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THE DEVELOPMENT OF CASH CROP ECONOMY IN AKWANGA DIVISION, 1908-1960

Akwanga division has been a major theater of export crop production and expropriation of other economic resources by the colonial regime, but the Economic History of the area has suffered neglect by scholars in the discipline. This work seeks to examine the evolution of cash crop economy in Akwanga division, north-central Nigeria and the changes brought about by the development. The development of groundnut as a main cash crop in central Nigeria's Akwanga division shall also be explore. The study also analyses establishment of produce marketing boards and their roles as catalyst for the distribution of export produce. The work argues that the development of cash crop economy has coopted the people of Central Nigeria into international economy as primary producers of cash crops. The system did not in any way mechanized the agriculture sector and deliberately eschewed possible avenues for the development of individual cultivators. The Historical research method is used to achieve the objectives of this research; primary and secondary data are consulted for the successful completion of the work. This research argues that the increase in demand of groundnut by European manufacturing industries for the production of soap, cooking oil, and margarine has facilitated its production Akwanga division. The work concludes that compulsory labour, taxes, and British currency were introduced as a strategy conceived by the colonial government to implement cash crop production in the study area. Above all the colonial economy did not mechanized agricultural sector and manufacturing industries were not established in Akwanga division. The development of cash crop Economy has incorporated the people of the area into international market as producers of raw materials needed by the European manufacturing companies.

Keywords: *Cash Crop, Economy, Groundnut, Marketing Boards, Buying Agents.*

Introduction

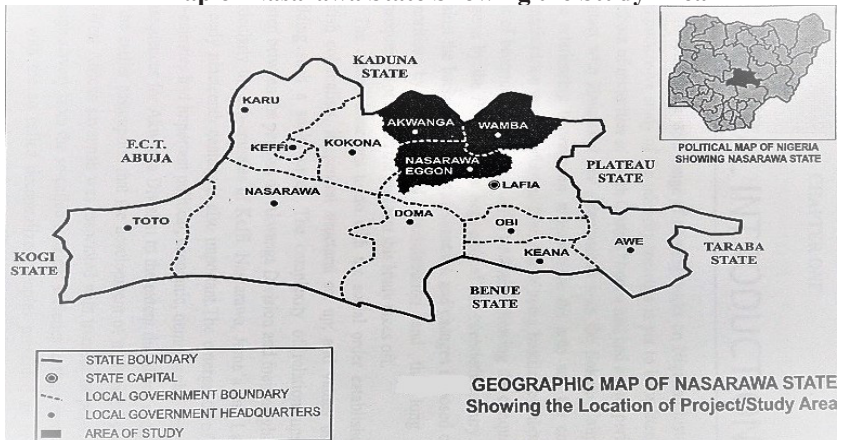
Central Nigeria comprises of six states namely Nasarawa, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Plateau Benue and the Federal Capital territory. These states share common

boundaries topography, religious, cultural beliefs weather and climate. There are heterogenous ethnic groups to the tune of twenty-five spread across the area. The area was and is still known for the production of both food and cash crops for consumption and commercial purposes. Akwanga division consisted of Wamba, Akwanga, and Nasarawa Eggon in present day Nasarawa state, Central Nigeria. The area was a major theater of groundnut production and tin mining during the colonial period. Existing studies on the area include the works of Ngharen titled, "Colonialism and the Underdevelopment of Akwanga Division: A study of challenges and Identity," and Ayuba's "Economy and Society in Colonial North Central Nigeria: The History of Akwanga region 1911-19160," laid much so emphasis on the political, cultural, religious and gender history.

The main focus of this research is to examined the development of cash crop economy in Akwanga division, the origin and development of export crops production particularly groundnut, and how the people of the area were exposed and integrated into the international economy as primary producers of raw materials. The study also investigates establishment of produce marketing boards and their roles as catalyst for the distribution of export produce not only in Akwanga division of north central but, northern Nigeria in general .

Historical approach using case study method is adopted for the successful attainment of the objectives. Both primary and secondary data were consulted in the conduct of the work. The primary sources consulted include relevant archival records such as Annual Reports, colonial files, diaries, Gazettes /documents, Reports, at the National Archives Kaduna and Jos Nigeria. Special attention was given to relevant files under Kaduna Ministry of Agriculture with particular reference to the nature and structure of cash crop farming in Akwanga division, oral interviews were also conducted to farmers and elder statemen domiciled in the study area, those interviewed were above the age of 60 years old. Secondary sources consulted include published Journal articles from recognized databases, internet sources, books seminar papers, relevant PhD Thesis conference proceedings, and magazines.

A Map of Nasarawa State Showing the Study Area



Source: Ngharen. A. Z. Colonialism and the Underdevelopment of Akwanga Division, A Study of Identity, and Challenges, CMBS Publishers, 2014.

