

**USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY, SOKOTO  
(POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL)**

**A HISTORY OF KOLANUT TRADE IN SOKOTO CITY:  
C.1900-2014**

**A Dissertation  
Submitted to the  
Postgraduate School  
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MASTER OF ARTS (HISTORY)**

**BY**

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### **Dedication**

I dedicated this work to my beloved parents: Alh. Maccido K/Rini, and late Hajiya Rabi Ahmad. May her gentle soul find peace with Almighty Allah (SAW)

## Certification

This dissertation by Bashar Maccido Aliyu has met the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts (History) of the Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto and is approved for its contribution to knowledge

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## Abstract

This dissertation studies the kolanut trade in Sokoto city from 1900-2014. The virtues of kolanut as masticatory to the people of Sokoto as well as the roles it plays in the promulgation of socio-cultural activities cannot be over emphasized. Just like coffee, Kolanut is among the stimulants which Islam does not prohibit and this makes its trading the only ancient existing trade that is still lucrative despite the present day technology at man's disposal. The kolanut trade between Sokoto and other parts of West Africa had been in existence even before the Jihad of 1804. During this period, many products were traded between Sokoto and Asante and *Kurmi* in the southwestern part of Nigeria. But kola has usually been singled out as the commodity of most interest by Sokoto people. This study examines the Socio-economic and cultural contact between the Hausa (Sokotawa) kolanut traders and the Yoruba of Southwest of Nigeria. Relations between different societies could derive from a common origin, trading connections and similar religious beliefs. This trade also brings about the emergence of certain settlements for both indigenes and Yoruba settlements as well as emergence of certain kolanut markets within Sokoto like shagon goro and famous kara market. The trade has also led to the emergence of prominent kolanut merchants who had contributed immensely towards the development of the kolanut business in Sokoto city. In the present era, due to the advancement in the technology, uses of mobile phones, modern means of transport, e-banking system etc. have come to affect the changing nature of kola transactions

## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Despite the economic revolutions which hit Nigerian vegetable products following the advent of Europeans occupation, the kolanut remains the only produce the value of which still seems to exceed the money paid for it.<sup>1</sup>

There are people in Hausaland who are addicted to kola: if they don't eat it they feel like vomiting... the Hausa people are so fond of kola (goro) that it will buy anything a man can give it as payment and it will be accepted.<sup>2</sup>

Kola, a member of the family sterculiaceae, is a nut that comprises a large amount of caffeine and other substances like kolatin, kolanin, glucose, starch, fatty matter, tennins, catechins, bataine and protein that act as stimulants which may also be like coffee as it is mildly additive.<sup>3</sup> There are two major species of kola-cola nitida and cola acuminata. For nitida, the specie was originally found along the western coast of Africa from Sierra Leone to the Republic of Benin with the highest frequency and variability in the forest areas of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. These areas have been accepted as the centers of origin of Cola nitida. The areas remained for long the most prominent source of kolanuts (Gwanja kolanuts) to the West African trading routes. In the early twentieth century, kola trees were seldom planted, the nuts used for trade and local consumption being obtained from spontaneous trees.<sup>4</sup>

Cola acuminata, the second important commercial species of kola, has its original area of distribution stretching from Nigeria to Gabon. The Cola acuminata could be found spontaneously in mountains areas of Angola, Zaire and Cameroun, while it has

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<sup>1</sup> O. Nzekwu, "kolanut", ed. In Nigeria Magazine

<sup>2</sup> P.E. Lovejoy, *Caravans of kola the Hausa kola Trade 1700-1900* ABU Press 1980, p.1

<sup>3</sup> L.K. Opeke, *Tropical Commodity tree crops* Spectrum books limited Ibadan 1987, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.,2

long been in cultivation on the islands of Principe and Sao Tome. However, in Nigeria, the areas of Idanre and Ijare all in Ondo state are currently regarded as the place where *Cola acuminata* originated.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, kolanut has a long history in Sokoto city and the use of kolanuts among the people of Sokoto featured prominently in their religious, social and ceremonial activities. Kolanut is used during ceremonies relating to marriage, naming ceremony, as well as coronations.

The virtues of the kolanut were known to Sokoto people in Nigeria about three hundred years ago. Thus, the involvement of Sokoto kola merchants in long distance trade had been facilitated by the existence of exchangeable commodities for barter (such as salt, nitron, hide and skin, onion, grains etc). These exchangeable items served as the indigenous natural resources for trading and human use.<sup>6</sup> The kolanut trade with other parts of West Africa by people of Hausaland according to history had been in existence even before the Sokoto jihad. Although, many products were traded between Sokoto and Asante (Gwanja) in present Ghana and Kurmi in the southwestern part of the country, but kola has usually been singled out as the commodity of most interest by Sokoto people.<sup>7</sup>

Thus after the Jihad of 1804, the spread of Islam had a particular advantage on the demand for kola. The nuts were the only readily available stimulant which Islam does not condemn; thus, as more people in Sokoto city recognized this trade in kola

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<sup>5</sup> According to Lovejoy, there are more than forty varieties of kola, and these four – *cola nitada*, *Cola acuminata*, *Cola verticillata* and *cola anomalan* are important in the commerce of West Africa. Thus, *Cola nitada* was by the few the most important in terms of trade between forest and savannah. See also, P.E. Lovejoy, “Kola in the History of West Africa”, *Cuhiend etudes africaines*, 77-78 Vol XX 1980 p.98.

<sup>6</sup> M. Adamu, *The Hausa Factor in West Africa History*, ABU Press, 1976, p.36.

<sup>7</sup> M. Adamu, *Ibid.* According to him, historically, it is very difficult to say with certainty when trade in kolanut started, but he believed that the introduction of kola into Hausaland predated the entire event before the Jihad of 1804. The more importantly by the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century some Hausa traders had already reached the main source of kolanut in Volta Region which was regarded as precious commodity.



increased.<sup>8</sup> The Sokoto kolanut trade along the Volta basin was one part of the larger West African trade in kola, and commercially, it was one of the most important sections. Each year in the nineteenth century thousands of people traveled over 900 kilometers from Sokoto caliphate to the markets of Asante to sell their products and purchase the commodity (kola).<sup>9</sup> By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Ashante set the political conditions on production and trade designed to protect its kola industry from being dominated by the foreigners and Islamic preachers also, to ensure that government officials benefited from the trade over other sectors of society.

This period is prior to the time when Yoruba of southwestern Nigerian production of *Cola nitida* became significant.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, this policy introduced by Asante accompanied with the restriction within the city of Salaga (a suburb of Asante regions) where the caravan settled) as well as exorbitant tariff imposed on kolanut by Asante government shifted the attention of the Sokoto caravan to the *Kurmi* trading and boycotted trading to Gwanja.

In the present era, the southwest of Nigeria appears to be the leading producing areas of kolanut in Nigeria and the bulk of their products are being taken to northern Nigeria including Sokoto city at least, since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by both Hausa and Yoruba traders. This internal transaction has paved way for more lucrative Kola business engagement among the traders than that of arduous long distance Gwanja trading.

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<sup>8</sup> P.E. Lovejoy, *The Caravans of kola*, op.cit. p131.

<sup>9</sup> P.E. Lovejoy, *Caravan of Kola*, op.cit. p.5

<sup>10</sup> Accordint to Agiri, the policy introduced by the colonial masters in the upgrading the kola seedling had started yielding a massive output in the production of *Cola nitida* in the southwestern part of Nigeria in this year. This *Cola nitida* have more universal recognition and acceptance in terms of qualities and physical appearance in the international markets. More explanations will be given in the subsequent chapters patterning to Asante policy that led to the end of Sokoto caravans movement to Gwanja which paved way to *Kurmi* trading

### **1.3 Statement of the Research Problem**

So many studies on long distance trade have been carried out on various articles of trade in different parts of Nigeria. These include (but not limited to) livestock,<sup>11</sup>grains<sup>12</sup>, groundnut<sup>13</sup>, Salt<sup>14</sup>Palm oil, fruits and vegetables. However, there is no detailed study on kolanut trade in Sokoto city considering its significant role in the socio-economic and cultural life of the people. Although there are a number of literatures that emphasized on the nature of pre-colonial exchange and movement of people within the ecological zones of West African region such movements led to the formation of many settlements and socio-cultural religious diffusion over a period of time.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, this research studies the origin, nature, development and impact of the kolanut trade in Sokoto city from 1900-2000. More importantly the role of the kola nut merchants in the transformation and integration of people in Nigeria through exchange of commodities. Meanwhile, the proposal provide additional contribution to existing studies. This we hope will highlight the significant position of this trade to the economy of the area.

### **1.3 Significance and Justification of the Study**

The work derives its justification and relevance from several arguments. Kolanut trade has been one of the earliest long distance commodity trade that existed in the city of Sokoto, but Scholars and researchers have overlooked the significance of this trade to the socio-economic development of the city even though, it was extensively traded and consumed in the area right from the pre-colonial time to the period of this study. This

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<sup>11</sup> M.M Inuwa, "The History of Cattle in Birnin Sokoto 1903-1989" M.A History, Department of History, UDUS, Sokoto, 1989.

<sup>12</sup> P. Clough, "The Social Relations of Grains Marketing in Northern Nigeria" In *Review of African Political Economic* Volt Roape, Publications Limited, 1985.

<sup>13</sup> M.O. Odey, Origin and Development of Groundnut Production and Trade in Benue Province, 1900-1930". in *The Development of Cash Crops Economy in Nigeria lower Benue Province, 1910-1960*.

<sup>14</sup> A.S. Alhaji, "A History of Salt Mining in Hoga Vally in 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century", M.A Thesis U.D.U Sokoto,2003.

<sup>15</sup> M. Kwaire Op cit

study will undoubtedly contribute immensely to the general economic history of Sokoto area of Nigeria.

Secondly, the work is to provide an analysis of the dynamic nature of the kolanut trade, immigration and settlement of the kolanut traders in the area which provided the most viable mechanism of integrating the people of Nigeria more than any other federal institutionalized programmes. Thus, this is what makes the study on kolanut trade in Sokoto necessary as it provides a detailed study on the origin and nature of the trade in the area which has not been properly documented. The outcome of the research will be useful to both government and individuals in designing policies and analyzing the role of commodities and trade generally in the area.

#### **1.4 Aim and Objectives.**

The main aim of this research work is to study kolanut trade in Sokoto city from 1900–2014. Therefore, the study aims at achieving the following objectives;

- a. to discuss the historical origin of kolanut trade in Sokoto city;
- b. to examine the general trends in the organization of kolanut trade, transportation, distribution and consumption pattern;
- c. to discuss the impact of economic policies adopted on kolanut trade;
- d. to examine the influence of indigenous groups in kolanut trading activities in Sokoto city;
- e. Analyse some of the problems involved in kolanut trade and marketing in Sokoto city; and
- f. To assess the role of kolanut trade in particular, kolanut merchants and middlemen among the Yoruba producers and Hausa traders in the economic development of Sokoto city.

## 1.5 Scope and Limitations

The primary aim of this proposal is to examine the kolanut trade in Sokoto city. The profound areas for the sale of kolanut like Shagon goro, Kara market, Kofar Rini, Kofar Atiku and Kanwuri area, Hungumawa, Gobirawa, Kalhu, Unguwar fatake all in Sokoto city shall be examined.

The study covers a period of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. (1900 to 2014) It begins from the termination of lovejoys work titled *Caravans of Kola the Hausa kola trade 1700-1900*. The work examines entrepreneurship in the Kola importing business in the central Sudan which concentrates on the activities of major groups of traders i.e. Agalawa, Tokarawa, and Kambarin Barebari. These people contributions to the trade and the nature of their long distance journey to Gwanja (Ghana) will be observed and explained in details. . Moreover, the period (1900) witnessed a paradigm shift of special specie of *nitida* kolanut in areas of Yoruba land more particularly in Ota, Agege, Abeokuta, Ikorodu, and Ijebu-Remo that was in high demand by Hausa kolanut traders. Finally it has been conceded as a land mark for the Hausa immigrants' settlement in Yoruba land not only for trade but for the cultivation of *nitida* specie in the area<sup>16</sup>.

Inadequate writing materials for the topic pose gap to this work. Moreover, the long distance of Gwanja market to obtain necessary information can not be possible due to limited resources. Therefore, the writer was compelled to utilize the available written materials at his disposal that are relevant to the research. Another limitation to this work is the insufficient personnel that have ever embarked on the long distance trade to Gwanja due to the demised of many of them. Thus, the few ones alive were interviewed. Nevertheless, the available written materials and the information gathered form the

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<sup>16</sup> Agiri, op. cit.

interviews would be sufficient to trace the trend of the history of kolanut trade in Sokoto city for the stipulated years which is the main focus of the work.

## **1.6 Sources and Methodology**

The methodology adopt in conducting this research involves the simultaneous collection and collation of data from all the available sources which are traditionally labeled and divided into primary and secondary sources:

### **(a) Primary Sources**

In pursuance of this study, primary sources such as archival materials from the National Archives, Kaduna, and Waziri Junaidu History and culture Bureau, Sokoto, Arewa House Kaduna, and other personal diaries from individuals proposal. The archival materials will be subjected to thorough and critical analysis and investigation with a view to detecting the likely biases and prejudices as well as speculation.

For instance, the colonial records and accounts concerning trade and market developments have always been interpreted within the context of colonial economy to the neglect of African indigenous economic formations. Also, the places where kolanut trading activities take place especially here in Sokoto city will be visited inorder to obtain necessary information from the traders and consumers of Kolanut. Therefore, Oral interview is among the methodology adopted in order to obtain additional information. All interviews shall carefully recorded through electronic and non electronic means and judiciously used.

Thus, the quality of historical research depends on the extent to which primary sources are recovered and used. In most of the contemporary researches on colonial period in Africa, Archival sources are conceded to be sacred and mostly relied upon, with little or no examination, believing that they are original and primary sources. But in a most critical sense, these Archival document particularly the provincial Annual

Reports, are only primary sources in their label-(name and physical appearance) not in their meaning and content. There is a great deal of biases and the already established Eurocentric view and conception of Africa. As such, there is the necessity of assessing the authenticity of these documents.

#### **(b) Secondary Sources**

A number of secondary source materials were used in this research work. Luckily enough, the earliest works on economic history of West Africa are important to any analysis of commodity production and exchange across the region. The area (Sokoto) chosen is currently rich in literature. Some of these include text books, publications journals and articles. Government reports, Maps and atlases, biographies and autobiographies.

#### **1.7 Literature Review**

This literature review is divided into sections, a selection of some books on the economic history of Nigeria and West Africa in general which provided general background to the nature of pre-colonial economic activities in order to justify the present analysis. The second section is basically on Sokoto city as a case study area, and lastly, the colonial and post colonial works (both published and unpublished) on the socio-economic activities of the area that have a direct bearing as the kolanut trade shall be adequately reviewed in order to have first hand information about the trade.

Many scholars focuses their attention on the economic history of West Africa. These include P. Lovejoy who studied commercial relations among Hausaland and Volta region in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He also mentioned many groups of merchants who participated actively in the trade between Ashanti and the

major states in what is today modern Ghana and Sokoto Caliphate as one of the dominant states in central Sudan in the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

Lovejoy however identified kolanut as a single most important commodity and one of the articles of the famous long distance trade. According to him, kolanut was an item of market economy as well as a luxury good that was adopted in the long distance trade in West African region.

