annual No.630 of 1908, H.M.S.O, 1909, Accounts and papers, (6) LXIV ,1910, quoted in Solaiman, Internationalization in Education, p.25

² PRO: C.O.592/9, Annual Report for the Year 1910, quoted in, Omenka, *The School in the Service of Evangelization*, p.91

³ On January 1, 1914, the two Protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria were amalgamated to form the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. Thus merging the Niger area into one entity called Nigeria. This amalgamation was merely done for economic reasons and thus the two protectorate’s administration affairs remained separate.

⁴ Ibukunolu, A, A, *Diagnosis of educational Policy and Reform*, University of Ibadan/Published by distant learning center, 2001, p65

His education scheme attempted at enhancing character formation, government scrutiny over mission schools, rural as well as urban education and an increase in the number of apprentices to meet the demands in colonial services¹. Lugard emphasized the development of character as the basic criteria for educational success. He believed in the power of education in revolutionizing the way Niger Delta people behaved and looked at themselves and in disciplining them to much identify with the changes brought with colonial rule.

The education Ordinance of 1916 provided highly professional courses on different administrative fields. Its aim was to prepare individuals to be leaders in their own community and be at the same time representatives of their people's affairs, or as opportunities allowed such students would have given the opportunity to study in Britain. In this regard, elite education would in the long run "provide for the youth of the colony and protectorate a superior course of general education, including preparation of students for matriculation in the university of London"². This elite agency received highly superior amount of knowledge and prestige that placed it high in the colonial hierarchy as servants of the British empire and real agents who presented the success of British imperial plans in bringing civilization and modernity to backward, uncivilized Africans. The training of the elite, therefore, would both provide security to the British since the elite were part of their program of civilization and made the administration of people much easier through their cooperation with British officials.

It was the task of education to prepare this elite agency to replace colonial authorities in matters of administration and be at the same time supervised by the Colonial Office in London.

Prime Minister Salisbury pointed out:

The condition of a protected dependency is more acceptable to the half civilized races and more suitable than direct dominion. It is cheaper, simpler, less wounding to their self-esteem, gives them more career as public officials, and spares of unnecessary contact with white men³

¹ Osokoya, *History and Policy of Nigerian Education*, p.22

² C.O.583/30, King's College Regulations, 5th Jan.1915, Enclosure in Nigerian Confidential Dispatch No.4985 of 26th May, 1915, quoted in Njoku, *The Development of the British System of Education*, p79

³ Andrew Roberts, *Salisbury: Victorian Titan*, Orion House, 1999, p 529

Salisbury further provided other reasons for forming this elite agency. He opined that this policy of handing the elite authority would, in the long run, reduce hostility of inhabitants towards colonial presence and at the same reduce officials' expenditure regarding native administration. This brought to light many facets of a new policy that dominated colonial authorities concerns within the second decade of the twentieth century. The formation of an elite agency was grounded on the basis of a policy of indirect rule.

This implemented policy sought to reduce hostility toward British colonial officials. It aimed at implementing policies for conducting the relation between natives and colonial government while tried to integrate people to the life and facets of British colonial administration. In *The Position of Native Chiefs*, Lugard spoke of the necessity of incorporating a body of people who would be representative of British officials to local people:

[The] calm of the Pax Britannica [might] induce a spirit of ennui. ...Our object should be to give them an interest and an object beyond the routine performance of their duties, to interest them in the scheme of government, to teach them to recognize the new order of things, to show them common interests, to engage their sympathies in our efforts for secular education and to promote a legitimate rivalry in civilized progress and even in sports¹

This to broaden the participation of the elite in colonial life and offered them the necessary paradigms needed to incorporate themselves in the colonial machinery. It was believed that the formation of a basic ground for the security and the prosperity of British rule was to occur through the building of strong elite agency that would show loyalty, respect and readiness to serve British colonial hegemony to carve the interior and exploit the land.

Even though British officials inaugurated a complete education program to this portion of the population, schools were not producing good individuals useful for administration. In the words of Henry Carr, the High Commissioner, Nigerians were “not intelligent, not reliable, not fitted for positions requiring independent judgment or resourcefulnessWhen left alone they

¹ Lugard, *Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative*, London: Waterlow & Sons Ltd., 1916, p. 265

all fall into divers temptation, ruin themselves, and bring sorrow to their families”¹. In the same manner, Miller had concluded that “if the terrible aspirations on the character of the youth of Nigeria today are at all true and not altogether biased, then there has been something radically and utterly wrong in the whole system of education in Nigeria”². Officials lamented that education in its primary motive should carter for bringing prosperity to colonial government and provide useful individuals who could sustain British presence in the coming decades.

In fact, even though the formation of this enterprise sounded rewarding and fueled with much prosperity to the economics of the empire, this elite agency formed early signs of threat and depression to colonial rule. The elite made officials accounts turned into a nightmare when they provoked early stirrings of elite nationalism. These education policies provided the context for forming the character of the elite who had a strong social status that placed them at the heart of deciding on the region ‘affairs. These policies made the elite aware of the responsibilities that they were to hold regarding themselves, their region and their race.

3. Colonial Education and Elite Status

By virtue of their education, Niger Delta Western educated elite were in a medial position between colonial authorities and African society ³. This position allowed them to interpret the African standpoint to the British and let Africans understand the British world. Their status was one of great importance that Adeyemo Alakija described his role as a Western educated elite: “my aim is to act as the bridge connecting the two sections, to understand the white man's view and interpret it to my countrymen and to interpret to Europeans the needs and aspirations of my countrymen”⁴

¹ Omolewa, M, “*The Adaptation Question in Nigerian Education 1916-1936: A study of an Educational Experiment in Secondary School Examinations in Colonial Nigeria*”, Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 8(3),93-119

² Walter, Miller, *have we Failed in Nigeria?* London, 1974, p92

³ Kristin Mann, *Marrying Well. Marriage. Status and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos*, C.U.P., Cambridge, 1985, p.87

⁴ Ayandele, *The Educated elite*, p.82

Western Educated elite' culture, in this regard, was composed of both worlds, the African and the British. The Western educated elite were not eager to stay too much closer to the illiterate masses because they thought their education gave them extra credit to be different from others and let them have new opportunities to gain respected jobs. On the other hand, this Western educated community was not able to come closer to the British. Most of the British did not accept them and were apathetic of the idea of assimilation¹. In fact, the elite did not completely cut relation with their social and cultural ties to Africa because of their education but worked to strengthen it. It was duo to this medial position as an African Western educated elite, and as African agent in the colonial service that they played a paramount importance in participating in the economic, social and cultural life of their people.

The fluid nature of the culture of the Western educated community was a prominent feature of their activities. They participated in soirees, levees, cricket matches, elaborate Church weddings, the Queen's Birthday Ball and jubilees². They also established friendly societies and in 1891 they formed the Ancient Order of Foresters which marked their modernity and civilized lifestyle. This was coupled with a great zeal to make ties with their African counterparts in America and Britain. They were also active in opening discussions in the literary, scientific and cultural fields. These activities, in fact, split them off from other members of society and gave them a definite clear social status so that they could raise questions regarding their race, their relation to the British and their place within colonialism as collaborators and beneficiaries³.

Along these activities, the Western educated members knew exactly that they were not in England and that they had a role to play. They knew that they were distinct from the British. In effect, economic change and kinship ties led them to stick to older African practices. They kept marriage practices especially that of the extended family because of social relations. They aspired to merge the African culture to Christian practices in order to establish a purely African

¹ Zachemuk, *Intellectual Life*, p.51

² Ibid, p.52

³ Brown, Spencer Hunter, "A History of the People of Lagos, 1852-1886." Diss., Northwestern, 1964, p.246

Church. In 1900, The Reformed Ogboni Fraternity worked out a program to incorporate African culture to Christian ideals. This, along other activities to be considered in later sections, marked revolutionary changes provoked by the elite to mark their presence in the economic and cultural transformations of the period ¹.

The Western educated elite became an important facet of colonial life. Their role as spokesmen, lobbyists, and merchants gave them prominence as a distinct group and valuable one. Most of them could be found as court advisors, barristers, doctors and churchmen². Their presence, in fact, strengthened their relation to society and broadened their horizons to reach all classes of the population while made their relation to the British overwhelmed by a sense of mistrust and suspicion. This feeling was in part as a result of the increased rate of discrimination against them and the illiterate masses. It could be argued that right from the early 20th century that the Western educated elite were not welcomed by the British. There was a shift from being agents of colonial rule and civilization to political, economic and cultural catalysts of change.

It could be argued that education policies placed the elite high in the social ladder of colonial life and gave them a clearly defined social status to demand equality and justice from the British. Their role was crucial in formulating an elite nationalism that raised people's consciousness about their religious, economic and cultural rights.

II. Early Forms of Protest and Cultural Nationalism

The introduction of Western education to the Niger Delta had far reaching effects in forming the character of the Western educated community. This educational project gradually provided the context for forming a group of people who were eager to achieve modernization and a lifestyle similar to that of the white man. Their participation in colonial life made them aware of the challenges that they were to face to achieve equality and modernity. This was coupled with an awareness of the challenges that they were to face regarding their vision of the African

¹ Mann, *Marrying Well*, p.110

² Ibid, p. 77-78

race and their place within it. Their activities for the coming decades were centered on both forming an opposition to British economic measures that deemed oppressive and to form their identity based on a shared African race.

Their early protests were one of great challenges to colonial rule. Elite's participation in the Church affairs made them eager to establish a purely African Church. A purely African Church was a place where the elite could make their voice heard and make illiterate masses aware of their shared history and culture. It could also be an avenue through which the elite raised questions regarding their place within colonialism and their future roles regarding their people and race. Along religious separation, the elite were active agents in promoting discontent against certain British economic measures that were heavy for people to hold. In fact, Lagos was at the hub of elite's protests. These protests were driven in large to repeal taxes that formed real obstacle to peoples' lives and to put pressure on colonial authorities to gain better life conditions. Coupled with this, Pan-African consciousness had a very strong influence in forming their identity. It made them conscious of their shared Africanity and urged them to look at their race with new promising vision that placed them equal to other races due to the richness of their culture and history.

1. Religious Secessionist Movements

The existence of multi-cultural differences signified the fact that Nigeria was an ethnic country encompassing hundreds of ethnic groups spreading over the whole region. Nigeria was a mere "geographical expression". Ethnicity clearly pre-occupied the minds and intellects of people who were in firm footing to show their loyalty to their ethnic origins. The British triggered this sense of loyalty by dividing the country and its people into fractions each with its own region, culture, customs and traditions¹.

¹ Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, p. 46

Religious revolts presented the first type of resistance against British presence in the region. These movements were largely elitist in nature since its adherents were beneficiaries of Christian teaching. Most of these groups were part of white-dominated Christian churches in the Niger Delta. Believing in the call of God to free humanity from oppression, these secessionist groups called for equality with the white man and the right of Africans to live a life similar to that experienced by Christian teaching. In August 1891, the United Native African Church, having seceded from the Anglican Church, organized a meeting in which they spoke about the reasons for the establishment of an independent African Church:

this meeting in humble dependence upon the Almighty God, is of the opinion that Africa is to be evangelized; and that the foreign agencies at work at the present moment, taking into consideration climatic and other influences cannot grasp the situation, resolved that a purely Native African Church be founded for the Evangelization and Amelioration of the African race to be governed by Africans ¹.