Literature Review

The evolution of crops in Nigeria dates back to the prolonged era of abolition of the transatlantic slave trade between 1879 and 1903, a period when the production of cash crops was encouraged by the British and other colonial powers. Hla Myint's,¹ Hogendorn,² Lovejoy,³ and Odey⁴ Mokhtar and Azmi⁵ maintains that idea of cash crop economy in most British colonies was conceived to expropriate the produce to the disadvantage of the natives. Gareth,⁶ Nadaraja⁷ argues that the colonial economy has perpetrated the cultivation of export produce from the interior to the mainland. The forest zone produced palm oil, rubber and cocoa while the northern part of the country specialized in the production of groundnut, cotton and later on cassava and yam.⁸ Labour for agricultural production, road and railway construction was usually organized by the traditional rulers as agent of the British before the second World War.

Cash crop farming in the colonial Akwanga division like other societies was compulsory, this was intensified due to the availability of slave labour and fertile and abundant land.⁹ Multi- national corporations like the Royal Niger Company, Imperial British East African Company and the British South African Company have monopolized the economic activities of their colonies thereby dictating what produce and how to produce. The introduction of taxation in Africa has compelled the people to produced more to in order to accomplish their tax obligation.¹⁰ Taxation as a colonial policy among other factor has spurred the development of cash crop in Akwanga division,

Daniel and Shakila assert taxation was an apparatus used by the colonial administration to enhance cash crop production in central Nigeria, it

also aided as an avenue through which colonial territories were absorbed into full conquest by the Europeans.¹¹ Similarly, Ngharen opines that high demand of raw materials sequel to the prevalent economic changes in Europe in the eighteenth-century paved ways for the introduction of tax, cash crops, forced labour and British currency.¹² According to the Southern Division Agricultural Report of 1933 the first cash crop to be cultivated by the colonial government in Akwanga division was ginger, the Assistant Superintendent of Agriculture of the southern division has directed that ginger should be planted in Wamba and environs in 1933.¹³ The directive was in line with the British intent to ascertain the level of their preparedness and to devise strategies for expansion. The projection of the colonial government was that ginger would become the people's major source of income in their near future. The commencement of ginger market in the area for the first time in 1938 was a colossal development to the colonial government. This facilitated the influx of British merchant and their investments like the United African company (UAC).¹⁴

Jonathan argues that the discovery of solid mineral (Tin and columbite) has diverted farmers attention from ginger farming as soon as the natives realized the amount of wealth generated at the tin mines in Wamba.¹⁵ The execution of forced labour as an aspect of the colonial economy (road and bridge construction, building of European guest house, conscription of young men into the army during the Second World War, recruitment as employees into the Native Authority as messengers, interpreters, day and night watchmen) has an affiliation with cash crop production. The link between colonial labour system and cash crops production was that produce purchased by European firms were loaded by hands on the train and ship for conveyance from the source to Nigerian ports for onward shipments to Europe. More so, the European firms required the service of local farmers and the African middlemen as they needed the service of African labourers for the construction of rail and roads for the conveyance of their goods to the seaports. The colonial government has provided some social infrastructures like roads, harbors, and railways to ease the movement of the primary commodities.

Odey observes that the British had designed a deliberate policy measure to achieve their goals by introducing policies such as taxes, British currency, commercialization of agriculture and importation of European goods, roads, construction of bridges and railways¹⁶ Olatunji opines that the establishment of British administration was the genesis of cash crop cultivation and its exports across the shores of Nigeria.¹⁷ Envuladu stated that mineral resources (tin and columbite), and fertile land for groundnut production attracted the British colonial to Akwanga division.¹⁸ The structure of the of the economy changed in 1908- 1940 with the discovery of Tin mining, this enhanced colonial forced labour system as men were coaxed to work and fulfil their tax responsibility.¹⁹

The Development of Groundnut in Akwanga Division, 1923-1960

The origin and development of groundnut as an export crop in west Africa dates back to the 19th and early 20th centuries, at a time referred to as the “epoch of transition to cash crop production”.²⁰ Moitt,²¹ Klein,²² and Mohammed,²³ also advocates that the development of groundnut as an export crop, its harvest and transportation to Europe was the sole responsibility of the slaves, and that slave labor was central to the expansion of groundnut in West Africa. The people of Northern Nigeria were mainly cultivating groundnut for consumption and petty business prior to the arrival of the British and the dominance of the multi-Nationals. The development of groundnut as a cash crop in Akwanga division dates back to the pre-colonial period when an early commercial contact was established with the Hausa traders.²⁴ The Hausa merchants (a prominent commercial like ethnic group in northern Nigeria that traded with Arabs during the trans Sahara trade, inhabiting Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Zaria, Rano, Daura, and Kaduna) had an early economic contact with the people of the area long before the advent of colonial rule, and the articles of exchange were consumables notably food and cash crops such as kolanut, textiles, and leather in return the Hausa traders obtained salt, soap, clay pots and other paraphernalia’s required in Hausa land. Mike contends that the Hausa’s had seemingly added groundnut as an article for sale to the people and since the soil was fertile it was adapted as part of the produce planted in the division.²⁵

The Economic History of Africa cannot be complete without mentioning the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade during which a large number of Africans were forcefully trafficked out of the continent and gruesomely abused in Europe and Latin America.²⁶ Slave labour according to Bean was the most crucial factor of production required in new world and for centuries the major commodity exchanged from Africa.²⁷ The arrival of African slaves in the in New World has boosted harvest and changed the nature of market positively.

