

UNIT FIVE: MAJOR ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF AFRICA

Introduction

Africa, a resource-rich continent with a diverse population, faces significant economic challenges despite its potential. The continent's economy is heavily reliant on primary economic activities like agriculture, mining, and fishing. Many African countries struggle with poverty, unemployment, and underdeveloped industries. To address these issues, African leaders have established Agenda 2063, a plan aiming for economic development, political integration, and improved living standards across the continent. Culture, shaped by socio-religious and economic factors, also plays a crucial role in African societies, influencing aspects like language, religion, and customs.

5.1 Overview of Employment Structure in the World

Employment Structure

The employment structure of a country shows how its labor force is divided among primary, secondary, and tertiary economic activities.

- **Primary Sector:** Involves extracting natural resources (e.g., agriculture, mining).
- **Secondary Sector:** Involves manufacturing and processing (e.g., textiles, electronics).
- **Tertiary Sector:** Involves services (e.g., education, healthcare).

Developed countries have a larger percentage of their workforce in the tertiary sector, while developing countries are more focused on the primary sector.

Developing Countries (DVCs)

These countries are less industrialized and heavily rely on agriculture. They face issues like high unemployment, low literacy, and rapid population growth. They can be classified into:

1. **Middle-Income Countries:**
 - **Lower Middle-Income:** GNI per capita between \$1,036 and \$4,045.
 - **Upper Middle-Income:** GNI per capita between \$4,046 and \$12,535.
2. **Low-Income Countries:**
 - GNI per capita of \$1,025 or less.

Countries like China and Malaysia have advanced from low-income to middle-income status, while others like South Korea and Singapore have become high-income countries.

5.2 Major Economic Activities in Africa

Economic Activities

Africa's economy relies heavily on the primary sector, involving the extraction of natural resources. Key activities include:

1. **Agriculture:**
 - Major employment provider.
 - Contributes 30-60% of GDP.
 - Vulnerable to climate variability (droughts, floods).
2. **Mining:**
 - Rich in minerals (copper, gold, diamonds).
 - Significant contributor to many African economies.
3. **Forestry:**
 - Africa has 624 million hectares of forest.
 - Supports economies through timber and other products.
4. **Fishing:**
 - Important for food security and employment, especially for coastal communities.

Challenges in the Primary Sector:

- Dependence on weather and natural conditions.
- Low wages for workers.
- Difficulty in transitioning to the secondary sector.

Secondary Sector:

- Involves processing materials from the primary sector.
- Includes manufacturing textiles, clothing, and basic metals.
- Has shown growth but lags behind global improvements.

Tertiary Sector:

- Involves services like transportation, education, and tourism.
- Growth in hospitality and tourism indicates increasing importance.

5.2.1 Major Factors Hindering Economic Growth in Africa

1. **Technological Limitations:**

- Technology is crucial for development.
- African countries need to invest in technology to improve their economic capabilities.

2. **Over-dependence on Foreign Aid:**

- Many countries rely on aid for development, which can hinder self-sufficiency.
- African nations should focus on trade and investment for sustainable growth.

3. **Poor Economic Structures:**

- Many countries still export raw materials without adding value.
- Improved technology and manufacturing are needed for economic advancement.

4. **Poor Education:**

- Education is essential for developing a skilled workforce.
- African education systems need reform to better equip students for global markets.

Unemployment Issues:

- High rates of working poverty and youth unemployment.
- Solutions include creating more job opportunities, encouraging diverse fields, and pursuing sustainable development.

Sustainable Development:

- Aims to meet present needs without compromising future generations.
- Involves balancing social, environmental, and economic considerations.

Africa's Agenda 2063 and Its Implications

Introduction: Africa faces numerous socio-economic challenges that require immediate attention. In response, African leaders have introduced **Agenda 2063**, a strategic framework aimed at transforming Africa into a global powerhouse. This plan outlines Africa's vision for inclusive and sustainable development over 50 years, from 2013 to 2063, reflecting the continent's commitment to unity, self-determination, and collective prosperity.

Objectives of Agenda 2063:

1. **Inclusive Social and Economic Development:** Promoting equitable growth and improved living standards for all Africans.
2. **Continental and Regional Integration:** Strengthening cooperation among African nations to enhance regional stability and economic integration.
3. **Democratic Governance:** Encouraging good governance, transparency, and accountability.
4. **Peace and Security:** Ensuring a stable environment conducive to development and prosperity.

Flagship Programs of Agenda 2063:

1. **Integrated High-Speed Train Network:** Improving transportation across the continent.
2. **African Commodities Strategy:** Enhancing the management and trade of African resources.
3. **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA):** Boosting trade among African countries.
4. **African Passport and Free Movement:** Facilitating easier travel and mobility for Africans.
5. **Silencing the Guns by 2020:** Ending conflicts and promoting peace.
6. **Grand Inga Dam Project:** Providing sustainable energy solutions.
7. **Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM):** Improving air travel connectivity.
8. **Annual African Economic Forum:** Promoting economic discussions and collaborations.
9. **African Financial Institutions:** Strengthening financial systems and institutions.
10. **Pan-African e-Network:** Enhancing digital connectivity and education.
11. **African Outer Space Strategy:** Developing space technologies and research.
12. **African Virtual and e-University:** Expanding access to education.
13. **Cybersecurity:** Protecting digital infrastructure.
14. **Great African Museum:** Preserving and showcasing African heritage.
15. **Encyclopedia Africana:** Documenting and promoting African knowledge and culture.

Comparing Agenda 2063 with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- **Agenda 2063** focuses on Africa-specific challenges and aspirations, including economic development, political integration, and cultural renaissance.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, established by the United Nations in 2015, provide a global framework for sustainable development by 2030. They aim to address issues such as poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, clean water, energy, economic growth, and climate action.

Key SDGs:

1. **No Poverty:** Eradicating poverty in all its forms.
2. **Zero Hunger:** Ending all forms of hunger and malnutrition.
3. **Good Health and Well-Being:** Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being.
4. **Quality Education:** Providing inclusive and quality education for all.
5. **Gender Equality:** Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.
6. **Clean Water and Sanitation:** Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation.
7. **Affordable and Clean Energy:** Ensuring access to reliable and sustainable energy.
8. **Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Promoting sustained and inclusive economic growth.
9. **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** Building resilient infrastructure and fostering innovation.
10. **Reduced Inequalities:** Reducing inequality within and among countries.
11. **Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Making cities and human settlements inclusive and sustainable.
12. **Responsible Consumption and Production:** Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. **Climate Action:** Taking urgent action to combat climate change.
14. **Life Below Water:** Conserving and sustainably using ocean resources.
15. **Life on Land:** Managing forests, combating desertification, and halting biodiversity loss.
16. **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.
17. **Partnerships for the Goals:** Strengthening global partnerships to achieve the SDGs.

Unit Summary:

In this unit, we explored Africa's economic activities and cultural diversities. Africa's diverse languages and religions reflect its rich cultural heritage. With

more than 2,000 living languages and a complex religious landscape, the continent's diversity is a key aspect of its identity. To address economic challenges, African leaders must focus on self-sustained growth, technological advancement, and educational reforms, guided by frameworks like Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.