



## INDUSTRIAL ADVANCEMENT AND POLICIES IN NIGERIA: A CASE OF THE COLONIAL TEXTILE SCHEME OF 1945-1950

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### Abstract:

A lot of studies have tried to observe, scrutinize and assess the role played by the colonial government during their epoch of colonizing Nigeria. Even though we can't take away their exploitative intension, it is however pertinent to admit that some of their policies "no matter how little" improve the knowledge and skills of Nigeria's industrial sector. One of the country's largest and oldest manufacturing sub-sectors is the Nigerian textile industry. Domestic production and consumption of cotton textiles in Nigeria conversely predated the colonization of the country by Britain. Production and consumption of textiles however, had become so widespread that by the middle of the nineteenth century, Kano (in northern Nigeria) has become the Manchester of West Africa. The textile industry has traveled a long and rugged road – from its pre-colonial cottage orientation, through its colonial struggle with imported textiles, to its current modernity. This paper looks at the effects of the colonial textile development policy on the industrial growth of Nigeria between 1945 and 1950. It however derives its strength from both primary and secondary materials available.

**Keywords:** industrial advancement, policies, colonial textile scheme, Nigeria

### 1. Introduction

Industrialization is considered as a development process that involves transforming raw materials, with the aid of human resources and capital into goods and services. Industrialization also contributes to the welfare of a nation by giving its citizens the feeling of greater control over their economic life. Therefore, industrialization is viewed both as a means of reducing dependence on imports and also a means of earning additional foreign exchange through expansion and diversification of the export base.<sup>i</sup> In industrial policies are stated government plans and intentions towards enhancing industrial development. Therefore, the focus of this paper is on the colonial policies intended to effect industrialization in Nigeria.

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The period; 1940-50 is historically significant in the history of textile industry in Nigeria. This period witnessed colonial investment in indigenous weaving and experimentation in the development of modern textile industries. Although the introduction of this European weaving technology set in motion a series of changes that were crucial and cumulative in their effects, on social and developmental changes, the experiment nevertheless ended up a failure. Rather than writing it off as another colonial failure, important lessons could be learned from studying how and why the programme developed the way it did. The study of the colonial textile development scheme could also serve as a fundamental lesson to the government on the strategy and policy making for industrial development.

## **2. Pre-Colonial Weaving Industry**

Cloth weaving and dyeing may have been brought into Nigeria by ancient immigrants from decaying empires of the desert such as Mali where a large cotton industry existed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, many parts of Nigeria were growing cotton in abundance and had become famous for their excellent “indigenous cloth”. In fact, an “export” trade in the cotton industry was already in existence before the advent of European explorers and traders. That a flourishing industry existed in those days in the manufacturing of hand woven cloth from local cotton, dyed with local dyes and indigo is shown in the diaries and reference of the first European explorers and traders. The weaving industry was of great importance to the region’s indigenous economy. It was not simply an industry, or a trade; cloth weaving was a technology evolved by the people in response to the demands of their environment. For centuries, weavers, spinners and dyers collectively produced cloth for subsistence and for trade between and beyond Yoruba communities.

The weaving industry in Nigeria, on the eve of the establishment of colonial rule was at its peak of development. The intricately designed cloths attested to the high level techniques of production. The industry was well organized and its method of production. The industry was well organized and its method of production varied because different materials, machinery and terms of labour were utilized. Indeed, technology was involved in the various processes in manufacturing fabrics. The entire process of textile manufacture demanded expertise in a variety of processes; collection of fibre, soaking, cleaning and spinning and their reconstruction and elaboration through weaving. Dyeing involved considerable skills in the technology and chemistry of colours. Dyes were extracted from barks, woods, roots, fruits and leaves. Technology was involved in the preparation of the dye and binding it to the material such that it does not damage the fibre and retains permanent coloration throughout the useful life of the fabric.<sup>ii</sup> The presence of numerous weavers also confirms the fact that there existed an extensive flourishing traditional cloth weaving industry in Nigeria.

Thus, it can be seen that the rich artistry and craftsmanship of cloths are a good reflection of a long-standing culture of textile technology in Nigeria. This trend of

growth was however interrupted by colonial rule, which was established by the peace treaty of 1893 in Yorubaland.