Walter Rodney,²⁸ and Afigbo,²⁹ opined that the abolition of the slave trade was basically for economic reason rather than humanitarian, the human trafficking was truncated simply because Britain had attained a breakthrough in industrial technology (industrialization). Machines have substituted human labour, thus the interest of the industrialist shifted from slaves to the search for raw materials and for market for their finished goods.³⁰ The abolition of the slave trade led the introduction of legitimate trade, otherwise known as the trade in export produce notably groundnut, rubber, cocoa, and cotton. The elimination of the slave trade also led to the European incursion of west Africa by the early eighteenth century. Similarly, Nunn³¹ argues that about 20 million slaves exported from Africa to the New World and that has drastically reduced working the population in Akwanga division and Nigeria in general. Though, some African chiefs, slave dealers and middlemen benefited from the transaction. Coastal states also like Calabar and Warri developed as a result of

the trade. Solomon,³² Nasla,³³ Makpa³⁴ Dahiru³⁵ Bilya³⁶ claims that groundnut was autochthonous to the area, it has been part and parcel of our harvest prior to the British colonial rule, the Rindre called it 'Epa,' while the Eggon and the Mada called it 'Benchwe'. Other crops cultivated in the area before the coming of the Europeans were cassava, yam, maize, guinea corn and assorted fruits. Though, they were not cultivated in commercial quantity until the arrival of the British who came with an advanced method of cultivation. Their presence had integrated the economy of the area into commercial farming estate as primary producers of raw material. The Royal Niger Company had been controlling the commercial and administrative duties on behalf of the colonial government. Groundnut as a leguminous crop is cultivated in a dry land with more rain and most often in hot and humid areas. The following countries: China, Nigeria, USA and Myanmar are the top countries that produced it in commercial quantity.³⁷ Nigeria is the leading groundnut producing country in west Africa (Other west African groundnut producing countries are notably the Gambia, Senegal, Cameroun, Guinea, Ivory Coast Niger, Mali, Togo, Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone) producing more than 50% for commercial and consumption purposes, it also produces 10% of the total world production and 39% of Africa's production.³⁸

Table 1: Total Percentage of World Groundnut Export in 1938, 1954, and 1961

Exporting countries	1938000 (tons)	%	1954000 (tons)	%	1961000 (tons)	%
All west African countries	389	18.2	707	63.6	1002	76.7
Nigeria Alone	180	8.4	428	38.5	494	37.8
World Total	2138	100	1111	100	1307	100

Source: Helleiner. G. K. 1963, Peasant Agriculture and CEC, Vegetables Oil and Oil Seeds, London, pp. 20-29.

The tabular illustration above signifies that in 1961 out of 76.7% tons of groundnut produced by African countries, Nigeria alone produced almost 22-40%.

Simon and Adrian argues that cash crop production is key to economic growth and development, they affirm that cash crops improve factor utility in both the short and the long run, the producing countries enjoys of comparative cost advantage.³⁹ The cultivation of groundnut in commercial quantity (for export) began in the 20th century in Northern Nigeria at a time the British invaded and subjugated the area under her imperial control. Groundnut has been part and parcel Nigeria's key export produce during and after the colonial period as illustrated by the famous Kano groundnut pyramids. Other groundnut producing communities in northern Nigeria are Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna,

Bauchi, Zamfara, Kebbi, Benue, Taraba, Bauchi, Kogi, Niger, Kwara and Nasarawa. The fertility of Nigerian soil encouraged the production of many cash crops needed by the European manufacturers. The geography of northern Nigeria has positively influenced the cultivation of groundnut in commercial quantity and this has attracted the consolidation European powers.

