

## Ending Slavery Legacy and Racism, a Global Imperative in Africa

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examined slavery legacy of racism and how we could end slavery in our contemporary society using Nigeria as a case in point. The elements of ancient and modern transatlantic slavery left behind a legacy of "Racism" and other forms of Eurocentrism in Africa continent and African Diaspora. This is elucidated in some of those articles/publication such as Conventional Museums and the Guest Years of Nigeria Art. Treasure of ancient Nigeria: A legacy of two thousand years, slavery and slave trade, the political socio-cultural factor in the West Africa slave trade (1450-1875) among others. The paper concluded that the ending of the legacy of slavery of Racism is an effort of both government and individual projection.*

**Keywords:** Racism, Legacy and slavery, Africa

### **Introduction**

Scholars have written mostly on the legacy of slavery in legacy of Africa, especially, those in the Africa Diaspora and continent which found themselves victims of racial discrimination and prejudice in variety of forms. In the United States of American, Africans were regarded legally as second-class citizens, before the formation of the civil right movement which force them to accept segregation through Jim Crow Law and often subjected them to discrimination and racist violence. It took many years of agitation and thousands of deaths before the struggle of the civil right movement (1950s and 1960s), could accomplish the task of emancipation.

Economically, this can be traced on most developing countries like Nigeria which was rooted in the slave trade and plantation slavery. The body of Africans was termed as commodities: man-power, a cheap resource. This was continued in the colonial era when African human and natural resources once again regarded as cheap commodity for the colonialist (European) buyer, who determined the price and worth of which to buy. This is applicable today in the unequal trade practices where the developed countries still determine the price and worth of what it gets from African who also determining the price and worth of what it sells to Africa what was the gain for the world, especially in the west, was a loss for Africa. Here I am not simply talking about the loss or human lives, power, resource, the economic loss for Nigeria and gain to the world. The trauma of the African psyche has been properly explored Ade Ajayi & Okon Uya (2010) manipulated by divide and cangues tactics of the raids helped in the enslavement process by weakening lance or continent of African, resulting to lost of languages. There are many question that we should asked, but we can, however, learn from the fight back culture and enslave practice of racism legacies of slavery. The cultural achievements by way of music, literature, monumental, etc. have a cultural global indelible beliefs and identification such as dress, language and unity.

This study, is in three sections, the introduction, slavery legacy globally and an exposition of some of its outstanding ending of slavery in contemporary Nigeria/African

as a whole. This paper sets out with the aim of examining slave legacies and racism in a global imperative in African and how to end slavery in Africa as a whole.

### **Conceptual issues**

**Slavery:** The concept slavery is not easy to define. Just as it entail many connotations from various scholars or commentator in the field, but the aim of this paper will utilize how it originated in African content as define by the modern writers. It was suggested that the word originated from an English world salve from the old French word “esclave” which can be found in the medieval latin sclavus and that the term is related to the Greek sklabos, from sklabeno, slavus of Slavic organ. The term ‘sklabenoi’ is closely linked to the old Russian Slovene, and the contemporary word slave is directly related to the Slavic people many of whom were sold into slavery. Other scholars view slave as someone who was owned by a person, whose labour was regarded as having economic values and whose person had a commercial values. This definition is clearly incomplete, as it neglects the social, political and military dimension in considering the values of the enslaved. It entails mostly especially with the nature of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and not situated in the concept of indigenous slavery.

Uya (2003) sees slavery in an indigenous sense as bondage, lack of freedom which dominated the slave’s whole and immorality all in attempt to degrade other human as less than human. He further view it as “a marginalization and/or oppression of people of colour based on socially constructed racial hierarchy by the privilege white people. This can be characterized based on systematic racism.