## 2.1 Textile Development Scheme

The scheme evolved out of visits made to Nigeria by Mr. A.E. Southern, the textile officer of Achimota College, Accra. Although employed in the Gold Coast by the West African Institute for Social and Economic Research (WAISER), Southern made several short trips to Nigeria at the colonial government's invitation to advise on the future prospects of local weaving. He concluded his report by saying that the industry was already under serious pressure from imports and an organized intervention was essential if it was to survive at all.<sup>iii</sup> Southern recommendations were adopted and he was hired by the Department of Commerce and Industries to supervise its implementation.<sup>iv</sup>

Thus, in the mid-1940s the colonial government began an organized attempt to introduce European hand weaving technology into Nigeria. The selection of the weaving industry showed the colonial governments' appreciation of the importance of the traditional textile industry and its potential for development. The modernization of the local textile industry therefore formed a significant part of the government's plan for developing the economy of Nigeria. Part of the rationale for establishing the Textile training Centre was to provide careers for the discharged soldiers as part of a colonial resettlement scheme. As remarked by the textile officer, Knibb in 1948, "*so far the policy has been to find a lucrative work for the ex-service men against the local weavers*".<sup>v</sup>

The framework of the textile development scheme was the establishment of eight territorial textile centres each in the charge of a European textile officer, with the objectives of studying indigenous methods of cloth production, to introduce improved equipment and new techniques and to train spinners, weavers and dyers to use them.<sup>vi</sup> The textile training centres (TTC) were set up at sites chosen either because there were already existing weaving centres or because of their access to locally grown cotton. The first centres established were sited at Ado-Ekiti in 1946 and Oyo in 1947, and a third at Auchin in 1958; others followed at Aba, Kano, Minjibir and Sokoto in 1949 and at Borin in February 1950.<sup>vii</sup>

The total cost of the scheme established at £60,000 was made from the Colonial Development and Welfare vote. The remainder of the cost was to be met from Nigerian funds. The cost of maintaining the scheme after the conclusion of the first five-year period, estimated at between £9,000 and £10,000 per annum, was to be charged exclusively to Nigerian funds.<sup>viii</sup>

A total expenditure of £53,338 was incurred on the scheme in the eight textile centres between 1946 and 1951. The yearly increment in the expenditure was due to the fact that the textile centres were established at different periods. The textile development expenditures are reflected in Tables 1-3.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of the expenditure on the textile development scheme between 1947 and 1948.

**Table 1: Textile Development Expenditure 1946 to 1951**

Year	Development and Welfare
1946/47	£5,942
1947/48	£7,706
1948/49	£13,872
1949/50	£12,818
1950/51	£13,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£53,338</b>

Source: NAI, DCI 403 S.5 Textile Development Sectional Report, 1946-1952, p.17.

**Table 2: Principal Items of Expenditure on Textile Development 1947-48**

	Approved Estimate	Expenditure to March 1948
Temporary Buildings	£4950	£1851.12.11.12
Textile centre and Equipment	£4800	£2650.8.6d
Demonstration and Investigation	£1000	£938.2.10d
Central Research	£400	£99.4.10d
Working Capital for Textile centres	£1000	£620,14.0

Source: NAI, DC11/1403 S.5, Textile Development Sectional Report, 1946-52, p.52

**Table 3: Financial Summary of Textile Development Scheme 1949 to 1950**

	Original Estimate of Cost	Revised Estimate of Cost	Expenditure	Balance
Capital Expenditure	£27,300	£28,500	£24,000	£4,500
Recurrent	£54,845	£56,500	£47,000	£9,500
Specialist Staff	£8,540	£15,000	£4,000	£11,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£90,685</b>	<b>£100,000</b>	<b>£75,000</b>	<b>£25,000</b>

Source: NAI DC 11/1 420 Textile Development, 1949-50, p. 85.

Ten expatriate textile supervisors were employed to take charge of the textile training centres, assisted by African textile assistants.<sup>ix</sup> Training was combined with demonstrations of improved methods of weaving and spinning in villages of Oyo and Ondo provinces, some lasting few days, others extending over a period of one or two months in order to initiate training in a given area. This invariably aroused keen interest which resulted in numerous enquiries about training, purchase of equipment and sale of cloth.

