

**BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN JAMA'ARE EMIRATE 1903-1960:
AN ASSESSEMENT OF COLONIAL POLICIES AND ESBLSHMENTS**

By

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and

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The occupation of the emirates under Sokoto caliphate was the last activity made by the Britshi in the history of colonial conquest of what is today known as Nigeria. The conquest and occupation of these vast territories was gradual. Besides, several emirates were written about their encounters with the British, while the others little is known, like the emirate of Jama'are. Therefore, this paper gives an analysis of how Jama'are Emirate came under British occupation. It also examines British socioeconomic and political policies, such as education and hospitals as well as the operational system of colonial police, colonial prison and judiciary in the emirate.

Keywords: *British, Jama'are Emirate, occupation resistance, Sokoto Caliphate.*

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Introduction

Before the migration of the Fulani people from Dilara¹, an area around Lake Chad (in the present Chad Republic), there had existed some small settlements around the vicinity of the present-day Jama'are town though it was not formally recognized as Jama'are as noted in Aliyu (1976). Thus, Aliyu further intimated that Jama'are came into being as the result of migrations. These settlements that existed long before the advent of Jama'are comprised 'Yangame, Bayere, Gijip, Wammile and Arawa.

The area was called Jama'are even before the 1804 Sokoto Jihad and was occupied by the local population living at Gijip-ta-Kuka²

The Fulani people under the leadership of Ardo Sale, his son Muhammadu Wabi I and his brother Muhammadu Sambolai led a team of the courageous warriors westward from Dilara. These people were concerned with better grazing land for their livestock since cattle determined their status in society. The beginning of the migration was around



1805/1806 and it referred to the commencement of the crisis in Borno between the Fulanin-Mare and Kanuri, over the issue of the practice of Islamic Shari'ah. For instance, the empire declined during the reign of Mai Ahmad and Birnin Ngzargamu was captured by Muhammadu Wabi I and Gwani Mukhtar of Misau.³

From the aforementioned, it can be alluded that the Fulanin-Mare settled at Birnin Ngazargamu after leaving Dilara and later moved to Dawasa where Muhammadu Wabi I established his mini kingdom around 1807. Jama'are emerged as a result of migrations and the nineteenth century Sokoto religious reforms (Jihad). Jama'are is among the fourteen emirates that received a flag of office from the Sokoto Caliphate in 1808 and played a significant role towards the actualization of the Caliphate's two-hundred-year Dynasty.

British conquered the Seat of the Caliphate (Sokoto) in 1903 and the rest of the emirates under a gradual process. The colonial conquest was ended, the British embarked on the process or colonial consolidation. Any form of resistance against the British was considered a refusal to submit to the 'constituted authority'. Colonialism demonstrated itself in three spheres namely; economic, social and political. Socially, it undermined all forms of a social system of the African people. Politically, it necessitated the loss of sovereignty by the Africans to the British colonialists. Between 1903 and 1960, all the emirates in northern Nigeria including Jama'are were

administered as colonial provinces that made up of northern Nigeria.⁴

Sokoto Jihad and the Establishment of Jama'are Emirate

The Sokoto Jihad was the movement that set the pace of change in West Africa in the early nineteenth century. It was initially a reform movement or revolution which led to the transformation of the societies that are now known as northern Nigeria. The jihad was waged between 1804 and 1809. After the Jihad, Uthman Bn Fodio spent the rest of his life at Sokoto where he established a form of government and polity that is known as the Sokoto Caliphate. In this type of government, the head of administration was a religious leader and the laws which governed everyone were called Sharia which is the Muslim law.⁵

The Sokoto Jihad had its basis from about 1774 when Uthman Bn Fodio started preaching in Zamfara and Gobir. The king of Gobir Bawa recognized the influence of Shehu Uthman Bn Fodio and arranged a meeting with him that was between 1787 and 1792. After Bawa, things were not good for Shehu and his followers under the successors of Bawa which degenerated into chaos and the ultimate broke of the jihad in Gobir and later spread to other areas where Shehu's follower had established influence.⁶

The extension of Sokoto Jihad to Jama'are started around 1807 when the Fulani from Dilara visited Shehu Uthman Bn Fodio to receive the flag of jihad under the leadership of Muhammadu Wabi I. In addition to

this, they had the intention of learning Islamic knowledge, these Fulanis embarked on their mission to Sokoto. After spending some time, they reached Sokoto and paid allegiance to Uthman Bn Fodio in which a flag of office was given to them under the leadership of Muhammadu Wabi I and his brother Muhammadu Sambolai.

