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Institute of Historical Sciences

THE IMPACT OF BRITISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION ON NIGERIA: THE AUCHI KINGDOM EXPERIENCE, 1904-1960

Doctoral Dissertation

2024 Suleiman Yakubu

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Summary of chapters

Chapter One is the introductory chapter. It focuses on the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives, the justification significance of the study, and review of literature. It guides the reader through the research methodology, literature review, research questions, sources of information, and information-gathering techniques and analysis.

Chapter Two gives a vivid description of the land, geography, location, and people of Auchi Kingdom. It further explains the origin of Auchi people. The socio-political structure, traditional and cultural practices of Auchi people in precolonial times.

Chapter Three is on the indigenous rule and administration up to the eve of the colonial invasion of Auchi Kingdom. The chapter brings to light the administrative system and structure that existed in the pre-Nupe and Nupe eras before the arrival of the British colonialists. It also explains how treaties were deceitfully made and concluded with kings and chiefs to take over their territories. It also examines the abolition of the slave trade

Chapter Four discusses Britain and its colonial policies and activities in the landmass later known as Nigeria from 1914 and West Africa. It further explains the activities of the Royal Niger Company (RNC) in Nigeria. This chapter also explains the impact of British Colonial Economic Policies, Indirect Rule System, Native Courts and Native Authority during colonial times in Nigeria. The role of Auchi Kingdom in World War I and II as well as the role of the Kingdom in the struggle for independence in Nigeria is also discussed.

Chapter Five focuses on the roles and activities of the Otaru System under British Colonial Administration. The description of the reigns of kings who experienced British Colonial Administration as well as how it impacted on the Kingdom up to 1960 will be explained.

Chapter Six: General Summary and Conclusion

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of British colonial administration on Auchi Kingdom in Nigeria. While the primary objective of British imperialism was economic exploitation, the contact nevertheless spurred certain levels of development within the region. The study explores the origin, traditions of the kingdom, and its situation within the Afemai region of Etsako West Local Government Area (LGA) in Edo State, Nigeria. It delves into the distinctive history of Auchi Kingdom, examining its customs, traditions, and interactions with the British over a fifty-six-year period. The research further assesses the socio-political and economic developments that occurred in the kingdom under British colonial administration from 1904 to 1960. The people of Auchi developed complex and stable social, political, and religious institutions under the leadership of King Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh and subsequent rulers, influenced by their interactions with the British. This dissertation emphasises the continuity of indigenous customs and traditions alongside the introduction of British policies and infrastructural developments during the period. Additionally, the study examines the introduction of Islam and the implementation of colonial policies and their impact on the community. The research reveals that the innovations such as railways and schools that were introduced by the British were to satisfy their own needs but the local people still benefited from them. Interviews were conducted to gather crucial information, and both primary and secondary sources were extensively utilised to ensure robust findings. An interdisciplinary approach was employed in the analysis of the vast amount of information to maintain historical objectivity. The research concludes that Auchi Kingdom has evolved into a significant socio-economic and political force within Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State and Nigeria as a whole, largely due to the impact of British Colonialism despite its exploitative tendencies.

KEYWORDS

British, Chiefs, Colonialism, Cultural practices, Kingdom, Policies, Religion, Rule, Nigeria, and Tradition.

NÁZEV

Vliv britské koloniální správy na Nigérii: Zkušenost království Auchi, 1904-1960

ANOTACE

Tato práce zkoumá vliv britské koloniální správy na království Auchi v Nigérii. Přestože hlavním cílem britského imperialismu bylo ekonomické vykořisťování, podařilo se mu rovněž podnítit určitou úroveň rozvoje v regionu. Disertace zkoumá původ a tradice království Auchi, rovněž tak i jeho postavení v regionu Afemai v Etsako West Local Government Area (LGA) ve státě Edo v Nigérii. Zabývá se specifickou historií království Auchi, zkoumá jeho zvyky, tradice a interakce s Brity během období padesáti šesti let. Výzkum dále hodnotí sociálně-politické a ekonomické změny, ke kterým došlo v království za britské koloniální správy v letech 1904-1960. Lid Auchi pod vedením krále Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoha a následujících vládců vyvinul komplexní a stabilní sociální, politické a náboženské instituce ovlivněné jejich interakcemi s Brity. Tato disertační práce zdůrazňuje kontinuitu domorodých zvyků a tradic vedle britské politiky a infrastrukturních změn během tohoto období. Kromě toho studie zkoumá zavedení islámu a implementaci koloniální politiky a její dopad na společnost. Výzkum ukazuje, že z inovací, jako jsou železnice a školy, které Britové zavedli pro uspokojení vlastních potřeb, stále prosperují i místní lidé. Byly provedeny rozhovory k získání důležitých informací, a pro zajištění přesvědčivých závěrů byly široce využívány jak primární, tak sekundární zdroje. Byl použit interdisciplinární přístup při analýze velkého množství informací s cílem udržet historickou objektivitu. Výzkum dochází k závěru, že království Auchi se vyvinulo ve významnou sociálně-ekonomickou a politickou sílu v lokální oblasti Etsako West v Edo State a v Nigérii jako celku především díky vlivu britského kolonialismu, navzdory jeho vykořisťovatelským tendencím.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Britové, kolonialismus, království, kulturní praktiky, náboženství, náčelníci, Nigérie, politika, tradice, vláda

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Abbreviations

AG	Action Group
APU	Auchi Progressive Union
ART	African Traditional Religion
BC	Berlin Conference
BCG	British Colonial Government
CMS	Christian Missionary Society
DH	District Head
DO	District Officer
GRA	Government Reserved Area
HRH	His Royal Highness
LGA	Local Government Area
NA	Native Authority
NAC	National African Company
NAI	National Archive Ibadan
NC	Native Court
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons
NCO	Native Court Ordinance
NTD	Native Treasury Department
RNC	Royal Niger Company
RGS	Royal Geographical Society
UAC	United African Company