Research work on the improvement of looms and equipment with the object of producing them more cheaply was carried out in Oyo and Ado-Ekiti centres. In 1948, a small number of carpenters were engaged to manufacture broad looms while some parts were made by local blacksmiths, only the metal creels were imported. Thus, by 1949, the textile centres produced a total of 100 looms, 12,000 bobbins and 60 creels.<sup>x</sup>

Arrangements were made for the recruitment of ex-service men at the training centres. The total intake of trainees up to 11/1950 in all the centres was 354, of whom 242 passes out as competent. 238 looms were supplied to the centres while the 216 looms at work in the different training centres produced 8,780 yards of cloth. Weavers were trained to weave traditional designs on the broad loom hitherto woven on the horizontal loom. Cloths were woven 36 inches in width as compared to the traditional 4

inches. Table 4 shows the textile training centres record on production and training in 1950.

**Table 4:** Textile Training Centres Records of Production and Training, 1950

Centres	Trainees Passed Out	Looms Distributed	Yards of Cloth Woven	Broad looms at work in the area
Ado	16	58	2287	50
Oyo	31	49	800	37
Auchi	33	14	250	42
Aba	30	37	1,500	37
Dorin	43	28	1,000	28
Minjibir	48	10	900	NIL
Sokoto	72	42	2,043	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>8780</b>	<b>232</b>

**Source:** NAI DC 1/1 403 S.5 Textile Development Sectional Report, 1946-1952, pp.18-19

A wide range of patterns was woven. Some of the weavers were taught to weave a number of relatively complex designs. However, the choice of design depended on the intended market, in a degree of confusion emerged on this issue.<sup>xi</sup> There were three options. The first was to weave the heavier and complicated European inspired designs and rely on a market for the cloth as furnishing fabrics, curtains, suits etc. In this case, the potential customers would be limited to Europeans and relatively small number of wealthy Nigerians. The second option was to weaver lighter and simpler European – inspired designs such as bedsheets and school uniforms that could be sold locally for everyday use. Thirdly, the products of the indigenous hand weaving industry could be imitated with the hope of reaching the market for ceremonial and festive dresses.

It was the first option that the training centres concentrated on at inception. The high quality of the cloth produced and the publicity given to the centres attracted orders from a wide range of sources including private individuals in the United States, and United Kingdom, British members of parliament, the Jos Museum and even an experimental order for car seat covers from the UAC in Lagos. All these orders were placed through the Department of Commerce and Industry in Lagos.<sup>xii</sup> Between January and June 1952, a total of 217,859 square yards of cloth valued at £11,588:39s was produced from all the centres. A total of 148,970 square yards of cloth valued at £7,983:4 was produced between July and December 1952.<sup>xiii</sup>

By 1949, it became increasingly clear that the operation of the Textile Development Scheme was stimulating interest in textile production generally and requests for advice in power loom weaving began to arise. A more spectacular development and one which represented the beginning of an important stage in the Nigerian industry was the decision of two companies, one in Lagos and the other in Kano, to build and equip new mills, each of which will operate 50-60 power looms and a small bleaching and dyeing plant. Messrs L. F. Kamson of Lagos were granted a loan of £30,000 by the Colonial Development Board. The Kano Citizens' Trading Company

were also granted, a loan of £35,100 by the Northern Regional Development Board to finance the purchase and erection of power mills and to provide working capital.<sup>xiv</sup>

The layout of the mills was planned by the Textile section of the Development of Commerce and Industries and in 1949, an experienced Textile Officer was sent specially to the United Kingdom to purchase the machinery and arrange for its shipment. These two mills were fortunate to obtain supplies of yarn at a reasonable price. The first shipment was bought 37 pounds from a UK port but it did not prove possible to get repeated orders at that price as cotton prices doubled from 10/- to 20/- between June and December 1950. It soon became apparent that yarn purchases from the UK was impossible and local sources of supply were sought, if possible, at a price of 12/- per lb.<sup>xv</sup>

