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The dilemmas of Development: Debt, International Aid and Climatic Change

Introduction

Historians, analyzing the past decades of African independence, focus on indicating the achievements of the continent. The fact cannot be denied that Africa faced certain issues during its development stages. In the past, Africa has been subjected to facing issues regarding international aid and debt, which eventually forced the nation to consider significant elements regarding the development. This essay aims to discuss the impact of debt, climatic changes and international aid on the progress of Africa.

Discussion

Debt

One of the core elements which aimed to stifle the development of Africa includes debt. Indebtedness of Africa is traceable to the critical trade terms established during the colonial period. It is argued by Nugent (449) that indebtedness has its roots during the period of slave trade. Governments did not provide sufficient support to deal with the element of debt, which attempted to create a negative impact on the continent. Despite the several efforts made by African governments related to reducing foreign debts and increasing self-sufficiency, the debts continue to rise. During the 1970s, indebtedness was subjected to a severe crisis. Stearns (109) argued that exports of Africa constantly fell due to the adverse terms of trade. The oil crisis occurred during the year 1973-1974, which significantly impacted the sub-Saharan African

countries. The crisis restricted the countries to consider a foreign exchange. The industrial world of North America and Western Europe suffered recession during the 1970s, which generated a downfall in the prices of raw materials exported from Africa. The significant increase in the prices of oil forced Africa to face difficult conditions (Nugent, 453). Various African countries focused on importing the oil needs through the foreign exchange that seemed to become quite expensive.

Numerous international banks facing high interest and high inflation rates, tend to be overflowing with a huge amount of funds finding places to lend. Governments of Africa, on the verge of bankruptcy, analyzed themselves with huge foreign debts. Structural adjustment programs (SAPs) comprise of loans provided by World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to the nations that tend to experience an economic crisis. Nugent (448) argued that solution provided by these organizations were more of a problem for the African countries. Further, during the period of colonization, Africans were denied access to various credit banks. Unfortunately, Africans were unable to possess control over their own economies. These dilemmas tend to create significant issues for the nation.

Climatic change

In the African continent, average annual rainfall has decreased since the 1950s. Climate change tends to have created certain issues for the continent. Researchers indicate that increasing atmospheric pollution creates the possibility of world climatic change. The dilemma regarding climate change exists within the African continent. Oscillation (extreme) between flood and drought, specifically in the savannah and Sahelian zones of rainfall has led to a climatic change in Africa. Some of the areas were severely damaged by drought including Ethiopia, Sudan and Chad. In the view of Nugent (480), drought can be considered one of the core causes of

emergency in Africa. Shortage of rainfall also affects the quality of life of the people. In Mozambique (drought-stricken), the rebels waged a warfare during the 1908s which led to chaos in that fertile region. In Botswana, Kalahari Desert suffered a drought, which eventually forced it to face the loss of hunting. The country of Botswana maintained an economy (stable), which based upon diamond exports and cattle. It was therefore capable of utilizing its economic reserves and infrastructure to initiate projects regarding drought-relief. It attempted to assure that despite the drought, people did not suffer from starvation and the country survived (Nugent, 480).

The historians argued that climatic changes created hurdles in the path of success of Africa. However, it strived to cope with the changes and developed new agricultural and pastoral techniques for improving the environment. One of the dilemmas observed involves that in the past, the population of Africa was much less as compared to the modern era. Now the things have changed for Africa and there is a rapid growth in population, which further includes mobility restrictions (Nugent, 481). It is argued that African governments need to come up with innovative ideas and concepts in order to deal with certain issues regarding climatic change faced by the nation. However, local solutions are present which are being implemented by the governments for the purpose of improving the environment.

International aid

International aid refers to services, money and goods provided by a country's government to assist another country. The historians and scholars often indicate that in during the past century, Africa did receive a significant amount of aid, however, the dilemma is that there is little to show whether it was utilized by the continent. It is pointed out that Africans should be blamed for not utilizing the aid in a wise manner (Stearns, 114). The emergency aid associated

with Africa has been successful in saving various lives in situations of scarcity. One of the significant concerns which must be highlighted includes that publicity regarding international funding focuses on highlighting children of Africa as suffering from starvation. This representation of Africa by media in the world's eyes is not acceptable. The occurrence of disasters forces the continent to utilize the element of disaster aid. Newly appointed leaders of Africa during the years of the 1950s and 1960s requested aid from the colonial masters (Nugent, 463). The colonial powers considered the element of debt to gain access to resources of Africa. Various types of aid to Africa were in the form of loans, which further led to indebtedness. The international banks gave reckless funding to Africa which must be considered.

Governments of Africa allowed international aids which led them to neglect the reality, that whether the nation is able to afford them. This element forced the public to consider the government as unfair. The major donors of aid started deciding the goals and objectives of Africa. It is further argued that countries of Africa are poor, as the commodity market system and international trading does not focus on paying producers of Africa enough for the resources (Stearns, 121). Even in the 21st century, it has been analyzed that Africa has to repay loans to banks more as compared to what it receives from the donors. Some of the economists now argue that there should be an end to international aid. Further, African governments should understand the significance of development planning without the element of international aid.

Conclusion

This essay highlighted dilemmas of development associated with Africa. Exploring the element of debt indicated that crisis forced Africa to cut exports to other countries and recession led the nation to face indebtedness. The dilemma regarding climatic change highlighted the factor of drought in the country. Shortage of rainfall led to critical issues within the country. Moreover, it is concluded that international aid from different institutions and countries became more of an issue for Africa rather than proposing a solution. African governments need to focus on devising local solutions which attempt to eliminate debt, foreign aid and climatic issues.

Work Cited

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