

**Ejigbo migrants in Abidjan and the development of their homeland since
1960**

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Abstract

Migration is incomplete, if it is not bringing development as far as some scholars believe to either the 'mother country' or the 'host country. The Ejigbo migrants have exemplified this assertion in their sojourn in the West African States where they can be found in pocket settlement and largely in Abidjan Adjamé to be precise. Even though some scholars will argue that the development of Ejigbo town is still at a low pace as against what Ejigbo Migrants has done in Abidjan where they largely settle .It is imperative to develop a multi-disciplinary approach in this study, through the deduction of facts from oral accounts and written sources; that is, making use of archival documents, conducting interviews, and also using written materials for this research work. The research has shown that with the help of Ejigbo migrants, development could be seen in Ejigbo land.

Keywords: Development, Migration, and Diaspora

Introduction

The movement of the labor force or manpower capacity, whether in long waves of several generations, seasonal or even daily, was not introduced by colonialism. It has always been an established feature of the traditional African economy.¹It has been established in existing literature that migration is one of the important aspects of human history.²The remarkable history of people of other descents migrating to another geographical area for either temporary or permanent settlement is caused by both involuntary and voluntary factors.³The dispersion of Africans outside the continent of Africa lies in two distinct historical phases, namely old Africa Diaspora and new African Diaspora. Simply put, the African Diaspora connotes the totality of people of African descent resident outside the shores of the continent of Africa, irrespective of the manner of their outward migration, which could be either involuntary or voluntary.⁴During the first phase of this movement, known as the old Africa diaspora, Africans were compelled into bondage and forced labour in Europe,

¹A.G. Hopkins. 1973, *An Economic History of West Africa*. Great Britain; Longman Group London. P. 20

²See O.H. Adebodun, 2016, *Ejigbo Migrants Women in Abidjan, Cote d' Ivoire 1902-2010*. M.A. Dissertation submitted to Department of the History University of Ibadan.

³Tunde Babawale 2008. *Africa and African Diaspora Relations: challenges, opportunities, and prospects*. Lagos: Nigeria, Malthouse Press Limited. CBAAC Occasional Monograph- No. 10

⁴ D. Dennis, Cordell, W. Joel Gregory, Victor Piche, 1996. *Hoe and Wage: A Social History of a Circular migration System in West African*. World View Press, New York. p.6



Americans, and the Caribbean to contribute to the economic development of these societies. In the second phase, known as the new African Diaspora, Africans emigrated willingly to fulfill their dreams and to seek ways of improving their life chances. Within this second phase, of African Diaspora, the reasons for the movement are summed up as pull and push factors of international migration. In this paper, discussion will be restricted to Ejigbo people in Abidjan, Cote d' Ivoire.⁵

Historically, the migration and settlement of the Ejigbo people in Cote d' Ivoire could be traced to the colonial period. The first set of Ejigbo migrants in the country were Alabi Emmanuel and Alhaji Muthahiru Saraki (Lawure). These two men were said to have migrated to *Ajase* town in Port Novo which was about 744km from Port Novo to Abidjan in around the 1900s. Having settled at Port Novo for a while and learned the French language. They saw those who arrived from Abidjan to Port Novo with this noble profession of trading commodities this single act attracted them to venture into the trading profession likewise. Due to their prosperity, both Alabi and Lawure decided to join in the trading business, which led to their migration and settlement in Abidjan.⁶ Subsequently several generations of Ejigbo migrants settlement in Abidjan, especially from the post-colonial period. It is against this background that this research paper examined the migration and settlement of skilled Ejigbo migrants in Abidjan since 1960.