This sudden increase in the cost of yarn purchased, placed the first phase of production in these mills in a favourable position, with the price of cloth showing a tendency to rise. At the beginning of production in 1951, Kamson Mill produced between 1,100 and 1,200 yards of textile per day. It was generally hoped that these two mills would play a very important role in the development of textile production in Nigeria. But these hopes were dashed as the mills were closed down shortly after *“owing to the apparently immovable suspicion in the minds of Messrs Kamson that Government was preventing them from running their own mill”*, while the government felt that *“very careful nursing will be needed to help mill owners to realize their responsibilities and a great deal of time will be spent in assisting this realisation”*.<sup>xvi</sup> Such ideological differences resulted in the withdrawal of the textile officers in these mills at the beginning of April 1951 and their ultimate closure.

### **3. Appraisal of the Textile Development Scheme**

The industrialization scheme of this magnitude in the colony was a reversal of the earlier cardinal objective of the British colonial economic policy, which was guided by two closely related objectives: first, to develop raw materials to meet the requirements of imperial industry, and second, to create and conserve viable market for British manufactures. British economic policy, as a matter of fact discouraged the growth of local industry that was not beneficial to the colonial project. The colonial government ensured that they did not go beyond what was necessary for the enhancement of British economic needs. Indeed, in order to avoid competition with European industries, they did not take much interest in developing any manufacturing industry locally.

The colonial investment in textile development cannot be viewed as a serious attempt at industrializing even that sector of the economic of Nigeria. First, from the onset of the scheme, the colonial government believed that the local industries of which textile weaving has the most significant, was an appendage of the farming sector, initially carried on to supplement some other sources of family income, and that the scale of production entirely absorbed by the local market with no distribution costs incurred.<sup>xvii</sup> Secondly, the technology that the scheme intended to transfer did not put

into consideration the pre-existing culture of the people. In other words, the new production techniques should be internalized; should be a great departure from the existing way of life. At least the people to whom the technology was being transferred must be able to appreciate it as helping them to do better what they had been doing before.<sup>xviii</sup> For instance, although the scheme was well intended in that it made provisions for the employment of ex-servicemen, it nevertheless failed in this regard because the scheme took off in Ado Ekiti rather than Borin where there were greater numbers of ex-servicemen and where the tradition of men weaving existed. The failure of the textile development project to train former service men to weave and to market hand woven cloth at Ado-Ekiti and Eastern Yorubaland generally may therefore be attributed to this culture factor. Culturally, weaving in that part of Yorubaland is associated with women; so, rather than view themselves as weavers, the ex-servicemen who entered the programme were nonchalant about it and it is not surprising that the men stopped weaving after leaving the training centre.

The initial focus of the textile scheme was, in theory, on the development and improvement of various hand weaving traditions well established throughout Nigeria. The policies that guided the implementation of the scheme negated this paper declaration. Weavers received insufficient training to enable them exploit to the full the new equipment. In England, such manually operated broad loom took between 2 to 2½ years to master, while only six month's training was given to weavers under the scheme. Generally, they could not thereafter work independently of the Textile Centre. Consequently, at the completion of the training, weavers were encouraged to work in groups very close to the Textile Training Centre and to continue to supervised by the Assistant textile officers.

This arrangement did not prove durable. For example, members of the Ondo ex-servicemen's weaving association, having been trained at the textile centre in Ado-Ekiti, returned to Ondo en block on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1948. Work commenced immediately after the erection of their looms. From the very beginning, it was apparent that the members of the association were disinclined to work hard enough to make the concern a paying one. Some members did not weave; very few indeed tried to produce results from weaving. In order to give the men a fair start, a subsistence allowance was paid to them for a period but with no positive result. Eventually, after repeated warnings, the association was disbanded on 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1948, barely three months after opening. A similar venture in Borin where a number of broadloom weavers formed a co-operative group with the name "Borin Weaver's Guild" WAS closed after three months in August.<sup>xix</sup> The Cooperative Unions that survived for longer, collapsed with the closure of the textile centres in Eastern Yorubaland and elsewhere.<sup>xx</sup> T.M. Shankland, the Acting Resident of Ondo province suggested a remedy in 1949 to the general attitude of the weavers to the scheme.