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

As Dawood observed, one of the most significant challenges faced by historians studying the origin and historical development of Auchi Kingdom lies in establishing a definitive starting point and accurately documenting when, where, and how key events unfolded.[1]During its earliest developments, few written records were available, necessitating the reliance on complementary oral sources. Before colonial administration in Africa, people went about their daily activities undisturbed and oblivious to the outside world. The people existed without the conventional art of writing. Significant events and activities were stored in the people's memories and passed down from one generation to another by words of mouth; this is oral tradition. Oral source is the main source for reconstructing the past in Africa. Even among people who had some sort of writing or had some historical sources, including the most ancient ones, records of the past were based on oral tradition.[2] Much of the historical information about Auchi people that survived till today have been passed down orally through the centuries. It is inevitable that, over such an extended period of oral transmission across generations, some details have been lost, and individual accounts may display slight variations. The history, therefore, often differs depending on the oral source with some historians or storytellers occasionally presenting versions that emphasise the prominence or superiority of their own ancestry, clan, community, or village.[3]

Both oral and written sources indicate that Auchi Kingdom first came in contact with the British in the early twentieth century, following the collapse of the Nupe Empire.[4] The Nupe imperialist arrived Auchi Kingdom several decades before the British. By the 1840s most of the

[1] Egbefo O. DAWOOD, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, July 27, 2020, Iyamho, Professor of History.

[2] Oral tradition, as an important source of African history, is indispensable for the accurate reconstruction of the continent's past. Numerous invaluable historical narratives predate the emergence of written records and have been preserved through oral transmission across generations. In the absence of oral tradition, a significant portion of African history would remain obscured. See Jan VANSINA, *Oral tradition as history*, London: The University of Wisconsin Press 1985.

[3] Embellishment is one of the weaknesses of oral tradition. For this reason, information sourced from oral tradition should be carefully analysed before being used for any research work. Narrators sometimes falsify records to make their town or village appear superior to others.

[4] Obomeghie WAJEED, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, July 19, 2020, 52, Abuja, Writer and publisher; Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nigeria Ltd 2006, pp. 27-28.

towns in north-eastern Yoruba land as well as in Afenmai land, where Auchi Kingdom is located, had become aware of the military threat of the Nupe armies emanating from the north-west.[5]

In 1860, the Nupe people invaded and conquered Auchi Kingdom, establishing their rule, which lasted for thirty-seven years until their expulsion by the British in 1897. The early twentieth century subsequently witnessed the expansion of British colonial administration in Nigeria, a period that continued until the country was granted independence in 1960.[6] The colonisation of some empires like the Benin Kingdom and Opopo by the British were difficult tasks. The British were confronted with several oppositions and stiff resistance from numerous ethnic groups while some welcomed and signed the British treaties. Auchi Kingdom willingly accepted British colonial administration because, unlike the British that offered protection by the signing of treaties, the Nupe people exploited and enslaved the people of the Kingdom.[7]

This study will focus on the political and socio-economic repercussions of British imperial rule in Auchi Kingdom, particularly its significance before Nigeria's independence in 1960. The research revealed the profound impact of British colonial policies on the economic, social, cultural, political, and religious aspects of life in Auchi Kingdom. The British introduced a new system of justice, Western education, and various other colonial policies that significantly influenced the region. According to Tony, despite the imposition of Nupe imperialism and British colonial administration, many indigenous practices of the Auchi people persisted, and these practices continue to be evident in present-day Auchi society.[8] This dissertation seeks to bring to light the impact of British innovations and policies on Auchi Kingdom, while also exploring the reasons behind the formulation and implementation of these policies. The people of Auchi adopted and utilised the innovations introduced by the British colonial authorities to their advantage. It is important to acknowledge that, despite the interior

[5] Michael MASON, "The Jihad in the South: An outline of the Nineteenth Century Nupe Hegemony in North-Eastern Yorubaland and Afenmai" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 5, No. 2, 1970, p. 205.
[6] Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, p. 136.
[7] Egbefo O. DAWOOD, "Resistance to Colonial in Nigeria: Esanland Encounter with the British Colonialists and its effects on Intra-Inter-Group Relations," *Academic Horizon, A Journal of the School of Postgraduate Studies* Vol.1 No.1, 2015, p. 2.
[8] Momoh ROBSON, *New perspectives on the history and politics of Nigeria: The Etsako Experience*, Edo: Afenmai Grafix 2016, p. 59.

motives of the British, these innovations and policies had some positive impact on the lives of the people of Auchi Kingdom.[9]

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The history of small communities and kingdoms in Nigeria like Auchi Kingdom have not found their deserved place in African historiography among African historians. This is partly because most works on the history of Nigeria tend to focus on the most prominent Kingdoms and Empires like the Benin Kingdom, Oyo Empire, Kanemi-Borno Empire etc. without due diligence to smaller Kingdoms. As a result of this neglect, not much work has been done to reconstruct the history of smaller Kingdoms like Auchi Kingdom and several others that are located in the various states of Nigeria.

The study of the history of Auchi Kingdom from the late fifteenth century to 1960 has suffered from several problems which include some of the following; firstly, not much has been documented on the prehistory of the Etsako people of which Auchi Kingdom is a part of but it is complemented with oral sources. Secondly, much of what we have on the pre-colonial and colonial history of Auchi Kingdom deals with kingship, religion, or just a general overview of the history of Etsako land of which Auchi Kingdom is a part of. The final challenge is that Auchi Kingdom is not largely reflected in terms of proper documentation of the developments it witnessed during and after colonisation by the British. It is, therefore, these loopholes that necessitated an inquiry into its historical past. This is the research gap that this work intends to fill. The work also intends to unravel the colonial policies that the British implemented in Auchi Kingdom. It also intends to reveal why the policies were implemented and how the policies and innovations impacted on the political, cultural, and socio-economic lives of the people of the kingdom, not to forget the role of Otaru Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh as the most active Otaru in the development of Auchi Kingdom during his reign as king for a period of twenty-five years, 1919-1944, which falls within the scope of this dissertation.