Conceptual clarification

Migration

This is the movement of people, from one place, region, or country to another, particularly intending to make either temporary or permanent settlements in a new location. The movement may involve individual, few, or large numbers of people living their own country of origin to another area or country, for socio-political, economic, and security reasons.⁷ Although people have used this word interchangeably, i.e. Migration and Migrants it should be noted that the words are of different meanings. Rasheed Olaniyi, sees migration in a broad sense, in that human migration is a permanent movement of an individual or group over a significant distance.⁸

This working definition leaves the key terms "permanent movement" and "significant distance" to be explained, and they are variously defined according to arbitrarily chosen criteria. Although the significance of the distance is usually measured geographically, it can be determined by social criteria, for example, a farmer who moves to a city apartment within the same country probably

⁵Tunde Babawale 2008. *Africa and African Diaspora Relations: challenges, opportunities, and prospects*. Lagos: Nigeria, Malthouse Press Limited. CBAAC Occasional Monograph-No. 10

⁶ O.H. Adebodun, 2016, *Ejigbo Migrants Women in Abidjan, Cote d' Ivoire 1902-2010*. M.A. Dissertation submitted to Department of the History University of Ibadan.

⁷ B. Sofela, 2011, *Diaspora Study*. An unpublished lecture material at Osun State University, (Uniosun)

⁸ R.O. Olaniyi 2008 *Diaspora is not like Home: A social and economic history of Yoruba in Kano,1912-1999*. Europa: Lincom GmbH

changes his life more drastically than those who move from an apartment in Ibadan to one in Lagos. Taking into account short movements that are socially significant, most analysts agree that migration must include at least a relatively permanent change of community.⁹ Movements that involve only a temporary change of residence are generally considered non-migratory. These include nomadism, for the nomad has no fixed home and seasonal movement as of farmworkers who follow the growing season.

Diaspora

The term 'Diaspora' could be identified as a group of people who share the same ethnic and cultural affiliations, and who lived in a particular region or geographical divide other than the area they originally come from. The concept of Diaspora is used to describe a community that has a history of migration, possesses distinctive cultural practices that distinguished it from the host community, and maintains cultural ties with the homeland. Although the term refers to the physical dispersal of the Jews throughout the world, it also carries religious, philosophical, political, and eschatological connotations in as much as the Jews perceive a special relationship between the land of Israel and themselves.¹⁰

Furthermore, the term 'Diaspora' is used here synonymously with dispersion, deriving inspiration from the Jewish concept of Diaspora enshrined in the Bible, that is, Deuteronomy 28verse 25 which says that: "The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: Thou shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and shall be moved into all the kingdoms of the earth".¹¹The term comes from the Septuagint translations of the Book of Deuteronomy concerning the Jews, but, as Professor George Shepperson has observed, while it might not be said that the African peoples have been dispersed into all the kingdoms and countries of the world, 'they have certainly migrated to a very large number of them'.¹² Since the 1970s, Diaspora was used sociologically to denote people living far away from their ancestral or cultural homeland to capture the group-related institutionalization and the evolving multicultural society.¹³ However, Armstrong is of the view that the term Diaspora is applied to any ethnic group which lacks a territorial base within a given polity.¹⁴ According to Professor Tunde Babawale, he conceptualized Diaspora using the African concept to say that African Diaspora connotes the totality of people of African descent resident outside the shores of the continent of Africa, irrespective of the manner of their outward migration be it forced or

⁹ B. Sofela, 2011, Diaspora Study. An unpublished lecture material at Osun State University, (Uniosun)

¹⁰ B. Sofela, 2011, Diaspora Study. An unpublished lecture material at Osun State University, (Uniosun)

¹¹King James Version edition

¹²G. Shepperson, 'The African Abroad or the Africa of the Diaspora' in *Emerging Themes of African History*. T.O. Ranger (ed), Nairobi 1968. P.152.

¹³R.O. Olaniyi, 2008. *Diaspora is Not Like Home: A Social and Economic History of Yoruba in Kano, 1912-1999*. Muenchen, Germany: Lincom Europa, p.14

¹⁴ J. Armstrong, 1976, "Mobilised and Proletarian Diaspora," In *American Political Science Review*, 70, (2) p.313

voluntary and at different points in time.¹⁵He further explains that in the first phase of this movement, Africans were compelled into bondage and forced to labour in Europe, the Americas, and the Caribbean to contribute to the realization of other people's dreams. While in the second phase, Africans emigrated willingly to fulfill their dream and to seek ways of improving their life chances.¹⁶However, this research paper attempts a discussion of Ejigbo migrants who wilily migrated mainly to seek greener pasture for the betterment of themselves not to achieved some else dream also this paper r write purely from the perspective of an untapped, but the highly desirable wealth of resources which could be of immerse significant in developing Ejigbo town in Osun state.