*"What is the remedy? I suggest that what is required is a return to the original principles of the Development Plan; we must seek to*

*develop directly from the essentials of the local industry. By all means let us aim to improve local looms and methods of spinning and dyeing but let us so contrive it that the new and improved methods can quite naturally take the place of things they supersede. Let us invent a loom that will improve the quality of production but let it cost 15/- and no £8, and let it be of a nature that can easily be fitted into a normal room in a normal local house. It has been realized that unless spinners and weavers having completed a course of training at a centre, were enabled to purchase reliable equipment at moderate prices, the value of training would be lost.*"<sup>xxi</sup>

In spite of these suggestions, trainees continued to face major problems in attempting to establish viable independent weaving concerns. The cost of the capital equipment necessary to set up a business after training was enormous, with the cost of a single loom at £8, £4 for a warping mill and 25/- for a spinning wheel and a variety of other subsidiary equipment.<sup>xxii</sup> It is true that the Native Administration was prepared to make short term loans, to finance the cost of loom and some working capital, which had to be repaid within a reasonable period. Loans were however limited to the ex-servicemen who were very few and uninterested in the venture but the ex-trainees who were interested were not afforded the same opportunity.<sup>xxiii</sup> Virtually all the ex-trainees lacked adequate funds and it became increasingly difficult for the trained weavers at the centres to set up independently.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Over the years, the officials involved in the scheme continued to turn out "qualified" trainees and produced optimistic reports, but concrete results were unimpressive. The annual report for 1952-54 showed that only 60 and 72 broad looms were at work in Ado-Ekiti and Oyo provinces respectively, while thirty looms were at work in Ilorin province. At least some of the reasons for this lack of progress had become apparent to other reasons for this lack of progress had become apparent to other senior officers in the provinces. In August 1951, one of such officers, P.J. Harris, perceptively observed that the textile development scheme was a failure because the improvement it offered over the indigenous weaving technique was too slight.<sup>xxv</sup> He noted that the horizontal loom utilized the whole family's labour, and seemed to offer a similar overall higher profit than the broad loom which only trained weavers could operate.

By 1952, it was common knowledge that the focus of the Textile training centres on fulfilling orders for luxury cloth demanded by expatriates led to repeated delays in meeting local orders. Broad looms were weaving a considerable number of traditional designs successfully, which increased the demand for such goods. However, this was gradually phased out as there was increased demand for the European type fabrics which took priority over local demands. In the Ado-Ekiti weaving centre, for instance, these priority orders were continually received from the Director of Commerce and



Industries, Lagos for “magnificent” materials of an “export” type for various distinguished persons and institutions in Nigeria and abroad. Before this stream of orders from abroad started, local people had begun to be interested in the cloth that was produced at the centres and had placed orders, but the execution of such orders had to be postponed to make way for the priority orders.<sup>xxvi</sup> The scheme thereby failed in its first objective of encouraging local industries for local markets. This could best be summed-up in the words of the Resident in Oyo Province, “*we have therefore failed in our first objective which as to encourage local industries for local markets. We are failing in this bid for export markets. We would never fill orders because of the impossibility of recruiting more people to this, if not sweated, at least underpaid, industry*”.<sup>xxvii</sup>

The centres were encouraged to produce designs attractive to the European eyes, such as cushion over cloths, etc. sold at far less than the prices that Europeans were able and willing to pay. With ridiculously low wages paid to the weavers, few people were coming forward to train. The weavers were paid between 1/- and 1/6d a yard for this intricate and lovely weaving. Its intricacy of design implied utmost and closest attention to their work and they could only produce an average of 2 yards a day. Equally, magnificent and heavy curtain materials produced at the Textile Training Centre, which could fetch at least 35/- a yard in England, was sold in Nigeria at 12/6d a yard. After payment of freight, the client would be paying 15/- a yard for it.<sup>xxviii</sup> What policy was it that dictated such low prices for materials which elsewhere fetched 3 to 4 times the price? This was definitely an attempt to undermine the existing market.