The Occupation of Jama'are Emirate

Jama'are Emirate was formed as a result of migrations and subsequent 1804 Sokoto jihad. After leaving Dilara, they had a temporary settlement at Birnin Ngazargamu where they fought Mai Ahmad (the last of Mai) together with Gwani Mukhtar. From there, he moved to Dawasa where he established a mini kingdom. Muhammadu Wabi I proceeded to Sokoto and received the flag of Jihad in 1808. Muhammadu Wabi I operated largely among the Kare-Kare and Ngzim ethnic groups becoming a belligerent hero. He died in 1824 in one of the engagements (war) with Ngzim. The relationship remained cordial between Jama'are and Sokoto until the coming of the British. However, the relationship remains friendly.⁷

The whole of Sokoto Caliphate was assigned to Britain as its sphere of influence under the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 following the treaties signed with the various local rulers. The conference was held in a bid to avoid clashes between the powers in their imperial desire for economic exploitation of Africa.⁸

In March, 1903, Jama'are Emirate submitted to the British without any form of resistance. At that time, any

form of reactions or confrontations against the British was considered as treason and therefore was brutally suppressed. However, immediately after the British occupation and subsequent establishment of Jama'are Native Authority, the British put their policies in place for the easy and formal colonization of the emirate.

The Establishment of Native Treasury

Native Treasury was an innovation provided by the British to strengthen their financial control over the emirate. The establishment and development of Native Treasury in Jama'are Emirate followed such development elsewhere in other emirates. H.R. Parmer⁹ initiated the Native Treasury System in Katsina in 1908 which came to be the first Native Treasury in the whole Northern Provinces, followed by Kano in 1909, Katagum in 1910/1911, Jama'are and Misau in 1913 respectively. This was established to consolidate further and strengthen British economic dominance.

With the establishment of Native Treasury under the control of *Ma'aji* which was responsible to the Assistant Resident (A.S.), this downgraded the emir's financial control. This time around the amount collected, instead of being distributed to the palace officials was broken down such that the central government took 50% and the Native Administration took 50%. It was this 50% of the Native Administration that was supposed to be used in paying up the salaries and undertaking some developments for the benefit of all. As such, all salaried



officials were brought under the mercy of the colonial government.¹⁰

The Native Treasury in 1931 was classified as fully organized, receiving through 1933 70% of the total revenue realized, while the central government was left with the remaining 30%. It was hoped this would solve the financial problem facing the Native Treasury and that wider program of public interest would be undertaken. Perhaps, this was changed to 70% because of the decline in the function performed by the central government due to the decline in the revenue.¹¹

Colonial Taxation in Jama' are Emirate

Immediately after the British occupation of Jama'are Emirate which was effected on March 29, 1903, the next step was the imposition of colonial rule accompanied by the imposition of colonial taxes. Taxation was a major colonial economic policy adopted to accumulate revenue for administration and stimulate export crops production since that was the only alternative available to raise funds to administer the area. In the pre-colonial period, the main source of revenue of government was the land. There were several taxes during precolonial era and it was levied on all those who were engaged in general farming activity.¹²

Jangali Tax in Jama' are Emirate

The economy of Jama'are Emirate depended on jangali taxation. It was adopted by colonialists because it existed a long time before their arrival. This type of tax was principally imposed on cattle keepers

who didn't settle in one place to make them pay for the general tax. Thus, it was continued to make the nomads realize the existence of authority and to add revenue to the emirate.¹³