Development

In common parlance, development could be defined as growth, growth on, the other hand, is anything that moves from zero (0) level to another level which makes it to be a means to an end.¹⁷ Development in humans is a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being. It can also be described as a process through which the potentialities of an object or organism a realized until it reached its natural, complete, full-fledged form. It can also be described as growth plus change and the key quality of people's life.¹⁸For years, scholars and economists believed that the yardstick for measuring development was in the national wealth of a country or a state as the case may be. This is usually expressed in the gross domestic product (GDP) of the individual state. This expression aimed at the development known as the growth first approach state that "if economic activity faster than the population, then there are more goods and services in circulation per person"¹⁹ and this "...indicates that the country-taken as a whole –is more prosperous".²⁰

An attempt to further understand the concept of development takes us to Walter Rodney who argued that development can best be discussed under economic growth, which is the state of improvement in the society where the available resources are felt among the people. It is regarded as an achievement of personal development which is very much tied to the state of the society as a whole. Development to Rodney is an increase in capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships.²¹ Therefore, it could be deduced that there is no development in the society where there exists no personal development,

¹⁵T. Babawale, 2008, Africa and African Diaspora Relations: challenges, opportunities, and prospects.CBAAC Occasional Monograph No.10. p.6.

¹⁶T. Babawale, 2008, Africa and African Diaspora Relations: challenges, opportunities, and prospects.CBAAC Occasional Monograph No.10. p.6.

¹⁷B. Sofela. The Political economy of Latin America unpublished manuscript.

¹⁸The World fact-book, Argentina last on 17th September 2014.

¹⁹Charles H. Blake, *Politics in Latin America: The Quest for Development, Liberty, and Government*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005, p.81.

²⁰Charles H. Blake, *Politics in Latin America: The Quest for Development, Liberty, and Government*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.p.81

²¹W.Rodney. 1973. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Tanzania:Dar-es-Salaam Publishing House.p.10

as development should go a long way in affecting or changing the lives of individuals or peasants.

As rightly pointed out by Rodney, the term development is used in an exclusive economic sense, the justification being that the type of economy is itself an index of other social features; thus development simply shows that a society develops economically when its resources are being enjoyed by all members of the society. From the forgoing on development, it could be seen that the people of Ejigbo which is considered in this paper have directly and indirectly contributed to the underdevelopment of Ejigbo town although this single fact might not go down well with the people because the majority of them believe that once they travel to Abidjan their financial proceeds will be sent back to Ejigbo to develop the town. But the fact remains that, most people only consider this if they have siblings in Ejigbo town which fall between the unproductive age bracket toddler i.e. either they are still very young or pretty old to turn whatever income they are generating to developing Ejigbo land.

Historicising Ejigbo migrants in Abidjan 1902

Ejigbo indigenes are well-traveled and this has made it possible for the people to possess dual-nationalities, particularly considering their movement from Ejigbo town in Osun State, Nigeria, to Abidjan in Cote d' Ivoire. The trajectory of the Ejigbo people in Abidjan resonates with a popular saying: "wherever the Almighty God has destined one to be, such person will be and will always find favour in the sight of God."²² While a respondent asserts that just as the male folks were interested in the movements so also were the females not left behind in the business of buying and selling.²³ Their long history of international emigration, particularly to Cote d' Ivoire, with the establishment of ECOWAS in 1975 created a border-less ECOWAS due to the frequent traveling experience they had over the years. This has also influenced their language pattern.²⁴ The people are versed in foreign languages such as *Dioulain* Mali, *Ewe* in Togo, and even *Asante* in Ghana. For example, in many cities and towns in Côte d'Ivoire, the Ejigbo people have a community leader they refer to as Oba, such as Oba Bouake, ObaAbobo, Oba Dabou, Oba Grand Bassam, ObaTreichville to mention but a few. The Oba who resides in Adjamé, suburb of Abidjan, is called the "ObaAbidjan", he is regarded as the paramount Ejigbo community leader of Côte d'Ivoire.²⁵ These Obas perform intermediary roles between the government and its subjects.