[9] Suleiman YAKUBU, "Colonial Rule in Nigeria: The Auchi Kingdom Encounter with the British Colonialists and the Impacts" *Brazilian Journal of African Studies* Vol. 6, No. 12, 2021, p. 53.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Dissertation

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the activities of the British in Auchi Kingdom from 1904 to 1960. The reason for picking these dates is to maintain coherence. After the collapse of the Nupe Empire in 1897, the British Colonial Officers arrived Auchi Kingdom in 1904 which is the starting point of the dissertation. 1960 was chosen because it was the year Nigeria was granted independence by Britain and this is also the terminal point of the dissertation. The general objective is to investigate the impact of the British, a power from Europe, on Auchi Kingdom within a time frame of fifty-six years. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. find out the indigenous traditional and cultural practices of the people that have survived until today.

2. find out the role of Otaru Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh in the developmental process in Auchi Kingdom in the first half of the twentieth century.

3. find out the situation of Auchi Kingdom before the arrival of imperial Britain.

4. find out the reasons why the British took over the administration of Auchi Kingdom.

5. investigate some of the British Colonial Policies that were implemented and how they impacted on Auchi Kingdom.

6. find out the reasons why some of these policies were formulated and implemented.

7. identify and give a vivid description of the developmental projects by the British in Auchi Kingdom before 1960.

1.4 Research Questions

Research questions are essential because they define the objectives of an academic study. The following research questions serve as a guide to the study:

1. What are the indigenous socio-cultural, traditional, and political practices that have survived until the present day?

2. What role did Otaru Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh play in the infrastructural development of Auchi Kingdom in the twentieth century?

3. What was the situation of Auchi Kingdom before the arrival of the British?

4. What were the reasons that necessitated the incursion of the British?

5. What British Colonial Policies were implemented in Auchi Kingdom and how did they impact on the Kingdom?

6. What were the reasons why some of these policies were formulated and implemented?

6. What were the notable developmental projects that were carried out by the British in Auchi Kingdom?

1.5 Scope of the study

Auchi Kingdom is among the fastest-growing urban centres in Edo State. Auchi Kingdom is currently under the Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State, in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria which is often referred to as the Giant of Africa owing to its large population and economy.[10]This study has a time frame of fifty-six years and this period was chosen for convenience as a result of limited written sources of Auchi's history before 1900. The study examines the impact of British imperialism on Auchi Kingdom. This period is very significant because several notable events took place. This dissertation also briefly examines the pre-Nupe and Nupe eras in Auchi. The pre- Nupe era is basically about Auchi from the time of its founding till 1860 when the Nupe raiders invaded and took over Auchi. The Nupe people, initially, came to Auchi for trading activities but later exercised their imperial rule over the Kingdom in 1860 after subduing them with the use of their superior weapons. During their reign, which was the Nupe era of thirty-seven years (1860-1897), Auchi Kingdom was exploited and many people were enslaved and taken to Nupe land as slaves. New socio-cultural practices were also introduced by the Nupe people. The British defeated the Nupe people in 1897 at Bida and took over the control of Auchi Kingdom.

The British established their colonial administration over Auchi Kingdom from 1904 when they arrived till 1960 when Nigeria was granted independence. During the period of the British colonial administration of fifty-six years, the British introduced innovations and implemented several policies that impacted on Auchi Kingdom. This dissertation brings to light the origin of Auchi Kingdom, the introduction of British colonialism, their reasons for formulating and

[10] Daniel Nosakhare ONAIWU, "Assessing the quality of housing in emerging Auchi Urban Region, Edo State *Journal of the Environment"* Vol. 9, No. 1, 2015, p. 43.

implementing the policies and innovations, and their impact on the Kingdom. This period covers a time frame of fifty-six years (1904-1960).

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study seeks to provide knowledge of the activities of the British in Auchi Kingdom situated in the southern part of Nigeria between 1904 and 1960. It also seeks to identify the British innovations and their impact on the socio-economic, cultural, and political life of the people of the Kingdom. The study also seeks to establish that despite the exploitative tendencies of Britain, there were still some innovations that the people of the Kingdom used for their benefits and that of the Kingdom. The study is significant because it will serve as an important resource material for students, academics, and political leaders of Auchi Kingdom and beyond. It also tends to give credence and create more awareness of the history of Auchi Kingdom and its people.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study of British colonial Administration in Auchi Kingdom, Nigeria, faces several limitations that impacted the depth and breadth of understanding of this historical period. One major limitation is the lack of comprehensive documentation and records from the perspective of Auchi people themselves. Much of the historical narrative surrounding colonial encounters is often based on secondary sources, British accounts, official records, limited archival sources from Nigeria, and perspectives, which may not accurately reflect the indigenous population's experiences, interactions, and position.

Another limitation is the focus on major ethnicities or polities in historical studies, which often overshadow smaller communities and kingdoms like Auchi Kingdom. As a result, there is a scarcity of detailed research specifically dedicated to understanding how colonialism affected these smaller groups at a local level. This lack of attention could lead to gaps in knowledge regarding the specific dynamics, interactions, and aftermath of colonial administration within such communities. Furthermore, limited access to Auchi people's oral histories, traditional knowledge, and cultural practices poses a challenge to fully capturing their experiences during colonial times. The reliance on limited written sources and external perspectives may overlook important cultural practices, traditions, and indigenous interpretations crucial for a holistic understanding of the impact of colonialism on Auchi Kingdom.

Understanding how colonial policies influenced daily life, social structures, belief systems, and identities within these smaller groups requires an approach which considers local contents and perspectives. While existing studies provide valuable insights into British colonialism in Nigeria, including its effects on various ethnic groups and regions, there remains a need for more localised research that delves deeply into the experiences of smaller kingdoms and communities like Auchi Kingdom. Overcoming these limitations would enrich our understanding of how colonial legacies continue to shape contemporary realities in Nigeria.