Another work by Lovejoy which is relevant to this research illustrates the process that brought about the development of trading networks between the central Sudan to the area of Guinea land. It also enriches our understanding of the specialized kolanut traders of Hausaland i.e. the Tokarawa, Kambarian Barebari and Agalawa in Northern Nigeria<sup>18</sup> and the strategic role they played in the development of the trade and their society. He clearly demonstrated the organization and extent of the trade between the regions which identified kola as the major important articles of long distance trade. Similarly, in an article entitled “Long-distance trade and Islam: the case of nineteenth century Hausa kola trade,” Lovejoy talked about the relationship between Gwanja community and the Sokoto caliphate. He explained how Hausa trade to Borgu, Dagonba, Asanti originated in the early eighteenth century and no doubt the trade continued after the jihad of 1804,<sup>19</sup> with textile, potato, leather goods, dried onion leaves (gabū) and other products such as kolanut as major exchange goods. He also explained that there was the emergence of Hausa settlement communities along the major trade routes to the Middle Volta Basin.

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<sup>17</sup> P.E. Lovejoy, *Caravans of Kola: The Hausa Kola Trade 1700-1900*, ABU Zaria Press, 1980. See also, P.E. Lovejoy, ‘The Role of the Wangarawa in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteen and Sixteenth Centuries. *Journal of African History*, xix 2, 1978 pp174-85.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> P.E. Lovejoy, ‘Long-distance trade and Islam: the case of the nineteenth century Hausa kola trade’ *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol.1, No.4, June 1971 pp537-46. Writing on caravan route.

He further discussed the role of merchants and Islamic scholars in the dissemination of Islamic knowledge to the local people in the area<sup>20</sup>.

The work of M. Adamu,<sup>21</sup> traced the long period of Hausa peoples participation in the long-distance trade and their contributions to the traditional economy of Hausaland. According to Adamu Hausa traders exported products of Hausaland which included leather goods, textile and luxury goods. He clearly demonstrated the strategic role of the Hausa trading Diaspora communities and their network in the wider context of the economy of the central Sudan. Thus, the work is crucial in the understanding of the economic history of Hausa land.

In a published book titled *Golden trade of the Moors* Bovil, traced the historical organization of long distance trade (trans-Saharan trade) across the Sahara, and showed how commercial activities between both north and south of the Sahara became a dominant factor in the socio-economic and cultural development of the region.<sup>22</sup> The work also trace the greatest part of the caravan trading route particularly between the Hausa and Ashanti among others where kolanut provided the main article of trade and these trade-routes were probably established in the fifteenth century and lasted until when the trade collapsed as a result of colonial encroachment in the region.

Boahen, also gives the historical account of the caravan trade routes as a strong chain linking the central Sudan that include the Barbary, the Sahara and some part of west African countries for many centuries. He showed how Kano emerged as a great

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<sup>20</sup> Lovejoy dwelled much to disservice Tripoli, Fezzan, Timbuktu, Jenne, Gao and Tuwareks. A caravan route from Kano Marawa, Jega-Kano-Pauwa Kwatarkwashi Kaura Namoda, Sokoto and various countries on the Bank of the Niger and Lake Chad goes to Salaga Marked for kola trade, which led to the establishment of Hausa communities in Dagbon, Kusagwu and other places

<sup>21</sup> M. Adamu, op cit .

<sup>22</sup> E.W. Bovil, *Golden Trade of the Moor*, Second Edition Oxford University Press, 1968 pp128,236.



commercial centre and a meeting place for exchange of commodities.<sup>23</sup> Hence, trade routes radiated west wards down to Volta region.

Equally important, is another work of Bovil which describes Jega as one of the earliest native market along the trading route in Hausa land. It served as a *Zango* (a sojourning camp) for many caravan traders. He also observed that the sharp decline in the fortunes of Jega toward the end of the 19th century was attributed to the development of modern system of transport that diverted the routes away from Jega.. He noted that the extension of the Nigerian railway line and improved road network to Kano as well as the bridging of the River Niger at Jebba, and building of the Dahomey railway by the French colonial officials have further detriment the usage of the traditional road to Jega by the long distance caravans traders.<sup>24</sup>

Similar works on kolanut by Hopkins,<sup>25</sup> M. Johnson<sup>26</sup> and Hiskett, M,<sup>27</sup> noted that although there was not a single currency in operation throughout the Sokoto urban economy, cowries, strips of sawaye cloth, slaves, Manila, Theresa dollars, gold and even kola nuts were offered and accepted in payment for goods and services. But, cowries and strips of cloth were the most widespread currencies used in the rural district of Sokoto.

In his work, Hogendorn adopted Myint's Vent for surplus theory in exploring the nature of West African economy, he showed how Hausa people played an important role in the production of groundnut, particularly the Hausa kola traders who had generated a

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<sup>23</sup> A. Boahen, 'The Caravan Trade in the Nineteenth Century' *Journal of African History* Volume 3, No.2 1962. Cambridge University Press. Nov., 1968, pp349-56. See also Lovejoy, 'Caravan of kola' has shown hoe kolanut distribution and marketing in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries kano the focal, point of kola trade in the central Sudan as Salaga was in the Middle Volta.

<sup>24</sup> E.W Bovil, "Market in Jega: A Social Economic and Political History", pub 2008 in *Journal of the African History*, Volume Xxi, 1922, pp86-95.

<sup>25</sup> I.A.G Hopkins, Op cit, p.88

<sup>26</sup> See M. Johnson, "The Cowry Currencies of West Africa" *Journal of African History* xi, 1, 1970, pp17-45.

<sup>27</sup> See also Hiskett, "Materials Relating to the Cowry Currency of the Western Sudan" *Journal of African History* xxxix, 1966 pp343-366.

lot of capital from the long-distance trade as well as other trans-border trade, in the western central Sudan, who turned their attention to the new trade in groundnut.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the Hausa kola traders assumed a leading role in the development of the colonial economy of northern Nigeria. Although, the work is specifically on the groundnut trade he has not focus how kolanut trade was carried out in the region. But it is still relevant in facilitating our understanding of the trend of the trade in comparison with the subject of study.

Asogwas et.al provides a general nature of kolanut production, processing and marketing in the south-eastern state of Nigeria. According to them there were no contiguous kola plantations in south-east rather some scattered trees around the back yard.<sup>29</sup> They observed some of the major constraints to the production of kolanuts in a large scale in the area. These include the poor nutrient status of the soils, the long gestation period of kola trees and various pests, diseases and weeds palavering the plant. Although, they described kola production and marketing in south east, but they failed to focus the participation of Hausa merchants in the trade.

In an attempt to trace the general history of commercial activities in Sokoto town and their relations dating back to the 19th century, Sale Abubakar, looked at the origin of Sokoto, its changing role and functions and its growth from a tiny hamlet at the beginning of the jihad in 1804, to a large and populous city twenty years later. According to him, kolanut is assumed to have occupied a central position and one of the most profitable single items in the city trade with areas to the south-west of Yoruba down to Gwanja area. Sale further stated that, the caravan traders of Hungumawa,

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<sup>28</sup> J.S. Jogendon, *Nigerian Groundnut Exports, Origin and Early Development*, ABU Zaria press Nigeria 1978,pp340.

<sup>29</sup> E.U. Asogwa. A.H. Ofuonye, et.al, "Kolanut Production, Processing and Marketing in the South-Eastern States of Nigeria". *Africn Journal of Plant Science*, Vol.5 (10) pp547-551,2011 available online at <http://www.academicjournal.org/Ajps>.

Gobirawa, Anguwar Fatake and Kalfu in Sokoto town dominated the organization of the kolanut trade<sup>30</sup>. Among their specialization was the provision of leadership, to other caravan going to Gwanja and Yoruba land, brokers (intermediaries), hosting of other caravans of kolanut and retailing the commodity in the city and its surroundings. In view of the above, Sokoto became an important distribution centre for the kola consuming areas of northern Nigeria and as far as Niger Republic.

Ubah discusses the attitudes of the British colonial administration toward the use of Manilas, in the eastern province of Nigeria. Although, they found a wide variety of currencies in use among the people, which included cowries, brass, and iron, copper rods and Manila,<sup>31</sup> the British introduced various denominations of coins hoping that these would completely displace the prevailing currencies in marketing, exchange and other transactions.

Also Mukhtar's article entitled "Nigeria-Chad Economic relations during the colonial period: a survey of the commercial exchange in cattle and kolanut, 1902 to 1960" discussed very extensively about kolanut trade and has outlined in his article colonial commercial relations with West African people. He also talked about various networks that linked markets between Nigeria and Chad.<sup>32</sup>

Mukhtar also showed how peace and security have been maintained along the routes between the two countries. He also mentioned the means of transportation in the trade and how railway lines were constructed in 1912. Also motorable roads linking

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<sup>30</sup> S. Abubakar, Birnin Shehu The City of Sakkwato, A Social and Economic History": 1809-1903 unpublished PhD Thesis, ABU Zaria, 1982, p.151.

<sup>31</sup> C.N. Ubeh, British Policy on Manilla Currency in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria, 1900-1949.

<sup>32</sup> M.Yakubu, "Nigerian-Chad Economic Relations during the Colonial Period: A Survey of the Overland Exchange in Cattle and Kolanuts; 1902-1960, paper on Nigerian History Volume1, ed. S.Abubakar pp.130-142.

major producing and trading areas have been constructed by the colonial government especially in Northern Nigeria.<sup>33</sup>

Equally, Nzekwu's article on kolanut in Nigeria also provided an insight in to the role kolanut trade played in the development of socio-economic life of the people of Sokoto caliphate. He, however, described the relevance of kolanut to both the centralized and non-centralized kingdoms in Nigeria.<sup>34</sup>

In "transportation in colonial West Africa" Ayodeju, assessed the overall impact of transportation on the economics of the major colonial powers of West Africa i.e. (Britain and France) particularly railways and road transportation, and how such developments influenced the internal economic development of the colonized areas.<sup>35</sup> Although in Nigeria the railways and motor able roads were built primarily to facilitate the exportation of cash crops and minerals by the British government. For example, railway was constructed from Lagos to Northern Nigeria (in Kano, Zaria, Kaduna, Kauran Namoda and Gusau etc.) in 1926 purposely to facilitate the evacuation of raw materials from the hinterland to the coast. Thus, such colonial legacy like transportation provided extensive linkages on economic activities particularly on kolanut trade between the southern and northern part of Nigeria, which was no longer carried out by human porters and pack animals,<sup>36</sup> as rightly indicated by M.G. Smith, A.G. Hopkins J.S. Hogendon, and A. Cohen. The caravan traders provided a full account of pre-colonial transportation system such as human porters, animals (donkeys, camels' oxen) as well as canoe in the riverside area. Thus, the work indicated the use of these systems in transportation of kolanut from the southern to the northern part of Nigerian area for

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> N.Onuora, "Kolanut" Independence, Nigeria Magazine No.71 pp298-305.

<sup>35</sup> Ayodeji Olukoju, A. "Transportation in Colonial West Africa" In An Economic History of West Africa (ed. Ogunremen,O. and E.K., Faluyi ed, Rex Charles Publication 1996,pp.89.)

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

trading activities.<sup>37</sup> Ogunremi's work on transportation also shows that there was effective bridge by traditional transport between the Asante's producers, Hausa and Kanuri traders. E.J. Osoro and Cohen have provided a proposition that the revolution in transport in the first two decades of the twentieth century facilitated the movement of kola for trading activities.<sup>38</sup>

Umar Jega also traced the evolution of Jega as a formidable commercial centre to a deliberate policy of the Sokoto caliphate which promoted the establishment of large urban settlements to serve as administrative, military and commercial centers. This policy he observes, became more pronounced during the reign of Caliph Mohammad Bello who encouraged people to undertake various form of commercial enterprises such as arts and crafts, commerce, agriculture, animal husbandry and other related professions highly required in a rapidly growing economy of the caliphate<sup>39</sup> due to the fact that most of the pre-jihad trading centers in Hausa land particularly in the Rima Basin were destroyed. Thus, soon after it was established by Malam Buhari in A.D. 1820 Jega's prosperity developed very rapidly and competed with many areas as the commercial metropolis of the caliphate.

Also, Ikpe traced the historical antecedent of the professional trading activities which of course is directly related to the rise of the merchant class as well as their socio-political involvement in the development of their societies. According to him, the development of the long distance trade and markets led to the rise of merchant class particularly among the West African communities who could provide commodities to

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<sup>37</sup> Coquery,C. "Workers of African Trade"(ed) G. Coquery Vidrovitch and P. Lovejoy. Sage Publication,London 1985 p.178.

<sup>38</sup> E.J. Usoro, "Colonial Economic Development Strategy in Nigeria: 1919-1939" in Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria. Vol.xix, No.1, 1997,p.35. See also Webster and Boahen, in *Revolutionary Years:West Africa Since 1800*, believed that there was also a lively trade in kolanut going north and cattle moving south. See also G.O Ogunremi, *Counting the Camels: The Economic of Transportation in Pre-Industrial Nigeria*, New York,Nok Publishers Ltd 1982, p.21.

<sup>39</sup> A.J. Umar, "The Emergence of Jega as a Commercial Centre in the Nineteenth Century", UDU M.A. Dissertation 2000,p.18.

meet the demands of substantial number of people.<sup>40</sup> A clear example could be seen by the Hausa kola traders that could be found in many West Africa, North Africa and the western Sudan in quest of commodities such as gold, kolanut, gum Arabic, dye and slaves.<sup>41</sup> Thus, their activities within West Africa had linked them with other part of the world through international trade.

B.A. Agiri's PhD thesis, On "Kola in western Nigeria. 1850-1950" provide some of the socio-economic changes and their consequences that occurred among the Yoruba farmers in the western state of Nigeria. He describes how the cultivation of kola and other new commercial crops at the beginning of the colonial period began to replace cocoa, the leading export and the dominant cash crop particularly in Ogbagba village in two district, Ota, Egba-Owode and Ijebu-Remo areas. Such changes are an episode of their experience in economic change and development from the Atlantic Slave trade to an agricultural produce base which was an earlier innovation.<sup>42</sup> The work provided a historical background to the innovation, the critical period of introduction, diffusion and final adoption and the changes in labour, land tenure, and land use as well as in marketing that have provided the background for the development of production. Thus, the work was found relevant to the area of study in considering the roles played by Hausa migrants and traders in the economy of Yoruba towns as a result of the interregional trade of kola between northern and southern Nigeria.<sup>43</sup>

Equally important, is the M.A. dissertation by Ngozi on kolanut (oji) production and trade in Ezinihitte Mbaise local government area of Imo State and its immediate environs. The research reviewed that *Ezinihitte* is one of the major centers of kolanut

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<sup>40</sup> E.B. Ikpe, "The Rise of the Merchant Class in West Africa" In *An Economic History of West Africa*". Pp.105-17.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> B.A. Agiri, "Kola in Western Nigeria, 1850-1950, A History of the Cultivation of Cola Nitida in Egba-Owode, Ijebu-Remu, Iwo and Ota areas", PhD University of Winconsin, 1972.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

production in Igbo land, the town has been fast expanding in kolanut (oji) production and trade through the activities of Hausa traders as the major buyers of kolanut.<sup>44</sup> The work also shows the cultural diffusion among Igbo and Hausa through the activities of the trade. Meanwhile, *Ezinihitte* in *Igboland* happen to be the only Igbo community with a kolanut festival outside the general celebration of kolanut. Thus, the research indicates the major challenges that accompanied the production and marketing of kolanut in the socio-political and economic development of the area.

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<sup>44</sup> O.N. Ngozi, "Kolanut (oji) Production and Trade in Ezinihitte Mbaise Local Government area of Imo State: 1900-2006". UDUSOK M.A. Dissertation April, 2008.

## CHAPTER TWO

### KOLANUT TRADE IN SOKOTO CITY TO 1960

#### 2.0 Introduction

One of the significant events in the history of western central Sudan over the last centuries was the involvement of Sokoto people in *Fatauchin goro* that is long distance traders. As far back as the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sokoto caravan had gone as far west as Gwanja in northern parts of modern Ghana and later south western part of Nigeria in pursuit of kolanut which was exchanged with their own leather work, textiles and other perishable good. Thus, it is known that great quantities of kolanut were transported from Sokoto to distant areas and markets north of the area by caravans (men and donkeys).

