



Reviving Markets: Nuhu's Tale of Progress



VOICES

Mallam Nuhu Hussaini recounted the challenges traders faced moving to the new Dutse Central Market in 2012. Forced by circumstances, they left the proximity of their established customer base for a new market with untarred roads and insufficient amenities. In the early years, dust from the roads saturated the market, settling on wares and clothing. "Yet not even the dust and despair could keep many traders awake since customers were kept at a distance from the market. Those were dissolute moments" Malam Nuhu vividly described times when traders contended with frequent break-ins and little profits to take back home. "We felt abandoned" he expressed about the gloom of those days as he spoke of his connection to the market.

Then the state government adopted revenue mobilisation strategies that enhanced stakeholder engagement, massive tax education and enumeration, and improved the monitoring and accounting for revenue collection. As the chairman of the marketers' union, Mallam Nuhu gradually understood the government's responsibility and the reciprocal obligations of traders. He became involved in the communication, negotiations, assessments, and distribution of demand notices.

"We know what the government expects of us, and we comply. We became regular with paying our taxes".

With PERL's support, the Jigawa State Government adopted the Medium-Term Revenue Strategy - a multi-dimensional approach to strategic engagements across different stakeholders' levels in resolving identified challenges around domestic revenue mobilisation (DRM).

These initiatives increased the number of taxpayers and domestic revenue. Jigawa State Government deployed a significant portion of this local revenue to fund public projects and programmes in various sectors. According to the immediate past chairman of the JIRS, Mallam Ibrahim Ahmad Muhammad,

"...thanks to PERL, the reform efforts of stakeholders in the revenue space helped to reduce leakages and is gradually increasing the contribution of IGR to the state expenditure".



Mallam Abdullahi, the head of the shoemakers and cobblers association at his shop

Today, the market is transformed. As the morning sunbathes it in warm hues, the fragrances of lavender, musk, and sandalwood create an inviting atmosphere in Mallam Nuhu's perfumery. Colourful bottles neatly arranged on shelves showcase a variety of scents, each promising a unique experience for customers. Mallam Nuhu enjoys growing profits, allowing him to build a new house for his family. He pointed out, "As you can see for yourself, we now have tarred roads, culverts, streetlights, a fire service station, solar power, and even a veterinary clinic." The market is bustling with activity and customers crowd there daily.

Mallam Nuhu also chairs the Dutse Union of Marketers under the Jigawa Marketers' Association. He passionately expressed their willingness to contribute more and continue to support the government as they provide amenities. He highlighted the success story of Mallam Abdullahi, the Head of the Shoemakers and Cobblers' Association. Malam Abdullahi testified to his daily earnings surging from N500 to between N5,000 and N15,000 "So, why wouldn't we want to pay taxes?" Mallam Abdullahi concurred with Mallam Nuhu.

They highlighted the growing number of customers and increased business activities in the market. Mallam Nuhu proudly spoke of the "self-reliance" in the trading code, addressing employment concerns, akin to fostering a sense of independence. "This journey is a true tale of progress," Mallam Nuhu stated with a hint of pride.

The vibrant market today is undeniable in its transformation from the dust-laden struggles of the past. This is not merely a fiscal contribution; it is about the tangible impact of collective efforts.

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