1.8 Review of literature

As explained above, existing works on Auchi Kingdom and its people are limited and characterised by fragmentary information for the research under study. However, some inferences and information were still obtained from the few available ones. In a bid to achieve objectivity, efforts were made to review some of the available works on Auchi Kingdom's history which proved useful towards completing this research work. J. U. Egharevba, with much intimacy with the history of Benin, wrote *A short history of Benin* and showed, though obscure, how the Afenmai people to which Auchi Kingdom belongs migrated from Benin Kingdom.[11] Equally worthy of mention is the work of R. E. Bradbury, *The Benin Kingdom and the Edo Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*. Bradbury deserves much praise for his beautiful job on the socio-political histories of Edo peoples, including Auchi Kingdom and other Afenmai communities and its people. He disclosed significant issues on marriage, kinship, birth, and burial rites. He, however, failed to see the success of the Nupe conquest of Afenmai land which later resulted in the establishment of one of the institutions under discussion in the second half of the 19th century, as a manifestation of the weakness of the leadership of the people. Little wonder, therefore, that he recorded no resistance by the Nupe invaders.[12]

Michael Mason's article "The Jihad in the South: An outline of the Nineteenth Century Nupe Hegemony in North-Eastern Yorubaland and Afenmai" is a well-researched and beautiful work that looks at the profound landmarks left in the people's principles of government, including Auchi Kingdom where appointed monarchs replaced the indigenous gerontocratic government.

[11] Jacob U. EGHAREVBA, *A Short History of Benin*, Benin: University of Ibadan Printing Press 1968, p. 14.
[12] R. E. BRADBURY, *The Benin Kingdom and the Edo-Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, London: *International African institute*, 1964, p. 102.

Onigu Otite, in his article titled "Historical aspects of the sociology of the Bendel State of Nigeria" also shared similar views with other historians that the Etsako people originated from the Benin Kingdom but he was not well detailed in his analysis. The research works of Northcote W. Thomas on "The Edo-Speaking peoples of Nigeria" is also of the opinion that the inhabitants of the Kukuruku area of Edo migrated from Benin Kingdom because there is a great similarity in words between the Kukuruku and Benin people. He compared the similarity of some spoken words, especially numbers, and concluded that the Kukuruku people migrated from Benin Kingdom.[13] However, he did not mention much about Auchi Kingdom in details because he adopted a holistic approach to the Kukuruku District of which Auchi Kingdom is part of his analysis. Also, his article and report were published in 1910 even before Auchi Kingdom was made the administrative headquarters of the district in 1920 by the British.

Momoh ROBSON, in his book titled *New Perspectives on the History and Politics in Nigeria: The Etsako Experience*, mentioned a lot of events and significant issues about the British in Auchi Kingdom. He explained how the actions and policies of the British impacted on Auchi Kingdom. He stated how they developed the Kingdom by constructing roads that linked Auchi Kingdom to other towns and villages.[14] He further mentioned how some bad cultural practices were abolished but he failed to mention the exploitative tendencies and interior motives of the British. K. M. Segosime, I. Bello-Imam. and Tony Momoh in their books titled *Origin and Development of Auchi,*[15]*An ethnographic survey of South Ibie Clan of Etsako West Local Government, Edo State, Nigeria*[16] and *Each man, his time: The Biography of an Era*[17] respectively all mentioned wonderful things about the British but failed to state how the British taxed and economically exploited Auchi Kingdom for several decades until 1960 when independence was granted. Two books by Wajeed Obomeighie were also consulted. These books contain significant information on age grades and kingship in the kingdom. They are *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades*

13 Northcote W. THOMAS, "The Edo-Speaking peoples of Nigeria," *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Oxford University Press published on behalf of The Royal African Society Vol. 10, No. 37, 1910, p. 1; Northcote W. THOMAS, *Anthropological report on the Edo-speaking peoples of Nigeria. Part I: Law and Custom*, London: Harrison and Sons, 1910, p. 5.

[14]Momoh ROBSON, *New perspectives on the history and politics of Nigeria: The Etsako Experience*, Edo: Afenmai Grafix 2016, p. 35.

[15] Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, p. 28.

[16] Ibrahim B. BELLO-IMAM *An ethnographic survey of South Ibie Clan of Etsako West Local Government, Edo State, Nigeria*, Ibadan: Vantage Publishers International Ltd 1995, p. 113.

[17] Momoh TONY, *Each man his time: The Biography of an Era*, Lagos: Pumark Nigeria Ltd 1995, p. 117.

of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond and *Manhood Initiation Festival in Auchi Kingdom*. These two books are rich sources of historical information on the history of Auchi Kingdom but oral sources were still used to complement them. It should be of note that no written history is ever a hundred percent complete.

Also reviewed for the successful completion of this research essay is Odjugo's Report of Commission of Inquiry into the Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy Title. The Commission was set up by the then Mid-Western State Government under Col. S. O. Ogbemudia in 1971 upon the death of Otaru A. K. Momoh to investigate the circumstances surrounding the appointment of a new Otaru. The report contains very vital information about the origin and history of Auchi Kingdom but the report did not say much about the activities of the Nupe people in Auchi Kingdom.[18] The manuscript of Prince O. A. Ikharo titled "The Founding and Origin of Auchi" was also consulted. Its relevance to this work could be seen in the striking developments recorded in the reigns of the past origin of Auchi and the socio-cultural life of Auchi people before the emergence of the Otaru institution.[19]

Another important work reviewed while carrying out this research is the work of S. F. Nadel's *A Black Byzantium*. Nadel revealed the imperial activities of the Nupe Empire in several locations in Nigeria. He describes the Nupe people as a very powerful force at the time. He further generalises the issue of the payment of slaves as tributes by Afenmai rulers to the Nupe over-lords and thus pays much attention to Yoruba, Okun, and Akoko. Had Afenmai rulers received the same over-showered emphasis as the case of Yoruba, Okun, and Akoko, the significance of the Otaru of Auchi would have been more recognised and respected, based on Auchi status as the headquarters of Bida Vassalage in Afenmai land during Nupe rule?[20]

The research of A. O. Arunah titled *A history of Auchi Kingdom* was also consulted for this research. This book is very rich in information concerning Auchi Kingdom but not much was mentioned about the impact and activities of the British in Auchi Kingdom. The book written by Chima J. Korieh titled *Nigeria and World War II: Colonialism, Empire, and Global Conflict* was

[18] I. K. ODJUGO, Report of the Inquiry into the Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy title, Official Document No. 1. 1971, pp. 1-20.
[19] A. O. IKHARO, "The founding and origin of Auchi," an unpublished manuscript, p. 1.
[20] Siegfried F. NADEL, *A Black Byzantium*, London: Oxford University Press 1942, p. 5

also consulted. This book revealed the activities of the Benin Province, which Auchi Kingdom is part of, during World War II. This book disclosed how the King of Benin Kingdom announced his support for the British during World War II. The King pledged to use his kingdom's financial and human resources in the war efforts. The book did not mention how small communities and kingdoms in Nigeria contributed to the war effort.