Mike also maintains that the economic and nutritious value of groundnut was first discovered by Portuguese slave merchants during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and later on by other Europeans.⁴⁰ Hogendorn postulates that the origin of groundnut as a cash crop is tied to the activities of European travelers, geographers and anthropologist to Africa in 1705 and the slave merchants up to 1802.⁴¹ Allister's work corroborated Hogendorn and Mike's analysis on the origin and development of Groundnut, he justifies that groundnut farming in Nigeria was rigorously pursued in Kano, Katsina Zaria, Bauchi, Sokoto, Niger, and Plateau before, during and after colonial rule in Nigeria.⁴²

Other factors that encouraged the cultivation of groundnut in the study area were among others the construction rail line in 1912, the railway linking Lagos to Jebba and the one joining Baro with Kano passing through Akwanga Division has gone a long way in expanding the span and mode of production.⁴³ This has facilitated the transportation of raw materials from the source to the metropolitan Europe for processing into manufactured goods. Hogendorn also maintains that another factor that encouraged the development of groundnut production was the increase in demand of groundnut by European manufacturing industries.⁴⁴ The production of soap, cooking oil, margarine was hitherto with oil palm, but the availability and cheapness of groundnut as an alternate raw material, has lowered the cost of production considerably.

The third factor that facilitated the development of groundnut cultivation in northern Nigeria in general and Akwanga division was the inducement of the buying agents with an interest free loan to acquire raw materials for the British. This arrangement has speeded the rate of cultivation and marketing of the produce.⁴⁵ UAC had accelerated the process of buying and transporting the produce to the coast and the factories in Britain. The binding force in this kind of transaction was trust between the agents and their masters. So many agents in Kano metropolis and Akwanga division benefited from the mutual trust kind of arrangement.⁴⁶ Ibrahim Nungu asserts that the Europeans hired some agents in Akwanga division and beyond to help them buy, store and transport groundnut to Europe.⁴⁷ The number of the groundnut merchants in Akwanga division, and neighboring Lafia and Benue province increased in 1914 due high demand of raw materials in Europe. The responsibility for selecting trustworthy agents was vested on the traditional rulers and their acquaintances. The British colonial officials joined forces with the traditional rulers to accomplish their goals in northern Nigeria. The traditional institution in this part of the country has been politically organized preceding the colonial

incursion of the area.

Cooperative labour was central in the development of groundnut farming in the area prior, during and after the colonial period in Akwanga.⁴⁸ A form of labour that was complimentary and reciprocal in nature commonly practiced in a sequential and hierarchical order depending on the nature and terms of their agreement. The group members are usually, peers, family, friends, and voluntary members of the community. The host prepares assorted food and drinks for the team as a form of appreciation for the cooperative labour rendered on his behalf. This mutual and contractual arrangement played a vital role to the development of groundnut production in Akwanga division.

Goshit asserts that the average production per household prior to colonial rule was low and subsistent in nature, but there was an increase during the colonial period, from thirty bags in 1950s, to about sixty to eighty bags 1960s, due to increase in demand of groundnut for the production of consumable like margarine, cooking oil and toiletries.⁴⁹ The colonial government conceived the idea of running mining and agricultural sectors concurrently around 1930-1940 using taxation a veritable tool to promote cash crop farming.⁵⁰ Thus, all farmers from the lower division of Plateau Province including Akwanga division were directed by the colonial authorities to venture into export crop farming, seedlings were brought and distributed to farmers across the Nasarawa province to be experimented, hence the experiment yielded positive result in Akwanga division particularly in Nasarawa Eggon.⁵¹ Groundnut was second to ginger in sequence of export produce that were cultivated in Akwanga division, but ginger was not as lucrative and economically viable enough. Records have shown that groundnut had international recognition particularly from the European merchants. The colonial administration established ware houses and produce (yields)collation centers in Plateau Province at Bukuru and railway station for the storage of produce like groundnut, ginger, palm produce and cassava before they were exported to Europe.⁵² The social amenities provided by the colonial government colonial were primarily to service their needs and not to improve the living conditions of the colonized people.

The production figure for Plateau Province (Akwanga division inclusive) from 1950 to 1960 is illustrated below,

Table 2: Export figures of Groundnut in Plateau Province 1950-1960

Year	Groundnut Export in Tons	Average for Akwanga Division in Tons
1949/50	341tons	49 tons
1950/51		
1951/52	860 tons	123 tons
1952/53	927 tons	123 tons
1953/54	1,260 tons	180 tons
1954/55	1,539 tons	220 tons

1955/56	1,441 tons	206 tons
1956/57	1,539 tons	220 tons
1957/58	1,707 tons	244 tons
1956/59	1,007 tons	114 tons
1959/60	913 tons	130 tons
1960/61	3,068 tons	438 tons

Source: Excerpt from Goshit. Z.D, “The Development of Export Crops Production in Plateau Province 1902-1960” with modifications average from Akwanga division.