The activities of the Textile Training Centre, rather than enhancing the existing market for traditional weaving, undermined it to some extent. Cloth woven on traditional looms was sold by 1948 at prices that varied from 4/6d to 10/- per square yard in the Western Provinces. In the Northern Provinces, the best white cloth sold at 4/- while other grades sold from 2/6d to 3/6d per yard. Whereas, the broad loom cloth sold for between 3/6d per yard for white plain cloth. The low prices that were charged on products of the broad loom enhanced the constant demand and preference for it,<sup>xxix</sup> thereby frustrating the efforts of the local weavers and encouraging the continuous consumption on imported textile goods. The failure of the textile centres to meet the daily requirements of individuals enhanced the continued demand for imported textile goods.

By 1950, this situation was obvious to the textile officer in Ado-Ekiti, when he declared that “*the year 1950 has shown that a turning point in textile development has been reached. The number of weavers working is far below what it should be in relation to those trained*”.<sup>xxx</sup> This was clearly the situation in all the other textile training centres in Nigeria.

Generally speaking, the textile development scheme in Nigeria as a whole was superficial. It was obvious that the scheme was not instituted for the benefit of the indigenous weavers and general populace, but rather to satisfy the needs of the colonial government for some goods which, if imported from England would be expensive. For various reasons including a lack of demand for the unfamiliar cloth produced and the

prohibitive cost of looms for qualified trainees, these textile centres were unable to establish a viable industry let alone supplant indigenous techniques. The experiment failed because of too much colonial control and refused to allow the trainees charge an economic price for their products. However, fundamental lessons could be learnt from the experiment which could guide the government on the strategy and policy making for industrial development.

#### **4. Cultural Factor in Technological Development**

This stresses the cultural factor in technological development. The mere possession of technical knowledge (technology) does not confer economic development on a people. The issue of technological development depends largely on the felt needs of a society and societal attitudes to such technological transfer. In other words, development is about people; this implies that social change affects the whole society, the whole way of life. It grows and becomes sustainable when it is internalized and becomes integrated into the culture. To be internalized, it has to be appreciated as fulfilling a felt need of the people, doing something they need to have been doing or doing better something they were doing.

Exploring the cultural factor in technological development, J. F. Ade Ajayi argues that:

*“You can borrow some technology, you can begin by imitating some aspects of other people’s technology, you can even try to transfer technology, but technology cannot develop- it cannot grow-outside the context of culture. This is because the growth of science and technology may be assisted by experiments in laboratories, as well as by studies, inventions and patents in the universities, but these do not grow and become sustainable development except within society, and within particular cultures. The experiments, inventions and patents grow only when they are acquired as skills by individual artisans, or by a group of collectivized artisans within the industrial process, artisans who apply technology to make things that become part of living, part of life”.<sup>xxx</sup>*

The emphasis is that technology can only be absorbed and grow if planted within a pre-existing culture. This was what the Colonial Textile Officers tried to do – develop the native weaving industry by introducing “modern” technology – without consulting the people, without inquiring whether they wanted to be so civilized or modernized. The people were told it was a good thing to develop their industry in the modern way but when they saw what it meant, they began to wonder whether that was the kind of change that they desired. The textile development scheme achieved little

success because the colonial administration failed to integrate the proposed the technology into the existing culture.

The Yoruba weavers therefore rejected the overtures of the colonial government in textile industry because; the weavers had developed a peculiar heritage of textile technology, an age long industry, and therefore would not need someone to impose a foreign area or technique that is inimical to the pre-existing culture and ways of doing things. The new technique of weaving introduced in the Colonial government did not germinate. The new technology found it difficult to replace the treadle loom partly because it was more expensive, very difficult and complicated to operate, making it impossible for the younger weavers and their whole family to use. But the product of this new loom was not any more satisfactory than the product of the treadle loom. In short the new technology introduced through the Textile Development Scheme was unable to meet the needs of the people at that particular time. The technology find the scheme generally failed because they did not grow within the context of the pre-existing culture.

