EXPLORING TOWN AND GOWN RECIPROCAL LINKAGE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY, KASHERE

BY

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**Abstract**

Meaningful and sustainable development can only be actualized if the basic and essential frontier needs of any target society are addressed. In respect to Town and Gown, mutual reciprocal linkage must exist in order to achieve this success. This paper examined the synergy between Kashere (Town) and Federal University, Kashere (Gown). The study used both primary and secondary data sources. Conflict theory was adopted to explain the reciprocal linkage for sustainable development between Kashere the host community and the Federal University Kashere. Findings of this study revealed that a complimentary relationship exist between Kashere (Town) and the Federal University, Kashere (Gown). Whereas the University has benefited from the town in no small measure, in the same vein, the University has influenced tremendously on its host communities. The establishment of Federal University, Kashere in 2011, has brought about increase in human population and economic activities in Kashere and the entire Pindiga Emirate in General. Other notable changes are on the traditional occupations of the people and pressure on existing frontier infrastructures (housing accommodation, road, water and power) within the town and its environs. The study recommended amongst others, that the University build staff quarters and school that will cushion the perennial residency problem faced by majority of its staff who shuttle between Gombe and Kashere daily. The University Entrepreneurial Development Center should organize training of school dropouts/ leavers in various skill acquisition programmes. Faculty of Agriculture of the University should assist famers and herders in areas of procurement of improved seedlings, fertilizers and vaccines at subsidized rates, thereby sustaining the traditional occupation of the people. The trio of Town, Gown and Security agencies should collaborate to establish a joint security task force geared towards sustaining the existing relative peace and security within the Town and Gown communities.

Key Words: Town, Gown, Reciprocal Linkage, Development.

**Introduction**

Many cities have universities located within their jurisdictions, yet many do not take advantage of the benefits that working with a university can bring. In order to bring about laudable and sustainable development in all spheres of life, there must be a mutual reciprocal linkage between the Town and Gown (Roger L. Kemp, 2013). In the same vein, Okaba and Okolo (2010) are of the view that for any development project or efforts to be sustainable and therefore meaningful, it must address the basic and essential needs of the target society. It is important to note that a complementary relationship exists between universities and their host communities. University as a formal institution is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, discoveries verified and perfected and rashness rendered innocuous, and error pushed by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge (John Henry Newman, 1801-1890 cited in Okecha, 2008). It is no fallacy and there is no gainsaying the fact that all organizations be it profit driven or not, operate in a given physical and geographical environment, and participate in the affairs of their host communities.

A university in a rural or semi urban setting is the backbone of the economy of the host community and by extension the surrounding communities. However, the university also depends on the peace and security that prevails in the host community and the environs, in order for it to carry out its mandates of teaching, research and community services. Universities are established to promote deliberate and voluntary teaching and learning, conduct research and foster community service. Orubu (2016) argued that the most important trans-boundary effect of town and gown nexus are driven from the output of research efforts in universities as centers of higher learning. As records show, the most famous discoveries in the world have come from university- based research and this takes the town-gown nexus beyond local boundaries, in as much as the innovation arising from all such research outputs benefits the world as a whole.

The enormity of these tasks therefore makes it imperative to explore the benefits of the reciprocal linkage for sustainable development between the host communities (Town) and the university community (Gown). The concept of town and gown was employed to describe the synergy between tertiary educational institutions and the host communities to such institutions. The town (Kashere) has provided land and other frontier infrastructures to the Gown (Federal University Kashere) for the furtherance of academic development in the society, in the same vein, the gown (FUK) has also impacted on the social, economic and political sphere of the host community and environs.

There is no gain saying the fact that Kashere has received continuous environmental inference (anthropogenic activities) from man since the establishment of the Federal University, Kashere(FUK).this in effect has considerably stimulate comfort and congenial lifestyle of the host communities.

**Theoretical Framework**

Many theories can be applied in explaining the reciprocal relationship between town and gown. Theories like corporate social responsibility, structural functionalism and social exchange are not out of place. The most appropriate theoretical explanation adopted in this study is the conflict theory. Conflict theory has its origin from the works of scholars such as Karl Marx, Ralph Dahrendorf and Lewis Coser among others. However, Karl Marx is the major proponent of conflict theory. The basis of Marx’s ideology is materialism where economic factors determine every other sphere of life. For Marx, the mode of production is the foundation of any society

Society, according to Marx, comprised a moving balance of esthetical forces that generate social change by their tension and struggle…….struggle rather than peaceful growth was the engine of progress, strife was the father of all things and social conflict the core of historical process. (Coser, 1971).