Meanwhile, the long distance kola trade has tremendous impact on the socio-economic activities of the areas because kolanut serves as the major nuts that Sokoto people were acquainted and addicted to as a stimulant that plays vital roles in their daily activities. The role of market in the development of trade as well as the major impact of the kolanut trade on the traditional economy and social development of the area.

#### 2.1 An Overview of Pre-Colonial Kolanut Trade

Kolanut has for some hundreds years served as an important article of trade in Nigeria and other part of Africa, and despite the active ingredients available in the kolanut (caffeine with some Theo bromine) kolanut still serves as the only readily available stimulant which Islam does not condemn.<sup>1</sup> Thus, after the jihad in 1803, the trade in kola increased. This nut, having recognized its potentials by the Sokoto people, it had been single out as the commodity of most interest both by traders involved in the trade and by subsequent people of Sokoto. In his work, (Imam Imoru C. 1910) quoted

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<sup>1</sup> P. E. Lovejoy, *Caravans of kola, the Hausa kola trade 1700-1900*, Zaria ABU Press, p.2.



that “there are people in Hausaland who are addicted to kola, if they don’t eat it, they feel like vomiting”. Although, the quotation may sound a little extreme, it does indicate that kolanut was in great demand in the central Sudan (Sokoto caliphate), a region far from Asante kola forests to the south-west.<sup>2</sup> The whole trade became known in the central Sudan as (Sokoto Caliphate) more importantly among the Hausa merchants as “fataken-Gwanja”<sup>3</sup> which was largely dominated by Hungumawa, Gobirawa and Unguwar fatake all in Sokoto city. The kolanut trade in Hausaland and the forest regions of West Africa believe to have been into existence for hundred of years and the trade had been subject to diplomatic concern even before Asante was founded in the seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup>

Before the Jihad and colonialism, the Sokoto people through their caravan trip which was long and arduous, taking from six months to one year to complete a round trip from Sokoto to Asante (Gwanja). More importantly, the caravans consisted of one to two thousand people including men, women and children as well as equal numbers of donkeys, mules (pack animal) and human porters<sup>5</sup> trooped to the kolanut areas to exchange northern products particularly the famous Hausa goods such as Nitron, leather, millet salt etc) for kolanut<sup>6</sup>. The caravans traveled under leader known as *Madugu*. *Madugu* was an outstanding trader believed to be a specialist in the organization of

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.3. See also, P. E. Lovejoy, “The formation of a Specialised groups of Hausa kola traders in the nineteenth century” in JHSN, Volume 4, June 1971, pp.53-9.

<sup>3</sup> P.E. Lovejoy, op.cit p.29. See also, A. Cohen, “Politics of the kola Trade: Some processes of tribal Communities formation Among migrants in west African town”, Africa, volume 36, July 1966, pp.20.

<sup>4</sup> P.E. Lovejoy “Long distance trade and Islam: the case of the Nineteenth century Hausa kola trade” in Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Volume No.4 June 1971, p.538.

<sup>5</sup> K. Faluyi, “Inter-regional Trade in pre-colonial Africa” in Tarikh Vol.10 *pre-colonial Economic History of Africa*. J. A. Atanda and B.A. Agiri (ed) Longman, Nigeria Plc, 1992, p.34.

<sup>6</sup> A Gwanja trader makes one journey in the year 1902 with two boys. He buys £2 worth of Indigo, £1 worth of kanwa (nathon) and £1 worth of onions. He goes through Illo, Kandi and Tengeta taking 48 days on the journey and selling the onions and kanwa to provide himself with money for food and customs. He pays 9/- customs dues at kandi and on arrival at gwanja sells the Indigo for £4. With this he buys 60 calabashes of 100 kolas at 6d.- £1.10.0 on his return journey he pays customs at yendi 9/- at tengeta 10/- and at Illo 19/- the remaining 12/- serve as journey money or if enough remains from his original supply he will buy brass pars at 6d to 1/- each which he will sell at a good profit on his return. At tega the boys are paid off with 10 calabashes of kola each the remaining 40 calabashes are picket over two calabashes of selected kola will sell for 7/-ea: 14/ the remaining 38 will fetch 3/6 each – £6.13.0. On an original outlay of £3.1.0 he finishes his Journal his journey with e7.7.0 given profit of £4.6.0 on the trip.

caravans.<sup>7</sup> He was generally able to fit out a caravan of between one hundred and two hundred donkeys on his own. The caravan routes were often infested with highway robbers and raiding groups and it was believed that there were also other supernatural obstacles that were usually confronted.<sup>8</sup> These *Madugai*, therefore, often had in their employ some armed men as well as security teams known as the *Jagaba* (the leading guide) whose function was to detect enemies and if possible fight them. It is alleged that the *Jagaba* often did not have to fight they merely informed the *Madugu* of the impending attack of the caravan by robbers, where upon he hurried forward and charmed the enemies such that they either fell asleep or wandered away from the caravan.<sup>9</sup>

But, the *Madugai* charm did not always work effectively. They often failed and in such event the caravans had necessarily to protect themselves against the raiders in physical combat.<sup>10</sup>

It was rare however, for *Madugu* to travel with their clients and donkeys often joined the caravans of important *Madugu*, for protection. Thus, the caravans were generally composed of a principal trader – the *Madugu* whose name was given to the caravan, and a number of private small-scale traders. All combined their human and military resources to protect their persons and merchandise against bandits.<sup>11</sup> The caravans of Gobirawa and Hungumawa, whose descendants mostly came through Agalawa<sup>12</sup> group of merchants largely, dominated the trade in Sokoto and some other places in Hausaland. Thus, they were reputedly larger in size and more in number. A caravan on the march was likely to have been an interesting sight to behold.

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<sup>7</sup> E.R. Flegeel, *the Biography of Madugu Mohamman mai Gashin Baki*. Translated and annotated by M.B. Diffill, University of California Los Angeles U.S.A 1985. P.10.

<sup>8</sup> A.C. Unomah, "Salt production and Trade in AWE district in the Nineteenth Century". Unpublished paper University of Ibadan, Department of History. P.20.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.21

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p.22

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. see also, Oral interview, Alhaji Abubukar Rara, Aged 81, on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

<sup>12</sup> P. E. Lovejoy, op.cit pp.7-8. See Also, A. U. Danasabe, A Comparative Study of Some Selected kano commercial establishment. B.U.K PhD Theses 1987. pp.33-5

In the front of every caravan was a *Jagaba* with armed men and medical team as companions. Arrows, spears and swords cannot pierce them. The donkeys and traders were in the middle with only a few armed men guarding them. The rear was composed of the *Madugu* himself accompanied with another set of armed body guard.<sup>13</sup> The return journey from Gwanja was also in caravan the only difference was that a single commodity was predominant – kolanut. The return journey was also sometime slower due to the heavy loads of commodity. By reaching their destination all merchants were happy that they were returning to a peaceful area as against the hostile area outside the Sokoto caliphate.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Routes**

One of the main sources for kola was the forest area which was dominated by the the Mossi State of Mamprusi, Dagomba, Fada N’Gurma, Wagadugu and the extensive Bariba Kingdom north of Dahomey<sup>15</sup>. The caravan routes known to exist around 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries through which the traders passed in their journey to and from Gwanja, depending on when and where the merchants started from. Probably, the seasons of the year also mattered in the choice of what routes to take to or from Sokoto. Starting from Sokoto they follow the road to Jega, where they buy umbrella frames, cottons, Sandals and hides, if the caravans were to travel northwards the next stop is wammako, the Toza, Katami and Argungu. Some of the people then follow the route to Lema, others to Domega, and others to Gewaye. Some of the Merchant cross to Kamba near Birnin Kebi,

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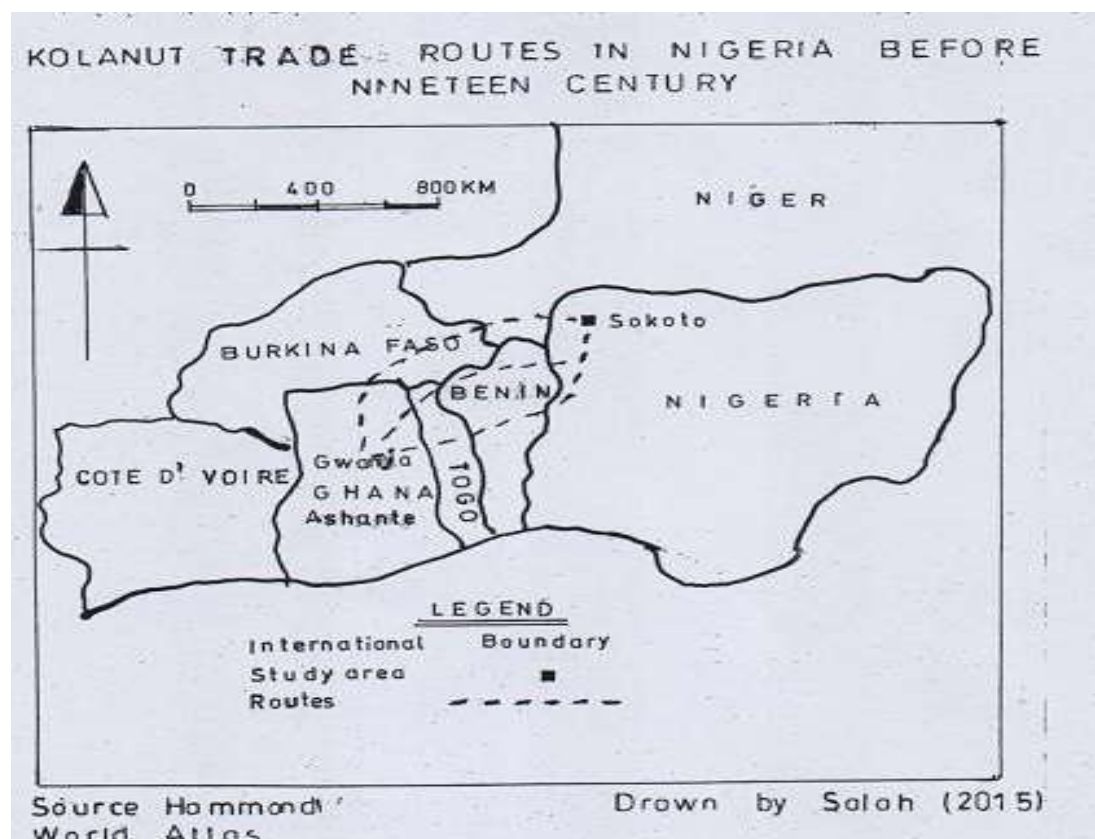
<sup>13</sup> A. C. Unomah, op.cit, p.21.

<sup>14</sup> A. U. Danasabeade, op.cit p39.

<sup>15</sup> J. Goody, T.M. Mustapha, “The caravan trade form kano to salaga” journal of the Historical society of Nigeria, vol. 111, june 1967. pp611-613

to Yawuri where the ferries over the River Niger were available in the north, and Chulu near Birnin Yawuri in the centre.<sup>16</sup>

The northern route (Kamba in Birnin Kebi State) traversed the clay lands of Hausaland and Gulma which might be favored during the wet season when the southern route would be too wet and humid for the animals and such goods as the Nitron (*kanwa*) Meanwhile, the route leading to Gwanja was the more central and was perhaps the most favored by the merchants up to the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Equally it traversed for the most part areas of Guinea savannah zone where the wet and dry seasons are almost equal and food and water could be easily found for the animals.



<sup>16</sup> NAK, Sokprof, 101/1904, Sokoto province Report for Month of March –May1904. By HRP Hillary. See also, M. Adamu, Op.cit p.129.

<sup>17</sup> M. Adamu, Ibid. P.33

More importantly, it went through a chain of administrative headquarters which were also centres of commerce and places where the propagation and the worship of the religion of Islam were openly carried out at Birnin Yawuri, Wawa, Bussa, Kaicima, Nikki, Djougou. While in Borgu those who wanted to go straight to Yendi would take the road to Sansanno mango, leaving Djougou for the south.<sup>18</sup>

However, in all their journeys, the cooperation of the chiefs of the territories through which they were passing was necessary. Because they needed their protection and assistance from the highway bandits. Infact, in order to minimize the risk of these bandits, the merchants preferred to travel in convoys in addition with their madugu.<sup>19</sup> Until the advent of modern transportation after 1900, kolanut had to be carried in large expensively operated donkey caravans over a long distance of many hundreds of kilometers from the Middle Volta basin to Sokoto.<sup>20</sup> In exchange for kola, traders exported products such as textiles, livestock, leather goods, jewelries, gabu (dried onion leaves)<sup>21</sup> and Nitron (kanwa) all from Sokoto for exchange with kolanut. On their way going and returning from Gwanja, traders sold some of their goods along the routes but, more were brought back to Sokoto and other parts of Hausa cities and later sold from traders' compounds and in local market places.

In the sixteenth century a group of Mande warriors who had established themselves in the vicinity of the great trading towns of Bono-mansu pushed north-eastwards and founded the state of Gwanja driving Dagomba and controlled the distribution centers for the kola trade with Hausaland. The Asante (Gwanja) kola

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> M. Last, "Caravan of kola trade 1700-1900." A review article in *Canadian Journal of History*, 1948. P.437. See also, P. Lovejoy, op.cit p.117.

<sup>20</sup> Oral interview from Alhaji Muhammad, Dan Sango, Gobirawa Sokoto (15/04/14) said: Due to the long distance between the central Sudan and Asante the nature of conveying goods and commodities involves used of head and shoulders (human pasturage) as well as the use of animals (beast and burden) which are more boring and tedious and a time more consuming.

<sup>21</sup> NAK, Sokprof, 311, Annual Report Sokoto provice, on Revenue: the kola trade March 1904. By HRP Hillary. See also, P. E. Lovejoy, op.cit. p.537

industry was, therefore, a major industry because it supplied virtually all the red kola for the central Sudan and other foreigners as the sole producer of kola. Thus, this development led to the centralization of the trade to an extension of Ashanti control over the Savannah markets. By 1744 an expedition sent out by the Ashanti King Opokuwara, conquered eastern Gwanja, where the important trading towns of Tuluwe, Kafabe and later Salaga were sited. Thus, the eastern Gwanja town of Salaga became the main Ashanti centre for the export of kola to Hausaland<sup>22</sup>.

Asante restrict the movement of merchants, particularly foreign nationals and could tax production and distribution. Infact, the kolanut industry experienced continued intervention by foreigners to the point where it was nationalised by the 1840s.<sup>23</sup> The development of these policies protected the interest of the empire and prevented foreign merchants from monopolising trade within the empire, since Asante could not compete successfully with Muslim merchants from monopolising the trade. Thus, the development of such policies was related to state control of other sectors of the economy and had the net effect of increasing the relative economic position of the empire with respect to its major foreign markets both overseas and north in the savannah region.<sup>24</sup>

The introduction of this policy which led to the settlement of foreigners in the suburb of Asante region in one way or the other reduced the influx of the caravans. One very important point to be noted here is that although, the Gwanja kolanut had been well

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<sup>22</sup> J. Goody, T.M. Mustapha, "The Caravan Trade form Kano to Salaga" op.cit

<sup>23</sup> I. Wilks, "Asante policy towards the Hausa trade in the Nineteenth Century." In Claude Meillassoux, (ed) *The development of indigenous Trade and Market in west Africa*, London, OUP, 1977.pp.124 -147. As the European and other caravan of central Sudan were trooping to the Asante regions for kolanut trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Empire (Asante) people were afraid of dominance of their indigenous commodity by the external nationals. Therefore, the introduction of policies to safeguard the kolanut commodities from monopolization by the foreigners was introduced and through the intervention of the government, the policies were made into law in the year 1840 by the government. The policies restricted the movement of the Hausa caravans. Thus, this restriction eventually compelled them to the formation of a new market frontier in Salaga which was largely dominated by Hausa caravans (see Lovejoy: The caravan of kola) pp 11-12.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

familiar with during the early 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries but, very important to know that these kolanuts available at Gwanja were not cultivated for commercial purpose but rather were grown naturally. Another issue to consider is that the quality of these Ashanti kolanut was not as rich as those available in the south western part of Nigeria (in terms of qualities and quantities).<sup>25</sup> Therefore, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sokoto caravan trading to Ashanti for kola trade started declining drastically having recognised the superior qualities of kolanuts from south-western part of Nigeria.