Technology can be borrowed; or some aspects of other people's technology can be imitated, but technology cannot grow in a self-sustaining manner outside the context of culture. This is because the growth of science and technology may be assisted by experiments in laboratories, as well as by studies, inventions and patents in the universities, but these do not grow and become sustainable development except within society, and within particular cultures. The experiments, inventions and patents grow only when they are acquired as skills by individual artisans who apply technology to make things that become part of living or part of life.<sup>xxxii</sup>

The two major problems affecting industrial development in Nigeria during the colonial period (and still prevailing) were firstly, that it was no designed to provide the framework for self-sustaining development. Expatriates owned the technology of the light industries that were established in the regions, which were withdrawn at will. For instance, as discussed earlier, the lack of understanding between Messrs Kamson, owners of the mills and the colonial government on the terms of the "Management of the mill" led to its closure. Messrs Kamson were suspicious that the government was preventing from exercising their rights over their own property while the government insisted on controlling production and the allocation of finished goods to, (according to them) ensure the prosperity of the mill. This "irreconcilable differences" led to the colonial government to withdrawn textile officers assigned to the mill, which consequently led to its failure and final closure barely a year after commencement of operation in 1951. Even when the new technology was acquired, it was not possible to sustain the development because most of these industries depended on available foreign exchange to import machines and spare parts and the raw materials processed abroad to feed the particular machines imported, and at prices dictated by the foreign technical partners.

The second problem that afflicted industrial development during the colonial period was the practice of installing second-hand equipment. This practice was most

prevalent in the textile industry. It was primarily aimed at minimizing the initial capital put at risk. This practice affected the textile industry because of the shorter life and the lower rate of output of used equipment. In the end, rather than save money, the unit of production became higher and the rate of turnover much lower. Although the failure of the powered textile mills has been blamed on entrepreneurial inefficiency, the importance of the economic policy guiding such establishment should not be brushed aside.

### **5. The Importance of Social Attitude to Technological Development**

The social attitude is also crucial to the development of technology. The reactions of people in Nigeria to the textile development scheme went a long way to undermine the success of the training centres. For example, the centres were supposed to be training establishments through which a constant stream of local weavers, dyers and spinners would pass, acquiring an improved technique and, in due course, to return to their villages to disseminate their newly acquired knowledge, thereby placing emphasis on training at each of the eight centres established in Nigeria. But the gradual deviation from this policy and the failure of the colonial government to get the weavers to internalize this new technology by integrating it into the pre-existing culture spelt doom for the scheme.

Although the textile officers argued that the local demands for both equipment and cloth manufactured at the centres made it necessary for it to operate a trading account, nevertheless, the emphasis placed on the production of goods to meet European demands at the expense of local demands clearly showed that the centre's initial objective was a paper declaration.

The indigenous people vehemently resisted the reversal of the policy guiding the establishment of the weaving centres. In Ondo, the Native Ex-Servicemen Weaving Association centre that started operation in July 1949 was closed down in September because of lack of sufficient production which stemmed out of the dissatisfaction of the weavers (ex-service men) who thought they had been given government salaried jobs as they were promised.

In Owo, the local people refused to patronize the products of the centre and those that did, bought the goods on credit, which led to its closure in 1950, having survived for just 3½ years. In Ado-Ekiti and its environs, most of the weavers went back to their villages to continue weaving on their old looms because they could not afford to purchase the broadloom.

### **6. Conclusion**

Indigenous manufacturers are worth considering in the context of current industrialization policies because modern manufacturing in Nigeria in general began

not with heavy industries but with relatively simple import substituting activities most of which were based on established crafts.

Our concept of technology must, therefore, focus not only on the large industrial complexes of imported machinery that are so dependent on further imports of raw materials and spare parts but on the direct application of technology to the problems of daily living. Similarly, the strategy of industrialization should begin with applying appropriate technology that is; technology must appropriate to resolve the felt needs of the people, to up-grade traditional arts and crafts into small and medium sized cottage industries that support self-reliant and labour intensive development. In other words, we should develop our crafts, which have survived colonialism such as pottery, textiles, basketry and revive others such as mining technology and use these as the basis for developing small and medium scale industries.