From the table above it is obvious that there was an increased in groundnut production from 1949-1957/58 but dropped between 1958/59-1959/60. The decrease of 1959/1960 related to the economic depression of the 1930s and the drought of 1959 which affected harvest negatively. Jonathan argues that British colonial administration did nothing to salvage the situation,

“The people of Akwanga division did not improve their method of farming, no incentives and farmers were left to exhaust their lands without any new knowledge of mechanized farming, the technology that was involved in the process of production remained the same as it was during the pre-colonial time.”⁵³

Hopkins stresses the fact that west Africans earned their livelihood from agriculture which was the major economic activity right from the pre-colonial period, but their method of farming has not been modified as they relied on local tools for cultivation.⁵⁴ Gareth advocates that cash crop production expanded in west Africa during the colonial period around 1890-1930 prior to the first world war and beyond, he further asserts that tremendous infrastructural development, improved transportation, positive institutional review and massive influx of work force (labour) is associated with the development of export crop in Nigeria.⁵⁵ However, the proceed gained from the enterprise has always been repatriated for the development of the metropolitan Europe at the expense of the host countries. To achieve this the British colonial administration has designed unique strategies in order to expediate the production and marketing of cash crops in northern Nigeria, hence , the introduction of direct taxation was fortified.⁵⁶ Furthermore, a fertilizers trail campaign was also organized by the colonial government under the supervision of agricultural department of the division from 1955-56, the campaign was fruitful as tremendous yield of guinea corn, and groundnut was realized.⁵⁷ Similarly, the colonial has provided transportation facilities, telegraph, and postal services in 1911 to fast track the movement of cash crops to where they are needed. Allen Mcphee and Hopkins refers to this development as “Groundnut Revolution” in northern Nigeria.⁵⁸ The traditional authorities also participated in the process of sensitizing farmers to cultivate at least one-acre groundnut.⁵⁹ The expectations

of the colonial officials on groundnut production in the early 20th century was less rewarding. But there was a change of narrative in 1940s as 214 tons was harvested, compared to the 12 tons realized in 1933.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, a better price of £6 per ton was offered by the multi-national corporations (UAC) compared to the price offered earlier in 1933 at £3 per ton.⁶¹ Helleiner professes that natural and Manmade problems contributed poor harvested in the entire region (northern Nigeria), and there was no technology for the proper processing of groundnut into finished goods.⁶² Mike advocates that “there was no groundnut crushing machine for hydrogenation process at that time in Britain.”⁶³ However, some multinationals like Niger Company later known as U.A.C, Lagos stores company, G.K. Gaiser, CFAO and John Holt ventured into exporting the groundnut. Despite that Niger Company exported around 500-875 tons between 1900-1911.⁶⁴ There was an increase in the export of groundnut to the 19000 tons by 1911 compare to the 875 tons of 1900,⁶⁵ groundnut harvested in 1937 and during the depression era caused by the two world wars, about 300,000 tons.

Goshit emphasized that the colonial government masterminded the swing from mining to agriculture sector and taxation was the tool used by the divisional officers and the traditional rulers to promote cash crop farming.⁶⁶ Thus, the colonial government directed all peasant farmers in lower division of Plateau Province comprising of Dengi, Langtang, Jos, Wase, Shendam and Akwanga division to venture into export crops farming.⁶⁷ The mode of operation had changed completely during the colonial period as more capital, tool, seeds, and readily available market were injected into the system.⁶⁸ More so, the region was integrated into main stream capitalism as producers of unprocessed groundnut and other raw materials in one hand and consumers of European manufactured in the other. The involvement of the traditional rulers (monarchs) in the implementation of the programmes initiated by the colonial regime also played a vital role in the leap. Secondly, fear has already been inflicted in the minds of the natives, hence there was determination by the natives to comply with the directives of their traditional rulers (who were highly respected) and cultivate cash crops. Natives resorted to comprehensive cultivation of groundnut to raise money and fulfill their tax obligation. Furthermore, traditional rulers that remitted the highest revenue were induced by the regime and those who declined such directives were threatened to mobilize their subjects or face the agony of removal.

The volume remained unchanged throughout the turbulent years.⁶⁹ However, the record was broken due to drought, poor rainfall, increase in the rate of domestic demand by local producers of groundnut oil and inadequate transportation. Outstanding progress was made towards the end of colonial regime from 1950 to early 1960s as tons harvested and exported to Europe grew to 428, 000 ton yearly.⁷⁰ This unprecedented growth was deliberately inspired by the European merchants who intentionally increased the price from £4 per

£40 per ton to inspire the local farmers to put in more effort in the trade. This development corresponded with increase in the volume of groundnut exported to Europe beginning from 1937 up to 1949, there has been persistent rise in the value and volume harvested from £29.7 million in 1945 to £29.9million in 1954.⁷¹