## **2.2 Kolanut in Pre-Colonial Sokoto City**

The Hausa Caravan came into contact with kolanut even before the advent of the colonial rule, and the influence of the jihad of 1804. Thus, kolanut became so important to the people of Sokoto due to its stimulant and sedative effect (aspirin, nicotine and caffeine) as well as its social significances which have lifted the kolanut from a mere unprofitable luxury to a vital necessity to the people.<sup>26</sup>

Though, agriculture was the major occupation of many people in Hausaland most especially the indigenous people of Sokoto even before the colonial era, but weather and geography of the area were not suitable and supportive of the cultivation and growth of kolanut in Sokoto. Thus, there was the need for exchange of the indigenous goods and commodities with the kolanuts from other people within and outside.<sup>27</sup>

These differences in natural endowments stimulated the growth of trade and markets not only in the kolanuts exchange but, also in the entire commodities available

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<sup>25</sup> According to the information gathered from Alhaji Jimoh Akande (95 years) the former chairman Kara kolanut merchants association. He stated that in the year 1932 he bought a truck which he intended to use for the importation of kolanut from Ghana to Sokoto. But, on reaching Ghana he found out that the kolanut of Ghana had no more value in market most especially in Nigeria. This is because, the south-western part of Nigeria kolanuts have good taste and more qualities. He went to Ondo state and found out that the kolanuts available were not only big enough for commercial purpose but, also have good taste and outlook compare to those available in Ghana

<sup>26</sup> O.Nzekwu, "Kolanut", Nigerian Magazine John Holt & Co. p.299.

<sup>27</sup> A. Mahdi, op.cit p.60

for trading either locally, inter-regionally or internationally.<sup>28</sup> Because of the great demand for kolanuts in Sokoto, the indigenous commodities that were found in Sokoto were exchanged for kolanuts in the inter-regional markets.<sup>29</sup> This inter-regional trade brought about early trade relations between Sokoto and its neighbors. The organization of market in Sokoto during the pre-colonial period could be linked with the existence of Sokoto along the trade route, i.e. (the Trans Saharan trade, and long distance trade) that existed long before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>30</sup>

However, for any community to exist comfortably there must be a demarcated side where exchange of commodity and trade is organized. By the establishment of Sokoto as caliphate's headquarters, it was decided by Mohammad Bello to establish a place (as market) where traders and consumers met to exchange product, and by 1809 the market was located outside the city walls on the north side of the town;<sup>31</sup> very close to the road leading to the Kofar Kware. The former position is currently occupied by a primary school known as Magajin Gari Primary School and some space occupied by the local pots builders and the rest as houses.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the fact that the market was small, but it received other articles of trade from Agades (now Niger Republic) including, brown salt (*balma*) cloth, chairs, chuku, (dried milk), palm-date, animals among others, in return the merchants exported food stuffs, cloth, dried sugar, kolanuts,<sup>33</sup> etc. In fact, by the early 1824, the Sokoto market

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.61

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p.62

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> NAK, Sokoto 86/1907, Sokoto provincial Report 10906, p.11. See also, S. Abubakar, op.cit, pp 56

<sup>32</sup> M. M. Lema, the Rise and Development of Sokoto market, SSCO, Sokoto. NCE Project, Dept of History, 1982. p.3

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.3. See also, NAK, Sokprof, S.206, volume 1, Sokoto Native Administration. P.61



had become a major trading centre and it has developed the characteristics associated with a city market in Hausaland.<sup>34</sup>

However, transaction of kolanut was carried out at Gobirawa area by remnants of the descendant of Agalawa traders in the area. The transaction were also made in places where people met like road sides, Sultan Palace (Kanwuri), and religious gathering and entertainment places,<sup>35</sup> and house trade which enable women in purdah (*kulle*) to trade most especially food items, beauticians (beads, and jewelleryes, etc), kolanut, salt among others.

The characteristics of local markets in Sokoto during 18<sup>TH</sup> Century were that some had trees to provide shade while some had tents or stalls and, therefore guilds were organised along members of the same trade or commodities. The most important features of those markets correlated with the centralized setting of Hausaland.<sup>36</sup> “*Sarkin Kasuwa*” (lumu) was the person in charge of market activities with wide range of powers to control and monitor the activities of traders and consumers.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, markets in Sokoto City operate mostly in two ways daily and Seven days. The daily markets were held in virtually all the urban centers where they served the immediate needs of people living in the towns and their environs. Such daily markets also operated in another dimension which was night marketing especially in the old Sokoto city near the gates. Such markets include kofar Dundaye, kofar Kade, kofar Rini, kofar Kware, kofar Atiku, Hungumawa, Marina Tsamiya, Yar Sake, Alkanchi and near

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<sup>34</sup> A.A. Sifawa, “Colonial Infrastructure and social development” UDU Sokoto. Unpublished M.A. Thesis Dept. of History, 2011 p.39.

<sup>35</sup> According to information gathered from the interview by Alhaji Abba (Kanwuri Sokoto) explain during these periods people came from far distance as well as outside (Niger Republic in particular) to pray at Shehu Mosque and usually they came along with several commodities for trading. O thus, it also pave way for interaction of trade between the foreigners and the indigenous people.

<sup>36</sup> Alhaji Salisu Oral interview aged 85 years Kanwuri area, Sokoto, see also S. Abubakar op.cit., p.85.

<sup>37</sup> K. Faloye, “Inter-regional trade in pre-colonial Africa” in Tarikh Vol.10 *pre-colonial Economic history of Africa*. J.A. Atanda and B.A. Avi ed, Longman Nigeria Plc 1992, pp 33-4 See also S. Abubakar, ibid.

the Dutsi Assadar ward,<sup>38</sup> and kolanut is among the major commodity sold in the Markets that are still in existence up till today.

### **2.3 Kolanut Trade in the Colonial Period 1903 -1960**

The virtues of the kolanut were known to the people of Sokoto in Northern Nigeria, kola became as important to them as betel among the Hindu, opium among the Chinese and cigarettes among the Spaniards.<sup>39</sup> The major purpose of kolanut among the Sokoto people is that the nut is used as a stimulant and this does not seem to have diminished in any way. Infact, it is so much in demand that it is said that some northern Hausas would spend their last coin to buy one to chew.<sup>40</sup>

Although, we do not know how profitable the kolanut trade was during the pre-colonial era, but, we have some indirect pointers to its profitability. In the ancient Sokoto, the control of the trade was mainly in the hands of royalties and well to do individuals.<sup>41</sup> This made it possible for the rulers and individuals to become more prosperous from the different taxes they collected. For instance, the trade brought to the royal treasury huge revenue through taxation which provided enormous resources for the running and maintenance of the state affairs. The emergence of the individuals was as a result of the involvement of many communities in the productive kolanut trade which eventually led to the emergence of new class of wealthy people.<sup>42</sup> As such, relative people were attracted to the new kolanut trade. Infact Most people in Sokoto cut

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<sup>38</sup> S. Abubakar, *ibid*, p.75.

<sup>39</sup> O. Nzukwu, "kolanut in Nigeria Magazine No.71, p299. *Op.cit*.

<sup>40</sup> Oral interview, Malam Sahabi Fakon Idi area Sokoto aged 70, 14/01/14.

<sup>41</sup> O. Nzukwu, *op.cit*. p.301. I Also according to the oral interview made with Hajiya Hauwa Bahausa mai goro aged 77, at Mangoro road (Sokoto), 2/4/14 said even before and after the discovery of oil (oil boom) in 1970 precisely, kolanut serves as a lucrative business that depends on huge amount of money (capital) and resources of workers and labourers, it provide huge profits for those who engaged in the transactions. A clear example could be seen by Sokoto wealthiest people such as Alh. Sidi Mamman Asarakawa, Alh. Abdullahi gobirawa, (Baban Maras) who was a father to Alh, Yaro Gobirawa in Sokoto). Alh. Bello Mai Kwanai, Alh. Idris etc. we shall discuss more about these people in subsequent chapter.

<sup>42</sup> Elegalem, P.O. Impact of external trade on traditional economy, in an Economic History of West Africa since 1750, Ogunrenmi, G.O. (eds) Ibadan, Rex Charless Publication 1996, p.69.

themselves off their traditional occupation (farming) where they grew food for their own need and embarked on the new trade which was more lucrative.

The advent of British colonial rule posed very serious challenges to indigenous economy of the Sokoto people. Although, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible for one to give the exact volume of trade in kolanuts between the Sokoto and forest region of Ashanti (Gwanja), but, it is clear that the kola trade rapidly shifted in the colonial period<sup>43</sup> to the southern part of Nigeria.

One important factor that facilitated the trade generally during colonial era was improved security along the trade routes. The unsettled and insecure conditions that marked the beginning (of long distance trade) to the present century in Sokoto and adjoining areas of the south-western part of Nigerian regions had slowed the pace of trading activity.<sup>44</sup> Traders, in particular, and indeed the generality of the population were for the most part wary of traveling long distances for fear of being attacked and having their merchandise plundered. The British primary aim of colonization was the exploitation of Nigerian resources to the benefit of their country and development of their industries and people.<sup>45</sup>

Meanwhile, the British established peace and security along the trade routes by bringing together several kingdoms and tribal communities under a single British control.<sup>46</sup> This measure became an important facilitator of trade within Nigeria as it

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<sup>43</sup> NAK, Sokprof, 101/1904, Sokoto province , Report for month of march 1904, by NRP Hillery. P.4. See also, O. Nzekwu, "kolanut" op.cit., p.307.

<sup>44</sup> Y. Mukhtar, "Nigeria-Chad Economic relations during the colonial period: a survey of the overland exchange in cattle and kolanuts," 1902-1960. Papers on *Nigerian History* Vol.2 (ed) S. Abubakar pp 130-136.

<sup>45</sup> M.Kwaire, "Commodity trade and sustainable integration of Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> cenry": A paper presented at the First National Conference organised by the school of Arts and Social Science, S.S.C.O.E. Sokoto June 12-15<sup>th</sup> 2001.

<sup>46</sup> N.A.K, Sokoto , 86/1903 Sokoto provincial Report, 10906, p.11. See also, F. Lugard, *The Dual mandate in British Tropical Africa*. Fifthedition, London, frank cass ltd, 1965, p.617. See also, Y . Mukhtar, op.cit p.137

enabled the long distance traders of the various ethnic groups to cross over the country freely without seeking the permission of the local rulers.<sup>47</sup>

Consequently, by bringing together several kingdoms, improved security along the trade routes stimulated commercial activity especially by increasing the pace at which regional and international commercial linkages were established.<sup>48</sup> In addition to amalgamation of tribal communities, the advent of new transport facilities equally promoted commercial activities especially kolanuts trade between Sokoto and south western part of the nation.<sup>49</sup> The introduction of railway and Lorries has been beneficial to local commerce, even though, the railway line did not reach Sokoto city but, it reached the neighbouring communities of Gusau and Kaura Namoda.<sup>50</sup> The appearance of rail transport stimulated in turn the need to build motorable roads to link the major producing and trading centers in the country and this eventually boosted and facilitated the movements of kolanuts and other commodities as well as people. For instance, the Niger route was replaced by the overland route from Lagos to Ilorin through Abeokuta, Eruwa and Iseyin, which in turn was replaced after 1900 by the shorter route Lagos through Shagamu, Ibadan, and Oyo to northern Nigeria.<sup>51</sup>

The imposition of common currency was a paradigm shift that gradually phased out the divergent currencies of the past (clothes, human beings, horses, cowries, shells etc) and this brought about several changes in the nature of trading. The British, having recognised the value of kolanuts, put some improvement in the cultivation of the nut. For example, the British encouraged the cultivation of kola nitida (which supplemented

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<sup>47</sup> Y. Mukhtar, *Ibid.*, p.138

<sup>48</sup> Y. Mukhtar, *Ibid.* p.137

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> NAK, Sokprof, 343/1951. Report No 3 on Sokoto province, 1931.p2. See also, W. Wallace, *Colonial Report Northern Nigeria, 1906-1911*. volume 11. pp487. See also, A.A.Sifawa, *opcit* p.166.

<sup>51</sup> B. A..Agiri, "Kola in western Nigeria 1850-1950, A History of the cultivation of kola- nitida in EGBA-OWODE, IJEBU-REMO, IWO AND OTA AREAS" Unpublished PhD. Thesis University of Wisconsin since 1972, p.216.

imports from Ashante) with the establishment of a botanical garden at Ibadan in 1904<sup>52</sup> from where 6,500 *C. nitida* seedlings were distributed to the chiefs and 127 others to the educated elite of Ibadan.<sup>53</sup>

Between 1900-1920 the cultivation of kola nitida was well established in such areas like Ota, Agege, Abeokuta, Ikorodu, Ijebu-Remo etc. This development improved the qualities and quantities of kola nitida and brought expansion of the nut trade in the country. Moreover, by 1909, an increasing number of Hausa (Sokoto) kolanut traders had settled in Lagos not only to trade but to propagate the cultivation of Kola nitida to other Yoruba areas.<sup>54</sup>

Although kolanut is grown only in the forest zone, where the necessary humid climatic conditions exist, but, its purchases and export to the north was largely dominated by the Hausa traders during the colonial era.<sup>55</sup> This was because they took the additional costs of packaging and transportation from the producing areas to Sokoto and other parts of Northern Nigeria.

Agiri in his work observed from an official source in 1909 that “the commerce in Gbanja kolanuts with the hinterland is entirely in the hands of the native merchants and Hausa traders and large quantities of these nuts are conveyed into the interior by means of donkey caravans.”<sup>56</sup>

It has for long been assumed that the major groups involved in kolanut trade in Sokoto were the caravans of Hungamawa,<sup>57</sup> Gobirawa and Anguwar Fatake. They more or less dominated the organisation of the caravans to Gwanja (modern day Ghana) and

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<sup>52</sup> B. A. Agiri, Ibid, p.217.

<sup>53</sup> Babatunde A.A. “The Introduction of Nitida kola into Nigeria in Agriculture: 1880-1920” in African Economic History Vol.3 (1977) pp 1-15.

<sup>54</sup> NAK, Logprof, 19643, Colonial Annual Report for Lagos, 1887-1900. and Southern Nigeria, Annual Reports. 1889.Ibid, p.7. See also, R.E. Dennett, “Agricultural Progress in Nigeria” *Journal of the African Society*. Volume xv111, No Lxx11, July 1919. pp.266-289.

<sup>55</sup> B. A. Agiri PhD, op.cit., p.216 See also, Lagos Nigerian Blue Book 1906.