According to Shaaba (2010) slavery sees as dissonance between personal greed and personal morality, and racism as the fundamental basis of chattel slavery. Africans become not labourers, but “slavery and slaves” in the mind of the capitalist-colonialist enslavers, wire less , much less, then labourers. They were nothing but chattel, property value. Africans chattelisation in the slave trade ensured the invention of race “the white race” and the commoditification of the “back” or African. The European slaves who know that they were not black invested and crease a new reality. The reality of race, the whiteness acquisition. Thus, slavery in the context of the trans-Atlantic slave trade become a pernicious activities, a greed matter, fundamental hypocrisies existence. His person, his family, his labour, his time and his skills all belonged to his owner. The vital indigenous slavery part of the social structure was based on the assimilated slaves into the society. The essential factors in slave labour was in the productive life of a wider range of communities in the area which comprise of a common element of observability concerning the nature of slavery with an attempt to expose the functioning in, and effects upon the society and economy of the community.

**Legacies:** According to Eddie Asukwu in this book “Legacies of Ages (2001), see it as general outlook on life, spiced with philosophical parable expectations, gain of apology, wisdom, excellence of forgiveness, and love. Legacy can also be defined legacies as an American fantasy drama television series, created by Julie Plec that Premiered on the CW on October 25, 2018. Recording to Merriam-webster sees legacy as a gift of money or other personal property that granted by terms of will-often a substantial that needs to be properly managed”.

**Racism:** The word derives from our understand of what slavery generally is the key step in this process is to determine what racial disparities exist in a given community or

society. However, Oxford, learner Dictionary defined racism as prejudices, discrimination or antagonism by individual community or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized “a programme to combat racism”. Hakeem (2001), says racism is both scientific and cultural fallacious beliefs that groups of humans possess different behavioural traits corresponding to physical appearance and can be divided based on the superiority of one race over another.

### **Dimension of slavery and racism in global imperative**

The subject of slavery legacies and racism in a global imperative started in 1441 from a systematic knowledge of the nature of environment and location of the area. This has contributed to the geographical realities of the centre of both developed and underdeveloped countries made available with a major route and gateway between the people of African.

In Nigeria, the area is located within the Niger River which serves as a source of a major waterway to hub intensive commercial and cultural historical and imperial trading activities for several centuries in the world. The irony of this location within geographical and thematic ideological was much open to the destructive effect of European commercial capitalism based on regional forces creativeness.

Reverend Samuel Ajayi Crowther, an ex-slave who later became a Bishop, a participant and eye witness of the event in middle Niger and confluence area in 19<sup>th</sup> recorded how the domestic slaves and masters lived together as family, ate from the same bowl, dressed alike and were intimate companion without distinction.

The articles on slavery within Atlantic slave trade was a chattel, without base, uprooted from his society, degraded, abused and held in bondage. Furthermore, the ideological origin of race and racism from seventeenth century was a base for hegemony and subordination.

According to Lovejoy (1983), the stimulus slavery trade among Africa state and in Africa general led to the development and influences of external forces. This claimed that slave trade marketing at the confluence areas was between 10,000 to 15,000 annually by the mid- nineteenth century. Firstly slavery and racism has a major influence of the development of capitalism, an economic and political system that first brought development to Europe and the whole world today; a historically slave legacies trade played a systematic role in the economic development of countries as evolution which spur up the production of textile and much of the 'important industry was produced by slave labour in American. Even after slave abolition, income or revenue continued to flow into American from investment in the slave trade and slavery (Agiri, 1983).

Secondly, there is more interference in the African continent as a result of economic interests Britain and other major European powers after official abolition of the slave trade during the end of eighteenth century. The rivalry between the major powers culminated with the times referred to as the "scramble for Africa". That was when the major powers invaded the African continent and establish colonial rule.

In 1914 (the amalgamation year) when the northern and southern protectorate of Nigeria were amalgamated, only two countries in African had obtained independence (Liberia and Ethiopia). The independency relationship that have developed during the period of slavery was continued much to the detriment of Africa. Most of the African countries including Nigeria, lost million of its population. This was followed by the cost

of political independence during the colonial period. Furthermore, African (Nigeria) remained in poverty, debt-ridden and dependent largely on developed countries. Today, racism is in form of children and women trafficking, brain drain and illegal immigration. Lastly, in developed countries, law were enacted which gave legal sanction to recrimination or discrimination against black origin in 1965 (Cooper. 1979).