British Policies in Jama' are Emirate

Jama'are was under Kano Province in 1903 and later transferred to Bauchi Province around 1918. The Resident officer was the chief administrator of the district, while the emir received orders from him (Resident officer) to the subordinates. It served as one of the basic units through which indirect rule system was administered. The Resident officer carried out the policies of the imperialist power with the assistance of other subordinate Native Authority, the District Officers (DO's) and their Assistants (ADO) were responsible for touring the districts to ensure strict compliance with colonial policies and directives. Nevertheless, the colonial state structure was the Native administration under the emir through whom the district and villages were efficiently brought under colonial control.

Indirect Rule policy

Having submitted to the British, Jama'are Emirate formally came under British administration. Therefore, the British started to implement their policies, one of which was known as the Indirect Rule system. The British consolidated their rule which took time to stabilize. The policy that was supposed to guide the administration of the emirate was the Indirect Rule system which meant the existing traditional rulers were to be used as an intermediary between the

British and the subjects or natives. However, their aim was not the disruption of the existing machinery of government but rather to make it more humane and democratic. This was to support the existing traditional authority, their councils, courts, customs and traditions so as they were not repugnant to the British ideals of humanity and justice.¹⁴

Forced Labour policy

The British colonial forced labour took root from the pre-colonial labour in existence in Jama'are Emirate. The aristocracy then used forced labour to work on the farms of the district heads or send them to Sarki to build or to repair houses, cultivate the land, construct roads, bridges and culverts on the directives of the emir. However, forced labour in the agricultural and indigenous industrial sectors was the fact that the recruitment of young able-bodied men and taking them outside the district led to the gradual decline of agricultural production as well as the killing of indigenous industries like textile, iron working, crafts, pot making. Forced labour was intended to promote capitalist production. It also introduced the process of individualization of labour which had a damaging effect on indigenous rural production units.¹⁵

Agricultural policy

The British colonial government intensively pursued its objectives of colonial occupation through carefully designed policies determined to achieve their colonial goals of domination, exploitation and transfer of excessive surplus capital in the form of cash crop or raw materials to

promote their economic advancement. Hence, all the agricultural policies were aimed at achieving these economic goals. To achieve these goals, they transformed the existing agriculture into export-oriented agriculture in which only the desired cash crops were produced as raw materials in response to the industrial needs in Europe. At the same time, the territories became markets for the consumption of European products.¹⁶

The above assertion echoed the opinion of a key informant:

At that time, we were introduced with some variety of crops which we were not used to. Most of the crops were brought by the Europeans through the chiefs. However, at that particular time, we didn't have the privilege to reject it. The situation was very unhealthy. This brought artificial famine, simply because the crops were exported by the colonialists¹⁷

Cash crop production policy

Beans, groundnuts and sugarcane, which later became the backbone of the cash crop economy, became extensively grown in the emirate for export and local consumption. Meanwhile, in addition to exportation, cotton was also produced in the area to satisfy the local textile industry. Groundnuts were the major export crop that was produced in the area. The colonialists made sure that they highly exploited the farmers to enrich themselves. Some middlemen exploited farmers by buying groundnuts at lower prices from them and sold at a high rate to make more money. Sugarcane production was not important before colonialism in the area because it was done on a small scale. However, sugarcane came to be



produced in large quantities, leading to large cultivation in the *Fadama* areas. These *Fadama* areas included Dogonjeji, Gilar, Gongo, 'Yola, Dako-Dako and Bodinga. From the 1930s, the production of sugarcane further increased. Peasants were forced to go into sugarcane production to get money for the payment of taxes.¹⁸

Shifting Cultivation

This is a system of cultivation in which a piece of land is cleared and cultivated for a short period of time, then left and allowed to regain its fertility. The system is practiced in Jama'are due to the availability of the land and to allow the dumped portion of land for the animals to stay for a season. Apart from cash crop production, another policy introduced by the colonialists in Jama'are Emirate was shifting cultivation, even though it was practised before the coming of the British. At that time, shifting cultivation was usually carried out by using simple implements like hoes, cutlass and other traditional implements. After the British conquest of the emirate, shifting cultivation was modernized and highly encouraged. The main reason for this was for the interest of the colonial economy.¹⁹