This type of protest formed elite's early manifestations to form a resistance against the colonial monopoly of the socio-political institutions of the time and this to be accompanied by a great move to the monopoly of all political affairs. The establishment of a purely African Church would be an avenue through which Africans could manage their affairs and open an outlet from which they could discuss issues of importance to their identity, their present situation and their image to the British.

The call for an independent African Church found a great response on the part of many Christian Western educated Niger Delta elite. In 1901, a group seceded from the Anglican Church and formed the African Church and another from the Baptist Church². Jacob Kehinde Coker, often known as the father of African independent churches, led many protests against bad treatment perceived from men of the white-dominated Church. His projection was grounded on the belief that Africans had been denied their right to practice Christianity freely. Africans often were obliged to wear European dress and sing western hymn. This kind of

¹ Oke, G.A, *A Short History of the United Native African Church*, Lagos ,1936, p.71

² Oke, *A Short History*, p.176

practice alienated them from all aspects of their culture. In the view of Jacob Kehinde Coker, Africans received Christianity from Europeans as an alien religion, different to African's own culture and environment. He asserted that "Many Africans had been spiritually lost because of the evils of the hypocritical life of the mission churches. They led African Christians to feel Christianity was not their own religion, indigenous to the soil and that it therefore was a foreign religion."¹.

All of these religious secessionist groups were clear signs of objection to alien rule and mainly this state of inferiority aggravated by the white men. Their weakness, however, was mainly due to "the strong tendency toward endless schism"². The latter led to rivalry between the leaders of the group and immediately caused many members to form their own sects. In fact, this separation was due to elite' strong ties to their tribal lines. The latter hindered any successful attempts at unification along these movements and delayed their activities to have a strong impact in formulating a protest in the real sense of the word.

Other groups were highly characterized by their anti-imperialist attitudes and radicalism that operated in a tendency to reject all that was white-man. In 1914, a movement under a person named the Second Elijah offered sporadic resistance to the British³. Nigerians and particularly the elite did not follow its footsteps due to its aggressiveness in receiving British presence and colonialism. Along this, it can be argued that by this time the nature of protest was still in its early stages based on securing certain rights or calling for equality with the British. As such, this movement collapsed earlier because it did not find the support needed for its progress.

Orunlaism was another earlier manifestation of protest against the British. It was mainly driven by the elite. It showed a great tendency to strengthen all that was African and tried to reject British presence and its dynamics of putting Africans in an inferior position. Among its

¹ Omoyajowo, J.A, *Makers of the Church in Nigeria*, CSS Bookshops, Limited Pub. Unit, p.111

² Ibid, p.177

³ Ibid, p.177

demands were to “Scrap the imported religion ...(there can be no) political emancipation without spiritual emancipation ... Paint God as an African,...the angles as Africans,...the Devil by all means in any color than an African,...and thou shalt be saved”¹. Orunlaim presented a real transition in the way unlettered masses perceived their race. It provoked for an awareness that the elite should be proud of their being Africans. It stimulated an awareness among the elite of the usefulness of being together and its role in furthering their demands and broadening their scope of protest and participation in the region’s affairs.

Broadly speaking, religious secessionist movements presented one form of protest against British colonial rule. These religious groups were convenient that the establishment of purely African institution was the only path to religious, political, economic and cultural freedom. These newly religious bodies provided the elite with an outlet through which they could discuss issues that determined their future within the colonial world and how they could broaden the scope of their activities to reach all parts of the region. Not only these bodies widened their activities but they fueled their energies to take other steps in their protests against British rule.

These religious protests were coupled with another form of protest that called for demanding economic rights and founding avenues for the elite to participate in the region’s affairs. In fact, Lagos presented one of these places that witnessed an active participation of the elite in the social and economic life of people. These movements found great support on the part of the elite since these movements attracted many of them due to its focus on drawing a wide picture of people’s economic grievances.

2. Early Protests Movements in Lagos

By 1880’s, Lagos presented one of the most important places that showed grievances of the Western educated elite toward British presence and some of its imposed economic measures on Lagosian citizens. These responses were in part not a real opposition to the British presence,

¹ Omoyajowo, *Makers of the Church*, p177

but only an attempt to rectify certain British economic measures. The nature of these protests nearly continued till 1920 when party politics and international organizations played a major role in bringing a real shift in elite's protests and activities in the coming decades.

Taxation presented one of the most important reasons that provoked discontent. A measure was issued in 1907 and 1909. It called for government expropriation of the property of the Lagos Island. This measure was undertaken mainly to provide residences for officials¹. Both of these measures urged the elite to counteract the situation. The elite made it clear that they had to receive the same rights as the white man since they contributed to the welfare of the white man and the British empire. Herbert Heelas Macaulay, known as the father of Nigerian nationalism, led sporadic resistance against these taxes. He published a number of articles to the Lagos Daily Times criticizing government policy regarding taxation, racial discrimination and the right of people to own land. He along many other Western educated elite believed that "the dimensions of the true interests of the natives at heart are algebraically equal to the length, breadth, and depth of the white man's pocket"². Coupled with this, taxation without representation took the most of elite's concerns during the period. The Western educated elite contended that Africans' right to be represented in the colonial government would "permit them to denounce openly and fearlessly acts of misrule, abuse of power, official terrorism and nameless annoyances"³. In an editorial in the Observer, J. Bagan Benjamin, a leading exponent of elite nationalism, opined:

In the name of the whole of the Lagos community, we ask...how long will we tamely submit to taxation without representation? ... There should arise from Lagos one general cry for political freedom loud enough to reach the ears of Downing Street, if not louder still, to penetrate the Houses of Parliament⁴

A tax on water rate was imposed on January 1908. This action provoked discontent among Lagosians who saw it unfair to pay such a tax. In its application, it was intended to supply

¹ Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p.179

² Boahen, A.A and J. B. Webster, *History of West Africa*, New York: Praeger, 1970, p. 225.

³ Boniface I. Obichere, *Studies in Southern Nigerian History*, Frank Cass and Company Limited, 2005,p.113

⁴Observer, 4 December 1890, quoted in, Omu, F. *Press and Politics in Nigeria*, London: Longman,1978, p.148

money to pay loans that were generated as a result of building a water supply for Lagos. This measure showed great opposition on the part of the Lagos elite who objected the action and demanded the repealing of it as it was, according to them, intended to benefit European, rather than local citizens. John Payne Jackson, a Western educated member and a journalist, expressed his opposition to government policies, pointing out that the British were trying to impose these taxes without paying attention to locals 'economic conditions. Accordingly, this situation was in part a result of the way they were silenced and deprived of any role to take to discuss their concerns. Jackson wrote in 1905 that "The European point of view is not only given emphasis by both pen and voice but finds expression also in the direction, aim and purpose of civilized life in West Africa vociferously. On the other hand, the Native point of view is seldom voiced as is on the whole accorded but scant recognition."¹

The elite expressed their great discontent of the present situation. They contended that these measures were imposed without any negotiation and it was their duty to object such measures. They grounded their manifestation on the belief that these administrative measures were discriminatory in their nature and at the same time these measures were put on without any consent on the part of local citizens². Such measures were in part a stimulus to an awareness among the elite Lagosians who start to think of steps to be taken to change the situation. In a letter published in the African Mail, the editor commented:

what we daily feel, and every action of the present Administration justifies and deepens, is that we are exploited for the benefit of those who come to us ...The distrust that is consequent on such feeling is spreading more and more widely and nothing is done to stem or counter act it³

It was clear by this time that elite' reactions to these measures became more vigorous. They even started to work more cooperatively so that they could benefit from each other to pose strong pressure on colonial authorities. The People's Union formed in 1908 by Dr. Obasa, a

¹ Omu, Fred I. A, "*Journalism and the Rise of Nigerian Nationalism: John Payne Jackson, 1848-1915*". Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, December 1974.

² Omu, *Journalism and the Rise of Nigerian Nationalism*, p.134

³ African Mail, Feb, 1909, quoted in Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p.134

Western educated member, and Dr. Randle, a Western educated member and an active politician, and the Lagos Ancillary of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society formed in 1910 were two organizations established to voice peoples' economic grievances. These bodies agitated against the water rate and worked for letting the Western educated elite come together to have a forum to discuss current issues.

The West African Lands Commission of 1912 was another measure that put great pressure on Lagosians. This measure according to elite Lagosians was an attempt to take the right of Africans to own a land. This mechanism was applied in Northern part of the Niger Delta and in 1912 it was recommended to make into effect in the Southern part. In response to this Act, a group of Western educated Lagosians and chiefs from Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ijebu- Ode, Ilesha, and Ife were sent to claim people's rejection of the W.A.L.C.A. In fact, these deputies formed a strong barrier to the implementation of this Act due to the participation for the first time of native chiefs who with the efforts of the Western educated elite put a strong pressure on authorities to repeal this Act ¹.

Early protests in the Niger Delta and particularly Lagos colonial life as the center of elite' protests were an attempt to reclaim Niger Delta people's rights to live an honest living as partners in the colonial machinery who contributed to the progress and development of the colonial economy. Although these associations formed a great response to certain grievances, they failed to maintain their presence in the political atmosphere. Their weakness may be attributed to lack of organization or as one editor of the Nigerian Advocate put "fault for us in Nigeria is that we cannot exercise tolerance with one another, and we quarrel over things that do not count" ². Coleman further asserts that their main weakness may be attributed to "the absence of meaningful political roles for them to play, or of an arena of legitimate political

¹ Buell, *The Native Problem*, p.770-771

² Enahoro, A., *Fugitive Offender: The Story of a Political Prisoner*, London: Cassel, 1961, p.124

activity. They lacked a strong sense of purpose upon which associational development might be built”¹.

Along the influence of these early protests in shaking the stability of colonial rule, the forces of cultural nationalism and mainly Pan-African movement played an enduring influence in shaping elite awareness of building a self-image for the African race and to join these desperate people into one entity called the African nation. The Pan-African movement presented another form of protest through which the elite not only called for securing economic measures but it broadened their scope to be aware of their shared Africanity.

3. Pan-African Consciousness and Negro Identity

Pan-Africanism had an enduring influence that made Africans and particularly Niger Delta elite aware of the prejudice and the status of inferiority that was a colonial design. The Pan-African movement saw the light in the U.S.A. in the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century. It had a great impact on shaping and forming identity of Negroes in the U.S.A. and in the African colonies. Its pioneers demanded Africans to be proud of their past and to restore their self-esteem. Its main concern was to be aware of the danger of being “absorbed into another race, physically, mentally, and spiritually.”² Blacks were greatly influenced by the way Europeans behaved and this in turn, according to some Pan –African leaders, would weaken African’s relation to their homeland, culture, and the past. This state of mind was common among the African Western educated elite who saw it unnecessary to imitate Europeans blindly and tried to reshape their identity to become more African in taste. This, in turn, would build new image of looking at their race in a new and promising status.