²²Interview with Mr.JimohAjimuyideen, transporter of Bobo Musher Int. Transport (B.M.T). At Ejigbo. November

²³Interview with Chief AjayiOsolo of Ejigboland, on November 12, 2015, at Ejigbo.

²⁴Interview with AlhajiAdekunleAdebisiBashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

²⁵ Interview with Professor Kasali Adeyemi Oyolola (President of Ejigbo Parapo in Cote d' Ivoire) Age 62, on 11-03-2016

Skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers in Abidjan

As at 2016, the finding has revealed that about sixty-two percent of Ejigbo migrants are traders, or better put, they occupy the trading sector in Abidjan while about ten percent occupy the teaching profession where Professor Oyelola has distinguished himself as the Best surgeon in the country.²⁶ More so, about eight percent of Ejigbo migrants occupy investment and five percent are clerics (serving as spiritual fathers). The importance of farming cannot be underestimated regarding the Ejigbo people in Abidjan, because Cote d' Ivoire is known as the largest cocoa nation in West Africa. Hence, the reason why some Ejigbo migrants are seen in that occupation, they make up about ten percent.²⁷

As information technology is fast growing and most nations of the world are investing heavily taking advantage of its process. Little wonder Ejigbo migrants also occupy about five percent of Information technology firms, unlike the indigenes who dominate the industry while only two percent of Ejigbo migrants are in Legal science. From the foregoing, it is clear that Ejigbo migrants occupied and dominant the economic sector more than any other section. Even though, it was said that its first, second, and third generations of Ejigbo migrants that were largely involved in the farming cash crops paved ways for the recent generation to be learned.

Means by which Ejigbo people migrated to Abidjan from 1975

In discussing the means by which Ejigbo people migrated to Abidjan it will be imperative to consider the transportation system in Ejigbo town as a factor that encouraged the people in moving in large numbers. Transportation is the movement of goods and persons from one place to the other. Ejigbo migration to Abidjan was made possible with the establishment of a transport system made available with the likes of Omo Yaro Transport (O.Y.T)²⁸, Chief Laba Transport (C.L.T), Bully Orelope Transport (B.O.T), Bobo Musher Transport (B.M.T)²⁹, Kaptain International Transport (K.I.T), Iwa Eda Transport (I.E.T), Anu Oluwa Transport (A.O.T), Yoyin Transport (Y.T), Dan Graji Transport (D.G.T), A.I.T, to mention but a few³⁰, the journey of the Ejigbo migrants to Abidjan covers about nine hundred and sixty-four Kilometers³¹ i.e. five hundred and ninety-nine miles that each transports company mentioned above takes to travel to Abidjan.³² This further collaborates the fact that Ejigbo people were moving out of Ejigbo town in droves with the available transport system

²⁶Interview with Alhaji Adekunle Adebisi Bashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

²⁷Interview with Alhaji Adekunle Adebisi Bashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

²⁸ Interview with Mr. Nathanael Ogundotun, a trader in Ejigbo, Age 50, on 16-05-2017

²⁹Interview with Alhaji Adekunle Adebisi Bashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

³⁰It was gathered in the field that the transportations companies in Ejigbo number above twenty, which cannot all be mentioned here, in order not to bore the readers

³¹Interview with Alhaji Adekunle Adebisi Bashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

³² Interview with Mrs. Ashiata Alaoode. Ejigbo indigene Age 50, on 05-02-2016, at Ejigbo

provided as mentioned above, which has hindered the development of Ejigbo town.³³

Even though statistical information on Ejigbo migrants is scanty and it is, therefore, difficult to access with a reasonable degree of accuracy the number of people involved in this movement of population, yet there is authentic information about the direction of the major inter-territorial flows. Given the fact that each transport company could carry about sixty-two (62) passengers or more in a bus then one can say sixty-two multiplied by the numbers of vehicles³⁴ numbers that will leave from Ejigbo to Abidjan in a week. That is a lot of Brain Drain that has kept the Ejigbo town from developing from what it is expected to be to what it is today.³⁵