- i. Around 20<sup>th</sup> century, great victories against racism were achieved as a result of the civil right movement in the United State of America, but till today racist violence exist in many countries mostly in African.
- ii. It lead to the discrimination against colonial law, which based on the based on the racist premise that African countries were incapable of governing themselves or developing their own land and resources.



Source: Edmund S. Morgan (1975)

### African Global Slavery Imperative Legacies

African maturation of slavery legacies in Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean slave trade shaped the economic, cultural and even political relationship between them and the coastal politics of developing countries and their hinterland neighbours as well as those between them and the Europeans. The black slavery played a very significant role in the political system and emergence, consolidation and ideological validation of Euro-American racism, a powerful forces in the world historical antecedent around seventeenth to eighteenth century of which black world has remained perhaps, the greatest victims some of this legacies include:

**Commercial legacies:** The establishment of firms received a slave trade and even it abolition got compensation this redeployment of slave wealth into other investment was a major departures from the establishment pattern in the early period of seventeenth century because commerce remained the major activities. Slaves were used in the trade in a variety of ways which allowed the enslaved great latitude to excel depending on their capacities and competences. King Jaja of Opobo enterprising slave could aspire to and indeed attain positions of eminence.

The recruitment of slave within African, mostly, Nigeria were could be traced from the Igbo and Ibibio hinterland by the Aro and sold through the Niger Delta ports where each captives during inter-communal war and conflict pawns-turned slave, social miscreants and criminals, troublesome – children or weak members of the society, looking for protection and sustenance. The coastal areas become frontiers of opportunity, attracting population from the hinterland toward the coast. The growth in power, prestige as well as wealth of the slave traders principally Ijaw-speaking people led to the re-orientation of power which was always a traditional political and religious authorities in favour of new forms of social organization centered on protecting the commercial interest of the slave legacies and racism in African.

**Cultural legacies:** The systematic role played within the British empire create room for historical stressed rather than land that constituted the only form of “private property” that can generate income sanctioned by traditional law and customs. Consequently, slave holding buying and selling constituted the important activities that affected every aspect of social political and economic life of western African societies in these years. The organization and the overall impact of the trade and its abolition; as well as the slave trade in the context of globalization has remained contentious and controversial.

The basic principal occupation of mostly the Bight of Biafra people have been peasant farming, fishing, craft making and trading along the many rivers, riverlets and creeks. Despite the diversity of culture and the interaction of the people which resulted to the emergence of Efik languages and Ekpe cult secret societies and major unifying institution for the entire area to such an extent that the area is sometime referred to a “cultural Efik zone.

The table below shows the estimated departures of slave (in thousands) from parties in the bight of Biafra, 1650-1865

Bonny	New Calabar	Old Calabar	Cameroon	Gabon/corisco	Other	Total
1651-1675	1.0	31.7	25.8	0	0.0	58.5
1676-1700	2.8	15.5	33.2	0	0.0	51.5
1701-1725	4.2	4.7	34.4	0	1.3 1.4	54.9
1726-1750	93.2	3.3	66.8	0	2.21 1.3	166.8
1751-1775	193.0	29.0	103.3	17.7	9.5 0.9	354.0
1776-1800	207.9	37.8	82.5	16.6	11.3 2.6	358.7
1801-1825	161.8	17.7	41.8	11.6	9.3 9.2	257.4
1826-1850	82.6	5.4	49.2	12.3	21.4 29.4	198.2
1851-1865	746.5	145.5	437.5	64.2	54.9 42.8	1491.0

Source Bashir, 466

It was estimate that about 1,329, 100 slave left the shores of Nigeria (39%) between 1965 and 1851 were shipped from the port of old and new Calabar, and Bonny. The estimated departure is showed in the table above. However, the regional people organized themselves to meet the various challenges of the European demand for slaves and the economic, social, and political activities which is the focus of this paper.