The Niger Delta elite had now a new vision of their race, a new interpretation that placed them in a position equal to that of the white man. They contended that they had all the means to take the lead in their affairs and that their position was so important that placed them to be

¹ Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p.182

²Schramm, Katharina, *African Homecoming: Pan-African Ideology and Contested Heritage*, Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, California ,2010, p.42

the one who decide on the nation's affairs. As Mbonu Ojike, a Western educated member and a Pan-Africanist claimed that "It is idle to think of any aspect of African society as a "passing culture". This community is too stable to be unproductive, too dynamic to be static, too dignified to be unimpressive, too African to be Western."¹.

Now they had all the ideological basis that made them proud of their African identity and be able to overthrow all the negative images introduced within the coming of British colonial rule. They necessitated that defining an African identity was an urgent matter for them to accomplish. John Payne Jackson, a Liberian-born, journalist and an influential Lagosian Western educated elite, commented that the "attempt to develop Africa on European lines can only end in failure.... The African, if he wants to progress, must go on his own lines"². Their main grievance was to find a balance between these two extremes mainly "race and civilization"³. They proclaimed that European civilization was that of revolutionary effects to their lives but at the same time they denounced for the fallacy of the claim that the African race was inferior. Their main concern was to look at African identity with pride and make all unlettered masses share this feeling⁴.

Niger Delta Elite potential was to argue why African culture should be eliminated with the advance of colonial rule. This was to say that the African culture had number of characteristics that placed it in parallel with other European cultures. In this regard, Jackson further asserted:

In the work of elevating Africans, foreign teachers have always proceeded with their work on the assumption that the Negro or African is in every one of its normal susceptibilities an inferior race, and that it is needful in everything to give a foreign model to copy; no account has been made of our peculiarities, our languages enriched by the traditions of centuries, our- parables many of them the quintessence of family and national histories⁵.

¹Gloria, Chuku, *The Igbo Intellectual Tradition: Creative Conflict in African and African Diasporic Thought*, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2013, p. 92

² LWR, 21 May 1904, quoted Michael J.C. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos, Macmillan, London and Africana*, New York, 1979, p. 49.

³ Ibid, p.47

⁴ Zachemuk, *Intellectual Life*, p.151

⁵ James Johnson, quoted in, George, J.O., *Historical Notes on the Yoruba Country and its Tribes*, Lagos, 1895, p.48

This feeling fueled their activities and enhanced their ambitions to form an intellectual appeal to replace all these negative images about Africa and Africans. This revolutionary spirit or as Ajayi in his “Christian Missions in Nigeria:1841-1891 ” called it “minor renaissance”¹ was a characteristic of the late decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The Niger Delta elite started changing their names into African names. Hence Edward Macaulay became Kitoyi Ajasa and Jacob H. Samuel became Adeg boyega Edun. Along this, the elite were eager to wear African dress. Thus, in 1889, Lagos elite decided to wear African dress. There was also a tendency to encourage the use of Yoruba language in writing, speaking and music. By this time, it was apparent that Yoruba publications increased ².There was a call to encourage the teaching of Yoruba language. In 1908, the Egba United Government accepted the teaching of Yoruba History and culture.³

The elite were eager to respond to these negative images put by Europeans. Samuel Johnson, a Western educated member, a historian and an influential Pan-African leader, published “History of the Yoruba”. He called for progress towards realizing the dream of a united Africa full of freedom, liberty and justice. He was immersed in propagating for the widespread of these ideas and wanted to make Pan-African consciousness a reality to all Niger Delta people. J.O. George’s “Historical Notes on the Yoruba Country and its Tribes” was also another influential book that praised African culture and history. He praised the richness of the Yoruba culture and greatly dismissed the idea of inferiority. He denounced that “Yoruba people may not be properly called real savages; they are not quiet ignorant of the elements and marks of civilization”⁴. J.A.O. Payne published his “Table of Principal Events in Yoruba History” that greatly glamorized African life style and history. In fact, these appeals enhanced their activities and made their appeal for social justice convenient and even they won the sympathy of other African elite who supported their cause.

¹ Ajayi, J.P.A., *Christian Missions in Nigeria. 1841-1891*, Longman, London, 1966, p.269

² Zachemuk, *Intellectual Life*, p150

³ Ibid, p 152

⁴ George, J.O, *Historical Notes*, p.63

The emergence of the press in the late nineteenth century accelerated Niger Delta elite activities to share their Pan-African perspective to the masses. The Western educated elite saw the press as an institution that they could use to realize their dreams of African identity and dignity. Through the press, they were able to encourage a sense of racial unity among the illiterate masses. Thus right from the 1880's, the idea of commemoration of "respectable people" was widely shared among presses of the time¹. It was believed that these people of African descent gave a lot to the African race and that their activities should not be forgotten. In 1885, the King's Memorial Fund was organized in the memory of Nathaniel Thomas King, a Sierra Leonean doctor, who was the first African to qualify as medicine in west Africa. Other memorials were held in the memory of both James Johnson and Edward Wilmot Blyden in 1919 and 1912 respectively. This commemoration was used by the elite as a process of bringing pride in African personalities and their contributions to humanity.

In Blyden's memorial, Sapara Williams, a Western educated member and an active politician, had this to say about Blyden:

so that future generation may know the man who has written and done so much for the general advancement of his people, the exponent of the true spirit of African nationality and manhood and also taught the people how to develop on their own lines of thought and preserve their national custom which are innocent and useful²

The press was also an active agent in the propagation of African unity. The elite used presses to lament for African's lack of unity. Owen Macaulay in the "Eagle and Lagos Critic" opined that there was a lack of "Union in one general interest, social sympathy, companionship, fellowship and company between distinct elements of society"³. A series of articles were published between 1882 and 1915 in this context. The Lagos Times published "Combination for Action: a Want in Lagos" that endorsed an appeal for racial and social unity. Another article in the Standard entitled "A Felt Want "Union is Strength" was published to call for establishing

¹ Nozomi Sawada, *The Educated Elite and Early Associational Life in Early Lagos Newspapers: In Search of Unity for the Progress of Society*, University of Birmingham, 2012, p. 137

² Nigerian Chronicle, 6 March 1914, quoted in Nozomi, *Early Associational Life*, p. 159

³ The Eagle and Lagos Critic, 28 July 1883, quoted in, Nozomi, *Early Associational Life*, p. 110.

friendly societies and trade associations that would work for African's unity and partnership. In 1908, the United Native Progress Society was established in Lagos. Among the Western educated elite that made its ideas into effect were Dr. Obasa, J. W. Vaughan and J. B. Olukolu. This body organized a series of lectures that took the African race, history and culture as its foremost priority ¹.

The elite had also assumed their great support to the aspirations of the Pan-African leaders in London during the first Pan-African Conference. James Johnson had clearly showed his pride in being a representative of the Negro Race. He asserted that this was "the beginning of a union I long hoped for"². In the Lagos Standard, John Payne Jackson appealed for the elite to join the movement. He made appeal "to members of the race the world over to extend their hearty co-operation"³. In 1912, Moses da Rocha, a Lagosian Western educated member, had assumed membership in the Negro Society for Historical Research in New York ⁴. Thomas Jackson stressed the necessity of giving support to Garviest movement as the only source of elevating Africans from their backward status. He reminded Africans: "that our brethren in the United States and West Indies are our advanced guard on the outpost of civilization, that it is to them we have to look in the near future for guidance and help."

For Majola Agbebi, this was the right time for Africans to know the African personality to build their "toga of manhood"⁵. James Johnson advocated that Pan-African consciousness was the only source of emancipation. He retreated "As we had together been Brethren through a common slave condition, so we are today Brethren through a common Emancipation."⁶.

¹ Nozomi, *Early Associational Life*, p 114

² James Johnson's speech in Report of the Pan-African Conference, London, quoted in Imanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, Methuen, London, 1974, p. 185.

³ Imanuel, *The Pan-African Movement*, p 198

⁴ Akinsola Akiwowo, "The Place of Mojola Agbebi in the African Nationalist Movements: 1890-1917," *Journal of Phylon* 26, 2, Summer, 1965, p. 137

⁵ Agbebi in *Sierra Leone Weekly News*. 5 March 1892, quoted in Ayandele, *African Historical studies*, Cass, London, 1979, p. 123.

⁶ James Johnson, in *Sierra Leone Weekly News*. 23 January 1915, quoted in Ayodele Langley.J, "Chief Sam's African Movement and Race Consciousness in West Africa," *Journal of Phylon* 32, 2, Summer, 1971, p. 172.

It is convenient to say that the activities of Niger Delta elite during this time was centered on propagating for the widespread ideas of Pan-African consciousness and it was even urged that these ideas should be a basic for each African to make a strong tie to his past, history, and present challenges. The elite had realized that to achieve modernization and civilization they had to not remain as sources of exploitation to the British but to join Western knowledge and the “African personality” to be genuine agents of civilization and race redemption. These ideas were an important theme in elite’ protests to reconstruct their identity. In fact, Pan-African consciousness provided the context for the elite to understand their race and re-build their Africinity to mean one people, one race and a universal Negro empire.

Conclusion

The British educational policies marked one of the most important changes brought with colonial rule. These educational policies took creating an elite agency as its first objective. The elite were not only agents of colonial rule but also the catalyst of absolute change. They provided the context for systematic attempts to form protest against British religious, economic and cultural plans. Their protest was revolutionary in the religious, economic and most importantly the cultural life of their people. The African personality was an important facet for their notion of national identity. Nigeria national identity in this respect was incorporated into a whole entity called Africa rather than seeing it as an inspiration for a specific national identity. National identity and nationhood were to be identified with the way the elite restored the pride of the African race, in the way they re-constructed the African image to the British and their efforts to propagate the richness of African culture, past and present. This is not to say that this type of protest would last for long and it was within the coming decades that elite Nigerians would identify new visions to look at their national identity within a West African perspective and then within a narrower scope that placed Nigeria at the core of a national identity.

Chapter Three: Elite Nationalism and the Discourse of a Nigerian National Identity

Introduction

Pan-African consciousness deemed large in Nigerian elite search for the real meaning of nationhood. Their activities were centered on defining their Africanity. By 1920, however, the activities of the West African intelligentsia formed an important facet of the Nigerian elite nationalism that called for a shared Pan-West African identity. Along the influence of the West African intelligentsia, the elite ethnic diversity presented a real obstacle to forming a national identity. In fact, after 1924, elite' activities were centered on defining their place within the Nigerian nation. The latter was a body that placed them together, made them aware of the challenges and prospects of having a shared national identity and developed a sense of belonging to one nation called Nigeria. This chapter addresses elite Nigerian discourses of forming a national identity. It is an attempt to show how the elite participated in a wide spectrum of a West African nationalism and its role in shaping their vision of a nation and national identity. Along this, this chapter will trace the way the elite overcome ethnic diversity and how they approached a real recognition of a Nigerian national identity as a monitoring dynamic for their protests.