It is necessary to review some literature that dwell on the importance of oral tradition in the reconstruction of African history. Jan Vansina in his book titled, *Oral Tradition as History,* tried to explain the importance of oral tradition when he stated that "the expression oral tradition applies both to a process and its products. The products are oral messages based on previous oral messages, at least a generation old. The process is the transmission of such messages by word of mouth over time until the disappearance of the message."[21] Similarly, in his article titled "Once upon a Time: Oral Traditions as History in Africa" most societies in Africa, South of the Sahara were oral, even if they used writing marginally.[22]This is to prove that oral sources are very important but there is a need to complement oral sources with written sources. David Henige in his book titled *Historical Evidence and Argument* stated that "Historical study requires verbal evidence, with marginal exceptions. This verbal evidence, with all respect to the fascination of oral history, is nearly all written evidence."[23] Henige believes that most documented histories were once oral sources and without oral sources having written sources would be very difficult. That is to say, oral sources complement written sources.

Literature that dwelled on the indirect rule system was reviewed. One of such was the book written by David Killingray titled *Fighting for Britain: African Soldiers in the Second World War*. The author explained where the Indirect Rule was first applied with success recorded before it was applied in Nigeria. However, the book adopted a holistic approach in its analysis. The success of the Indirect Rule System in the local communities in Nigeria wasn't explained. Other works such as the article written by Z. O. Apata titled "Lugard and the Creation of Provincial Administration Northern Nigeria 1900-1918" and that of Obaro Ikime, titled "Reconsidering Indirect Rule: The Nigerian example" were able to successfully tackle this problem.

[21] Jan VANSINA, *Oral tradition as history*, London: The University of Wisconsin Press 1985, p. 3.
[22] Jan VANSINA, "Once upon a Time: Oral Traditions as History in Africa,*" Daedalus* Vol. 100, No. 2, 1971, p. 443.
[23] David HENIGE, *Historical Evidence and Argument,* London: The University of Wisconsin Press 2005, p. 85.

Several articles on the impact of the activities of Colonial Britain were reviewed. Some of them include the works of Ebitu Ezekiel Tom, "The Impact of Colonialism on the Development of Marketing in Nigeria: A Dyadic Analysis" This article touched on key areas of Colonial Britain's marketing activities in Nigeria. Egbefo O. Dawood and Joseph I. Osagie, in their article titled "Impact of Colonial Administration on Inter-group Relations between Benin and the Esan Peoples of Nigeria" revealed the role of Britain in intergroup relations in Nigeria. The article by Safiya J. Garba titled "The Impact of Colonialism on Nigerian Education and the Need for E-Learning Technique for Sustainable Development" revealed the impact of Colonial Britain on the Educational System in Nigeria. These above-mentioned articles have been able to bring to light the role and impact of Colonial Britain on Nigeria.

E. R. Olujemi in his book titled, *An Economic History of Nigeria I860-1960,* revealed that the coming of the British to Nigeria and their activities was all about the exploiting of Nigeria's agricultural products and other resources and that Britain benefited far more than what Nigeria benefited in return. He, however, did not mention the impact of British colonial economic policies in small communities and localities in Nigeria. Kenneth Kalu and Toyin Falola's book titled *Exploitation and Misrule in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa disclosed* the activities of Britain in Africa mentioning major cities and ignoring smaller ones. Moreover, several archival materials such as the annual reports, letters, and memoranda on Kukuruku Division were consulted to complement the existing records with a view of providing an outstanding account of the British activities in the history of Auchi Kingdom during the period under study. These materials will be seen in subsequent chapters of the dissertation.

1.9 Sources and Methodology

The production and reproduction of historical knowledge about the pre-colonial, colonial and recent history of Auchi kingdom requires a crucial examination and re-examination of its sources. This is very crucial to understanding how the past has been interpreted and represented. Before the coming of Western education to Africa, Auchi Kingdom like any other kingdom lacked conventional literacy and means of communication but adopted other means of communication and transmitting information. The history, tradition, cultural practices, religion, and environment of the people were not documented but were represented in tales, sayings, songs, and proverbs, and were transmitted orally from people to other people and these were handed down from

generation to generation over the centuries. In Nigeria, the articulation and preservation of history and memory have traditionally taken an oral form. While historians in the nineteenth century and thereafter regarded oral traditions as history in their own right, academic historians in the post-1950 era have approached them as sources of historical evidence. This shift has significantly contributed to the reliance of African historians on oral sources as their primary references. [24]In this regard, oral sources were used to complement the very scarce written sources, especially in the aspect of the pre-twentieth-century history of Auchi Kingdom.

There is much reliance and emphasis on oral sources for the reconstruction of the history of Auchi people and their kingdom because written sources are very scarce, except for a few written sources that were written after the independence of Nigeria from the British in 1960, apart from colonial official reports, memoranda, and letters. The debates advanced by historians on how to reconstruct history is explained by Ian Hacking when he stated that "history is history of the present, how our present conceptions were made, how the conditions for their formation constrain our present ways of thinking. The whole is the analysis of concepts. For me, that means philosophical analysis."[25]Vansina further revealed that the historian can identify relevant historical evidence and information from the available or existing raw data. It should be noted that all kinds of historical sources are very important. Jan Vansina has explained that "among the various kinds of historical sources, oral traditions occupy a special place. They are messages, but unwritten; their preservation entrusted to the memories of successive generations of people."[26] Oral tradition or source exists in the memories of people and without oral sources there would be little or no African history.