Establishment of Produce Marketing Board in Northern Nigeria

The interest of the British in west African trade went a long way in making her acquired more colonies, which was in line with their drive to put an end to the anticipated threat to their commercial interest.⁷² Hence the establishment of produce marketing board in 1940s to consolidate their monopolistic control over the trade of the sub-continent. Marketing boards were initially established in Nigeria for individual Agricultural produce which later metamorphosed into legally backed single buyer economy which was deliberately created by the imperialists to facilitate the exploitation of Nigeria's agricultural export produce to their advantage.⁷³ According to Helleiner. G. K.⁷⁴ John. C. A,⁷⁵ Bauer. P.⁷⁶ and Ayinde *et al* the establishment of Marketing Boards in Nigeria had resuscitated the control and marketing of the export by the British colonial administration in Nigeria.⁷⁷ Marketing boards are created to simplify the sales of some export Agricultural produce such as groundnut, cotton, rubber, and cocoa.⁷⁸ It was a league formed to manipulate the prices of the agricultural produce by the multinational corporations notably, U.A.C, Uniliver, PZ, Compagnie francaise de l'Afrique occidentale CFAO along with Societe commercial de l'aouest africain SCOA.⁷⁹ They evolved during the Second World War by the British colonial authorities in order to maintain their hegemony over the agricultural exports of their colonies globally, "it was created by law and supported by the colonial authorities with the aim of maximizing profit and raising revenue."⁸⁰ Raw materials were channeled through the boards to western developed societies for processing and manufacturing into finished goods to the detriment of the local farmers.⁸¹ The first to be established by the British in 1940 was the cocoa marketing board, followed by the West African Produce Control Board in 1942 controlling the export of the following produce cocoa, groundnut and palm produce in the whole of West Africa. However, the British government assigned her Ministry of Food and supply a priority over the export produce in West Africa and other colonies, respectively. Thus, the board was later on reorganized and regionalized to cater for particular produce and most importantly region as earlier mentioned in the preceding paragraph (western, eastern, and northern regions marketing boards and subsequently). The boards enjoyed extreme monopolistic power even after its decentralization (regionalized), fixing prices and exporting groundnut, cocoa and palm produce from the various regions of the country continuously remained their sole responsibility as authorized law.⁸² The questions that comes to mind is how

the marketing board advanced the course of the Nigerian farmer? And to what extent did the marketing board defend the interest of the local producers? The mission of the colonial government according to Afeikhana and Ogunkola argues that the establishment of Marketing board allow producers to have direct contact with commissioned and accredited buyers, and this will in no small measure protect them from unnecessary exploitation.⁸³ The second argument advanced by the British as the reason for establishing the board was not unconnected with their desire for providing a palliative in an event of any natural disaster such as drought or famine and the need to enhance and support the producer with modern farming techniques when the need arises.

The background motive for the formation of the board was basically to cushion the effect and depression of the post war era, thus frantic effort was made by the British colonial authorities to hijack Nigerian agricultural sector which was the backbone of the economy by introducing harsh economic policies that were not in any way favorable to the farmers. Both the Nigerian Produce Marketing company and the marketing boards were directly under the British Boards and based in London.⁸⁴ Commenting on the detrimental nature of the unequal rapport that existed between the board and the farmers Adeyinka. T. A et al, asserts that “the colonial government placed high premium on stabilization and 70% of the accumulating reserve were to be retain for that purpose.”⁸⁵ Bauer contended that the marketing boards are basically statutory bodies with anticompetitive powers and a single buyer-oriented economy.⁸⁶

However, some legislations appeared to have changed the nature of the marketing board in 1954 affirming the earlier mentioned decentralization of the boards into three regions of the country and according to their production mechanism and comparative cost advantage. The northern region marketing board-controlled groundnut and cotton, while the southern region took care of cocoa and rubber, and the eastern region marketing board was basically for palm produce. The sole controlled of export produce was the primary responsibility of the regional marketing boards. The central marketing board shouldered the responsibility of monitoring, supervision and evaluating the conduct of the regional boards in all ramifications. In the long run commissioned agent also emerged into the setting to assist the British by going into the villages to buy the needed produce on their behalf. According to Falola the surplus realized from the board's manipulations were most often used to finance development plan and partly used to alleviate and combat the post war inflationary burden.⁸⁷ The Board also held the primary task of certifying and authorizing “Licensing Buying Agents” (LBAs), who were consented by law to buy in bulk directly from the producers and convey the produce to the ports for shipment to Europe.⁸⁸ The certified Buying Agents also bought from the local uncertified agents “scalars” who equally obtained the yields from the “pan buyers”⁸⁹ Both the LBAs and the small-scale buyers usually provided some farm tools, pesticides, quasi- loan services to the farmers with the promise that the farmer

will sell their produce to the agents at the end of the season , in return for the gesture the farmers accepted to surrender their crops to the agent at an unprecedentedly low.⁹⁰