**Historical legacies:** The memories of slavery legacy and racism was base on the slave owners descendant. This was popularized by John Fage, Philip Curtin and others despite the effort of Walter Rodney:



The rapid development of Atlantic slave trade and the African responded to it as arising from the Pre-existence of slavery legacy which provides a safety values to better life for the enslaved African who would have become victims of human sacrifice. According to John Fage, the institution of slavery was endemic in a national feature of indigenous West African society, so that foreigners arriving with the demand for African slave were immediately organised for export trade in slave to increasing scale. Furthermore, Walter Rodney (1972) insited on the direct linkage of domestic slavery to the rapid development of Atlantic slavery trade in 17<sup>th</sup> century without the pre-existence of the institutions in African.

**Imperial legacy:** The wider circuits legacy of empire as investors, administrator and selters in colonies beyond the slave colonies. According to Ajayi and Okon (2010), the warfare role and recruitment method has been a subject of debate in the nineteenth century which observed that since there were no centralized politics in the area, slave were not procured through war as was the generally the case in the Bight of Benin. Enslavement in the Bight or Biafra was much more commonly the judial rolling orders of oracles and kidnapping base on the act of taking free person when they were offered passage between ports by the Europeans, boating a very dangerous system in which some European were killed by those who tried to forcefully steal from their boats. Kidnapping, which account for the largest number of slaves shipped from the regional coast of African to European; raiding African merchants theft of children buying and selling by slave agents in both African and European along the market and water ways regions, child abandonment and sale, self enslavement and crimes punishment mostly crime against social norms which affect the well being of the community. The table below shows the total numbers of people that are were taken from African.

**Number of English slave trade from Africa between 1890 to 1807**

Coastal pegun	Total of slaves	Percentage
Senegambia	141,300	55%
Sierra leone	111,600	4.3%
Windward coast	299,300	11.6%
Gold coast	473,000	18.3%
Bight of Benin	292.700	30.1%
Bright of Biafra	776.400	18.2%
Angola and Mozambique	468.300	0.6%
Others Unknown	16.100	100%
	2.579,400	

**Source; field work**

### **How to End Slavery Racism**

As we celebrate the end to slavery, this time we should also reminded our self and represent an opportunity to reflect, rethink and restructure our work and move forward and thereby giving equal opportunity to all which is based on dedication and liberty. Further price had to be paid in a tragic, calamitous civil war resulting to indelible imprint on our nations soul before this new democracy could be rid of that most undemocratic institution. But for black Americans, the end of slavery was just the beginning of our quest for democratic equality.

The issue of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which is based on the problem of the color line, national dilemma and fretting about the threat it posed to the success of our democratic experience should be avoided.

In addition, leaders of the free world should be made to preside over a regime of racial subordinate. Fourthly, in other to sharpen the contrast between Africans and Americans, the ideals on the one side and seemingly second-class status of the negroes on the other side of nations political elites should choose the morbidity of their civil creed over comfort of long standing social arrangement.

### **Conclusion**

Slavery racism has been a feature life of centuries, the colour bar existed in accommodations, the armed forces and even boxing – nobody of African origin was permitted to fight for African until 1948. Law against legacies of racism were introduced only in 1965. However institutional racism and crimes was recognized as it was highlighted in Lawrence case in 1993: These are reminders that racism is a persistent legacy of slavery which can only be solved by government and individual effort.

Secondly, the beneficial in human episode in the global imperative of Africa convert the tragedy represented in the context of slavery routes and relics of cultural tourism apart from the foreign currency earners, are serving to attract Africa diaspora population in Europe to connect with their historical roots in this age of globalization and cultural interconnectivity. This shows that, the adversities and tragedies of the slave trade years can be connected into significant props for positive development of African in the Diaspora.

Thirdly, the volume of the structure of slavery legacy and racism in a global forms of slavery, the impact of both the trans-Sahara and trans-Atlantic slave trade as well as ending global imperative of African institutional legacies which was base on the careful examination as a warn against the tendency to generalize about the nature, role, status and ideology of Africans based on cultural, political, social and religiously challenges faced, especially those associated with economic and political activities between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

Fourthly, the prevalent view of members of the British parliament between 1807-1933 did not substantially affect African institution based on the production of legitimate goods and services” but had the opposite effect of expanding slavery legacies especially in the new plantations set up to produce the new articles of racism. Today, racism is in form of children and women trafficking, brain drain and illegal immigration.

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