Trade

The introduction of colonial currency intensified trade in Nigeria. Development in transportation facilities like construction of roads, for instance from Jama'are to Kano and Katsina. Motor vehicles came to replace the use of animals in carrying goods from distant areas. At that time, trade became more pronounced with

the promotion of cash crop production. Increase in cash crop production led to an increase in commerce in the district.

Royal Niger Company, John Holt, SCOA, and Paterson Zochonis (PZ) established their branches in Bauchi, and also posted trading agents in Azare district to participate actively in the purchase of farm products. They built warehouses for packaging of agricultural raw materials before transporting them overseas. The European firms obtained shea butter and groundnuts from the inhabitants and in turn, supplied finished goods like cloth, salt, shoes, and mirror.²⁰

The differences between the prices of African exports of raw materials and their importation of manufactured goods constituted unequal exchange. The huge amounts of profit realized by the European firms were transferred abroad instead of being invested in Nigeria. The importation of European finished goods had negative consequences on the home industries. Even where the local products were cheaper and better people still preferred the European products like cloth, shoes, mirror which were imposed on them by the colonialists. People began to abandon their skill production in the face of cheap and available European industrial goods. Improvements in weaving, blacksmithing, pottery all bowed out of existence.²¹

The Introduction of Western Education in Jama'are Emirate

Before the imposition of colonial administration in the area, the only form of education was Islamic

education. Islam was introduced into northern Nigeria in the eleven century through Kanem Bornu as a result of Tran-Saharan trade with North Africa by Wangarawa traders, later it moved into Hausaland around the fourteen century.²²

The introduction of Western education started in the emirate with the establishment of the first elementary school in 1932. This was with a view to training manpower that could be absorbed in the new administration. In most cases, the enrolment had to be both by force and persuasive campaign. People were mandated by the emirate to bring their children to school by force. In rural areas, people's response to western education was not impressive. At the initial stage of the enrolment, people ran to neighbouring areas to escape the enrolment. Some of the children were locked up in the homes to avoid being enrolled in school. In the end, most of these registered in the school were 'ya'yan *Talakawa* (less privileged children) and 'ya'yan *Sarakuna* (children from royal families)²³

The first elementary school was established in 1932 in Jama'are Emirate with Mallam Gidado as a conventional classroom teacher and Mallam Atiku as Quran and Arabic teacher. Having Education Teacher Certificate (E.T.C), Mallam Gidado was paid 27 pounds per year, while, Mallam Atiku was paid 6 pounds per year.²⁴

In 1937 and 38, provisions were made for an additional teacher in the emirate who was seriously needed. Under that

situation, a clean, disciplined and bright set of pupils were produced and set as examples. Boys were neatly clothed in jumpers and shots provided by the emir. Girls turned-out expensively, neat and clean.²⁵

Colonial Police (*Dogarai*) in Jama'are Emirate

Before the establishment of the British rule, the emir had an armed force who maintains the laws and order, they were also used for defending his people in waging war against non-Muslim communities in the name of jihad. These people are called *dogarai*, they were purposely employed by the emir, and they were used as bodyguards, messengers and police. The establishment of the British rule was to affect the emirate armed forces. Accordingly, Lugard affirmed:

In future..... neither the emir nor any chief would be allowed to have resources to armed force, and the *dogarai* (gunmen), because it would be abolished. If the emir was unable to enforce his legitimate orders, he would refer to the Resident for in the British alone was to be vested the task of policing the country.²⁶

This was because the British realized the importance of force which, if left under the emirs, 'revolt and rebellion would be organized against them (British). By controlling the armed forces, they could easily use them to quell local resistance. This taking over of the armed forces was another step towards total colonial domination. The *dogarai* became employees of the British colonial government only to be used by the emir on request. Despite

the decrease of the emir's power over the *dogarai*, the colonialists recognized their authority for the purpose of tax collection. The *sarkin dogarai* headed the police department under the supervision of *Yerima*. This time around they were to be messengers, outriders and escorts of British officials when touring. They were also assigned to European companies to keep law and order at the groundnuts buying plots and preventing the cash croppers from cheating.