I. The Intelligentsia and West African Nationalism

By 1920, the idea of a political movement joining together the four British West African colonies (Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia) found great support on the part of the West African intelligentsia. For the Nigerian intelligentsia, this was a time of transition from seeing their protests as part of a shared Pan-African identity into a new form of protest that sought to reclaim their people's economic, social and cultural rights through developing a Pan-West African identity. In fact, racial discrimination, economic depression and unemployment

for school graduates were all factors that stimulated the activities of the elite ¹. Their activities for the coming years centered on constructing ties with their African counterparts in the British West African colonies to form a Pan-West African community. In this way, Pan-Africanism gave way to the idea of a West African nationalism that placed the interests of the four British West African colonies as one.

This section examines how the Nigerian intelligentsia incorporated their activities to merge under the banner of a West African nationalism. Emphasis is given to the emergence of the National Congress of British West Africa. It is an attempt to discuss the nature of this body, its objectives and its vision of a West African nationalism. It is further an attempt to show how the elite conceived its ideas and how they responded to it. In this way, the emphasis is to give an account of the reactions stipulated by the elite to its policies and their attempts to understand being incorporated into a body that placed their Nigerian national identity within a West African perspective.

1- The Intelligentsia and the National Congress

Greatly influenced by the example of the Indian Congress Party and largely motivated by the activities of Pan-Africanists abroad, the intelligentsia formed a great awareness of creating a body that would work to develop a Pan-West African identity. The National Congress of British West Africa endorsed for bringing this intelligentsia to form new type of protest against colonial rule. The participation of Nigerian elite in this international body would come out with serious issues regarding the validity of its claims, the place of the Nigerian elite within it and most importantly how this body conceived the idea of nationhood and national identity.

The idea of the N.C.B.W.A. was first introduced in 1914 by Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford, a Ghanaian lawyer; Dr. R.A. Savage, a Nigerian Western educated elite; and F.W. Dove of Sierra Leone. The idea was first realized when in 1918 a call from Ghanaian Western educated

¹ Zachernuk, *Intellectual Life*, p232

elite was sent to the Western educated elite of British West Africa to attend a conference held to discuss some of the parameters that would allow for cooperation between these colonies and to discuss measures for opening avenues for African's participation in colonial government. In fact, until the first conference took place the intelligentsia attempted to propagate for its ideas to make the elite of other British West African colonies follow in their steps and show great support to its realization in the coming years.

The aims of the Congress' movement centered on finding a body that would join the four British West African colonies to work cooperatively. Its leaders demanded that they had to promote the economic, social, political and cultural well-being of their people. This was due to, according to Hayford, the "one touch of nature that has made all of West Africa kin"¹. In this respect, Casely Hayford clearly stated the main objectives of the body. He affirmed that the movement should cater for

the promotion of the common interests of the British West African Dependencies politically, economically, educationally, socially, and otherwise; and to promote and effect unity of purpose and of action among them; to establish Universities, Colleges, Academies and Schools for the racial education and culture of the people; and to promote commercial and industrial intercourse of the people and to work for better conditions generally in all British West Africa.²

In fact, the pioneering leaders did not call for the destruction of the existing colonial structure, but they demanded the modification of laws that degraded West African's right as agents of colonial rule³. It was alleged that the Congress objectives shall not quarrel with government interests and hence they should work hand in hand with government officials to realize their demands. It was, thus, resolved:

The aims of the Congress shall be to aid in the development of the political institutions of British West Africa under the Union Jack, so as to eventually to take her place beside the sister nations of the Empire, and, in time, to ensure within her borders the Government of the people, by the people, for the people⁴.

¹ Magnus J. Sampson, *West African Leadership: Public Speeches Delivered by J. E. Casely Hayford*, A, H; Stock well, 1980, p98

² Ibid, p.99

³ Boahen, A. Adou, *Africa Under Colonial Domination, 1880-1935*, James Curry, California, UNESCO, 1990, p 273

⁴ Magnus, *West African Leadership*, p99

The Congress' movement introduced an economic policy that promoted the development of native industries and the creation of economic institutions. Dr. Savage, a Lagosian Western educated elite and one of the supporters of the movement, pressed the importance of forming economic institutions that would work for the development of the four West African dependencies. Savage clearly believed that

.... the time has come for.... the formation of a Corporation, to be known as the British West African Co-operative Association....to found Banks, promote shipping facilities, establish Co-operative stores, and produce buying centers, in such wise as to inspire and maintain a British West African National Economic Development ¹.

Economic co-operation could be achieved if there existed a union of the four West African dependencies. It was the only method that would allow West Africans to exploit their economic resources so that they could benefit from colonial development and not merely remain as sources of exploitation ².

In its introduction, the idea did not find support among the Western educated elite in Lagos. Their rejection of the idea was based on the belief that unity among these colonies was impossible and that struggle would emerge between the founding leaders. Olusanya in his "The Lagos Branch of the National Congress of British West Africa", observed:

There were those who honestly believed that the whole idea was utopia, that there was no common ground for unity of action on the part of the four colonies and that, in any case, the differences and jealousies amongst the peoples of the four territories would make the establishment of such a body difficult ³.

In another editorial in the Times of Nigeria, Dr. Randle, a Nigerian Western educated member, clearly described his opinion toward the movement. He affirmed that

it seemed hardly likely even to the most sanguine supporters, that it should progress beyond the academic stage –long standing inter-tribal dissensions, and inter-colonial antipathies were obstacles powerful enough to damper the zeal of any enthusiast and that almost superhuman effort alone could surmount ⁴.

¹ Kimble, A, *A Political History of Ghana*, University Press, 1983 p384

² Hopkin, A.G, "*Economic Aspects of Political Movements in Nigeria and in the Gold Coast 1918-1939*", The Journal of African History, no 07, 1966, p.133-52.

³ Hopkin, *Economic Aspects*, p.322

⁴ The Times of Nigeria, April 12-19,1920, quoted in Olusanya, G, "*The Lagos Branch of the National Congress of British West Africa*", Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 1968 p 322

Accordingly, elite' orientations toward their respective colonies and their ethnic and tribal lines delayed any active progress toward making this body into effect. Their main concern was to quarrel over things that did not matter and how they could appoint members to represent them to colonial authorities. The presence of all these opinions made the idea of a West African conference very difficult. It was even alleged that thinking of joining the four colonies "seemed a remote possibility"¹.

Even though there were many obstacles in the face of making the idea into effect, there were many signs that enhanced Western educated elite's cause and challenged them to make it into effect. In an editorial in the Lagos Weekly Record, Thomas Horatio Jackson, a Western educated member and an active politician, addressed and commented that the glory that the Indian Congress had attained was only one step closer to the West African colonies if they supported the idea of a conference.

For we have seen what spectacular progress the Indian National Congress had been able to achieve, how by giving articulate expression to Indian aspirations in a tone of increasing strength and firmness it has succeeded in forcing India the forefront of imperial politics and has also won a place for her by direct representation in the future deliberations of the British imperial conference ².

This glory, according to him, was only attainable if all sects of the educated community supported the aspirations of the pioneering leaders and started to make its appeals as part of their broad program of progress toward changing elite vision of their relation to each other and the future tasks to be taken to manifest their efforts to work for the benefit of all. John Payne Jackson also shared Thomas Horatio's vision of a West African unity. He clearly stressed the necessity of developing a national unity among the British West African dependencies. He strongly denounced that it was the right time to construct a Pan-West African identity.

West Africans discovered today what the Indians...discovered 35 years ago, that, placed as they were under the controlling influence of a foreign power, it was essential to their well-being that they should make a common cause and develop a national unity...³

¹ Olusanya, G, "*The Lagos Branch of the National Congress*, p. 375

² The Lagos weekly Record 7 & 14 July 1917, quoted in Olusanya, *The Lagos Branch*, p 323

³ Lagos Weekly Record, April, 10, 1920, quoted in Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p. 185

A committee consisting of prominent Western educated Lagosians who supported the idea was formed¹. This committee² worked for popularizing the idea among the Western educated elite in Nigeria. Andrew Thomas, a Western educated member and one of the supporters of the movement, published nearly 1500 copies in both English and Yoruba to let people know more about the idea of a West African unity³. In doing so and in order to find more support of the movement in the interior, a number of branches were formed. Branches were established at Ebutte Metta, Ibadan, Calabar, Buguma, Abeokuta, Ilesha, Bonny, Ijebu-Ode, and Ijebu Rome. Among its presidents were: J.G, Campbell, R. Antus Williams, Rev. Amakiri⁴. Along this, series of lectures were held to make the idea more known among the elite. Adeyoe Deniga, J.B. Adebayo and J.B. Losi held a number of lectures to support the movement. Nearly 200 to 300 people attended these lectures⁵.

On 11 March 1920, the National Congress first conference was operating at Accra. Deniga and Campbell were chosen to represent Nigeria at Accra. Adeniyi Olugbile represented the Ebute Metta committee and Prince Ephraim Bassey Duke and Essien Offiong Essien represented the Calabar committee⁶. Little attention was shown by the Western educated elite in Lagos while the Congress was operating. This was due to the fact the Western educated elite were still apathetic of involving themselves in West African affairs rather than thinking of local politics and its effects on their lives. In *The Times of Nigeria*, J. A. Oshodi, a Western educated elite, had observed that "It seems as if the educated Native at Lagos sinks the national importance of a British West African Conference below the level of self, and all that concerns him always is why should I not come first? If not, nothing was done"⁷.

¹ Campbell, J.G, "*The Truth about the Local Nigerian Branch of the British West African Conference*"*The Lagos Weekly Record*, July 10, 1920, quoted in Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p325

² The committee consisted of: J.A.Oshodi, A.Ade, Oshodi, L.A, Cardoso, Victor,E. Campbell, Dada Adeshigbin, J.A, Fashanu, J.A, White, J. Alesh, Williams, J.Osho-Davies, Philip Coker, J.K.Coker, S.Ade. Doherty, Ben Joseph, T.F.Olukutun, D.B. Oshuntolu, J.B.Losi, I.A. Cole, R.A. Williams, Rev. Amakiri, Rev. G.A. Oke. Rev, A.O. Ijaoye, J. Pitan, Rev. D. Epega and Rev. Adekoye.

³ Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p325

⁴ Ibid, p325

⁵ Campbell, *The British West African Conference*, p 252

⁶ Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p 326

⁷ *The Times of Nigeria*, 22 March 1920, quoted in Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p 327

And in a stronger tone, he appealed for the Western educated elite to look at the idea of a conference with more interest. He continued

Wake up, Lagos! Wake up, Nigeria! there is the first session at Accra going on today of the British West African Conference. Rally round the noble movement; take a lively interest in its proceedings; and for once, if never before, bury the spirit of selfishness and pride, and fall in, fall in with the march of progress to the glorious goal of race freedom and race redemption ¹.

This is to justify that the movement toward believing in the idea of a West African nation started to see the light and that there were many steps to be taken to bring the activities and the aspirations of the Congress movement into more evaluation on the part of the elite.