Akwanga division was not an exception to the outrageous commercial interaction that existed between the licensed agent and the farmers with the legal backing of the marketing boards. The activities of the multinational corporations become apparent in Akwanga division as a result of the availability of groundnut, cotton, cassava, and palm produce. The people were to hoodwink into producing only cash crops which the voracious firms like the R.N.C, U.A.C, U.T.C, Uniliver, P.Z, and the B.C.G.A were to buy at a very low rate, but the farmers had no choice than to comply to the obnoxious transaction. After the construction of the railway connecting Akwanga division with other parts of the country the colonial officials encouraged the multinationals to continue their commercial ventures in agricultural produce and solid minerals.⁹¹ The UAC opened two ware houses and canteens in Akwanga division in 1927 and 1930 respectively at Gudi and Mada station to store raw materials and market their manufactured goods to the people of the area.⁹² The Licensed buying agents employed the services of “scalars”⁹³ in Akwanga division who were mostly local often Hausa traders to help them obtain goods from the hinterland, they usually entered into an agreement and later on fund are released to the petty agent unlicensed agent. The traditional rulers usually recommended mostly their kinsmen (family members), very loyal and trusted members of their community before money is released (entrusted) by the mega Licensed Buying Agents. Jonathan affirms that in 1933 the colonial officials (District Officer) and some indigenous traditional rulers declared a campaign on the need to cultivate groundnut and other cash crops in Akwanga division “every adult farmers was persuaded to plant one acre”.⁹⁴ Available records has shown that the colonial government did much to propelled the people of the area to cultivate the cash crops desired by the multinationals, not only that the colonial government also cultivated groundnut at the prison farm in Wamba the administrative headquarter of the division, and the intent was partly to feed the prisoner and to subsequently add to the total number of ton realized.⁹⁵ The drive to boost the production of the produce was unsuccessful simply because the prices fixed by the buying agents was not attractive enough to encourage the farmers to cultivate more, however, there was a considerable increased in the price from £3 per ton in 1933 to £6 per ton in 1940, the also resulted to an increased in the total number of tons realized from 12 tons in 1933 to 214 tons in 1940.⁹⁶ UACs ware houses located at Gudi and Mada railway station were filled to the brim as a result of the boom recorded in 1940 partly because of the hike in price and the fact that the native had no alternative rather than to cultivate and sell to the Licensed Buying Agents as required by the marketing boards.

The marketing boards had transformed and integrated Agro-Allied Sector from a subsistent to a more capitalist oriented sector, thereby encouraging the cultivation of primary produce.⁹⁷ The marketing boards organized the groundnut trade in an orderly manner that supersedes the way food crops were marketed, before the second world war the Europeans firms purchased more than 90% of the groundnut in northern Nigeria, and during the second world war UAC and other multinationals bought 50% of the groundnut in the northern region.⁹⁸ The basis for this success was simply because the European business moguls had protected their investment with the mechanism of governance and the enactment of laws that relegated every form of competition and uprising to the background.

Impact of Cash Crop Economy on Akwanga Division

Compulsory labour was introduced as a strategy designed by the colonial government to implement their policies. Forced labour in Akwanga division encompasses compulsory conscription of labour force to cultivate export crops, coercion of able and energetic youths into the colonial army to put an end to anti colonial resistance, involuntary conscription of labourers into the Wamba mining fields, and obligatory conveyance of produce from the farm by humans to the produce collation centers. The regime relied on the available and free manpower in the study area to explore and exploit the economic and human resources. Legislations that authorized the exploitation of manpower not only in Akwanga division but the country in general were formulated and implemented by the colonial government. The areas of focus were notably export crop farming, road construction, railway construction, bridge building, seaport construction, mining and the provision of colonial infrastructures.

According to Ohadike the process was accelerated by the promulgation of the Southern Nigerian proclamation No15 of 1903, which stipulates that every physically and mentally stable Man should work with or without wages or as directed by the traditional rulers.⁹⁹ The northern Nigerian road proclamation of 1903 which legitimized compulsory and forceful conscription of labour in northern Nigeria without remuneration and good working condition.¹⁰⁰ The forced labour act was formulated by the British in the first decade of the 20th century had succeeded in merging the people into international capitalism as main producers of raw materials.

The evolution of tax was another innovation that accompanied cash crop production in Akwanga division. Tax as a colonial policy created contradiction in the area leading excessive military actions on communities that resisted its implementation by the colonial regime. Though there was taxation in some substantial part of northern Nigeria prior to colonial rule, but the British taxation was somewhat excessive and exploitative. The success of the administration depended on the internally generated revenue accrued by

the colony, According to Lugard 'financial liberty inspires the actualization of the colonial mission.' Colonial Tax system was viewed on the part of the colonizers as a way of emphasizing absolute control over an area, and colonizers saw it as a way of pledging total allegiance to the colonial government.¹⁰¹ The legislation was made in 1904 by the Governor-General on land proclamation which authorized land users to pay a certain amount of money as royalty to the colonial officials.¹⁰² Taxation as an aspect of colonial economy lubricated the phenomenon by providing enormous resources for the effective realization of their objectives.