<sup>56</sup> NAK, Sokprof, C456, Provincial Annual Report 1906. p7Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> S. Abubakar op.cit., p.27

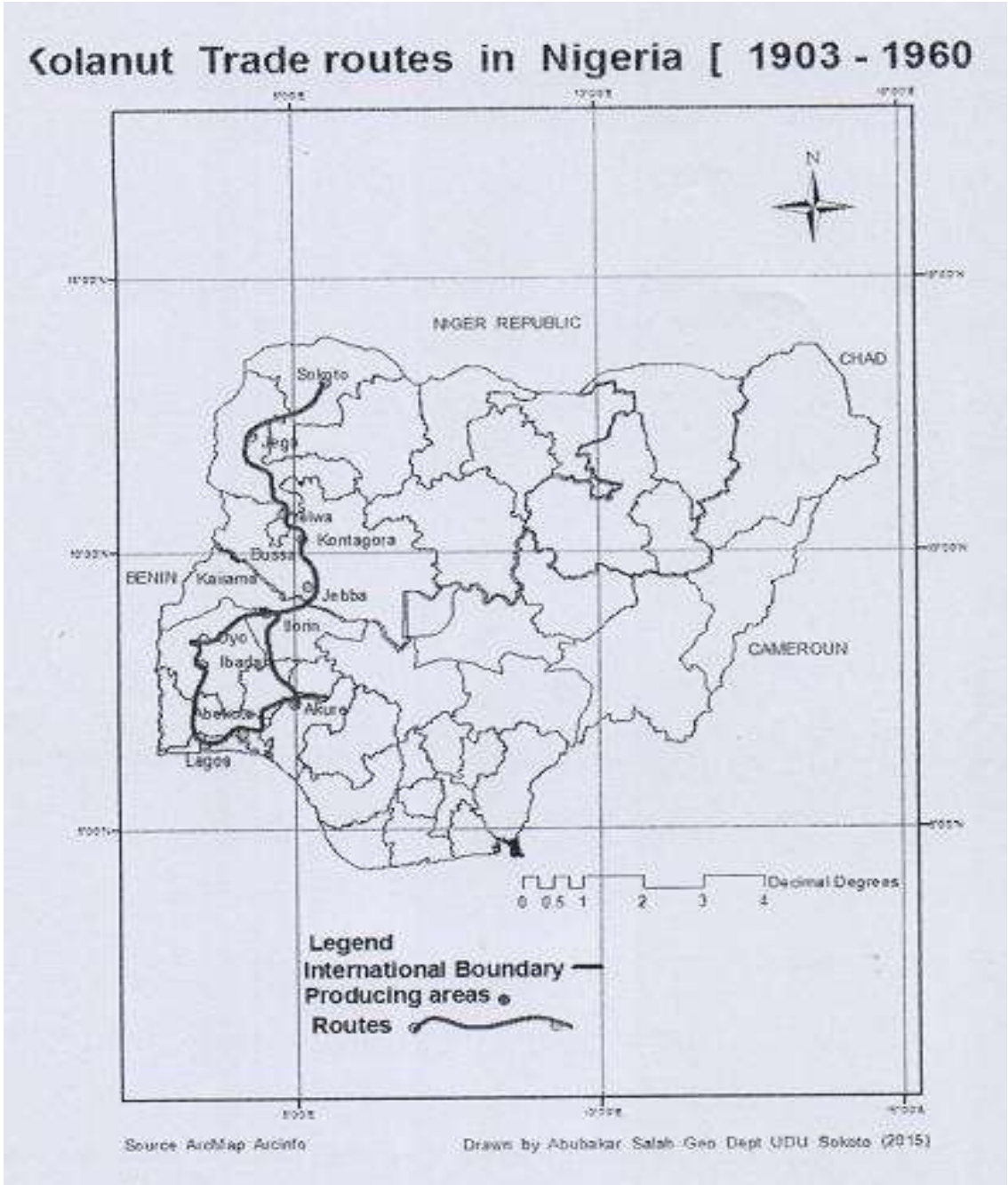
Kurmi market (south western part of Nigeria). In pre-colonial times although, trade in kolanut was very small and purely local and by barter. Thus, those groups (Hungumawa and co.) took on their outward journeys such goods as smoked fish, dried cotton, and garments, hides and skins, leather and leather goods, natron (kanwa), onions, gabu (dried onion leaves) medicinal herbs, horses and cattle's among others, in exchange for kolanuts and other assorted goods.<sup>58</sup>

The caravans (fatake) brought kolanuts into the area (Gobirawa) through house-to-house transactions. This mode of operations in kolanut trade continues for several years until the advent of the colonial rule. The caravans were blessed with fewer burdens in their long distance journey through the innovations brought about by colonial rule in transportation, infrastructure and other related social services. Thus, the construction of railways with the terminus at Gusau helped a lot in boosting the kolanut transaction among the kola traders which alleviated the head to shoulder and use of beast of burden characteristic of old long distance trade.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Mahdi, A. op.cit., p.126

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. see also, A.A. Sifawa,. op.cit p.168.



Meanwhile, with the establishment of the railway terminus at Gusau, the kolanut was transported to Sokoto through the Nigerian Railway Cooperations Lorries and

deposited at the railway station at Sokoto (presently SARDA).<sup>60</sup> The kolanut was parked in sacks “*Huhu*” with the name of the owners tagged on the body of the sack “*Huhu*” and a letter or receipt of ownership, was given to the owners to claim their goods on arrival which could be transported from railway motor station to their various homes.<sup>61</sup>

Although the railway motors played a significant role in the movement of goods and persons to Sokoto metropolis but they were inadequate in alleviating the transportation problems due to poor communication facilities and serious deplorable conditions of roads and Lorries by the late 1940s.<sup>62</sup>

Subsequently, with the establishment of market along (“*Tsohowar kasuwa*”)<sup>63</sup> old market in Sokoto City, the kolanut traders in Sokoto found it so difficult by using bare head and shoulders to transport their kolanuts to various houses. Therefore, the idea of finding a place very close to the market where they could easily deposit their kolanuts for commercial purpose developed. Consequently, the idea of establishing the Shagon goro emerged.<sup>64</sup> The present Shagon goro area was on the out skirt of the old market where refuse was dumped.

Shagon goro market was the first kolanut market established in 1948 at Sokoto city. It served as an important depot for the kolanut trade among the Hausas their business partners in kolanut trading<sup>65</sup> In fact, the period between 1920 and 1950 witnessed the growth of the market in the kolanut trade. The increased numbers of

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<sup>60</sup> Alhaji Bello Maikwanci former chairman of kolanut club. Aged 87, oral interview 14/2/14. See also oral interview with Hajiya Hauwa Bahausa. According to her, kolanut used to come in huhu “(Along basket contain many kolanut, it is also being used in keeping kolanut for long period of time) which contain about 10,000 pieces of kolanut.

<sup>61</sup> Hajiya Hauwa, oral interview, opcit.

<sup>62</sup> A. Bello Chairman, oral interview opcit.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid Hajiya Hauwa op.cit (oral interview)

<sup>64</sup> Ibid (oral interview)

<sup>65</sup> I. Gatawa, Sokoto Birnin Shehu 1960-2007. Unpublished Ph.D. UDU Sokoto, Department of History Sokoto pp 85-7.



Hausa kolanut traders and the coming of Yoruba men and women into the trade was an aspect of the expansion of the market.

Subsequently, by the year 1948, the Native Administration allocated the Shagon goro site to some highly prominent and privileged kola traders who formed the major outlets shops and guest houses among whom were: Alhaji Mai Ghandi, Alh. Bello Mai Kwanchi,<sup>66</sup> Alh. Sharo, Alh. Mamman Nahutsu, Alh. Bakale, Alh. Mairago, Alh. Sidi Mamman Assarakawa, Alh. Isah Litafi, Alh. Ahmadu Gururzau, Alh. Yahaya Malami, Alh. Audu Zukulu, Umaru Dan Karami, Bello Batune Gobirawa, Mamman S/Fawan Kwani, Sa'adu bakin Masallachi, Hali Gobirawa, Isan Dan Gwarzo, Dantanin Gobirawa, Alh. Sahabi, Nuhu Kofar marke, Audu Na Alhaji Adili, Alhaji Alun Kacen, Alhaji Baban Baba, M. Garba Unguwar Mallammai among others.

According to Alhaji Bello Chairman, some varieties of kolanut were found in Shagon goro market organised in different quantity and quality contain in *Huhu* (a large container) or basket based on calabashes made for sales. They included: *Goriya* and *Marsa* (more general term for the largest and exceptionally nuts) which were mostly purchased by the rich and the royal families, while, *Farsa* (splinted into their parts) patronized by the less privileged people. *Menu* was for the middle class people. *Saranwaga* (an assortment of *Marsa* and *menu* ( the mixture of large and smalls nut) were used for ceremonial activities<sup>67</sup>, *Hurun Ruwa* or *Gazari* from Abeokuta is chiefly consumed by women in conjuncture with tobacco flowers for adornment and coloring of the teeth red or black. *Labozhi* from Nupe is said to be as the finest quality, followed by Dan Ar-

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<sup>66</sup> Alh. Bello Chairman, op.cit (Oral interview)

<sup>67</sup> A.Bello Chairman, kolanut Club Sokoto. Oral interview, See Lovejoy P. Caravans of kola, the Hausa kola trade 1700-1900 (Zaria 1980), p.124. According to Lovejoy, there are more than forty varieties of kola and of these, four colanitida *C. acuminata*, *C. verticillata*, and *C. anomala* are the most common and important in the commerce of West Africa of these four varieties. But *C. nitida* are by far the most important in terms of trade between forest and savannah.

Agege (Lagos) which is second in popularity while Dan Gwanja from Gold Cost came third in popularity.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, based on the level of kolanut demand by the people of Sokoto City coupled with the availability of the varieties found in the market, here are statistical table of two major types of kolanut:

**Table 2:1: Kolanut Price in Sokoto City for Some Selected Months in 1948**

Months	February	March	April	May	June	July	September	October
Variety of kolanut Abata	3/per 100	None in market	None in market	None in market	None in market	None in market	None in market	None in market
Kolanut gwanja	6/per 100	6 to 5/for 100	5-per 100	5/for 100	2/6-5/for 100	2-5/for 100	3/bd/f or 100	3/Bd/f or 100

Source; NAK Sokprof, 5333 a, food price funeral correspondence and return 27 September December 1948.p12

According to the statistical figure shown in table 2:1 that kolanut Abata<sup>69</sup> was largely not available in the market most of the period with the exception of February which sold at the rate of 3/per 100. This is because the nut was not popular and therefore not high demand in Sokoto. Secondly, it has a different taste and therefore nor favored by the kola consumers. Lastly, it was dark red in color and very expensive in the market due to its scarcity.<sup>70</sup> The kolanuts that came form Gbanja and South western Nigeria, are

<sup>68</sup> WJHCB, No.448/1925/S. Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> 1930 the Resident Sokoto province – kolanut importation see also Hajiya Hauwa Bahausa Maigoro op.cit.

<sup>69</sup> M. Mukaila, “the Significance of kolanut in Igbo land” in Sunday Trust, September, 8, 2013. According to Igbo’s when kola breaks into five or more parts mean prosperity for the family. Six a separate celebration is required and some time even including the slaughter of a goat. Note: Abata kolanut is a special specie purple/reddish coloured nut (cola acuminate) are preferred over its greyish counterpart that split and break into three to six parts; normally used for rituals/oracles in a non Muslim Yoruba and Igbo’s community.

<sup>70</sup> NAK, Sokprof, 28306, volume 1, kolanut Trade, 1940-1949, northern province to the chief secretary to the Nigerian Government. Lagos 10 Dec, 1948. p.6.

the finest nuts preferred in Sokoto, Kano and Zaria, possibly because of their taste and the many advantages it has over Abata nut led to the availability of the nut in the market.

Equally important, the data shows the rises in prices of kolanut from February to May normally become the wet or new and fresh kolanut was not available in the market. Infact available ones were exported to neighboring communities of Niger, Cameroon and Chad republic which was highly needed in the areas. Thus, from June to December the price of kolanut usually came down due to the availability of newly harvested ones in the market.

#### **2.4 Colonial Economic Policies towards Kolanut Trade**

The introduction of Gwanja kolanut served as an innovation in the agricultural economy to the Yoruba Land, A small percentage of this kolanut was consumed locally by the Yoruba, while the bulk of it is sent to northern Nigerian markets (in particular Sokoto) which served as a centre of demand.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, it represents a part of the process of change in the agricultural economy where by none locally consumed crops have become important and are produced for new markets.

The colonial government established a Botanic Garden at Ebute-Meta in Lagos, while an experimental station was opened at Ikorodu, where model farms were set up at Olokomeji (on Egba territory)<sup>72</sup> and at Mamu (a village located on the boundary between Ibadan and Ijebu territories), later by 1910, an experimental stations were established at Agege and Ibadan.<sup>73</sup> The aim of the colonial government in establishing the Botanic Garden and experimental stations was to breed economic crops (i.e. kolanut) and sell the seedlings and plants to local farmers in the hope that “the inhabitants will take readily to

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<sup>71</sup> G.O. Ogunremi, “Pre-Colonial Economic and Social Relations between South-Western and Northern Nigeria” ODU. *A Journal of West African Studies*, New Series . 22. January 1982. University of Ife Press, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Pp133-35

<sup>72</sup> B. A. Agiri, op.cit., p.215

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p.215

the cultivation of the economic products which is the objective of the government to diffuse throughout the country”.<sup>74</sup>

These experimental farms breed many seedlings and sold them at half a penny each or distributed them free to local farmers. Due to the availability of this local nuts in ten years after, the period between 1920 and 1940 witnessed the growth of the market in the local Gwanja kolanuts. The increased number of Hausa kola traders and the entry of Yoruba women into the trade were all aspects of the expansion of the market.<sup>75</sup>

Pursuant to the scientific improvement of the kolanut by the colonial governments, the local nuts had some advantages over the imported ones. For example, by 1931, it was reported that Owode and Agege Gwanja nuts were the most expensive nut in Southern Nigeria but more preferred in Sokoto, possibly because of their taste.<sup>76</sup> In October that year in Sokoto, Owode nuts fetched £0.3 per 200, Agege nuts £0.275 while the price of nuts from the Gold Coast was £0.25 for 200. Only the nuts from Sierra Leone commanded a higher price, £0.35 to £0.375 per 200.<sup>77</sup>

The colonial economic policy placed the imported commodity at a disadvantage. This is not only because the internal costs of packing and transportation in the country of origin, but also the imported Gbanja kola paid a custom duty £0.675 on every 100lb on entry into Nigeria. Transportation and repacking cost totaling some £0.5 was also incurred in Lagos for every bag weighing about one-quarter long ton, before it was railed to northern Nigeria.<sup>78</sup> These additional costs introduced by the colonial government naturally made it more expensive in the market. Thus, the “excessive duty” on imported

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p.215 See also Gifford, P. et.al. (ed) France and Britain in Africa rule University Press 1971, p 608.

<sup>75</sup> B.A.Mosummola, “The role of women in the economic history of south-western Yoruba land in the 19<sup>th</sup> century”. B.A. Easy in History University of Maiduguri June 1991, p.181.

