

ST Mary's Medical Charity

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Brain drain in Olofin

Brain drain is a major concern in Olofin. In fact, adolescents and young adults who stayed at home are viewed as frivolous and irresponsible. This is majorly due to the fact that there are limited opportunities in the community available to give a young person a head start. Those who are lucky to get a higher education often migrate to cities in search for job opportunities. Others who could not afford a higher education often go to cities to serve successful business people. They engage in a kind of an apprentice system in which they are practically taught the tricks of the business their bosses are into so that they gain enough experience and expertise to start their own business. Lucky ones who complete their service in good faith with their bosses for a period of between 5 – 9 years are settled by their bosses with capital that would be enough for them to start up their own business. So, considering the fact that jobs and apprentice opportunities are almost only available in the big cities, it became a general believe that every sensible and serious young person who wants to earn a moderate living would certainly leave the community to the cities. As such, brain drain becomes a certainty.

Whereas, recently, a handful of intelligent young persons have stayed back to learn some crafts such as welding, plumbing, building and so on, lack of finance to purchase all the needed tools continue to push the best hands away to cities where they can easily find a company to employ them.

Another issue that has contributed to the brain drain apart from the search for improved prospects for careers is the issues of living condition. The community has experienced so much neglect from the government that even the basic amenities such as water, light, and basic health care are difficult to access. The health center in the community has been in ruins for decades until the intervention from St. Mary's medical charities Australia that saw to restoration of access. My family and many other families spend 2 to 3 hours in search of water every day and some days, luck may run out and more hours may be needed to fetch water. These conditions lure away the best brains from the community.

Nigeria continues to suffer from brain drain in the country; rural areas such as Olofin even continue to suffer more as those who could not emigrate from the country leave the communities for big cities. No blames goes to those who choose to move out in

search of better prospects and living conditions. The blame instead goes to bad and repressive governments who have maintained a system that pushes away the most talented people and best trained professionals who would have contributed much to the development of the community. The prospect for the government to change their attitudes and to address the challenges is very minuscule. It is left altruistic individuals and organizations to invest in the community to help her to develop and retain the best brains.

Gender issues in Olofin

Olofin as much as most other communities in Nigeria embrace traditional gender role beliefs in every aspect of their lives: religion, marriage, career, politics, and so on. Being a male or a female is the predominant predicting factor of one's role in a family, one's educational and occupational choices, and so on. The female gender is considered as being inferior to that of the male gender. Females are viewed as weak and are expected to take on jobs considered soft and aspire for occupations that would place them below the males. Females are taught from childhood that their major job is to take care of the home and to answer to the male.

In a village meeting, whenever kola nut is served, any male in the midst of females is served first regardless of whether or not he is the eldest. Only males inherit the property of their father such as lands and houses. Women are expected to marry out and be taken care of by their husbands. The practice gives the male gender a great privilege and prestige. For this reason, it is very common to see men whose wives had given birth to only females live in depression; some goes ahead to take a second wife in the hope of producing a male child who would inherit their property and sustain their names. In the event of the death of a man who did not give birth to a male child, the closest living male relative to the man inherits his lands and properties; this happens even if the man has daughters.

However, some educated families have started to appreciate the female gender and accord them same respects and privileges given to their male counterparts. This gives a little hope; little in the sense that only a few are educated as the vast majority of people cannot afford post-secondary education where they can gain exposure and enlightenment enough to loose their grip unto the traditional gender role belief. This vast majority continues to use such words as woman doctor, woman lawyer, and so on. They also continue to advice against marrying an overeducated or overachieving lady who they believe would not accord due respect to their husbands or who would neglect the home. So, it does not come as a surprise when almost all females the community secondary school would want to be either a nurse, a tailor, a cashier, a secretary, a first lady, or an army officers wife whereas their male counterparts would want to become either a doctor, an engineer, a CEO, a president, or a general.

In many homes, women are to blame if there is any form of dysfunction. It's a woman's fault that her husband is an alcoholic, that the children are late to school, that there is no peace in the house; after all, it is a woman's job to keep the home. Those

upholding this belief are not just the males who benefits from it but the females also. The females in fact are the ones that would ridicule one another in the event of a deviation from the norms from any one of them. This is not only rooted in the culture but also expresses itself in every of the religious sects in the community so that it became a very sensitive issue to discuss. Changing the views might requires rigorous and punctilious mass education from the educated class in the community as members of the community holds the educated class in high reverence and seldom doubt any word from this class.

CRIME AND SECURITY CHALLENGES

One could say, “remove poverty and crime and there would be no crime in Olido”, and be considered right in a way. This is because generally, the type of crimes reported are generally hunger crimes: petty thefts, robbery, rustling, and so on; this is opposed to other forms of interpersonal violent crimes such as arson, murder, homicides, assault, etc. Most of these hunger crimes are committed by youths who are unemployed, lack support, therefore see stealing as the available options for survival. It is not rare to hear reports missing goats, palm oil, and other agricultural produce. The toughest groups among them who go to the extent of stealing household items often sell these items at a very meager price compared to the actual prices of the items.

Although, hunger can be linked to majorities of crimes (stealing) committed in the community, there are those that are due to the use of the drug, cannabis. Drug use is very common among some of the local boys. Most of the times when robberies are investigated, the culprits are usually one or a group of these boys that are known to use drugs especially cannabis. Often times, they are arrested by the police and jailed for months; however, they get back to continue their business as usual. This can be attributed to the fact that prison in Nigeria focuses more on punishment rather than rehabilitation.

Violent crimes are seldom reported in the community. That is not to deny the fact that they do not occur. The traditional belief majorly deters people from committing such crimes. Those who engage in violent crimes when caught are not only made to face the wrath of the law but are stigmatized and avoided like a plague. Olido people value a good name and one of the easiest ways to lose a good name is to be caught in a violent crime or to be associated to a violent criminal. In an entire year, it is possible to have a zero report of a violent crime. Where crimes like murder rarely occurs, crime such as rape may be under reported. Sex a sensitive topic in the community and many girls would chose not to report if raped.

Criminal investigations and security are carried out by the community watchmen. There are no government security posts in the community. Whenever the attention of the police is needed, it would require going to Ogrute, a community away from Olido which houses the local government secretariat and the divisional police station. The community watchmen are called ndi oche and are made up of all the male youths, that is, those at their final stage of adolescent to those at the middle of their adulthood. They divide themselves into four groups according to the four market days in the community each group keep watch at any one of the market days. The watch is throughout the night. At day time, a shout of “ndi oche” would attract every available watchman

as it signals danger. The watchmen go beyond the act of keeping watch to adjudicating matters between parties. Whenever they are confronted by a case beyond their capacity to handle, the police would be invited from the local government. For instance, if a violent criminal is caught at night, the person is bound and kept at the house of the watchmen's overall chief until morning before they are handed to the police. Petty thieves are usually flogged in the public or fined; when fined, they rarely pay unless they are related to a rich person.

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