When the Nigerian delegates returned to Nigeria, another meeting was held in Lagos on 16 October 1920 to discuss some of the resolutions passed at the first conference. Among its members were Dr. Savage, Dr. Oyejola, Patriarch J. Campbell, Adeoye Deniga, J. K. Coker, J. B. Losi, Adedejii, Ishola, L. A. Cardoso, Ogunlaye, J. Osho-Davies, Oki, Karimu Kotun, Alhaji Davies, Chas Blaize, Abudu Ramonu Aranmoletiesho, Aboudo Olori, James Aleshinloye Williams, Philip J. Koker ². During this meeting, the Western educated elite passed a number of resolutions including their great support to the congress movement and its decisions regarding cooperation and unity. It was resolved that the present committee was in charge of conducting the congress activities in Nigeria and had scrutiny over all branches and their activities to promote the congress ideas and plans ³. It clearly showed the readiness of the elite to support the ideas of the N.C.B.W.A. and asked for steps to be taken to popularize the idea among people. In doing so, another resolution was passed by Ogunlaye that called for collecting money to support the operation of the branches in Nigeria⁴.

Still, the idea of a successful West African unity was under pressure. There were many forces that tried to eradicate its progress on the grounds that Patriarch J. G Campbell and Professor Deniga were not able to present Nigeria at Accra. Others went further to struggle over who first

¹ Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p.,327

² Nigerian Pioneer, 29 October 1920, quoted in Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p 328

³ Nigerian Pioneer, 29 October 1920, quoted in Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p.328

⁴ Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p 328

introduced the idea of a West African conference. This generated a type of hostility between Savage and Randle and immediately led Randle's supporters to form the Reform Club to be as a medium to attack Dr. Savage's supporters. Addressing the lack of sufficient leaders to carry on the work of the movement, Dr. Randle opined that "It is the gross mismanagement and reckless assumption of powers not granted that had alienated the bulk of the public of Lagos from the movement"¹. It was clear that progress towards any form of unity among the Western educated elite was hindered by the way the elite looked at each other's role in the body. This was evident in one editorial by the Times of Nigeria. Brimah Igbo, a Western educated Lagosian and one of the supporters of the movement, wrote as follows:

It is the common knowledge of patriotic Africans, be they Christian, Mohammedan or Pagan, that the greatest hindrance to the carrying out successfully of any scheme initiated by the West African Native is disunity and mistrust to each other. This is the cause of all our troubles and trials. This has caused the ruin of many a good cause and the wrecking of many a noble and patriotic scheme².

This is to say that progress toward a real realization of a West African unity was a hard task for the Western educated community since unity required their cooperation, willingness and their great efforts to work for the benefit of all. Antagonism of this type clearly put pressure on the progress of the movement and delayed its activities to reach all parts of the four West African dependencies.

Not only the movement suffered internal divisions among its members, British officials also showed their hostility to the Congress' activities. Sir Hugh Clifford had attacked fiercely the Congress and its members. On December 29th, 1920, he described the congress's leaders as

a self-selected...Whose eyes are fixed, not upon African native history or tradition or policy..., but upon political theories evolved by Europeans to fit a wholly different set of circumstances, arising out of a wholly different environment of peoples who have arrived at a wholly different civilization³.

¹ Nigerian Pioneer, 20 October 1920, quoted in Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p 329

² The Times of Nigeria, 10 May 1920, quoted in Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p. 330

³ Address to the Nigerian Council, Dec 29, 1920 (typed copy), Macaulay Papers, quoted in Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p.193

Clifford clearly stated that the congress members were unable to hold such claims as uniting West Africa. He dismissed the idea of a West African unity on the grounds that these people were still not prepared to apply ideas which were new to them and were originally brought by Europeans. British Official opposition to the Congress was grounded on several reasons having in common with how officials perceived the idea of a self-government, patriotism, nationality, and nation. They were of the belief that any measures taken to develop any form of self-government were out of question because self-government was only given to “self-contained and mutually independent Native States”. They further denounced that any idea of bringing these four units into one mutually cooperate body was a matter of danger to British presence and any discussion of such matters was forbidden ¹.

By and large, it could be argued that due to hostility showed by the Western educated elite and British officials that the idea of a Pan-West African unity did not have great impact on Nigerian political life. The significance of the movement lied in its role in bringing political aspirations of the Western educated West Africans to the fore. Along this, this movement provided the context for forming political parties that clearly endorsed the Congress’s ideas as its own. The Nigerian National Democratic Party was formed by J.E. Shyngle who was among the Nigerian delegates to Accra in the first conference of the Congress. Both the N.N.D.P. and the Union of Young Nigerians showed in their constitution a support for the Congress’s ideas and purposes ². What is striking from this analysis of the behavior of the elite toward the movement was their antagonism, disunity, selfishness and inability to cooperate which would characterize their activities for the coming years and let their activities to merge under ethnic and tribal affiliations.

¹ Olusanya, G, “*The Lagos Branch of the National Congress*, p.194

² Olusunya, *The Lagos Branch*, p 333

II. The Elite and Nigerian National Identity after 1924

By 1924, the Congress movement collapsed in Nigeria. There had been a resurgence in elite activities that took local politics as its first concern. This coincided with the emergence of party politics that played a major role in elite activities for the coming years. The formation of these political parties, however, was overwhelmed by a desire to secure ethnic interests. This caused divisions among the Western educated elite who worked to let their parties be as a medium to speak about their ethnic interests. The emergence of both Yoruba and Ibo strands in elite nationalism was only an example of how ethnic affiliations hindered any real step to unity among the Western educated elite. It further caused hostility and mistrust among the Western educated elite and increased their rivalry to form ethnic unions. Along these divisions, the elite were convinced that unity required their cooperation and that only if they overcome ethnic barrier and find a real meaning of nationhood that they could achieve their economic, social and cultural interests. This was apparent in a statement by Kitoyi Ajasa who affirmed that “We have a Yoruba nation, and a Hausa nation, but so far we have no Nigerian nation”¹. The latter would bring them together and made their appeals had more strength to secure their economic and social rights from the British.

1. The Elite and the Question of Ethnic Diversity

Even though there were many promising signs on elite activities to demand their rights, their politics after 1924 was highly characterized by a tendency to think of national identity in terms of ethnic lines rather than formulating a view of Nigeria as one entity. As such, the elite vision of nationhood was fragmented along ethnic and tribal blocks. This vision was an apparent phenomenon of the intellectual’s appeal for social justice and freedom. Hence, Coleman advocated that “ the tendency to think of nationality in terms of race or tribe, rather than in

¹ Davidson, Basil, *Modern Africa: A Social and Political History*, Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York, 2013, p. 36

terms of an artificial territorial unit under British control, was characteristic of the early exponents of nationalism”¹.

Ethnicity in this regard determined the activities of the elite and placed their decisions under the influence of their ethnic origins. Nationality in this respect was placed as a secondary concern for the elite. In *Constitutionalism in Nigeria: A Conceptual Analysis of Ethnicity and Politics*, Kalu opined that “most Nigerians irrespective of their nationalist claims have the tendency to first identify with their ethnic roots before identifying themselves as Nigerians”². Their activities were fueled in the first place by ethnic backgrounds and their decisions were overwhelmed by placing ethnic interests above national ones.

The term Nigeria, according to the elite, was only a British creation. The elite did not believe in the idea of a Nigerian nation and thought that they were still distinct from each other due to their different ethnic origins. They even claimed that any attempt at unification was impossible due to the strong belief on the distinctiveness of their society that clearly supported ethnic affiliations. Obafemi Awolowo, a Western educated member and a prominent politician, clearly explained the present situation.

Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no “Nigerians” in the same sense as there are “English”, “Welsh”, or “French”. The word “Nigerian” is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not ³

Accordingly, the Western educated members strongly advocated for supporting this feeling of belongingness to their ethnic origins and never saw themselves as one group. Their beliefs, religion, customs and traditions were apparent signs that obliged them to show loyalty and respect to their ethnic origins. In this respect, Abubaker Tafawa Balewa, a Nigerian nationalist and a prominent statesman, clearly endorsed this vision.

¹ Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p.210

² Kalu, A. Kelechi., “*Constitutionalism in Nigeria: A Conceptual Analysis of Ethnicity and Politics*”, West Africa Review, Issue no. 6,2004, p9

³ Abbot, Charles. W, *Hometown Associations and Ethnic Unions in Twentieth century Nigeria: A Geographical and Historical Interpretation*, UMI microform, Diss, July 2006, p.103

Since 1914 the British government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their backgrounds, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any sign of willingness to unite... Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country ¹

This orientation created an identity for the way Nigerian politics was organized and shaped patterns for looking at the future of Nigeria along many ethnic lines. A number of ethnic unions were established to further the development of ethnic interests. By 1925, the Ibo Union was formed. It merely worked to enlarge the participation of Ibos in the colonial government and increasing educational facilities for them. According to Francis Ibiam, one of the Nigerian delegates to Accra and founder of the union, this union was established to unite all Ibos and create a Pan-Ibo identity. Unity was crucial to the advancement of all the Ibos.

Brethren, this is the day and the hour when the Ibos of Nigeria should rally together...and sink all differences- geographical, intellectual, moral and religious, and unite under the banner of our great objective- the tribal unity, cooperation and progress of all the Ibos ²

Cooperation, according to him, would make them stronger and would further their appeals to call for their rights. Education, along many other demands, was given a paramount importance since the advancement of any community depended on the rate of education attained by its people. Hence, the Ibo Union urged all Ibos to be educated. It was alleged that "...education is the only real agent that will give rebirth to the dying embers of the Ibo national zeal...It will be the means to free the Ibos from the throes of both mental and moral thralldom and I see no better place to start the work of reunion than Lagos"³. Accordingly, five secondary schools were built in Iboland in order to let all Ibo children acquire education. This was followed by the establishment of a national bank to the Iboland ⁴.

Other Ibo Western educated members went further to clamor that only if the Ibos were given authority that Nigeria would lead its people to the economic, social and cultural emancipation.

¹ Adeleye, A, "Amalgamation of 1914: Was it a mistake?" Vanguard, Lagos, 2012, p.95

² Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, the University of Wisconsin Press, 1976, p. 463

³ The Nigerian Daily Telegraph, Feb. 3, 1926, quoted in Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism* p. 340.

⁴ Ibid, p.340

It was alleged that due to their strong cultural background and their education that the Ibos deserved autonomy of the socio-economic affairs of the Nigeria people. These held beliefs increased the work of Ibo Western educated elite to further their activities to bring all sects of the Ibo Western educated elite to support their cause and develop associations that would work to unite Ibos ¹.

The development of a Pan-Ibo identity raised the hostility of the Western educated elite and led each group according to his ethnic origins to establish organizations to develop his interests. A Pan-Yoruba identity was developed among the elite of a Yoruba descent. The Union of Ijebu Youngmen, the Yoruba Union, the Egbado Union, the Ekiti National Union, the Ife Union, the Ijaiye National Society, the Offa Descendant's Union, the Ogbomoso Progressive Union, the Owo Progressive Union and the Oyo Progressive Union were all established in 1924 to develop Yoruba People's interests ².