<sup>76</sup> B.A.Agiri, op.cit p.125

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.p.216. See also, Lagos and Colony Blue Book 1897, p.104

<sup>78</sup> W.J.H.C.B, Guf,/31 volume. 1, Colonial Development and Welfare Funds. 1940-1950. See also, B.A. Agiri, Ibid.

nuts forced many of them into liquidation which eventually posed backwardness in the importation of the nut.<sup>79</sup> Consumers turned to the cheaper, and perhaps better, local nuts especially at that time when the economic depression had reduced their purchasing power. As a result the Sokoto caravans shifted to Agege for the transaction of cheaper local kolanut<sup>80</sup>. These colonial policies reduced the rate at which caravan traveled to Gwanja and this led to scarcity of Gwanja Kolanut in Sokoto City. Consequently, those who were addicted to Gwanja kolanut could no longer purchase and had to divert to local Kurmi kolanut. Also, majority of Sokoto kolanut traders abandon the business and searched for an alternative business such as commercial farming while others became agents to Colonial companies.<sup>81</sup>

### **Colonial Transportation Policy**

As part of the colonial economic policies on transportation system, the construction of railway lines and roads have been beneficial to local and regional transaction. The railways served as an important policy because it stimulated economic growth. Larger volume of goods could be transported for a long distance at a greater speed than the old means of transportation.<sup>82</sup> By 1889 Southern Nigeria had a 60 mile long railway along Lagos across to Offa and Ibadan (as major kolanut production area). But, in the north up to 1902 there was only a 20 mile of railways line linking Kaduna - Zaria- Funtua- Gusau where cotton production was largely transported for European

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p.177

<sup>82</sup> NAK, Sokprof, 6212, Annual Report Sokoto province 1944.p.21. Aq Resident, H.B.Leonard, Esq. Available record suggested that rail way motor Station open in 1944. See also, L.C. Eards, "Lagos society before 1900", Article inside Nigeria Magazine No.39 1953, in I. Kule, *Background to Urbanization*, p.259. See also M Kwaire,. op.cit. p.5.

industries.<sup>83</sup> Thus, railways and Lorries did boost the movements of kolanuts, palm oil, livestock and people in the colonial period.<sup>84</sup>

Even though, in the early stage the Hausa long distance traders did not use the railway much because the freight rates were very high. Thus, it was against this backwardness, that the management of the railway intensified its canvassing among the “native merchants and Hausa traders to divert the caravan traffic in kolanut to the railway and as an inducement, a free pass is issued to any trader who consigns over 100 tons.<sup>85</sup> These efforts gradually achieved some successes. In 1911, 1028 tons of the commodity went by rail and four years later the tonnage more than tripled.<sup>86</sup> After 1910, production from Agege and Offa areas formed a part of the railway tonnage to northern Nigeria particularly in Sokoto.<sup>87</sup>

### **Colonial Policy on Currencies**

The introduction of different colonial common currency in West Africa generally had affected the overland trade in kolanut. In the case of the British and French territories silver coins and currencies served as the major means of exchange. They were acceptable for virtually all transaction of goods and services. The proclamation of the Ordinance No.2 of 1880 gradually phased out the divergent currencies of the past (slaves, cloths, manilas, cowries among others).<sup>88</sup>

As rightly pointed out by indigenous traders operate across the frontier had to contend with regulations governing their currency transaction. Infact, to overcome some of the obstacles imposed by the

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<sup>83</sup> NAK, Sokprof, 6637, Sokoto division annual report 1946, p.19 by D.O. Sokoto Emirate. See also, M. Kwaire, op.cit p.5.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p.7

<sup>85</sup> B. A. Agiri, op.cit p.175

<sup>86</sup> NAK, Sokprof, 556/1041, Annual Report No 6. Nigerian railway1930,p.8. See also, B.A.Agiri, Ibid, pp.156-7.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> A. Balogun et.al Monetary policy and economic performance of West African monetary zone countries. London 1979, p.212. see also NAK, SNP7, Acc. No.5045/194 “Coins Five-,France pieces etc. prohibition of importation of”. op,cit

colonial boundaries And district currency zones, indigenous traders transacting across the frontier resorted to smuggling, a phenomenon that still continue to limit the independent state of the region.<sup>89</sup>

Apart from caravan tolls, which the traders paid or custom duties to state officials at the various borders with different colonial currencies regulation and policies through which they passed, the amount paid depended on the policy of the state and the commodities involved. But, cloths and horses attracted more duties than foodstuffs which depended on the whim and caprices of tolls collection,<sup>90</sup> those involved in trade across the colonial frontiers could easily become victims of inter-European bureaucratic rivalry as it was stated by the traders, resident of Sokoto province over the matter.

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<sup>89</sup> Y. Mukhtar, "Trade, merchants and the state" in papers on Nigerian History Vol.1 (ed), S. Abubakar pp 99-1-6. See also, WJHCB, File Kolanuts No.106/1930 14 of 27<sup>th</sup> March 1933, your endorsement.

<sup>90</sup> F. Toyin, "African pre-colonial domestic economy" in Tarikh. On An Introduction to the Economic History of pre-colonial Africa, p.10.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **KOLANUT TRADE: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: 1960-2014**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines the nature of kolanut trade from 1960-2014. The chapter equally analyzed the introduction and impact of some modern facilities and social services such as telephones/GSM phone as (community's facilities) modern infrastructures and other related services in the movement of people and commodities in the area. Thus, the dynamic of trade in the integration of the people of Nigeria through exchange of goods (kola and other related goods) to some communities and markets outside their native areas and their eventual settlement and social integration would be analyzed. It is shown that in the final analysis that in spite of many challenges faced by the trade, and the merchants of kola, the trade still survives.

#### **3.1 Kolanut Trade in the Post-Colonial Period**

By the end of the colonial era, the kolanut trade had witnessed series of massive developments in the commercial sector. This is because of shift in the advancement attained in the infrastructure (technology), currency and banking system as well as development in science. Due to the scientific advancement in the early 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the kolanut has assumed a recognized significance as it is more value in the local and international market in many countries.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Daily Trust (Tuesday, June 17, 2008, p32) "Booming kolanut business in the North" by Murjanatu Mohammed Abba Kaduna



Because of the high stimulant (also alkaloids, similar to those of coffee and tea) kolanut possesses, it now serves as the basis of a major ingredient for all cola soft drinks. Most European countries and U.S. soft drinks manufacturing companies need kolanut as flavouring for their products, hence its high demand all year round. Kola can also be used in the production of energy drinks, wine production, production of sweet and chewing gum, kola powder and it is used to produce various drugs and body creams.

As a result of the advancement in science especially food and medical sciences (i.e beverages and pharmaceuticals) more uses were found for kolanut which has hitherto served only as edible stimulant and sacrificial offerings among the people of West Africa. However, much as in pre-colonial times, the kolanut trade in post colonial Sokoto was pre-dominantly geared to satisfy people's demand for it as an edible stimulant and items of ceremonial offering this is so due to absence of complex industries that may require its uses. This trend continued even today as almost all the kolanut coming into Sokoto from the southern part of the country is directly consumed by the people in Sokoto and its neighboring areas. While in Sokoto kolanuts are traditionally used for variety of proposes. Kolanut is smuggled in substantial quantity to other neighboring countries from Sokoto, to Niger Republic as well as Saudi Arabia especially during Hajji Operation which generate some foreign exchange earnings to the kolanut traders.<sup>1</sup>

The construction of various roads that linked with the railway lines, roads development since the colonial era and massive importation of cars and lorries, had contributed immensely towards the movement of bulky goods and sustainable business transaction between the north (Sokoto) in particular and southern part of Nigeria. With regard to kolanut for example, no less than 54,000 tons were exported from south to

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<sup>1</sup> Oral interview, Hajiya Yardubu aged, 65 oral interview Gidan Igwai area, Sokoto. on 17/10/2013

Sokoto in 1964<sup>2</sup>. In fact in the same year statistics have shown that almost 94% of the kolanut originated from the west; 4% from the east and 2% from Lagos.<sup>3</sup> Thus, even though the railway terminus did not reach Sokoto city and that it is slower in nature compare to road transport it nonetheless facilitated easy movement of bulky goods compared to the old boring and burden some caravan long distance kolanut trade journey. It should be noted that the development of modern transportation, infrastructure in both colonial and post colonial periods aided the speed, the rate and the ease with which kolanut business was conducted. This is particularly true of the rail and motor able road transportation facilities which are in sharp contrast with pre-existing human portorage and/ or animal transportation.

In the source region i.e. western Nigeria, there were several places where kolanut was available in bulks such as Ibadan, Shagamu, Agege, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Ijebu-Igbo, Ikire Apomu etc. where direct shipment either by rail or by road took place.<sup>4</sup> But Ibadan became the leading centre of kolanut trade and accounted for 41% of the total export from the west in the 1960s<sup>5</sup> such that the headquarters of the Kolanut Dealers Association was located there. In the year 1963, the Dealers Association was dominated by over 200 Hausa landlords, mostly from Sokoto, Kano and Katsina. In Shagamu, the Sabo market quarter was founded in 1924 and the kolanut traders could boast of a population of over 5000 Hausa immigrants in the 1970s.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> B.A.Agiri, kola in western Nigeria, 1850-1950, A History of the cultivation of Egba-owede, Ijebu – Remu, Iwo and Ota Areas, university of Wisconsin 1972. p.123.

<sup>3</sup> M. Kwaire, “Commodity trade and sustainable integration Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”, A paper presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> National conferences organised by the School of Arts and Social Sciences, SSCO, Sokoto June 12-15<sup>th</sup>, 2001, p.11

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. See also B. A. Agiri , “The introduction of Natida kola into Nigerian agriculture” 1920-1980. opcit, p45.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. P.32.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. See also Ibrahim Y.B. “A History of Hausa settlement of Sabo-Ibadan”, M.A. UDU, Sokoto (1990).

Thus, because of this local demand different prices were fixed based on the quality and colour of the varieties as rightly shown in following table.

**Table 3:1: Prices of Kolanut in some Selected Months 1960**

Months	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Varieties Of Red kola prices	Red kolanut 3 1.0	Red kolanut 55.0	Red kolanut 25.0	Red kolanut 44.6	Red kolanut 64.6	Red kolanut 64.6	Red kolanut 64.0	Red kolanut 33.0	Red kolanut 45.0	Red kolanut 46.0
Varieties Of white kola price	white kolanut 34.6	white kolanut 100.0	White kolanut 30.6	White kolanut 53.1	white kolanut 64.0	White kolanut 64.0	white kolanut 70.0	White kolanut 44.0	White kolanut 53.0	White kolanut 60.0

Source: NAK, Sokprof, 6635, quarterly report on the prices of selected commodities in Sokoto town from January. March, April June, July –Sep 1960 p. 17-52.

The available data on the price shows the fluctuation of market prices of white and red nuts, between January and December 1960. Kolanut were sold in the unit of 100, although, the prices were determined by the size and quality and quantity of the nut and the period (harvest or slack) of the year when the commodity was sold in the market. The big white nuts fetched the highest price, next came the big red nut, The medium white nuts fetched lower prices still but this was higher than that for medium red nuts. The small nuts fetched the lowest prices. In practice, however, the big white nut called (*goromarsa*) was regarded as first class grade 1 nut. The mixed white and the red, comprised the big white and red nut grade 11. The medium white and red grade 111. The Smalls and the infected ones formal grade IV. The prices were usually low during harvesting period from September to December as slack season set in from January when prices tend to go up until August.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> NAK, Sokprof, 24873, Assessments Report January March to September 1960. in Sokoto State.

However, the above data on the market prices of kola nut presented in table 3.1 shows comparative indication of the range between white and red nuts. Thus, the white specie of the nut obtain the highest prices probably because of the prestige attached to it by Hausa men and that indicated the cultural value attached to white variety for traditional ceremonies and occasions.

### **3.2 The Significance of Modern Banking System to Kola Trade**

The kolanut trade has been modernized through the advancement in the use of banking system. Unlike before, when a trader would carry a large sum of money to *kurmi* kola market which involved some level of risk to both lives and property especially through accident and highway robbery attacked, the banking business transaction has completely removed the risk and now plays a vital role between the kolanut producers and merchants in the southwest and the middle men (brokers) in Sokoto.<sup>8</sup> A kolanut trader/producer can bring his kolanut based on trust system to a particular broker in Sokoto with a special letter attached containing the detail information and number of baskets sent. In return a principal kola nut broker or agent in Sokoto remits large sum of money to his Yoruba trader/client through banking transaction in order to buy kolanut which will eventually be sent to Sokoto brokers .However, in some cases these brokers might be directed to purchase other goods such as garlic, onion, dried skin, beans, pepper among others instead of remitting the cash currency in to bank. Although, such trust exist right before the post-colonial period between them, but banking system and mobile phones have made it even more attractive and more convenient.

The speed with which people adapt to the modern e-banking transactions is itself a testimony to the efficiency of the system. This is more so as the modern banking transaction eliminate hitherto vexatious issue of highway robberies which prior to the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

advent of banking transaction, was eating deep into the fortunes of the kolanut traders in the two divides. Lives and fortunes have been lost to armed robbers along the highway such that a number of people known to have been rendered bankrupt or suffer physical harm. The modern banking transaction eliminates all that as kolanut merchants do not have to travel with cash after selling their products.

As information is the key to any successful business, it is worthy of note that the introduction of GSM also contributes a lot to the kola transaction. This is because of the immediate and quick dissemination of business information and transaction in terms of prices and the nature of the market among the traders in both southern and northern Nigeria. More so, this development in the use of GSM has made the Yoruba whom are known to be the “producers” sells their goods while boycotting the middle men.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, this development is drastically changing the nature of the trade by making the involvement of middlemen no longer necessary and old fashion. Hence, the invention is currently breaking the monopoly of the Hausa middle men.

Global system of mobile telecommunications has equally helps in checking all forms of price fluctuations which help traders on both sides of the supply chain to adjust to any change that may arise either resulting from transportation, hiccups, instability or surge in demand. In the same way, it helps the supplier to know when to supply and when to hold on in order not to saturate the markets as well as which market to supply in the consuming region<sup>10</sup>. The development of modern transport, communication and money transfer technology have greatly aided the growth and sustainability of the kolanut trade in Sokoto as in much of northern Nigeria.

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<sup>9</sup> Mal. Dogo aged 51, oral interview, Kara kola market Sokoto, October 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Abdulhamid salawu, Aged 49. Oral interview, Kara kola Market Sokoto. October 2013.

### **3.3 The Emergence of Kara Kolanut Market**

The present Kara kolanut market was established in November, 1992.<sup>11</sup> Before independence, Shagon goro not only served as the base for kolanut depot, where the nut was available in bulk for transactions in Sokoto city, but also, as a place to accommodate the Yoruba kolanut traders from the south-west. With independence, the influx of Yoruba kolanut traders into Sokoto city increased dramatically.<sup>12</sup> Hence, houses of settled Yoruba kolanut traders as well as Hausa indigenes (most especially the brokers) along and within Shagon goro area became the place to accommodate the visiting Yoruba kolanut traders from the south-west. The houses and shops in Shagon goro became overcrowded and the problem of accommodation to shelter the traders became a burden to both Hausa brokers and the settled Yoruba kolanut traders.

This inadequacy of shelter coupled with insecurity of lives and properties of these visitors created the need for an alternative place other than Shagon goro to substitute or supplement their needs, and smooth and peaceful operation of this lucrative business in Sokoto. Groups of some itinerant kolanut dealers in Sokoto town made up of the indigenes and the non-indigenes embarked on a mission of soliciting for a new place to operate their business effectively. They wrote proposal to the Sokoto state government as well as the Sultan of Sokoto (Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, the 18<sup>th</sup> Sultan of Sokoto Sultanate) to come to their aid.<sup>13</sup>

In November 1992 Sultan Ibrahim Dasuki granted the present kara kola market (which initially was a venue for the transaction of cows and camels before) to some prominent kolanut dealers under the leadership of Alhaji Bello Liman, Mal. Lawali Tumba, Alhaji Saidu, and Alhaji Muhammad Nuhu (late Sarkin Goro). Among the non-

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Alhaji Bello Najari (Chairman, Shagon goro market) aged 75 July 17 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

indigenes were Alhaji Jimoh Akande (late), Alhaji Abdulkareem Lawal, Baba Saidu, Baba Zainabu as well as Alhaji Murtala.<sup>14</sup>The market was fairly big enough to accommodate the growing need of the traders for whom it serves as commercial centre for kolanut trade.

It was estimated that more than fifty (15) Lorries bring and offload kolanuts from the south every day.<sup>15</sup>The kolanut is distributed within Sokoto city and different areas of the State. Among the challenges facing Kara market includes competition in the supremacy of leadership between the *kara* groups and old *Shagon goro* groups. Also, Kara market is prone to fire disaster because of poor wiring in some shops. During rainy season access to some shops is very difficult due to inadequate drainage system.