In the same vein Wallace and Wolf (1982) are of the view that the general orientation of conflict

Incorporates three central and connected assumptions:

1. The first is that people have a number of basic interests in things they want and attempt to acquire and which are not defined by societies but rather common to them all.
2. Central to the whole conflict perspective is an emphasis on power as the core of social relationship. Conflict theorists always view power not only as scarce and unequally divided- and therefore a source of conflict but also as essentially coercive. This analysis leads in turn to a concern with the distribution of those resources that give people more or less power.
3. Ideas and values are seen as weapons used by different groups to advance their own ends rather than as means of defining a whole society’s identity and goals. People develop ideas to suit their own interests.

Whereas Karl Marx is of the opinion that the division between the owners and the non owners of property, was the only significant groups in society and the major source of conflict, Max Weber argued strongly that there could be numerous division within the two basic classes identified by Karl Marx. However, contemporary scholars extended conflict theory beyond economic variables or the relationship between capitalists and workers.

The focus now is on how opposing interest permeate every sector of society be it a small group, and organizations a community or entire society. From a conflict perspective, the establishment of tertiary institution in a community produces tension and conflict because of opposing views, philosophies and interests between the town and gown. Conflict theorists are of the opinion that tertiary institutions engendered urbanization, industrialization and population explosion which results in the influx of people with diverse cultures and background and orientation to the host communities, and this is capable of generating conflict between the duo which could be inimical to peaceful coexistence and impede sustainable development (Omadjohwofe, 2016). To draw convincing connection between conflict theory and town-gown reciprocal linkage for development, there are two major aspects that will be examined. First, there was conflicting interest as regards the location of the Federal University, Kashere. Whereas Gombe town being the state capital deemed it befitting to host the university, Kashere town on the other hand stood her ground of the right of host community to the university as specified by the act establishing the institution. The state Governor then, an indigene of Kashere deemed it fit to locate the university in his place kashere haven cited the State owned university in Gombe the state capital. This conflict though not violent, slowed down pace of the infrastructural development of the university vis-à-vis Kashere town.

Secondly, as postulated by Orubu (2016) that since communities provide the land on which universities are located, indigenous population will always want to have all benefits flowing back to them. Kashere community and indeed the entire Pindiga Emirate expected preferential treatment in terms of employment, admission of students and even in the award of contracts to procure university works, goods and services at the expense of other external contractors who may be more qualified .The argument here is because the indigenes of Kashere sacrificed their farmlands and other structures for the smooth take –off, of the Federal university, Kashere. These conflicts are normal, because economic and social groups with conflicting interests and values are bound to clash from time to time.

**The Concept of Town and Gown**

The concept 0f town and gown is a metaphor that refers to two different social configurations. Put differently, Town and Gown represents two dissimilar communities of a university and a town. The town refers to the host community to the academic institution, a non-academic population. While gown represents the academic institution within the town. The traditional conception of the Town and Gown relationship has a historical underpinning. Lawrence et at (2010) observed that universities were often located in rural (frequently remote) areas far removed from the economic and social problems of the broader society. Universities promoted themselves as elite bastions of information and knowledge. Professors and students attired in their academic gowns were as distinct from townsfolk. This separation is captured in the often-invoked expression: “town and gown”. The metaphor has continued to be used in the literature to describe attitude and mode of social interaction in modern university cities and towns with some other types of institutions of higher learning A historical explanation of town and gown according to Hay (1989) revealed that a large number of the medieval universities in Europe operated under ecclesiastical (mainly the Catholic Church) authority. Consequently, students admitted usually held clerical positions, and it was the tradition of the universities for their students to wear gabs closely resembling those won by the church clergy. It is this gab that eventually evolved into the tradition of wearing the academic gown that are won along the hood and the cap that has remained a common practice among universities on occasions such as matriculations and convocations till date.