Plenty of time and patience is always devoted to sourcing, gathering, storage and scrutiny of oral tradition. Since 1960, when African nations started gaining independence from their colonial masters, African history gradually began to be recognised as an academic field of study. There was the adoption of oral tradition in research as a means of the reconstruction of African history. This innovative methodological approach was initially introduced by Jan Vansina,[27] whose

[24] Jan VANSINA, *Oral tradition as history*, London: The University of Wisconsin Press 1985, p. 2.
[25] Ian HACKING, *Historical Ontology,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2002, p. 70.
[26] Ibid, p. P. xxii.
[27] Jan VANSINA, Belgian renowned historian and anthropologist He was a specialist in the history of Central Africa. He was one of the major pioneers behind the historical methodology of oral history in the study of Africa. He is also

pioneering ideas gained prominence following the International African Seminar held in 1961 at the University of Dakar, Senegal.[26] The recognition that unravelling the importance and significance of oral tradition is tantamount to unravelling the history of Africa led to a historical renaissance, revolutionizing the academic pursuit of oral historiography. Since then, oral tradition has emerged as a vital means for reconstructing African history. This was so because the development of oral historiography with its peculiar nature had captured the attention of African historians. As a result of the growing interest in oral historical research, an entirely new set of procedures was needed for employing it. David Henige stated that "historians not only collect oral data but help create and shape it in the process."[28]

Since oral sources became a major primary source for African history, numerous scholarly articles and books have been published addressing the challenges and questions related to the use and potential misuse of oral tradition. The scholarly debates and interactions among historians and academics in related disciplines have significantly advanced the study of African history. These discussions have, in turn, led to the development of new methodologies for the production and interpretation of historical knowledge. Historians and scholars in related fields generally agree on the definition of oral tradition, recognising that, in theory, oral traditions consist of testimonies or spoken accounts about the past that have been transmitted from person to person across generations. Jan Vansina stated that "the expression, oral tradition applies both to a process and its products. The products are oral messages based on previous oral messages, at least a generation old. The process is the transmission of such messages by word of mouth over time until the disappearance of the message."[29] He stated that the process is a long one where oral information passes through a lot of people and the process of transmitting the information is as important as the information itself.

It is no news that available written sources on pre-colonial African history are very few and make the use of oral sources for the reconstruction of the historical knowledge of Africa very important. At this juncture, it is very necessary to always claim that oral history is as important as written sources when reconstructing African history. It must also be noted that not every

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the first historian to tackle the challenge of reconstructing the past of societies in the rainforest region of Central Africa. He passed on in 2017.

[28] David HENIGE, *Historical Evidence and Argument,* London: The University of Wisconsin Press 2005, p. 80.

[29] Ibid, p. 3.

information that is stored in human memory should be referred to as oral tradition. Oral tradition is different from individual knowledge. Ruth Finnegan stated that "it is by definition dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion there is no other way in which it can be realised as a literary product."[30]While individual knowledge is "knowledge residing within a human subject, by intersubjective knowledge, it is meant such knowledge of individuals which is shared among them."[31]

A significant issue that has arisen among historians and scholars in related disciplines concerning the use of oral sources is the potential for the misuse or distortion of oral tradition, either by the interviewer or the interviewee. This concern arises because interviewers may sometimes seek to craft a patriotic narrative, thereby embellishing the oral information they gather to present it in a more favorable light. Similarly, interviewees might fabricate or exaggerate their testimonies to enhance the credibility of their accounts, often portraying their origins or those of their community as superior to others. The distortion of oral testimony is particularly prevalent among individuals or groups within political circles in many African countries. One of the primary motivations behind such distortions is the desire to advance the interests of a particular dominant ethnic group. Socio-political crises and conflicts among ethnic groups in African nations have often led dominant groups to manipulate oral traditions to gain political advantage.

There are several scholarly publications on the use and misuse of oral traditions but the issue of validity and authenticity of the evidence of oral tradition is still unsolved. That is the reason why several interviews should be conducted on the same topic. When there are similar outcomes, it implies that the oral source is authentic. John E. Philips stated that "oral sources do more than simply offer alternative sources of information or slightly different vantage points from which to describe processes. They offer us the possibility of exploring the social production of memory, self, and subjectivity." In Africa, it is apparent that the nature of historical explanation and understanding within any indigenous knowledge system is uniquely shaped by the society in which it is situated. The contemporary traditions, culture, and religion of Auchi Kingdom are direct outcomes of its historical interactions with the Nupe Empire and British colonial administration.

[30] Ruth FINNEGAN, *Oral Literature in Africa: World Oral Literature Series: Volume 1*, Cambridge: Open Book Publishers 2012, p. 3.
[31] Elayne COAKES - Dianne WILLIS - Steve CLARKE (Eds), *Knowledge Management in the Socio-Technical World*, London: Springer-Verlag 2002, p. 37.

These interactions have significantly influenced the societal identity and realities of the present-day Auchi people. This research contributes to the methodological framework for utilising indigenous knowledge systems in the collection and analysis of oral information, offering a means to elucidate the significance of the kingdom's past and how that historical knowledge is represented.

As demonstrated in this research, there is a significant contribution of oral tradition to the production of historical knowledge of Africa. The issue with the authenticity of oral traditions led to the difficulty in the reconstruction of African history. For this reason, oral sources are then complemented with written sources. Archaeological findings also, sometimes, complement oral tradition. John E. Philips stated that "archaeological narratives link chronology and context into an explanation of change."[32]As earlier stated, the secondary sources for the reconstruction of precolonial Auchi history are very scarce, but for this research, resource materials from archives and libraries were sourced. Some of these materials are documents of the British colonial period such as intelligence reports and letters compiled by colonial administrative officers between 1900 and 1960. Articles, books, and the write-up of some Auchi and non-Auchi indigenes have been very useful. The data gathered from oral interviews were conducted within and outside the Auchi Kingdom.

Several places were visited to collect relevant research materials to complete this dissertation. Bibliothèque universitaire des langues et civilisations (BULAC) in France and the central library of the University of Warsaw, Poland both in Europe were visited. The libraries of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, and the University of Benin, Benin city all in Nigeria were visited to source for the research materials. The materials consulted gave very useful information about the topic under study. The History Department, University of Benin was also visited but sadly, the academic staff of universities in Nigeria were experiencing an industrial strike action I was able to schedule an appointment with a Professor of History. I eventually met and interviewed with him. He was also able to provide some very handy research materials. Another Professor of History who had written widely on colonialism was consulted at the Edo University, Iyamho in Nigeria.