The Colonial Judiciary in Jama' are Emirate

Nearly every society has its method of dispensing justice and Jama'are Emirate is no exception. This was dictated by the Islamic teachings in the emirate. The immediate steps taken by the British after establishing their rule in the emirate was the reforming of a judiciary. The Sharia Law (permitted Native law and custom) continued with the modification. Lugard stressed the importance of this in all appointment letters given to the emirs:

In matters of Law and Justice, so long as it was not contrary to the Laws of the protectorate it would not be interfered with, and the Emirs and Alkali's courts would be upheld and strengthened under the supervision of the Resident.²⁷

This meant the emirate system of justice, although was based on Sharia law, would no longer be the supreme law of the society, but secondary to laws of the colonial government, and its functions would be at the convenience of the colonial government. The Residents at the

same time had the power to tamper with it in so far as it was not in line with the administration. Indirectly, the Judiciary was no longer serving societal interests.

The Colonial Prison in Jama' are Emirate

Any convict sentenced to imprisonment was jailed in the newly created prison. However, there had been a prison long before colonialism, which was called a "lock-up" situated in the emir's palace. This lock-up under British rule was built outside the palace and made an institution in itself independent of the emir. The prison was under the control of the chief warder (*Maidala*). The *Maidala* was answerable to *Yerima* (the district head of Jama'are). The chief warder and his staff were made salaried officers and thus part of the administration.

The prisoners were employed to do manual work, the building of roads, sanitary works, British official residence and offices. In her continuing effort of social transformation and economic progress, the British government closed the Jama'are prison in 1936. The British officials concerned argued that there was no need of having the prison in the emirate where there were only a few inmates compared to the warders and a huge amount paid to them. As a result, it was economically wise to close the prison and transfer the prisoners to Azare prison. Neither the emir nor the populace welcomed the idea because it affected the prestige and the integrity of the emirate. The people were extremely annoyed with the change, but the

administration exercised its full power to effect the change, after all, it was not in the interest of the people.²⁸

Conclusion

This paper discussed the British occupation and administration of Jama'are Emirate after Sokoto Jihad 1903 to 1960. It examined how Jama'are Emirate submitted to the British forces in March 1903 after the fall of Sokoto Caliphate. The paper further discussed colonial administration and policies such as an indirect rule, colonial taxation shifting cultivation and cash crop production. Other colonial occupation also included police, prison and judiciary respectively. The introduction of Western education was also other issues brought by the colonialist.

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Notes:

- ¹ a place near lake Chad where Fulani people of Jama'are migrated from
- ² an old settlement of Jama'are
- ³ Hogben, S.J and Kirk Green A.H.M. (1966). *Emirate of Northern Nigeria*, London: Oxford Press
- ⁴ Okonji, M.I. (1974). *British Administration in Nigeria 1900-1905; A Nigerian Review*, New York: Nok Publishers Limited
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- ⁶ ibid
- ⁷ Johnson, H.A.S. (1967). *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto*, London: Oxford Press
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- ⁹ A British who initiated the Native Treasury system in Katsina
- ¹⁰ Mukhtar, M.I. (1983). *The Impact of British Colonial Domination on Social and Economic Structures of the Society of Kano 1903-1950*, Unpublished M.A Thesis ABU Zaria.
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- ¹² ibid
- ¹³ ibid



¹⁴ D.M. Last, (1967). Sokoto Caliphate, London: Longman

¹⁵ ibid

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²⁸ National Archive, Kaduna SNp17 k6569 vol. II Bauchi Province Annual Report for 1927