It should be noted that most transport companies in Ejigbo have more than one bus that plies the route to Abidjan. Then it will be safe to say that the above figure gotten multiplied by the number of Transport Companies plying the route from Ejigbo to Abidjan.³⁶ This means that a great number of Ejigbo people leave Ejigbo town to Abidjan within age sixteen to forty-five (16-45), which represent the prime age(s) of production.³⁷ This which means that if they had stayed back in Ejigbo, Ejigbo town would have developed beyond extensively It should be noted that the frequent movement of Ejigbo migrants to Abidjan was mainly for economic purposes, as most people in this category were traders who buy from Nigeria to sell in Abidjan or buy from Abidjan to sell in Nigeria.³⁸

The case of Professor Kasali Adeyemi Oyololawho is of Ejigbo origin but was born in Abidjan is renowned medical personnel and medical director in Felix Houphouet-Boigny, University in Cote d' Ivoire where he is highly respected because of his contributions over the years in the field of Medicine in the country.³⁹ While Ejigbo town lacks good medical care while Professor Kasali is a medical director in Felix Houphouet-Boigny University in Cote d' Ivoire. Although, he is part of those who contributed to the development of Ejigbo town the point here is that if he is based in Ejigbo, Ejigbo town would have developed beyond what it is now in terms of health care delivery.⁴⁰

Another underpinning fact about Ejigbo low pace of development is the fact that it has only one local government⁴¹ even though Ejigbo has other communities

³³Interview with AlhajiAdekunleAdebisiBashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

³⁴While Mr. Nathanael Ogundotun, trader in Ejigbo, Age 50, on 16-05-2017 has opined that the transport companies in Ejigbo are more than twenty in numbers

³⁵Interview with AlhajiAdekunleAdebisiBashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

³⁶Interview with Chief Bully Orelope the Chairman of B.O.T. Transport, in Abidjan, Age 61, 20-03-2016

³⁷ Observation from fieldwork carried out from Ejigbo to Abidjan 2010-2017

³⁸ Interview with Mrs.AshiataAlaode. Ejigbo indigene Age 50, 05-02-2016.

³⁹Interview with AlhajiAdekunleAdebisiBashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

⁴⁰ Observation from fieldwork carried out from Ejigbo to Abidjan 2010-2017

⁴¹Interview with AlhajiAdekunleAdebisiBashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

under it like Ede and Iwo⁴², some scholars have argued that the population of Ejigbo indigenes in Abidjan far outnumber those that live in Ejigbo town itself. According to the 2006 census the population of Ejoigbo town is about two hundred thousand while Ejoigbo emigrants in Abidjan number over eight hundred thousand.⁴³ Some believe that the lack of development in Ejigbo town is directly connected to its relationship with Abidjan. This is in spite of its prominence since the early 1950's.⁴⁴ Although, there has been strong attempts regarding the creation of more local government from as early as 1982 it is obvious that several factors are impeding this process.^{45,46}

A clear indication of the low pace of development of Ejigbo town as far back as the 1950s could be seen in the Five years Development Plans put in place during the colonial era. In the words of Mr. Mogbesola II, The Elejigbo of Ejigbo through his letter to the Asst. District Officer, Ogbomoso on 22 July 1952 with regards to the 5-year developmental plans aspired for Ejigbo town, he writes:

Concerning your Letters Nos. 1179/7 of 27 June, and 147/11 of 21 July 1952, respectively, we have to inform you that our Finance Committee members, with the Assistant District Officer, Ejigbo, sat down last year to prepare the Five years' development plan for the progress of this N.A, because we were not financially strong; the whole subject was tabled pending further discussion. We will take up the subject for discussion again to see if we will be able to have the whole thing done. We will inform you as soon as possible, what we can do about it.⁴⁷(sic)

Some have contended that young indigenes of Ejigbo who visited Abidjan often do not return because of the lure of the opportunities available to them there. Parents also worsened the situation because they also do not encourage their wards to return to Nigeria citing the lack of opportunities.⁴⁸ Several respondents have also maintained that if this migration had been prevented, Ejoigbo would have attained a more reasonable level of development than its present state.⁴⁹ Ejigbo indigenes nevertheless have formed unions in Abidjan through the Ejigbo *Parapo* in Abidjan where they meet on daily basis to discuss the stagnation of Ejigbo town where they can come in to help.