Another historical explanation of Town and Gown was that the typical medieval centre of higher learning was more integrated into the city than in the case of Plato’s academy. It is no accident that it was established within the city, as its existence required a permanent population and an infrastructure that included a vibrant market place and a system of governance (Orubu, 2016).He further explained that the typical student population was therefore larger, while the system of instruction involved was not necessarily monastic or domiciliary. Thus, the learning environment at the same time provided a special framework for social interaction, as most students took lodging in the university town.

Jimoh (2016) is of the opinion that the vital component of development can be credited to array of factors such as resources (physical and human) and methods of human governance among others. In essence, the town and gown concept has a reciprocal relationship with development as the activities in former influence the wellbeing of the people in the larger community.

**Importance of University-Community Innovative Partnership**

Innovation is conceived as a new approach or technology that positively alters the operation of a service, programme or administration process (Reviere et al., 1996). Aspects of innovation such as creativity, organizational improvement and knowledge building remain integral to the concept. In the past four years, the economic and social problem of Kashere town has continued to increase and infiltrate the university campus. Despite such a turbulent history, the last three years has witnessed a new dawn in the creation of university- community innovative partnership. Based on the increasing rate of social problems, town and Gown are creating innovative collaboration at an exponential rate geared towards tackling these social problems and engendering a sustainable synergy between the two.

For any university-community partnership to succeed, there are some factors that must prevail. Salamon (2002) noted that the importance of synergistic partnership can be based on seven factors considered essential amongst others: (1) Service Learning, (2) Service Provision, (3) Faculty involvement, (4) Student Volunteerism, (5) Community in the classroom, (6) Applied Research and (7) Major institutional change. The Federal university Kashere has achieved a tremendous success through her application of service learning activities as part of student’s regular coursework. The service learning initiative adopted by gown has helped the students to educate the town of the basic needs of gown community, emphasizing on the larger problem such as architectural design and affordable housing for both students and staff. In the last two years, there has been a great shift from the traditional architecture of the host community to modern architectural designs.

Adams (2003) asserts that faculty involvement takes the form of individual initiatives where faculty becomes the driving force behind particular community activities. Faculty involvement is another area of success as regards innovative university- community partnership in Kashere. Faculty of Agriculture of the Federal university, Kashere has made its services available and affordable to farmers in the host communities especially during cultivation and harvest seasons. There has been a paradigm shift from traditional methods in the area of farming to modern methods, as the university now assists with tractors for clearing and cultivation of farm lands which is gradually replacing the traditional use of cows. Several workshops have also been organized by the faculty of agriculture geared towards educating the town farmers on the use of improved seedlings, application of fertilizer, pesticides and effective storage techniques.

**Contributions of Town to Gown**

Despite the herculean task of developing the Gombe state University (GSU) by the state government, Gombe state government maintained a cordial supportive and developmental relationship with the Federal University, Kashere. The university received donations both in cash and infrastructures from the Gombe state government and other distinguished individuals. Table 1.1 below provides some significant insight to these contributions.

**Table 1.1 Projects and Services Pledged**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Donor** | **Project/Services** | **Remark** |
| 1 | Gombe State Government | Donated **127** hectares of land for the take off of the university in 2011. | Redeemed |
| 2 | Gombe State Government | 133 hectares Leventist Foundation Agricultural Training School to serve as site for Faculty of Agriculture. | Redeemed |
| 3 | Gombe State Government | 30 hectares of land for the construction of school of general and preliminary studies in Gombe. |  |
| 4 | Gombe State Government | A fully furnished liaison office in Gombe metropolis for the smooth take off of the university. | Redeemed |
| 5 | Gombe State Government | A guest house in kashere and a car donated to the university | Redeemed |

Source: Information and Protocol Unit, FUK 2017

**Table 1.2 Pledges by individuals**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Donor** | **Details** | **Value** | **Remark** |
| 1 | Alhaji Danjuma Goje | Construction of the university main gate and fencing | N150,000,000.00 | Redeemed |
| 2 | Alhaji Habu Muazu | Construction of university Juma’at central Mosque | N64,000,000.00 | Redeemed |
| 3 | Dr. Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo | Construction of university convocation Arena and | N50,000,000.00 | Redeemed |
| **S/N** | **Donor** | **Details** | **Value** | **Remark** |
| 4 | Dr. Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo | Endowment foundation for the award of prizes to best graduating students | N10,000,000.00 | Redeemed |
| 5 | Alhaji Habu Muazu | Annual Bursary award for Gombe state students. | N5, 000.00 and N2, 000.00 for students indigenous to Akko local government area and Gombe state students respectively. | Redeemed |
| 6 | Prof. Abdul-Mumini Sa’ad | Support for the construction of the university Juma’at Mosque. | N 50,000.00 | Redeemed |
| 7 | Prof. Mohammed Farouk | Support for the construction of the university Juma’at Mosque. | N 100,000.00 | Redeemed |