*Lugard saw taxation as a stimulus to production, a source of revenue for the support of the colonial administration- 'It marks the recognition by the community of the protecting power' and finally it serves as the basis for the development of the indirect rule system... Without income from taxation, they could not provide for development let alone payment of officials regularly. Without a tax, there can be no treasury, and without a treasury no eventual measure of self-rule.*¹⁰³

A land proclamation act of 1904 compelled land users to pay a certain amount of money as royalty to the colonial officials.¹⁰⁴ This law empowers the traditional rulers the responsibility to collect taxes. This led to irregularities by some dishonest tax collectors appointed by the traditional rulers and in some cases the village leaders.

British currency was introduced as a universal means of tax payment. The British initially faced the problem of coming up with a universally accepted mode of tax payment in the entire province. When the British currency was introduced in the 1920s payment of taxes in kind was stopped, opening a new chapter in the history of colonial rule in Akwanga division, and exacerbating the nature of exploitation in Nigeria. The natives of Akwanga division had to either cultivate cash crops, work at the mining camps or work at the railway and road construction side to raise money and pay tax in British currency.

There was high labour migration due to the economic viability of the area (cash crop farming and development of mining camps). The influx of working population into Akwanga division had amplified the incidence of taxation and the number taxpayers. The emerging venture added to the expansion of Wamba as a commercial and administrative center of the division. New mining camps like Marmara, Maimudubi, Locci, and old settlements like, Rafin Tabo, Gwongwon, Rafin Kuza developed and attracted more British attention.¹⁰⁵ Ngharen argued that Gudi and Wamba had witnessed a tremendous influx of permanently and temporarily workers from neighboring and distance places.¹⁰⁶ These occurrences have contributed to the flow of British currency in the area and also boosted the revenue generated by the British colonial authority. Finally, though the colonial economy had contributed to emergence of

middlemen, agents as new class of income earners in the society, they were most often seen as catalyst for colonial exploitation and collaborators of the colonial government. Hunger and rural poverty ravished the people as a proportional number of the food crops produced in the area was taken to the mining camps in Jos to the detriment of the area. The meager wages sometime given to the labourers on the mining and construction camps, and price paid by the merchants were taken back as tax by the colonial regime. Above all the colonial economy did not introduce mechanized farming as local implements were used throughout the period. The economy of the area was largely dominated by the foreign investors without encouraging the localization of industries in division and the country at large.

Conclusion

Cash crop farming in colonial Nigeria has been the fulcrum that supported the venture leading to its success. The quest for raw materials, market and the zeal to expropriate the resources of the colonies also spurred the desire for empire-building and consequent stagnation of the of the occupied states. Thus, colonial agriculture in British occupied Akwanga division was primarily targeted at providing an avenue through which the people would be compelled to be absolutely subservient to colonial government. Though cash crop farming predated the colonial incursion of the area but, it took a different dimension during the colonial period. The development of groundnut has had integrated the people of Akwanga division into the international economy as primary producers of raw material. Cash crop farming in colonial Akwanga like other parts was accompanied by the introduction of British currency, taxation, forced labour and the establishment of produce marketing boards.

The phenomenon has compelled the natives to go extra miles to raise money and fulfil tax obligation as a mark of submission to the colonial government. The imposition of taxation was supplemented by excessive pressure of the law enforcement agents notably Police, Courts, Prison and the harsh and repressive action of the Men of West African Frontier Force (WAFF). Tax evaders were sent to jailed or considered as enemies of the state and faced the wrath of the WAFF. However, the colonial government made the production of cash crop compulsory, hence, a tax regime was imposed on the people to facilitate the production of export crop. A conspicuous example of the relevance of taxation to colonial government was expressed by Lugard as thus,

Lugard saw taxation as a stimulus to production, a source of revenue for the support of the colonial administration- 'It marks the recognition by the community of the protecting power' and finally it serves as the basis for the development of the indirect rule system...

*Without income from taxation, they could not provide for development let alone payment of officials regularly. Without a tax, there can be no treasury, and without a treasury no eventual measure of self-rule.*¹⁰⁷

The monetization of labour in most colonial territories has informed their desire to subjugate and exploit their economic resources. Though wages paid were disproportionate to work done, but natives prepared to provide the required services to satisfy the whims of their rulers. The evolution of forced labour in Akwanga division by the colonial authorities was basically to provide raw materials and social amenities needed by the colonial officials notably rest houses, roads, railways, and postal services. The increase in demand of groundnut by European manufacturing industries for the production of soap, cooking oil, and margarine has facilitated its production Akwanga division. Basiru and Solomon corroborated the argument by postulating that development encompasses the ability of any nation to manage domestic and foreign, utilized her resource judiciously devoid of external interference.¹⁰⁸

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