⁴² Interview with Mr. Nathanael Ogundotun, a trader in Ejigbo, Age 50, on 16-05-2017

⁴³<http://population.mongabay.com/population/nigeria/2343784/ejigbo>.

⁴⁴ Interview with Alhaji Adekunle Adebisi Bashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

⁴⁵ One of the major power that has been hindering the development process in Ejigbo town is said to be the monarchical head in Ejigbo town whose fear of loosening the tribute and respect that still accrued to them not to comes has

⁴⁶ Interview with Alhaji Adekunle Adebisi Bashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

⁴⁷ NAI, File No: 1970, Ejigbo Native Authority Five Years Development Plan.

⁴⁸ Interview with Alhaji Adekunle Adebisi iBashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

⁴⁹ Interview with Mr. Musbau Bello, a trader in Ejigbo Town. Age bracket of 54, on 16-05-2017

Ejigbo migrants in Abidjan and the development of their homeland

Remittances by Africans from the Diaspora to the continent are substantial because Africa needs to exploit this wealth of financial, technical, and intellectual expertise to tackle the myriads of challenges of development and economic growth.⁵⁰

Remittance is the transfer of money by a foreign worker to an individual in his or her home country. The financial support gotten from Abidjan by Ejigbo migrants to Ejigbo town competes among the largest financial inflows towards the development of Ejigboland. Migrants have utilised the instrumentality of money transfer to send funds to Ejigboland for educational needs of relatives and other infrastructural developments. These have been carried out without their physical presence .⁵¹

These transactions were aided by the presence of Skye Bank in Abidjan which also has a presence in Ejigbo because of Osun State University.⁵² The Ogiyan Microfinance remains another notable financial institution that the people of Ejigbo have credited with enabling the excellent flow of financial transaction between indigenes and those in Diaspora. This state of affairs has remained in spite of the presence of Omoluabi Bank .⁵³

Figure 1. Ogiyan Microfinance Bank



Source: Author 2017

It's also important to observe that both the Ogiyan microfinance Bank and Ayofade Bank were the results of the efforts of the indigenes of Ejigbo to further

⁵⁰Tunde Babawale, 2008 *Africa and African Diaspora Relations: challenges, opportunities and prospects*. CBAAC Occasional Monograph. No. 10. Pg.28-29

⁵¹Interview with AlhajiAdekunleAdebisiBashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

⁵²Interview with Mr. Musbau Bello, Mr. Sikiru, Mrs. Ajijat, and Mrs. Monsurat traders in Ejigbo Town. All in the Age bracket of 54-55, on 16-05-2017

⁵³Interview with Mr. Musbau Bello, Mr. Sikiru, Mrs. Ajijat, and Mrs. Monsurat traders in Ejigbo Town. All in the Age bracket of 54-55, on 16-05-2017

advance the cause of their people at home and in the Diaspora. These banks are largely staffed Ejigbo indigene.⁵⁴

Critical to the Ejigbo Diaspora is the fact that Ejigbo migrants in Abidjan still form a union in Abidjan through the Ejigbo *Parapo* in Abidjan where they meet on regular basis to discuss the stagnation or simply put the underdevelopment state of Ejigbo town where they can come in to help ⁵⁵. **EJIGBO PARAPO** meaning **EJIGBO SETTLERS COMING TOGETHER** with the motto: *Ilu Ejigbo konibajeooo, o bajeti!!!* Meaning *Ejigbo land will not get destroyed*. From the motto of the above organization, there is a clear distinction of what the organization stands for or what it represents. That all the coming together was to promote the interest of the entire Ejigbo land, right there in Abidjan using all their resources to develop that common interest that the motto of the organization spelled out to achieve, which is one of the concerted efforts put in place to ensure that Ejigbo town is developed.