Source: Information and Protocol Unit, FUK 2017

**Contributions of Gown to Town**

In order to consolidate the contributions of town to the development of gown, the gown also reciprocated in no small measure to the socio-economic advancement of the town. It is worthy of note that the Gown is not only a receiver, but also a giver. The relationship between town and gown is therefore a reciprocal one. Federal university, Kashere is an agent of modernization capable of stimulating remarkable socio-economic, cultural and political changes among people in the host community and the state at large.

Universities are saddled with many activities within the gown community, the byproducts of which become beneficial to the host community and the nation at large. Jimoh (2016) asserts that development propelling issues that are capable of enhancing comforts in an area vis-a- vis town and gown are as follows; the university and social infrastructures. To this end, it is a part of university functions to construct lecture rooms, laboratories, and lecture theaters, office blocks for staff, accommodation for both staff and students in the institution. This is with a view to promote quality teaching, learning and research environment. The by product, which translate into high productivity in the immediate environment and beyond.

The Gown (FUK) recently rehabilitated the Police Divisional office in Pindiga destroyed by heavy storm. Reconstruction of the culvert washed away by rain in Garin-Rijiya, the Pindiga-Kashere road was also Carried out by the Gown. In collaboration with the Akko Local Government area, the university is currently working through the Entrepreneurship Centre on the skill acquisition programme for the youths in the Local government. This is an initiative that is geared towards linking what the students are learning in the classrooms and laboratories on campus, to real world experience in the community.

Kashere and other districts that make up Pindiga Emirate in Akko Local Government Area of Gombe state, are popular for their agricultural and pastoral activities. These served as the traditional occupation of the host community. Findings of this study revealed that with the establishment of the Federal university, Kashere, there has been a slight shift from this traditional economic activity of the people especially among the teeming youths of the town. Trading and student’s hostel business are gradually taking over the traditional occupation of the town (Farming and Herding).People now sell their farmlands and cattle to either build student hostels or go into business of buying and selling.

Youths look unto the gown for white-collar jobs. However, ironically, most of these town youths do not possess the basic academic pre-requisite to grab the vacant positions in the gown community. Hence, many resigned to commercial motorcycle riders (Achaba). The university has become a pull force to achaba riders from other nearby communities. This in effect has negative impact on the security of life and property not only in the town but also within the gown community. Fulfilling its corporate social responsibility policy geared towards curtailing the rising crime wave within town-gown, most of the unskilled youths were recruited as gardeners, security men and cleaners by the university.

**Conclusion**

The paper put forward a number of suggestions on how the relationship between Town and Gown can be improved, geared towards achieving greater sustainable development. Despite the initial non violent conflict regarding the location of the Federal university in Kashere, much has been achieved in areas of human and infrastructural development. The existing innovative university-community partnership has impacted positively on the host community; while on the other hand, the university is enjoying a relative atmosphere of peace and security.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations will be of immense importance in actualizing town and gown reciprocal linkage for sustainable development in federal university, Kashere.

Improved communication between the town and the gown will ensure transparency and a sense of belonging. People in the host communities still depend on rumour as source of information. Hence, it is strongly recommended that the university ensure that information on its policies and programmes are properly and effectively disseminated.

That the Gown should develop policies and programmes in line with the culture of the host communities. Such policies and programmes should not be detached from those of the host communities in the achievement of a secured sustainable societal development. As part of the Gowns corporate social responsibility to the Town, employment of local residents and indigenes, particularly at the junior cadre should be considered and given preference especially in area of security. This will go a long way in guaranteeing the safety of the university properties.

Tertiary institutions should extend basic amenities and infrastructures beyond the confines of gown community to reach out to the host communities. In this regard, partnership should be fostered with local authorities in the areas of security, sanitation, library, sports and healthcare facilities.

The university Entrepreneurial Development Center (EDC) should organize training especially for secondary school leavers and even dropouts, in various skills acquisition programmes.

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