### **3.4 Inter-Groups Relationship**

Naturally, each ethnic group has its peculiar historical tradition about their composition and existence, and no community or society is independent of itself, rather it has to relate in one way or the other with other societies or groups for development. Although, the historical relationship between Sokotawas and the Yoruba kolanut traders has been on for more than five hundred years before the British rule.<sup>16</sup> In an attempt to examine the inter-group relations among the kolanut traders in Sokoto and from southern parts of the nation (Yoruba in particular) one need to look into Three (3) factors that engendered the relationship of these tribes up till date. One of the most important is trade, Islam (especially the jihad of Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo 1803 ) on the one hand and then colonial rule. These three factors produced the state of inter-group relations in contemporary northern Nigeria.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid (Mal Qasim)

<sup>15</sup> Mal. Adesina (General secretary) aged 60 years, kara market 17/6/2014

<sup>16</sup> A. Tijani, "Ethnic relations". A study of Hausa community in Ogbomosh, Nigeria (1924-1967).

Traditionally, internal migrant among communities has been part of the Nigerian historical heritage. Immigrants provided a complementary services alien to the host community which often added value to the economy. The Yoruba kolanut merchants transverse communities in Northern Nigeria and established their abodes in various parts of the north as well as Sokoto territories<sup>17</sup> (Shagon goro, kalfu, Aliyu Jodi, Ahmadu Bello way, etc) and they were well settled with their offspring's today forming the core of the people in Sokoto city. It is pertinent to point out some of the ways in which kolanut trade have contributed in the ethnic integration of Sokoto city. Although, the relationship that exists between the Sokkwatawa and other tribes across the nation cannot be attached to kolanut trade alone yet, the Yoruba relationship with the Sokkotawa in general is somewhat unique in nature.<sup>18</sup>

Isa Hashim has offered three (3) explanations why the Yoruba were accepted in the north more than any other tribes from the southern parts of Nigeria.<sup>19</sup> Firstly, due to Islamic tradition, the Yoruba were regarded as brothers and sisters of the Hausa people because the majority of Yoruba migrants were Muslims. This suggests why some Yoruba have been assimilated into Hausa culture or enjoys accommodation. Secondly, economically, they were hardworking in terms of their technical skills, productivity and quality of work delivery.<sup>20</sup>

Thirdly, the Yoruba shared myth of origin with the *kanuri*. Oral traditions in Borno has it that the “Yoruba and kanuri were cousins”. According to one mythology, the Yoruba were said to be outspoken while the *kanuri* were calm people who detested discussing their private affairs in public, particularly those issues concerning their

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. See also, A.Bako, Sabon Gari kano: A History of Immigrants and Inter-groups Relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Sokoto, UDUS Press, 206, p.3.

<sup>18</sup> R. Olaniyi (2004) “Conceptualising Yoruba Diaspora: *Ajo ko da biilile* (Dispora is not like home) see also books, [opendeition.org/ifra/919](http://opendeition.org/ifra/919).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.



sexuality. There are those who claimed that the similarity in Yoruba and Kanuri culture could further be observed in their passion for singing and dancing, particularly among their women.<sup>21</sup>

However, the dynamics of trade in the integration of the people of Nigeria through exchange of goods and the immigration of merchants to markets outside their native areas and their eventual settlement as well as their social integration have been the major antecedent for inter-ethnic settings across the nation. Thus, trade has continued to mobilise people and product across the various parts of Nigeria without regard to ethnic, state, regional or religious barriers.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, intergroup relationship has some impacts most especially in trading which include the stimulation of favourable cultural exchanges. For instance, Yoruba traders in Sokoto have learnt to speak Hausa language. Hausa traders in Yorubaland have also learnt Yoruba language. Also, many Hausa eat *amala*, *eba*, *akpu* while some Yoruba eats “*tuwo*” and drink “*Fura* and *Kunu*”. The *Hula Kube*” cap and embroidered gown *Tago* are used by Hausa and Yoruba alike<sup>23</sup>. Sokoto city is full of Diaspora Yoruba kolanut traders who formed settled communities of occupational specialist. This settlement had led to marriage relationship, a new breed of “mullatoes” mixed in colour have been formed through the inter-ethnic marriage between the Hausa and the Yoruba. A clear example was Alhaji Ori Are of Gobirawa area in Ahmadu Bello way Sokoto.<sup>24</sup> He came to Sokoto around 1930s and settled for kola trade. He married three (3) Hausa

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> S.A. Onakomaiya, “Internal Trade in Speciality foodstuffs in Nigeria”. In NISER. 1987.

<sup>23</sup> G. O. Ogunremi, “Pre-colonial Economic and Social Relations Between South-western and Northern Nigeria.” ODU. A Journal of west African Studies. No 22.Jan/july 1982. University of Ife. Ile Ife. Nigeria. P.148.

<sup>24</sup> An interview with Mal. Qaseem Akande, aged 55. The biography of Alhaji Ori-Are shall be discussed in the subsequent chapter. See also the work of M.Kwaire, op.cit. Ogunyemi, described in Sokoto the migration of Yoruba traders from Ogbomosho in the 1930s among whom were David Gbadebo and Mr. Toriola among others who settled at kalfu quarters. Gbadebo who became the leader of Yoruba in the quarter was exporting pepper and onions from Sokoto to Lagos in return with kolanut.

women and was blessed with many children among whom is Alfa Abdulhameed Ori Are (PRO, Association of Kara kola market traders) Furthermore, Alhaji Garba Gada ( A man from Gada local government) married a Yoruba kola merchant in 1973 and was blessed with many children.<sup>25</sup>Mal. Bello migrated from Sokoto to Shagamu in 1975<sup>26</sup> and started his career as a kolanut dealer who sends a large consignment of kolanut from Shagamu to Sokoto married a Yoruba lady. Also, Alhaji Hussaini K/Rini married to a Yoruba woman from Shagamu through kolanut trade. These and many others are concrete evidence of the impact of kolanut trade in promoting intergroup understanding and in fostering integration.

There are several ways in which the kolanut industry affected the social and political life of the people. Apart from straining the relations between the Hausa and Yoruba at the initial stage, kola trade was a factor of closer cooperation among the diverse ethnic groups inhabiting Sokoto and neighboring districts.

This trade unites the people of these two ecological regions (savannah and the forest regions) which show the interdependence between Sokoto, south western part of Nigerian and some countries in West Africa (Niger and Ghana in particular) the cordial and symbiotic relationship established among the Northern Hausas and the southern Yoruba as well as other countries of West Africa. Moreover, the rise of many villages and towns; Jega, Yawuri, Kontagora could be associated with the long distance trade among Hausas and Yoruba. The evolution of these villages and town was as a result of intra and inter regional trade by the kolanut merchants.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> An interview with Alhaji Bello Najari (Chairman, Association of kolanut traders Shagon goro).

<sup>26</sup> M. Kwaire, *Op.cit.* p.12. According him there was considerable migration of merchants from one region to another some of whom became permanent settlers. For instance the demand for kolanut in Northern Nigeria, and Sokoto in particular and meat in western Nigeria encouraged massive influx of Hausa kolanut and cattle traders in Ibadan.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p.70

Internally, the trade brought about the unity and intertribal relationship between Sokoto traders and Yoruba peoples of south west.<sup>28</sup> The intermarriages and settlement. In fact, the immigration of Yoruba kolanut traders from Ogbomosho in the 1930s among whom were David Gbadebo and Mr. Toniola who settled at Kalfu quarters were typical exemplary of intertribal marriages. Gbadebo who became the leader of the Yoruba in the quarter was exporting pepper and onions from Sokoto to Lagos and in return brought back kolanut. Although deceased in 1930s his male and female children are still living in Sokoto and married to indigenes.

However, the seasonal migrations of labour into the kolanut producing towns as well as the trading were likely to have enhanced mutual understanding among the people and made for greater inter-ethnic peace. In fact, Kolanut trade was a factor making for the rapid growth of population in places like Shagon goro area, kalfu, Bello way among others and of course the ownership of market plots (kara market) by mostly Yorubas was one of the determinants of high social status. It was said that the Alaru (institution of laborers) was one of the greatest out come of kola trade in Hausaland.

### **3.6 Challenges in Kolanut Trade**

Just like in every business, the kolanut trade has series of challenges that have been in existence and hindered the smooth operation of the business since the pre-colonial time. Meanwhile, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the caravan of kola during their long distance journey faced a number of hazards. These include the danger posed by wild animals along their routes. Sometimes herds of elephants, lions, and tigers as well as hyenas and wolves do attacked them,<sup>29</sup> resulting in loss of lives and destruction of their goods. More so, most of the animals used for transportation

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<sup>28</sup> M. Kwaire op.cit., p.6

<sup>29</sup> Mal. Uwaisu aged 95, Mai kulki town Tangaza LGA 18/3/2014

sometimes died on their trips creating some difficulties for the journey.<sup>30</sup> Equally important was the sickness e.g. Asthmas, Malaria, and typhoid encountered by the traders and their animals during the trips. These difficulties that had affected the smooth operation of the long distance caravan journey to *Gwanja* (Ghana) and Yoruba land in pre-colonial times.

During the colonial era, the imposition of taxes in Nigeria on goods imported from Ghana had led to shortages in the availability of *Gwanja* kolanut.<sup>31</sup> It was colonialism that put a stop to the long distance caravan trade between the peoples of West and North Africa. Not only did the Arabs find European presence worrisome, but colonial laws and enactments coupled with regulated boundaries and taxation became the final onslaught on the trade.

However, on a positive analysis, the colonial era was to usher in a modern trend in the way the kolanut trade was conducted; the creation of state was followed by infrastructural development on a measured scale especially in rail and road transportation. During the period also, kolanut seedlings were introduced (imported) from Gold Coast (*Gwanja*) into western Nigeria in the 1920s thereby reducing the dependence on the *Gwanja* kolanut by the Nigerian end users. The introduction of the rail system also eliminates the slow and cumbersome tradition of animals and human portage, while enhanced security was ensured by actions of the colonial establishments. Moreover, the introduction of the western monetary currencies in place of the traditional West African currency (gold, iron bars) and barter introduced another modern dimension to the business of kolanut trading. Post-colonial period equally came with its challenges; not least was the problem of intermittent social crises and conflicts

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> NAK, Sokprof. See also Paul L.J. *The Caravan of kola* p.5 1970. See also Yakubu Mukhtar *Nigeria-Chad economic relations during the colonial period: a survey of the overland exchange in cattle and kolanut: 1920-1960*.

which very often takes on violent dimensions. A clear example was the Nigerian civil war of 1967-70.<sup>29</sup> Others include Ogoni/Mossop crisis, the June 12 political Crisis, the OPC and the rising militancy of the twilight of the military regimes and the early phase of the present fourth republic political dispensation. Thus, all these have a negative impact on the kolanut trade in one way or the other as it resulted in loss of lives and properties of the traders, burning and looting of markets, obstructing smooth flow of traffic and creating artificial scarcity and a hyper rise in the price of the commodity to the end users. A clear example during the June 12 crisis, when there was a seizure in the supply chain of kolanut into Sokoto and most of the north, a Yoruba woman trader from Ibadan brought kolanut to Sokoto, the cost of each basket ordinarily then was N150, but because of the shortages each basket was sold at the rate of N2000 each during that crisis.<sup>32</sup>

Equally important, were the introduction of new currency and the rejection of old currencies by the then military regime (1983-1985) which created a serious challenge to kolanut traders. This was because some of the kola traders lost their capital especially those who went to Yoruba land, with the old currency to purchase kolanut but found their money rejected by the Yoruba kolanut dealers because of the change in currencies.<sup>33</sup> Thus, this eventually led to the shortages of the kolanut in Sokoto Kebbi and Gusau as it led to loss of capital by a number of kolanut merchants.

Similarly, 1979-80 was also a period of sterility for kolanut trees as most of these kolanuts trees were unable to produce fruits which eventually led to poor production and low yield.<sup>34</sup> Thus, kolanut became very scarce in the whole northern part of the Nigeria.

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<sup>32</sup> Adesina aged 65 oral interview, kara kola market(PRO)

<sup>33</sup> Alh. Bello Najari, Chairman Shagon goro oral interview.

<sup>34</sup> Alh. Bello ibid, But according to Alh. Bello Mai Kwanchi, the seizure was a result of Awolowo's agricultural programme across the southwest by fell down alots of kolanuts trees which were replaced with rubber trees for international transaction. Thus, kolanut became very scarce in the whole northern part of

One of the most common and usual challenge is the long distance transportation that accounts for 90 percent of the risk. Sometime the dealers lost everything when there is an accident on the road.<sup>35</sup> Also, break down of vehicles in the process of conveying the kolanuts resulting in damage and additional expenses to the dealers and trades alike.

Another challenge is inability of some regular customers to pay for the commodity purchased mostly on credit which posed a lot of threat to the business.<sup>36</sup> Sometimes when the dealers on credit to the retailers/customers they usually don't pay on time and this is affecting the progress of the business as most of the time a lot of the money is hanging outside. Infact, this is the current challenge that hinders the business nowadays.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, many dealers ware unable to sustain the business to a meaningful period of time. This coupled with the inadequate financial support through loans from government and others credit facility providers to improve the production and trade.<sup>38</sup> As rightly pointed out by a kolanut producer and trader.

*The government is not giving attention to kolanut like Cocoa and I do not know the reason, there by leaving us to savor both Good and bad of kolanut business.*<sup>39</sup>

This in itself is a challenge confronting the informal sector of the Nigerian economy operated and dominated by small scale farmers, traders and business men..

Inadequate preservative method to prevent the kolanuts from decaying is another challenge facing the kolanut dealers. Most times when the market is not booming or

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Nigeria which eventually led to the importation of kolanut called (kwali or bage nut) from Abidjain (CoteDe'Ivour) coming from Niger to neighbouring state of Sokoto state subsequently kolanut was obtain from Sokoto to neighbouring state of Kano, Kaduna, Borno and even some part of Yoruba communities.

<sup>35</sup> Daily Trust "Booming kolanut business in the north" op.cit. Tuesday, June 17 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Mal. Hassan Abubakar, aged 42 kara kola market, 17/6/2014

<sup>37</sup> Mal. Qassim op.cit.

<sup>38</sup> Mal. Qassim op.cit. see also Daily trust "Boko Haram cripples kolanut trade merchant" Tuesday 20/2014

<sup>39</sup> Daily Trust, Thursday April 3,2014,p.31.

whenever there is breakdown of vehicle along the road, a lot of kolanuts got decayed<sup>40</sup> and cause a lots of losses to the dealer. Other trade related problems include acts of Fraudulence, a situation where bigger kolanuts are put at the top while the smaller nuts at the base during packaging to deceive the customers. The implication of which lead to loss of trust and confidence. The practice is common nowadays in the kolanut business, and according to Mr. Kasim Jimoh, it is a burning problem that if immediate solution is not found can tarnish the trust in the kolanut business transaction.<sup>41</sup>

Another problem is from the activities of law enforcement officers, the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) at the check points along the roads always cause a lot of destruction to kolanut packages while searching for drugs. The Agencies such as The Police, SSS officials also destroys the kolanut baskets in search of drugs.<sup>42</sup> In most cases, it leads to the exposure of the product and caused it to dry. It also results in delay delivery thereby missing some of the market days. This coupled with extortion of money by security agencies along the said routes.

The role kola plays in some Nigerian communities (Sokoto in particular) leaves it without substitutes. Despite the fact that presently kolanut facing a common competition from others take for instance, like sweets, dates, chewing gum, (for invitation to various occasions.)<sup>43</sup> This, however, did not seem to ease the demand for kolanut. This is because every town, every village and every hamlet and cities kolanuts just as much as in the past. The use of kolanut covers a very wide spectre of the cultural practices,<sup>44</sup> and

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<sup>40</sup> Mal. Bashir aged 72 Shagon goro market. See also K. Lawrence, Opeks Tropical commodity trees crops [www.spectrumbooksonline.com/Ibadan](http://www.spectrumbooksonline.com/Ibadan)

<sup>41</sup> Hajiya Hauwa Bahausa, aged 65 and also Mal. Qassim op.cit.