[32] John E. PHILIPS, *Writing African History*, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2005, p. 207.

Researchers were consulted at the University of Warsaw in Poland and Institut des mondes africains (IMAF) in France where I visited for internship programmes. The National Archive in London-Kew in the United Kingdom was visited to obtain relevant materials to complement the limited resource materials gathered at the National Archive Ibadan in Nigeria. Research materials from the National Archive at London-Kew were very useful in the areas of Justice, British Colonial Policies, Native Authority, and Courts during the British Colonial times in Nigeria. Several oral interviews were conducted to find out the opinion of both indigenes and non-indigenes of the area on the history of Auchi Kingdom. The fieldwork was conducted between 2021 and 2024. Telephone calls were also made to people who had vital information but physical contact was not possible at the time due to distance. Age, life experience and status were the criteria for choosing who was to be interviewed, though some other informative categories of people were not neglected. Even the advice by some informants to meet with specific people who were not initially considered paid off.

Oral interviews with these people were interesting and rewarding. Many recalled the events of the past with great similarities in their narratives. To most of the interviewees, the events seemed to be fresh in their memories. Despite this, their narratives had some limitations regarding the problems of dates, distortion, and embellishments. Adequate time was spent to analyse personal experiences and narratives as well as the behaviour, age, attitude, and mindset of the interviewed in other to point out discrepancies and lapses in their accounts and narratives. None of the people that were interviewed were below forty years of age. All the information and data obtained were qualitatively analysed. History as a field of study is not completely divorced from other fields of study. Hence, there was the need for interdisciplinarity. Other disciplines were adopted to complement historical sources like Political Science, Anthropology, Ethnography, Archaeology, Geography etc. There was basically a need for the use of data from other disciplines to bring out the best in this research work. This research work is a very significant addition to the efforts and attempts that have been made by other researchers to make critical and analytical use of some written and unwritten sources to produce a scholarly, befitting and descriptive history of Auchi Kingdom and its people.

In this research, "Ibid" was used several times throughout the dissertation but for only written sources. It was not used for oral sources to avoid the conflict or confusion of identifying

the correct oral sources that were used to complement the available written sources. This was done for convenience and to allow coherence to be evident in the research. Without this method, it would be very difficult to accomplish or conclude this research. Sometimes, due to the difficulties and complexities of referencing styles, other means and methods should be adopted to solve the issue without deviating from the original plan or course of the research.

A qualitative research methodology was employed in this study. This approach involves exploring a phenomenon through comprehensive surveys and in-depth interviews, enabling the collection of essential information from living witnesses of the phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative methods allow for the development of a rich body of descriptive and explanatory data, as well as the critical evaluation of informants' perspectives and opinions. Conversely, quantitative research refers to the systematic investigation of phenomena using survey designs for data collection and statistical techniques for data analysis. These methodologies are complementary, with the distinct features of qualitative methods becoming particularly evident when contrasted with those of quantitative approaches.[33] In all, it must be stated here that oral sources were heavily relied upon but complemented with written sources to produce data that was used for this research work which is the reconstruction of British Colonial Administration in Auchi Kingdom.

[33] John W. CRESSWELL, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*, California: Sage Publishers 1998, p. 3.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LAND AND PEOPLE OF AUCHI KINGDOM

2.1 Location and Geography

Auchi Kingdom is located in Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. As the study area, it has a radius of 10.5 km, the area spans about 346.316 km^2. It is located between latitude 70 10' and 70 20' north of the equator and longitude 60 16' and 60 36' east of the Greenwich Meridian.[34] The area is bordered to the west by Owan East and Akoko-Edo Local Government Areas, to the east by Etsako Central, and to the south by Esan West, Esan Central, and Esan North-East. This region encompasses much of Etsako West Local Government Area in Edo State, Nigeria, including some peripheral settlements such as Ikpeshi and Warrake, which fall under Akoko-Edo and Owan East Local Government Areas, respectively. Auchi Kingdom is situated approximately 133 kilometers from Benin Kingdom, which served as the provincial authority over Auchi during the British colonial era.[35]

Auchi Kingdom, according to Tony, is located in the northern part of Edo State and the inhabitants speak the Etsako dialect of the Edo language. The Auchi Kingdom flora is classified under the Guinea Savannah.[36] The Kingdom is characterised by notable physical features, including hills, valleys, and mountains with caves. Seghosime notes that the soil in the Kingdom is exceptionally fertile, supporting the cultivation of crops and grains such as millet, beans, rice, and maize, among others. Additionally, a variety of fruits, including mangoes, cashews, pineapples, and bananas, are also grown. The most significant and revered river flowing through the Kingdom is the Orle river, which originates from a spring in a cave located in Dangbala village, Akoko-Edo Local Government Area, Edo State. This river merges with the Edio river at Aviele clan and continues to flow towards Anegbete clan, situated in present-day Etsako Central Local Government Area, where it ultimately joins the Niger river, the largest river in West Africa and the second largest in Africa.[37]

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[34] A. S. AJAYI – Ibrahim RASHEED – Seghosime SULE, "Overview of the Anthropogenic Causes of Soil Erosion in Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria" *Merit Research Journal of Agricultural Science and Soil Sciences* Vol. 7(8*)*, 2019, p. 88.

[35] Suleiman YAKUBU, "The Role and Impact of the Islamic Religion on the Auchi Kingdom in Nigeria Since 1914" *European Scientific Journal* 17 (28), 2021, p. 4.