These associations helped in creating a common interest among all Yoruba elite and called for the creation of a Yoruba nationalism. It was alleged that only through the cooperation of Yoruba people that people would foster unity. Adeoye Deniga, a Western educated member of a Yoruba descent, explaining the necessity of unity among Yoruba people. He affirmed that Yoruba associations were established "to accelerate the emergence of a virile modernized and efficient Yoruba state with its own individuality... and to unite the various clans and tribes in Yorubaland and generally create and actively foster the idea of a single nationalism throughout Yorubaland"³

This was coupled with a clear intention of opening educational facilities for all Yoruba children. Here emphasis was given to the attainment of secondary and higher education for all Yoruba boys and girls. Samuel Akisanya, a Western educated member of a Yoruba descent,

¹ Azikiwe, Nnamdi, *Liberia in World politics*, A.H. Stockwell, 1931, p.256

² Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p.343

³Sklar, R, *Nigerian Political Parties*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, p.68

was one of the exponents of this idea. He affirmed that their objective was “to plan for the improvement of educational facilities...especially by means of scholarships awards by the society...for the pursuit of secondary and universal education by Yoruba boys and girls”¹

The maintenance of traditional Yoruba authorities was given a paramount importance. The protection of Yoruba chiefs and any efforts to develop and sustain their authority was regarded as a tool for the development of Yoruba interests in large. This was achieved when all Yoruba chiefs accommodated themselves to the new context of modernization and civilization brought by colonial rule. In this respect, Obafemi Awolowo advocated that their role should be “to recognize and maintain the monarchical and other similar institutions of Yorubaland, to plan for their complete enlightenment and democratization, to acknowledge the leadership of Yoruba Obas”². Statements of this sort tended to bring all sects of the Yoruba population to work together and open new prospects for them to unite and cooperate to bring the aspirations of the Yoruba Western educated elite into reality.

Along these divisions, fragmentation along Hausa-Fulani and Southern Western educated elite revealed how ethnicity influenced the Western educated elite. Different cultures, religion and rate of development were all reasons that raised hostility among the Western educated groups. Speaking about this relationship, one writer clearly described the hostility of the Hausa-Fulani Western educated elite to the Southerners. He opined that “So widely separated were they by distant and by point of view that they would not unite to face what was then a common danger in their minds- the approach of British sovereignty”³. Antagonism of this type increased the tension among the Western educated elite and it even provoked hostility among ordinary northerners and southerners. Hatred of such type was apparent on the rate of discrimination encountered by both groups ⁴.

¹Sklar, R, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p69

² Ibid, p69

³ Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p 323

⁴ Ibid, p. 360

Attempts from both sides were deployed of the necessity to give in to the idea of being separate and distinct. This was an overall realization of the distinctiveness of the Nigerian society and the impossibility of bringing all its elements into one. Balewa explained this vision, pointing out that the idea of a Nigeria nation was only a mockery and the Western educated elite would remain hostile toward each other. He retreated that “Many Nigerians deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one...particularly some of the press people...This is wrong. I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial...”¹. There can be little doubt that this amount of hostility not only divided the Western educated elite but it caused divisions among people of all regions.

A growing body of literature that focused on the history of ethnic groups saw the light. G.I. Amangala “Short History of Ijaw (1924)”, Ajayi Kolawole Ajisafe “The Laws and Customs of Yoruba People (1926)”, Jacob U, Egharevba, “A Short History of Benin (1926)”, Adebessin Folarin “The Laws and Customs of Egbaland (1925)”, and Said Hajji, “History of Sokoto (1926)” were all publications in this concern. A first glimpse at these works suggested the way these authors glamorized their past histories and Africanity. But in fact, these works raised tension between the Western educated elite due to its content. A book written by an Efik educated member raised hostility between Ibibio and Efik Western educated members due to the way the author described how the Ibibio people were once slaves of the Efik. Writing of this type raised tension and closed the door for any negotiations between the Western educated elite concerning their protests against British rule ².

By and Large, Ethnic politics was an important facet of the 1920’s elite’ protests. Even though the Western educated elite were eager to secure political participation and economic needs of their countrymen, their attitudes and orientations were greatly influenced by ethnocentric sentiments. Accordingly, many ethnic associations emerged to glamorize the idea

¹ Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p.361

² Ibid, p 328

of ethnicity within politics. Their activities were highly concentrated on demanding and securing certain measures for their ethnic groups. It was due to this background that the elite members found it difficult to negotiate with each other to form strong pillars to their protests. This, in turn, led them to think of other ways that might lead to unity. The latter, they believed to be only attainable if the Western educated elite along their ethnic loyalties started to think of forming a shared national identity that placed all these ethnic loyalties apart and made the idea of a Nigerian nation to the fore. Nigerian national identity was the only expression of the political, social, economic and cultural emancipation. The boundary of a nation would work for the interests of all. It would re-shape elite nationalism to lead the elite along their illiterate masses to the real sense of nationhood. It was only through supporting the idea of a Nigerian nation that elite nationalism would provoke real protest against colonial rule.

2. Developing a Nigerian National Identity after 1926

By 1926, Nigerians did not see themselves as “Nigerians”. The elite believed that the boundaries put by colonial rule were a matter of fact and that it was their task to make ties with their ethnic partners in the region, in general, to be aware of their shared identity. In this respect, elite nationalism at the time focused on developing an ethnic identity as its first concern. Their protest, in fact, appealed for the Western educated elite to join together to form a shared ethnic identity that placed all their ethnic interests within the same concern¹. However, after 1926, a vision espoused the minds and intellects of the elite. The call for a shared Nigerian national identity deemed large in their task of forming protests. Not only the elite voiced their discontent against British economic measures, but the elite embarked on a campaign for letting illiterate masses be aware of a shared national identity that bound them together under the name of a nation. Nationhood and national identity in this sense were of special importance to the elite since these two would re-shape their protests against British rule and made a great shift in the

¹ Toyin, F & Matthew, M, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge University Press ,2008, p.136

way the illiterate masses received their status as Nigerians. This orientation served two important roles that contributed to enlarging their protests. First, it offered a type of protest that placed local affairs to the fore, helped illiterate masses to get for the first time situated at the heart of nation's affairs and made them aware of their future tasks regarding their responsibility toward their nation. Second, this vision established new linkages for the elite to voice their opinions and find great support to their cause. It also provided a fertile ground for illiterate masses to take the lead and wage a revolution that would put an end to colonial rule.

This trend toward placing a Pan-Nigerian identity on the fore was accepted by the elite as the only avenue for achieving their task. The quest for a United West Africa supported by the body of the N.C.B.W.A. and Pan-Africanists ambitions for an African state were all questioned by the Nigerian elite. In their view the idea of being together as one nation was no longer valid because they thought there would be a time when each African state would control its own affairs. Abudu Ramonu Aranmoletiesho, a Western educated member and an editor in the Times of Nigeria pointed out:

If at all that day should come and it must come in the process of evolution — when Africa shall be controlled by Africans, each distinct African nation while having the most cordial relations with every other sister nation, will infinitely prefer remaining as a separate political entity to being drawn into one huge melting pot of a universal Negro Empire.¹

The elite were not only seeking to demand social justice but to make the idea of a Nigerian national identity to the fore. With these ideas that placed Nigeria and Nigerian national identity at the heart of their activities, the elite marked a significant departure from seeing their nationalism as an attempt to cooperate with either African or West African intelligentsia to nationalism that worked for glamorizing the idea of nationhood and national identity.

Others even started to criticize these ideas in explicit terms and were doubtful of the idea of African unity. African unity, in their view, was impossible due to the fact that each African

¹ Times of Nigeria. 24 May 1927, quoted in, Rupert Lewis and Maureen Wamer, *Garvey, Africa. Europe, the Americas*, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Kingston, 1986, p. 136-51.

state had its own political as well as social structure and this, in turn, would hinder any attempts at unification. In a stronger tone, J. K. Coker, a Western educated elite and an active politician, observed that “On the surface there is nothing more alluring than the force and solidarity of one nationality running from one end to another in Africa as a basis for political union. But is such a scheme possible in Africa today? Was it ever possible in Africa?”¹. Accordingly, the Nigerian elite were drawing another form for their political protests. There was a move from seeing Nigeria in merely race terms into developing a new vision of Nigeria as part of their national identity. It was thus alleged that “The Nigerian intelligentsia were clearly defining a more...Nigerian stage for themselves”².

There emerged a tendency to write about national themes. Unlike 19th century orientations, elite’ production after 1926 focused on issues that were of interests to Nigeria as the motherland. Adeyo Deniga’s books published between 1927 and 1934 were all centered on issues about the Nigerian society. Both Essien and Ernest Ikoli were among the ones who placed Prince Archibong and J.E.K. Aggrey as pioneering characters who fought for the Nigerian cause. On the whole, their writing was informed by a call to find a place and understand this entity of Nigeria of their own³. The Nigerian Union of Teachers, the Nigerian Law Association, formed by the Western educated elite who studied in Britain, and the Nigerian Produce Traders, led by Obafemi Awolowo, formed in 1928 were all mediums to construct a broad social network to develop national unity and national identity. What was special in these association was that leadership was multitribal. For example, the Nigerian Union of Teachers had an Efik as secretary, a Yoruba as a president and an Ibo as a vice-president⁴. Moreover, the Union of Young Nigeria formed in 1927 by Dr. J. C. Vaughn, Ayo Williams and Ernest Ekoli was an association that clearly endorsed for letting young Nigerians be aware of their country. Its

¹ Nigerian Pioneer, 27 November 1928, quoted in Langley, Jabez Ayodele, “*Garveyism and African Nationalism*” *Journal of African Studies*, no 07, 1969, p. 157-72.

² Zachemuk, *Intellectual life*, p.186

³ Ibid, p.192

⁴ Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p.213

nationalist activity centered on interesting “the young men of the country in the doings of their country”¹.

Nationhood became a recurring theme in all presses. The Nigerian Daily Times called for a shared anthem that would make people of Nigeria aware of their shared history and culture². Ojo-Cole published two important books, a *Collection of Yoruba Thoughts* and *Glimpse of Yoruba Civilization* all of which were intended to speak about Nigerian history and culture in depth. His *Comprehensive History of Nigeria*, even though he failed to publish it, was another attempt to make history of Nigeria well known among the masses³. Isaac Delano published his “*The South of Nigeria*” by 1927 and this was considered among the most influential works that made in details the grounds for a concrete concept of Nigerian nationhood. Akinyede put an emphasis on the cultural unity of the Nigerian society and stressed ethnic-racial ties that were an important facet of forming a nation. Awolowo, even though he was critical of believing in the existence of a Nigerian nation, clearly urged for uniting all sects of the Nigerian population⁴. It was, thus, alleged that the work of the elite should not only to provoke protests against colonial rule, but to find within the diverse complexity of the Nigerian population a real meaning of Nigerian national identity⁵.