<sup>42</sup> Mal. Abdullahi Jimoh, aged 45 kara market.

<sup>43</sup> Mal. Muhammad Abdullah aged 55 kanwuri area. See also Ibrahim Usman "The development of Sokoto metropolitan 1960-2010." Ph D thesis UDU Sokoto.

<sup>44</sup> New Nigeria. "The significance of kolanuts in Igbo land" culture on Sunday, September 8, 2013 p.13, See also, "presenting kolanut in Igbo land" 21/4/2004. New Nigeria.

plays a role in almost all aspects of life. This fact has aptly been captured by the Igbos, one of the major tribe in south-east Nigeria thus:

*The more parts the kola breaks up to, the more prosperity it is said to give to its presenter and visitors. He who brings kola brings life.*<sup>45</sup>

Associated with this maxim is the belief that the kolanut is a “truth serum” as Igbo’s say

After eating the kolanut the truth emerges.

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<sup>45</sup> New Nigeria, “Presenting kolanut in Igbo Land” 21/4/2004, op.cit.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### PROFILES OF SOME SELECTED KOLANUT TRADERS IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This aspect of the research provides a profile of some prominent Yoruba and Hausa kolanut merchants and traders in Sokoto City. This will take the form of brief biographies and family histories. These prominent personalities had played significant roles in the socio-economic development of Sokoto and its people. The chapter also looks into their personal achievement as individuals and as groups. Their participation in Sokoto socio-economic activities has expanded in several ways, as well as the level of businesses activities in the state in general. The profiles of these traders will no doubt fill in some vacuum in our understanding of the history of the kolanut trade in Sokoto metropolis.

#### **Alhaji Bello Mai Kwanci**

Alhaji Bello Mai-kwanci<sup>1</sup> (a former Chairman of United Kolanut Trading Club Shagon goro kolanut market Sokoto) was born in 1925 (89 years old) at Wababe district of Dange Shuni local government area. His father Mal. Umaru has a large herds of donkey that he traded in Niger Republic during his lifetime. As part of Hausa tradition, to educate their children in Islamic knowledge, Alhaji Bello was sent to Qur'anic school at Gobirawa area in Sokoto city. Having completed his Qur'an education, Alhaji Bello voluntarily joined kolanut business as a hawker. He participated actively in the long distance kolanut trade especially to the south-western part of Nigeria where he became a prominent kolanut dealer. He has many Yoruba business colleagues and his shops at Sokoto served as depots for the south western kolanut traders in Sokoto. By 1948, when

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<sup>1</sup> Alhaji Bello Maikwanchi, Oral interview January 12014

*Shagon goro* market was established, Alhaji Bello Mai kwanci was appointed chairman of the United Kolanut Traders Club *Shagon goro* area Sokoto.

Although, Alhaji Bello might be a kolanut dealer, but he also played significance roles in the politics of Sokoto where he was appointed as the secretary of the NPC in 1960. He holds the post of chairmanship of their association up to 2007 when he handed over the Chairmanship due to old age. In spite his of old age, Alh Bello still supervise other part of the business with support of members of his family. Alhaji Bello married four wives with many children among whom are Nura Bello Mai-kwanci (Higher Education, Sokoto), Mal. Suleiman Bello (Ministry of Education) Shehu Bello (Business tycoon) among others.

#### **Alhaji Bawa Kofar-Bai**

Alhaji Bawa Kofar-Bai was among the founders of Shagon Goro kolanut market. He was born in 1913 at kanwuri (kofar bai) area in Sokoto and named Muhammad Bello. He has long been known as Bawa mai goro. Although, he was born in Sokoto but his families were said to be from Wurno local government.

He was introduced to kolanut business by some of his friends that were already in the business. Those friends include late Alhaji Uba Dankinta, late Alhaji Sharu, late Alhaji Umar Dankarami, Alhaji Altine Dan kwali, Alhaji Buhari Agege (Sarkin Durbawa district) among others. However, at the age of 35 Alhaji Bawa travelled to *kurmi* (South Western part of the Nigeria) to import kolanut to Sokoto city, using the railway which has become a popular means of transportation from south to northern part of Nigeria. Alhaji Bawa did not participate in any political activities, he lamented that “God’s willing he is proud to be a kolanut trader, and kolanut trade has served as the major resource that supported his entire lively activities.” He is blessed with many children and great grandchildren. Among his children were Alhaji Muhammad Kabiru (kolanut

trader), Alhaji Abubakar Bawa (kolanut trader), Almustapha Bawa (driver) and Ahmad Bawa (Student).

### **Alhaji Bello Najari<sup>2</sup> (Chairman; United Kolanut Trading Club) Sokoto State**

Alhaji Bello Najari one of the most important present day kolanut dealer in Sokoto was born in the year 1943 at Gurawa district, a small town in Shagari local government. His father Mallam Yusuf Hakimi was a kolanut merchant. Mallam Bello grew up as a kolanut trader. He said, “My parents introduced me to the business since when I was a child.” He has been helping his parents to sell kolanut since childhood and that is why he chose the business as a source of living since then. Bello Najari said, “I started hawking kolanut when I was a small boy with less than a kobo as my Capital.” He said, and then “I used to purchase the kolanut from my father depending on the amount that I saved, and then hawked around the market to sell import Gradually I became fully involved in the business, as I am now a dealer and Chairman of Kolanut Traders in Sokoto State”.

Alhaji Bello was appointed Chairman of Kolanut Traders Association on 25 July 2007 when Alhaji Bello is Mai kwanchi handed over the chairmanship due to old age. Alhaji Bello is married with 2 wives and has many children and grand children

### **Alhaji Umaru Awala**

Alhaji Umaru Awala<sup>3</sup> was also a kolanut merchant at Shagon goro kolanut market. He was born in the year 1945 at More town of Sokoto city. His father Muhammad Hantsi, latter relocated to *Kwatarkwashi* town in Zamfara State. Umar was sent back to Sokoto for an Islamic Knowledge as a boy. It was after his graduation (Completion of Quran) that he joined kolanut business. Among his contemporaries in

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<sup>2</sup> Alh Bello Oral interview, Aged, 71. Sokoto 13 October 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Alh Umaru Awala Oral interview Aged, 69. 13, octover 2014.

kolanut business to kurmi market include, Alhaji Sahabi Bazza, Alhaji Yahaya Dogo, Alhaji Malami Sakanau. Among others.

Presently, due to old age, Alhaji Umar only sits down in his shop where he attends to his customers. He said, “I was blessed, because I earned my entire lively hood through kolanut trade, as I went to Mecca three (3) times and sponsored many of my family.” Alhaji Umar married three 3 wives and he is blessed with many children among whom are Malam Mustapha Umar (vice principal Sani Dingyadi Secondary School Sokoto), Mallam Ibrahim Umar (a journalist Abuja), Abubakar Umar (Agency for mass Education Sokoto), Abdulrahman Umar (staff nursing Specialist Hospital Sokoto)

### **Alhaji Muhammad Ahmad Gobirawa**

Alhaji Muhammad Gobirawa<sup>4</sup> a kolanut trader and a family member of Agalawa traders. Born in the year 1948, at Gobirawa area of Sokoto State. He was among the early kolanut hawkers at Gobirawa. However, it was after the relocation of kolanut market from Gobirawa to Shagon Goro market, he was able to secure shop a where he sells kolanut in bulk.

Although, Alhaji Muhammad is a successful kolanut tycoon in Shagon goro market Sokoto, he said “inspite of many challenges in the business that I can’t mention, and for the fact that I inherited the business (Kolanut trade) from my father. I thank almighty God.” He is married to 2 (two) wives and blessed with 2 two children.

### **Alhaji Jimoh Akande**

Alhaji Jimoh Akande is 98years old and a successful and prominent kolanut trader in Sokoto city<sup>5</sup>. Born and brought up from kolanut trading family at Ilorin (Kwara state). In 1942 the *Sardauna* of Sokoto (Sir Ahmed Bello) met with some Yoruba traders

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<sup>4</sup> Alh Muhammad gobirawa, Oral interview, Aged 62. Shagon goro area 21 October 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Mal Tahir Akanni, Oral interview, Aged 52. polo club area Sokoto, 23 October 2013.

at Ilorin where he encouraged them to export kolanut to Sokoto, Alhaji Jimoh Akande was among those met by *Sardauna*. Although he has been to Ghana (*Gwanja*) for kolanut business in 1932. On reaching Ghana, he found out that the kolanut available in Ghana had no much value compared to that of southwest of Nigeria. Thus, he came back home to continue with his kola business in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the coming of *Sardauna* to Ilorin in 1942 facilitated and energized Alhaji Jimoh to export kolanut to Sokoto. However, in the year 1952 he purchased a lorry which he filled up with kolanut for exportation to Sokoto. On reaching Sokoto, he met Alhaji Tiamiyu, who advised him to settle in Sokoto. By 1954 Alhaji Jimoh decided to settle in Sokoto along Shagon goro area. From then, he introduced some friends and relatives into the kolanut business. Among those introduced by Alhaji Jimoh are Alhaji Abdulkarim Lawal, Iya Nike, Iya Fatima etc.

Subsequently, because of his close relationship with Hausa people and *Sardauna* of Sokoto in particular, he was able to marry a Hausa woman (late Hajiya Halimatu). They were blessed with two children (Ramatu and Abdullahi). Having traded for many years and achieved greatness in the business, he retired to his home town in Ilorin (Kwara state) in 2004.

Before his demise in the month of August 24<sup>th</sup> 2013, Alhaji Jimoh was blessed with many children among whom are Malam Kasim Jimoh Akande (currently a legal adviser to Association of kara kolanut traders), Malam Musbah Jimoh (Malam Dogo), Alfa-Muftahu, Malam Kabiru etc.

### **Alhaji Bashir Alaran**

He was popularly known as Alaran from Alaran's family. He came from Abeokuta in the present day Ogun state in the 1930s. He was one of the few earliest Yoruba migrants to the city of Sokoto. He came to Sokoto in the company of his

younger brothers among whom were Abdul-Ibrahim Alaran and Tihamiyu Alaran who assisted him to establish an independent kolanut business.

When he arrived in Sokoto, Alhaji Alaran settled along Aliyu Jodi road where he erected a personal house. In the period between 1971 to 1974, Alhaji Alaran moved back to his home town due to old age while the management of his business was left with his younger brothers for continuity. Due to his familiarization with Hausa indigenes, such as Tsoho Dan Amali, Alhaji Shehu Kamba, he was able to marry a Hausa woman (Hajiya Hauwau) and God blessed them with many children.<sup>6</sup>

### **Alhaji Abdulazeez Ibrahim (Ori Are)**

Alhaji Abdulazeez came to Sokoto from Ibadan in the present Oyo state in the 1930s. He first established himself as a great kolanut merchant. His commitments to kolanut trade made him one of the most enterprising business men among the Yoruba resident in Sokoto.

He assisted many people especially members of his tribes financially in the course of kolanut commerce through leasing of fund through loan and supplying of goods for sale on a short term credit period. Having work for so many years and achieved greatness in business, he retired to his home town Ibadan in Oyo state in 1992.<sup>7</sup>

### **Late Alhaji Mustapha Oladuntoye**

Another prominent Yoruba kolanut trader was late Alhaji Mustapha Oladuntoye who came to Sokoto from Offa in the present Kwara state in 1920. He was one of the earliest Yoruba traders in kolanut who influenced the settlement of Yoruba in Shagon-goro area. He participated actively in kolanut trading activities in the form of wholesales and retails. His commitments to the Business activities made him to secure a place in

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Mal. Salihu Bashir (40 years) at Aliyu Jodi Sokoto on 21<sup>st</sup> of February, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Muftau Ibrahim (59 years) at Bello Way Sokoto on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2014.

Shagon-goro area as a base for the arrival of other Yoruba kolanut trades from the southwest of Nigeria.

He occupied a large compound in the area which contained more than one hundred (100) rooms. He married two Hausa women and blessed with many children. Having reached old age, he moved back to his home town Offa in Kwara state in 1992 while the management of his business was left with his family in Sokoto.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Moshood Oladuntoye, (53 years) at Shagon-goro area, Sokoto on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2014.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1 Conclusion

Kolanut trade in Sokoto city in the period of the study has remarkable implications on the socio-economics and cultural lives of the people of Sokoto. From the economic perspectives the trade paved way for kolanut traders to become influential in major area of the city viz- Gobirawa, Shagon goro, Kalfa and Anguwar fatake among others. In fact, most of the influential people who become prominent in the city have in one way or the others are engaged in kolanut trade before diversifying to other business. In the early period of kolanut trade in Sokoto, Gobirawa area became a booming center of kolanut trade before it was finally relocated to Shagon goro area. They may perhaps be attributed to the fact that they could remnants descendent by Agalawa traders who have established their settlement in Sokoto as a result of the 1804 Jihad.

The colonial administration encouraged the cultivation of kola nitida which supplemented importation from Ashanti (Gwanja) and Futa Jalon areas. With the establishment of a botanical gardens for kolanut production and distribution in south western Nigeria to farmers. Consequently, form 1900 to 1920, the cultivation of kola nitida was well established in Yoruba land. Thus, this was an avenue for the colonial government to enforce and generate taxes. Taxation was paramount in the colonial economic policies.

It was also noted that the introduction of railways and Lorries facilities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has been beneficial to the kola trade. But throughout the colonial era, some native traders of kola in Sokoto boycotted most of these services provided by the colonial administration, because, some could not afford to pay the train charges, likewise



the smoke emitted from the train engine spoiled the taste of the kola nut which were eventually rejected by the consumers.

The growth of kola trade internally in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries represented major advances in the organization of scarce resources and provided the basis for future economic development which has continued in to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, the marketing and distribution of kola as a luxury item has stimulated and facilitated other economics sectors, Kola trade encouraged the expansion of manufacturing goods, agricultural products (onion, beans hides and skin, livestock textiles among others which serve as a mean of exchange to the traders.

In the final analysis, the research asserted that in the future some descendants of the contemporary kola traders of Yoruba trading in Sokoto could only trace their genealogy from Sokoto. Activities of kolanut traders were not limited to Sokoto city, but the whole of Sokoto state and beyond. However, the trust system that exists among the kolanut traders is still in existence. This is because the role of middle men, agent and *maigida* in the system has not diminished. The old traditional of being Yoruba as the sole producers of kolanut has taken a new dimension, because quit a number of Yoruba kolanut produces have turned to be the sellers (distributors) of kolanut within the city. Finally the trade stimulated favorable cultural exchanges, intergroups relation in terms of languages inter marriage and mode of dressing.

In future, the kolanut will face a challenge, from competitions in usage from other related commodities like sweets, dates chewing gun, chocolates among others, which are used as substitute for kola during any ceremonial and socio-cultural activities. However,

in spite of those challenges, marriage ceremony can not be done without kolanut. Thus, the value of the nut and kola trade is maintained.

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3. Hajiya Hawau Bahausa, aged 69 interviewed at Polo club Gwawa area Sokoto on 13-1-2013 kola trade and housewife.
4. Alh. Bello Najan, aged 58 interviewed at Shohon goro market Sokoto on 08-1-2014 kola trader.
5. Kasimu Jomoh Akande, aged 43 interviewed at kara kola market Sokoto on 13-8-2013 kola trader and students.
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7. Alh. Muhammed Gobiwara, aged 57 interviewed at Gobirawa area on 12-4-2014 kola trader.
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