It is only by building in this way on the cumulative effort of our past that our technology and industrialization can move the society forward as a whole, and without losing our identity and dynamism as a people. The Colonial textile development scheme in Nigeria should therefore be seen as a case study with significant implications and serving as a fundamental lesson that the cultural factor is crucial to any meaningful technological development. This is particularly important at a time like this when appropriate technology, rural underdevelopment, the promotion of informal sector trades remain key issues<sup>xxxiii</sup> confronting government in developing countries. The scheme should be seen, therefore, as having a substantive lesson to teach, rather than a mere footnote in the history of colonial economic policy.

## Notes and References

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- <sup>i</sup> Zurekas, Clarence, *Economic Development: An Introduction*, New York, Macmillan, 1979, p. 242.
- <sup>ii</sup> For a detailed discussion on this Issue, see J.F. Ade Ajayi, “The Cultural factor in Technological Development”, in *In Search of the Route to National Technological Development: A Compendium of Foundation Day Lectures*, FUTA, Akure, 2004, pp. 160-161.
- <sup>iii</sup> NAI, CSO 26/3638 S.3 Vol. II, p. 157.
- <sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.* p. 61.
- <sup>v</sup> NAI, Ondo Prof 1/11836B, Textile Centre, Ado-Ekiti, 1949, p.1.
- <sup>vi</sup> NAI, DCI 1/1 403 S.5, Textile Development Sectional Report 1946-52, p.1.
- <sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>viii</sup> NAI, DCI 1/1 2792, Annual Report on the general progress of Development and Welfare Scheme, 1947, p.88.
- <sup>ix</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>x</sup> *Ibid.* p.89.
- <sup>xi</sup> NAI, DCI 1/1/402, Textile Centres Area, Ado-Ekiti matters affecting 1947-1949, p.209.
- <sup>xii</sup> NAI, DCI 1/1 419/S.2, Export Market for Hand Woven Cloth (America) 1950 – 1952, p.A02.
- <sup>xiii</sup> NAI, DCI 1/1419 Vol. II, Disposal of cloth produced at Textile Centres, 1951-1952, p.50.
- <sup>xiv</sup> DCI 1/1 2792, Annual report on the general progress.
- <sup>xv</sup> NAI DCI 1/1 403 S.5, pp.30-33.
- <sup>xvi</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>xvii</sup> NAL, RG/X42. Statement on the Activities of the Department of Commerce and Industries, 1949, p.11.
- <sup>xviii</sup> J.F. Ade Ajayi, “The Cultural Factor in Technological Development”, *op cit.*, p.161.
- <sup>xix</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xx</sup> NAI, Ondo Prof 1/1 1836A, p.118.
- <sup>xxi</sup> NAI, Ondo Prof 1/3 D.34, Development of Textile Industry, 1949, p.28.
- <sup>xxii</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Interview, Chief S.A. Obayemi, 70 years, former textile assistant, TTC Ado-Ekiti, 25 Waterworks Road, Ado-Ekiti, 10/7/94.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> This opportunity was enjoyed mostly by the ex-servicemen who formed a clique of the ex-trainees
- <sup>xxv</sup> NAI, DCI/404, Textile Centre: Oyo Matters relating to, 1946-1949, p.192.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> NAI, Oyo Prof 1/1/1757, p.49
- <sup>xxvii</sup> NAI, Oyo Prof 1/1/1757, Vol. I, p.49
- <sup>xxviii</sup> NAI, Oyo Prof 1/1/1757, p.49
- <sup>xxix</sup> NAI, DCI/1 2792, Annual Report on the General Progress of Development and Welfare Scheme 1948, p. 32.
- <sup>xxx</sup> NAI, DCI/1 403 IS. 5, Textile Development Sectional Report 1946-1952, p.4.

<sup>xxx</sup> J.F. Ade Ajayi, “The Cultural Factor in Technology Development” in *In Search of the Route to National Technological Development: A Compendium of Foundation Day Lectures*, FUTA, Akure, 2004, pp. 160-161.

<sup>xxx</sup> J.F. Ade Ajayi “The Cultural Factor in Technological Development, op.cit., p.161.

<sup>xxx</sup> Peter, Kilby, *Industrialization in Open Economic: Nigeria 1945-66*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1969, pp. 303-314.