The activities of the elite in the whole were an attempt to shed light on different facets of Nigerian history and culture. It was even believed that the elite should construct their national identity from this “conglomeration of small and insignificant tribal societies”⁶. In this respect, history and the writing about history was understood as a way to make Nigerians, as well as

¹ Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p. 217

² Nigeria Daily Times, 3 February 1928; also 2, 9, and 21 February 1929, quoted in Olasunya, “*Garvey and Nigeria*”, p138

³Akin-Awosefaju, “The Late Mr. Julius Ojo-Cole, a Tribute,” Nigerian Daily Times. 22 February 1928, quoted in Zachenruk, *Intellectual Life*, p.193

⁴ Zachenruk, *Intellectual Life*, p.334

⁵ Ibid, p.334

⁶ Oluwasanmi, H.O, *The Problem of Minorities in Nigeria*, Ibadan 2, 1958, p. 5

Africans, understand themselves as they were in separate entities. As such, it was observed, as Ladipo Solanke, a Western educated member and a leader of the W.A.S.U, put it

It is the duty of Africans to investigate and give to the world in suitable literary form, an account of their history, laws, custom, institutions and languages. Without such materials, it would be impossible for us to know what lines our development should take....¹.

Accordingly, the elite started to see themselves as completely Nigerians regardless of any connection to what was both African or West –African ². It was alleged that race leadership was grounded on the idea of a nation and that the Nigeria nation would lead its own destiny without reference to any race relations. In that race became a tool for advancing the idea of nationhood rather than calling for racial unity and equality ³. In this respect, T.O. Elias, a Western educated member and a notable historian, clearly stressed the necessity of forming contacts between all ethnic associations in order to raise national consciousness and he called for the publication of books on Yoruba and Igbo history not to glamorize the idea of ethnicity but to find within this distinctiveness shared traits of nationhood ⁴.

These held beliefs were shared not only within the Nigerian intelligentsia but even with other sects of the Nigerian elite abroad. The West African Student Union members were apparently critical of the idea of race relations and by 1928, most of its leaders were looking at African states as separate entities. In 1928, several lectures were in an attempt to justify the need for looking at Nigeria and nationhood as important facets that determined their protests. Eric.O, Moore, a Western educated member and one of the members of the W.A.S.U. opined that this was the right time to decide “whither are we tending as individuals, as a community, as a race?”⁵. Okoi Ariko, a notable Western educated elite and an editor, talked of the inevitable destiny of a Pan-Nigerian unity and that this unity was a step forward to an African unity. It

¹ Solanke, L “Lifting the Veil” in Wasu 1. 1 (March, 1927), p. 14, quoted in G.O. Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonization. 1925-1958*, Daystar Press, Ibadan, 1982, p.19.

² Zachemuk, *Intellectual Life*, p.332

³ Akinyede, G. B. A, *The Political and Constitutional Problems of Nigeria*, Nigerian Printing and Publishing, Lagos, 1957, pp. 55-61

⁴ Elias, T.O.“Towards Nationhood in Nigeria,” in Occasional Papers on Nigerian Affairs 1 October, 1935,p. 14-15.

⁵ Zachemuk, *Intellectual Life*, p.333

was in his opinion that mixed socio-cultural aspects of Nigerian history that Nigeria became so rich and powerful to look at its future with great respect. He concluded:

From all these accounts there is one inevitable conclusion, namely that Nigeria is not an accident. It is not an artificial creation nor an arbitrary block of land chipped off the surface of tropical Africa. On the contrary in Nigeria, we are dealing with a cultural melting-pot where cultural influences from all directions have met to produce a most virile cultural complex.¹

The Nigerian National Democratic Party² gave another stimulus to the elite to be aware of their Nigerian national identity. Even though its work centered on Lagos, apparent attempts were deployed by 1928 to inform people of their connection to a whole territory called Nigeria. Dr. C. C. Adeniyi-Jones, the president, held a number of lectures that were all-Nigerian in scope. As a member of the Legislative Council, he addressed issues that had to do with the future of Nigeria as a nation³. In this respect, The N.N.D.P. placed a broad program that placed Nigerian affairs as its first concern. It demanded the establishment of higher education institutions to Nigeria and the implementation of compulsory education. It clearly demanded an increase in Nigerians 'participation in the civil service and the incorporation of Nigerian traders into the economy of the empire. There was a clear identification with all what concerned Nigeria and Nigerianity. Herbert Maculay stated the intended objectives of the party:

to secure the safety or welfare of the people of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria as an integral part of the British Imperial Commonwealth and to carry the banner of "Right, Truth, Liberty and Justice" to the empyrean heights of Democracy until the realization of its ambitious goal of "A government of the people, by the people, for the people"...⁴

Even more other Nigerian elite were stressing more the fact that the British created the ground for this new feeling of nationality, and asserted that even though British colonialism was destructive to their socio-economic status, it was in other instances due to this phenomenon

¹ Okoi Arikpo, *who are the Nigerians? The 1957 Lugard Lectures*, Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1957, p. 32.

² Formed in 1925 and only by 1927 that the party started to make impact on political life. This was due to some restrictions put by British officials to political parties and their actions. By 1928, the party clearly placed a number of plans that formulated a vision of Nigeria as a nation and the future tasks the educated elite should take to achieve their plans.

³ Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p. 200

⁴ Constitution of the Nigerian National Democratic Party, p.1, quoted in Coleman, *Background to Nigerian Nationalism*, p 198

that “ a common Nigerian nationality began to develop”¹. It was alleged that past experiences with British colonialism were no more than a path to forming a vision of the Nigerian nation and a fertile ground for the emergence of new forms of looking at nationalism within a national scope rather than Pan-African or West-African visions ².

Elite great ambition to construct a new identity and a nation was very rapid and motivated that all were curious to make illiterate Nigerians grasp the new idea and have a support to its realization within the coming decades. This awareness to look for an entity called Nigeria was a matter of every Western educated elite of the period. Setting the context for such an innovation was a responsibility and a duty of all Nigerians. The idea of a nation became so strong that Aboudu Olori, a prominent politician and a Western educated member, denounced “we have been held together like sand in a box in an artificial bond by the force of an alien imperialism. It is now imperative that we should find effective cementing forces to bind us together into one organic entity called a nation.”³.

This sense of attachment to one nation was only achievable, according to the Western educated elite, if they took initiatives and found solutions to some of the problems that rested as obstacles to unity. Chas Blaize, a Western educated elite, urged that the “thralldom of narrow provincialism” was only a new path to a “Nigeria wide-patriotism”⁴. James Aleshinloye, a Western educated elite, urged that these tribes should “intermarry and develop one outlook”⁵. While Philip J, Koker, a Western educated elite, was of the opinion that “men from opposite ends of the country must be made to realize that there is a band of national interest-holding them together.”⁶. Eyo Ita, a Western educated elite, asked the Western educated elite to bury

¹ Oluwasanmi, H.A, “*The Problem of Minorities in Nigeria.*”, Journal of African Studies, Vol 05, Ibadan, 2 February, 1929, p. 6-22

² Sam Epelle, *The Promise of Nigeria*, Pan Books, London, 1960, p. 14-29

³ Nigerian Freedom edl., 24 November 1929, quoted in Zachemuk, Intellectual Life, p.335

⁴ Ariori, A. T, “Nigeria in the British Empire,” Service 1, 2(September, 1929), p. 19; Philip Awunka, letter to the editor, DS, 13 June 1929, quoted in Olusanya, The Lagos Branch, p228

⁵ Latunji Martins, “Spirit of Collectivism,” Service 1, 3; December, 1929, p. 19-20, quoted in Zachemuk, Intellectual Life, p.340

⁶ Mbanefo, L “*Unity and Co-operation among the Paramount Chiefs in Nigeria.*” Wasu 6, 2, Coronation Issue, 1929, p. 32.

the spirit of selfishness and loyalty to their ethnic groups and fall into the march of nationhood and national identity. He affirmed that “We need a magic wand of nature that can create a universal kinship among us that all Nigerians are “fellow citizens” ...the greatest need of Nigerians today is to become a community, to evolve a national selfhood...¹.

The belief in this unity, he continued, would raise national consciousness among all sects of the population. He urged the elite to “seek coordination among them in a way that will help to build a strong national consciousness ². He then concluded by stressing the necessity of creating a common Nigerian nationhood: “[youth] must realize that the whole of Nigeria is a supreme value before God, and that its creative work is part of the vast plan of the Divine Conserver of our values”³.

Pan-Nigerian identity in this respect became a form of protest to form a nationalist movement in the real sense of the word. It called for uniting all these ethnic boundaries into one and brought them all together to be aware of their shared destiny. Local politics and local affairs were a matter of great importance since they guarantee that their activities were driven and motivated by a collective national identity ⁴. It was clear at this time that there was a new phase that the elite and the illiterate masses will undergo. Elite’s contribution to Nigerian life and politics till 1929, in fact, was regarded by many scholars as a stepping stone to let those illiterate masses take the lead to wage a revolution against British rule. Their new constructed Nigeria worked as a motivation to bring about a new phase in Nigerians protests against British rule.

¹ Eyo, Ita, *Nigeria Youth League Movement*, Calabar: n.d., quotation includes excerpts from p.,1-7, quoted in Coleman p. 220

² Ibid, p.220

³ Ibid, p220

⁴ Toyin, F & Matthew, *History of Nigeria*, p137

Conclusion

Driven in the first place to define the exact notion of nationhood and national identity, elite nationalism of the 1920's was overwhelmed by a desire to identify with all aspects of local and international politics that might bring elite' activities one step closer to the real discourse of nationhood. Even though the picture was gloomy for the elite to understand the real sense of national identity, they by the end of the 1920's come to neglect all these barriers to their unity and started to feel that there was no unity if they did not come together under the banner of a nation. In fact, due to elite' activities that by 1929 a mass react blowout. The Aba Women Riot of 1929 marked a real move to a new type of resistance that had never been experienced by the British. Fueled by a long time of elite's participation in local politics, The Aba Women Riot could be considered as a revolutionary event that opened doors for mass react. The activities of women were strong enough that one Officer described the events in this manner: "I might almost say in the history of the British Empire. Disturbances in which women have taken the foremost, or the only part, are unknown here and elsewhere in the Empire ..."¹. This event, in fact, brought new phase in Nigerians protests against the British. It made a revolutionary shift to nationalism within the coming decades and placed masses at the center of protests to wage a revolution that brought British rule to an end by 1960.

¹ Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1968, p. 475

General Conclusion

Just as the curiosity motivating this study concerned broad questions about the nature of Western education and the way it led to the emergence the elite and their role to raise national consciousness, so the conclusions to be drawn from it concerned the reactions triggered by the elite to colonial monopoly of the economic, social and cultural spheres of their lives. Important aspects of this study tried to reflect the growth of national consciousness among the elite who were in a continuous re-evaluation of their relation to their race, their ethnic origin and to Nigeria as a nation. Expansion in these ideas created the conditions in which the elite could move toward a more concrete and direct understanding of Nigeria as a nation.