It is important to point out at this juncture that the formation of Ejigbo Parapo was the joint efforts of both men and women from Ejigbo town.⁵⁶The women realized that if there is a formidable association that will cater to their needs and pursues their interest in Abidjan the women folks will benefit more from the association which was one of the major reasons why the association got the backing of the women in its formation from the onset. From all indications from the field, it seems there was a pre-formation of Ejigbo Parapo in Ejigbo town in 2010 before the initial establishment of Ejigbo Parapo in Abidjan in 2011.⁵⁷

It should be noted that Ejigbo Parapo was established on the 27th March 2011 at about the period when peace was restored to Abidjan. Their memberships were very few and they were about thirty (30) people when it was established compared to what it is today where it has over two hundred thousand members and still counting. Though it was said that many Ejigbo people were yet to return to Abidjan from Ejigbo, as at the time the association was to be formed, but they all gave their support to the establishment of the Ejigbo Parapo especially the women folks. Those on the ground laid the foundation of the structure of what Ejigbo Parapo is today.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Emblem here means that it is the representative symbol of the Ejigbo people because another name the people are known for is Ogiyan people taking from their oral tradition, more so, the founder's name is Ogiyan which becomes what the people are known for to date.

⁵⁵Parapo means coming together e.i. Ejigbo people coming together for the betterment of Ejigbo land or Ejigbo town

⁵⁶ Observation from the field

⁵⁷ Interview with Her Excellency Ifeoma J. Akabogu-Chinwuba (mni) formal Ambassador du Nigeria en Cote d' Ivoire on 15-03-2016

⁵⁸ Interview with AlhajiAdekunleAdebisiBashiru (Chairman of Adjamé commune in Abidjan i.e. first magistrate of Nigeria in Adjamé) Age, 57, on 11-03-2016

Figure 2. Ejigbo Banner in Abidjan in front of the Ejigbo Parapo Office

Source: Author Abidjan 2016.

Through this association little development can now be seen in Ejigbo town, the case of Alhaji Lias Ajibade who is one of the important figures of Ejigbo Parapo in Abidjan gave the sum of fifty (50) million naira to build a modern hospital that will serve the health interest of Ejigbo people. It is a welcome idea that was geared to develop the land of Ejigbo. Aside from the money given he has bought land about an acre for the same purpose.⁵⁹ This was in conjunction with the fact that Ejigbo has some of the best Medical personnel in Abidjan in the person of Prof. Adeyemi Oyolola who has proposed to send a qualified Medical team to Ejigbo from Abidjan to improve the medical condition of Ejigbo people.⁶⁰ Mr. Timothy Adegboyega has been credited with building a company that produce lubricants and package water called Owama water in Ejigbo town with street light which has been installed within the Palace area of Ejigbo town. Alhaji Lias Ajibade also promise the Ejigbo people that he will see to the road construction that has posed a challenge to the people of Ejigbo.

Conclusion

The competitive movement of Ejigbo people out of Ejigbo town has a resulted in the Economic prosperity of Abidjan, where the Ejigbo migrants regard as their "Small London" even though some scholars believe that this singular act has drained thousands of capable hands that would have developed Ejigbo town. Though, in recent times Ejigbo migrants are waking up to the challenges that Ejigbo town has to be developed with the advent of Ejigbo Parapo in Abidjan According to the motto of the association ***Ilu Ejigbo konibajeooo, o bajeti!!!*** Meaning ***Ejigbo land will not get destroyed migrants are making efforts to fulfill this.***

⁵⁹Interview with Mr. Musbau Bello and Mrs. Monsurat Bello traders in Ejigbo Town. All in the Age bracket of 49-54, on 16-05-2017

⁶⁰ Interview with Mr. Nathanael Ogundotun, a trader in Ejigbo, Age 50, on 16-05-2017

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Interview with Mrs AshiataAlaooode. Ejigbo indigene Age 50, on 05-02-2016, at Ejigbo

Interview with Mr. Nathanael Ogundotun, trader in Ejigbo, Age 50, on 16-05-2017 has opined that the transport companies in Ejigbo are more than twenty in numbers

Interview with Mr. Musbau Bello, a traders in Ejigbo Town. Age bracket of 54, on 16-05-2017

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