First and foremost, different missionary bodies had penetrated the Niger Delta by 1842. Places like Badagary, Oyo, Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta, and Calabar were all centers for missionary activities. It could be argued that missionary education led to the emergence of the Western educated elite. It, in fact, had only paid little attention to teach apprentices skills useful to their lives. Instead, most of the instructions centered on delivering religious speeches and setting these apprentices to know the realm of Christian faith. Indeed, the introduction of Christian based education clearly dismantled the existence of indigenous education and the existence of the Vernacular in favor of English as medium of instruction. The latter had provided a medium through which the Western educated members could communicate easily regardless of ethno-cultural differences. Western education created a common intellectual cultural intercourse that brought the Western educated elite to think of their collective demands. Greatly motivated by missionary teaching and values, the elite started to see its status as equal to their mentors and hence should lead the same life as their European counterparts.

Yet, the very reason lies in the fact that Christian teaching triggered its beneficiaries to know concepts of equality, civilization, modernity and nationalism. So, it was ironical to see a type of education that clearly placed as a goal diminishing all old African practices that was seen as

backward and uncivilized on the one hand and on the other it still regarded Africans inferior to Europeans due to their race or color. Against this background, the elite put down their protest against white-men monopoly of the Church. It was their agitations that clearly put the ground to establish a purely separate African Church. It happened, however, that the elite mobilized their efforts not only to establish an African Church, but to mark their presence throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

By 1882, however, British officials had assumed responsibility over all educational matters. Their education scheme covered all parts of the Niger Delta except the North which was a region dominated by Muslims¹. Their plans were specifically designed to create a class of people who would assist in the administration of the colonies. In fact, the training of the elite was not meant for their own betterment, but for the economic, religious and political ambitions of British empire builders. This was clear in the words of Diedrich Westermen who clearly stated the goals behind launching Western education: “Even in important questions affecting the inner life of people such as education, we are in danger of considering not the needs and interests of Africans, but our own aims, whether these be political, economic, religious or of a generally civilizing nature”². The very role of colonial education, therefore, was the creation of agents who could consolidate British presence to make the exploitation of the land much easier. These agents would be real representatives of British civilization and modernity. A concept that clearly triggered these agents to copy all British customs, laws and life styles. Nevertheless, this educational project was confronted with a threat that was a production of the system itself.

The emergence of the Western educated elite marked one of the paradoxes of Western education. The status of the Western educated elite by the beginning of the 20th century was remarkable in the literary and cultural spheres of colonial life. In fact, they clearly formed a clear social status and became a threat to colonial rule. Colonial economy was perceived to

¹ British officials avoided spreading education plans to the northern part because of their fear that Muslim rulers would not accept their intervention in their lives and religion.

² Westermen, Diedrich, *The African Today*, London: Oxford University Press, 1934, p.3

depend heavily on the efforts of the elite to cooperate to strengthen British presence and to provide security and sustenance to imperial ambitions. And to the misfortune of the British, the Western educated elite instead of being supporter to imperial plans, they clearly provoked discontent against British economic, social and cultural plans.

In fact, Western education clearly made the elite conscious of their role toward their people. They knew exactly the fallacy of colonialism and the way it used education as a tool to justify colonial presence. Their fluid culture helped them to question colonial presence and to use European values of equality and modernity as tools to provoke protests. Western education provided a common language to the elite to exchange ideas and views. The English language, in this regard, not only became a tool for communication, but it stimulated the growth of national unity. The English language imbibed the Western educated elite with the spirit of nationalism, patriotism and a detestation to all types of police state. These ideas were recognized by the Western educated members and put as goals to fuel their ambitions.

Now, the Western educated elite grasped all the necessary political and cultural concepts needed to question their situation within the colonial world. Till 1920, the work of the elite centered on asserting their Africanity and their shared race traits. Their aim was not to reject European culture. They worked to make African culture equal to other European cultures. The elite demanded spiritual emancipation from all Christian practices that degraded their rights to practice Christianity of their way. For example, religious separatist groups were vital in mediating the processes by which the elite found a forum to discuss current issues regarding their race and their place within colonialism. The establishment of an African Church was a clear sign of how Western education triggered the elite to know Christianity and not only they knew it but tried to establish a Christianity of their own, in conformity with their African identity. Coupled with this, Western education made the elite aware of their right to earn a good living. Local protests, in fact, presented another form of an elite-driven nationalism. Driven by elite's efforts, these protests were a reaction to some of the economic measures advanced by

the British and seen by the Western educated elite as too heavy for locals to hold. These protests, mainly in the form of economic grievances, were faced by the British with great animosity, and both were either rejected by force or the threat of force. Their uniqueness was due to the participation of the Western educated elite mainly from Lagos and the way these protests inspired for further activities to have a share in the colonial economy. An analysis of these protests reveals how the elite placed Pan-African ideas as a motto for their activities. These early protests clearly put ahead the creation of an African identity as an expression for every Western educated member. This was evident from publications of the elite of the period from 1900 till 1920 which clearly precipitated reviving the African past and identity as a priority to their literary production.

In the 1920's elite nationalism took on a new form. The ideology of the Pan-African movement was no longer accepted by the elite. A new move to create a Pan-West African identity started. Indeed, international organizations played a major role in marking a deviation on the protests of the elite. By 1920, the elite had chosen to incorporate their protests to form a Pan-West African identity. The participation of the elite in this movement, right from its inception, was overwhelmed by mistrust and suspicion. The latter reasons were vital in putting an end to the movement in its earlier stages. At the same time, the movement impact on the Western educated elite was significant because it, on the one hand, triggered the elite to question the validity of their vision of a nation and, on the other hand, it clearly showed how early elite nationalism suffered defects due to the way the Western educated members looked at their own interests and neglected the common good of all.

The definition of the nation and the shaping of a Nigerian national identity started during the period after 1924. Ethnicity marked important divisions within elite protests of the period. The elite were divided by their ethnic loyalties. They led ethnic affiliations to promote the interests of specific activities and to save the interest of their people. Ethnicity did not only divide the Western educated members into factions, but it stood as an obstacle to them to be

overcome. This started after 1926 when new voices aroused of the necessity of finding a solution to these divisions. The inevitable conclusion was that elite nationalism should take another path that clearly placed Nigerian national identity above all differences, racial, regional and ethnic.

By acknowledging the fact that race mattered less, the elite had concluded that each African nation was destined to be led separately regardless of any ties with other African nations. The elite deconstructed the notions of Pan-African identity, Pan-West African solidarity and ethnic affiliations to mean one nation, one entity, one national identity that was Nigeria. The elite placed Nigeria as a nation-state and built new premises to illiterate Nigerians to start a mass nationalism based on great ties of nationality and nationhood. A case that was similar to the Algerian situation when the Algerian Western educated elite prompted an outcry among the French generals that nothing could wipe out their memories of the past, their culture, language, civilization, religion and the distinctiveness of cultural differences among the Algerian people in favor of French Culture and civilization.

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Abstract in French (Résumé)

La présente étude tentera d'examiner comment l'éducation occidentale au Nigéria, dans le cadre du programme de fonctionnaires britanniques pour gouverner et administrer des colonies, a conduit à l'émergence d'un nationalisme d'élite précoce entre 1882 et 1929. Il s'agissait d'une manifestation contre les facteurs économiques, sociaux et culturels. Les fondements du colonialisme britannique et une tentative de rétablir la présence nigériane en politique, en économie et en culture.

En 1842, l'ancienne éducation autochtone était largement remplacée par l'introduction de l'éducation formelle des missions chrétiennes. Ces missions chrétiennes ont établi le christianisme et ont introduit un mode d'éducation occidental. Dans de telles circonstances, la communauté de l'élite éduquée occidentale engendrée par l'enseignement chrétien avait affirmé leur rejet et sa frustration à la nouvelle religion car elle était inadéquate à leurs aspirations et ambitions. En 1882, cependant, les fonctionnaires britanniques ont assumé la responsabilité de toutes les questions d'éducation. On s'attendait à ce que ces écoles produisent un groupe d'élites éduquées en anglais prêt à être recruté dans le cadre administratif et devenu agent de confiance et de fiabilité.

Cependant, le résultat final a été la production d'une élite éduquée de l'Ouest fortement motivée pour relever la présence économique, sociale et culturelle britannique. En raison de leur éducation, de l'anglais comme langue commune et d'une identité africaine auto-consciente, l'élite a entrepris des actions pour promouvoir la culture, la langue, le développement économique et la présence politique de leur peuple. À la fin du XIXe siècle, ils ont nié l'infériorité des Africains et ont défendu le caractère distinctif de la culture africaine et de la personnalité africaine. Au 20ème siècle, alors que l'idée d'une unité panafricaine était rejetée, l'élite a vu rejoindre le Congrès national de l'Afrique occidentale britannique pour développer une identité pan-ouest africaine comme devise pour leurs manifestations. En 1929, l'élite était arrivée à une identité nationale nigériane clairement définie. Cette étude pose les bases pour examiner le contexte dans lequel l'élite a déménagé pour façonner son discours d'une nation nigériane.

Abstract in Arabic

ستحاول هذه الدراسة مناقشة كيف أن التعليم الغربي في نيجيريا، كجزء من برنامج المسؤولين البريطانيين لحكم وإدارة المستعمرات، أدى إلى ظهور القومية النخبوية بين 1882 و1929. هذه القومية النخبوية احتجت على الوجود الاقتصادي، الاجتماعي والثقافي البريطاني وحاولت إعادة تأسيس الوجود النيجيري في السياسة والاقتصاد والثقافة.

بحلول عام 1842، تم استبدال التعليم السابق للسكان الأصليين إلى حد كبير بإدخال التعليم الرسمي للبعثات المسيحية. أنشأت هذه البعثات المسيحية وأدخلت طريقة الغربية للتعليم. وفي ظل هذه الظروف، أكد مجتمع النخب المتعلمة الغربية الذي ولده التدريس المسيحي رفضه وإحباطه للدين الجديد لأنه غير كاف لتطلعاته وطموحاته. وفي عام 1882، تحمل المسؤولون البريطانيون المسؤولية عن جميع المسائل التعليمية. وكان من المتوقع أن تنتج هذه المدارس مجموعة من النخبة المتعلمة باللغة الإنجليزية على استعداد لتجنيدنا في الكوادر الإدارية لتصبح عوامل ثقة وموثوقية.

ومع ذلك، فإن النتيجة النهائية كانت إنتاج نخبة غربية متعلمة إلى حد كبير لتحدي الوجود الاقتصادي والاجتماعي والثقافي البريطاني. وبفضل تعليمهم، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة مشتركة وهوية أفريقية ذاتية الوعي، اتخذت النخبة إجراءات لتعزيز الثقافة واللغة والتنمية الاقتصادية والوجود السياسي لشعبها. في أواخر القرن التاسع عشر، احتجوا على دونية الأفارقة ودافعوا عن تميز الثقافة الأفريقية والشخصية الأفريقية. وفي القرن العشرين، عندما رفضت فكرة الوحدة الأفريقية، رأت النخبة أن تنضم إلى المؤتمر الوطني لغرب أفريقيا الغربية لتطوير هوية أفريقيا الغربية كشرط للاحتجاجات. وبحلول عام 1929، وصلت النخبة إلى هوية وطنية نيجيرية محددة بوضوح. تضع هذه الدراسة الأساس لدراسة السياق الذي انتقلت فيه النخبة لتشكيل مفهومها عن الأمة النيجيرية.