[36] Ibid, p. 1

[37] Ibid, p. 1

The Auchi Kingdom is divided into five quarters, these are in turn made up of twenty-five villages. These five quarters are Utsogu, Akpekpe, Aibotse, Igbhei and Iyekhei.[38] The Auchi Kingdom is a major Islamic Kingdom having the largest population of Muslim communities in the southern part of Nigeria.[39] Arunah observed that, regardless of religious differences, the people of Auchi live harmoniously with one another. The welcoming and hospitable nature of the Auchi people has significantly contributed to the Kingdom's cultural and religious diversity.[40] The Auchi Kingdom has in recent years been amongst the fastest-growing urban centres in Nigeria which about 104,540 people.[41] Oseni revealed that Auchi Kingdom is headed by a monarch and the traditional ruler is referred to as the Otaru of Auchi. The 8th of January is celebrated as Auchi Day. This memorable day was previously called Uchi Day.[42]

Throughout its history, Auchi Kingdom has served as the headquarters for various divisional authorities. These included the Kukuruku vassalage under the Bida Emirate (1860-1897), the Afenmai Division, formerly known as Kukuruku Division until 1954 during British colonial administration, and later, the headquarters of Etsako Local Government Area following the creation of the Mid-Western Region in 1963. Mutanebi highlighted that Auchi Kingdom is well-connected by a network of roads linking it to other communities within Edo State and neighbouring states, such as Kogi to the north and Ondo to the west and northwest. The Kingdom's strategic location and historical role as an administrative centre likely contribute to its growing population and vibrant commercial activities. Following the return of democracy in 1979, Auchi Kingdom became the headquarters of the former Bendel North Senatorial District. With the creation of new states and local government councils by Nigeria's military regime on August 27, 1991, Auchi Kingdom was designated the headquarters of Etsako West Local Government Area while continuing to serve as the seat of Edo North Senatorial District.[43] Below are some maps showing the location of Auchi and Etsako West Local Government Area (LGA).

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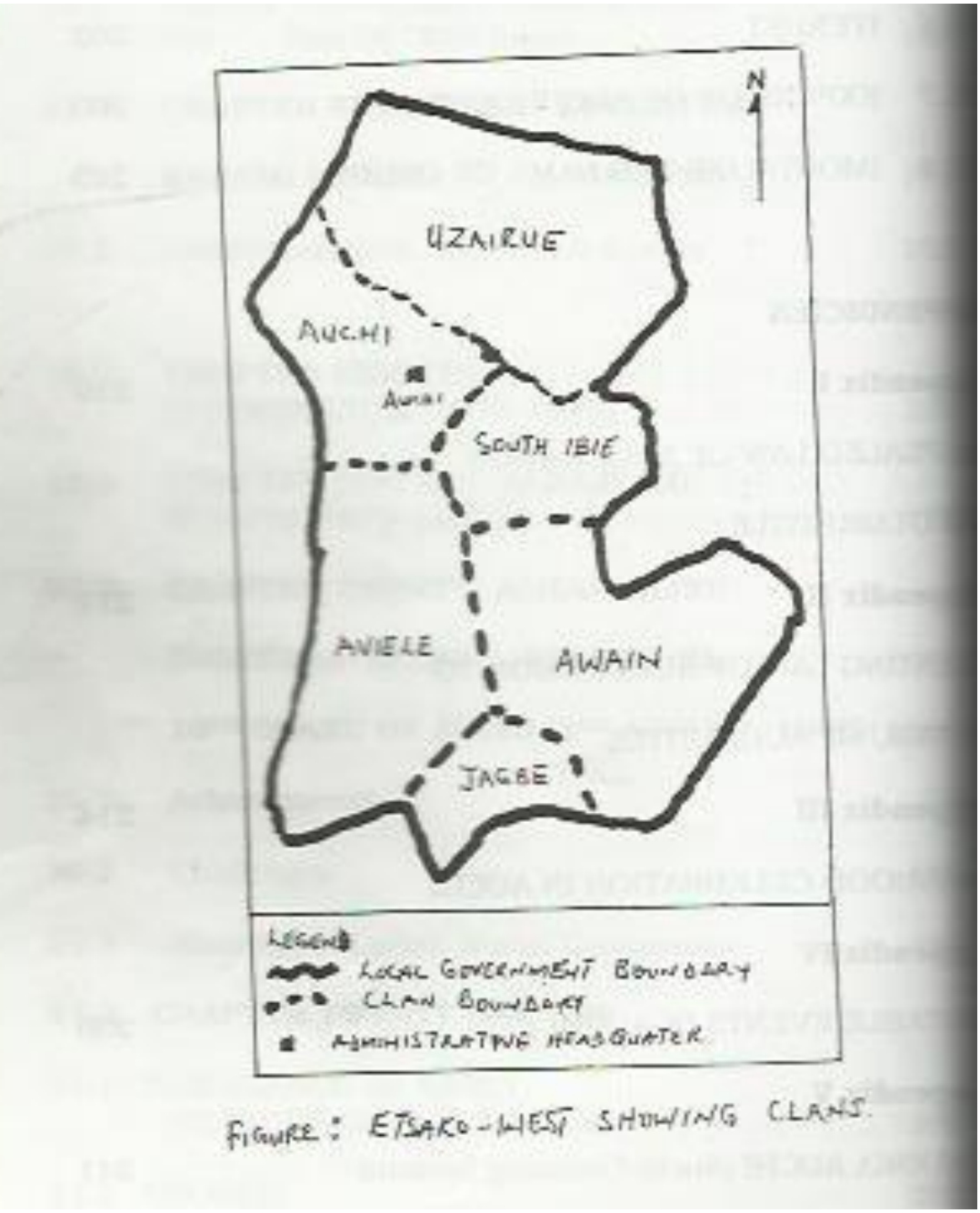
[38] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, "The Islamization of Auchi Kingdom in South Central Nigeria" a paper presented at the First Auchi Day celebration, Lagos Efua Media, 1998, p. 62.
[39] Suleiman YAKUBU, "The Socio-cultural and Political Practices of the People of the Auchi Kingdom Before the Arrival of the Nupe in Nigeria" *Athens Journal of History* Vol. 9, Issue 1, 2023, p. 74.
[40] Ibid, p. 4
[41] Olotu YAHAYA - Iyawe HOPE - M. B. OLATUNDE - F. O. OLATUNDE, "Assessment of Reference Evapotranspiration Estimation Models*" Asian Review of Environmental and Earth Sciences* Vol. 7, No. 1, 2020, p. 27.
[42] Ibid, p. 63
[43] Seghosime Abdul MUTANEBI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, July 23, 2024, (56), Geography lecturer.

Figure I: Map of Edo State showing the location of Etsako West L. G. A. and study area

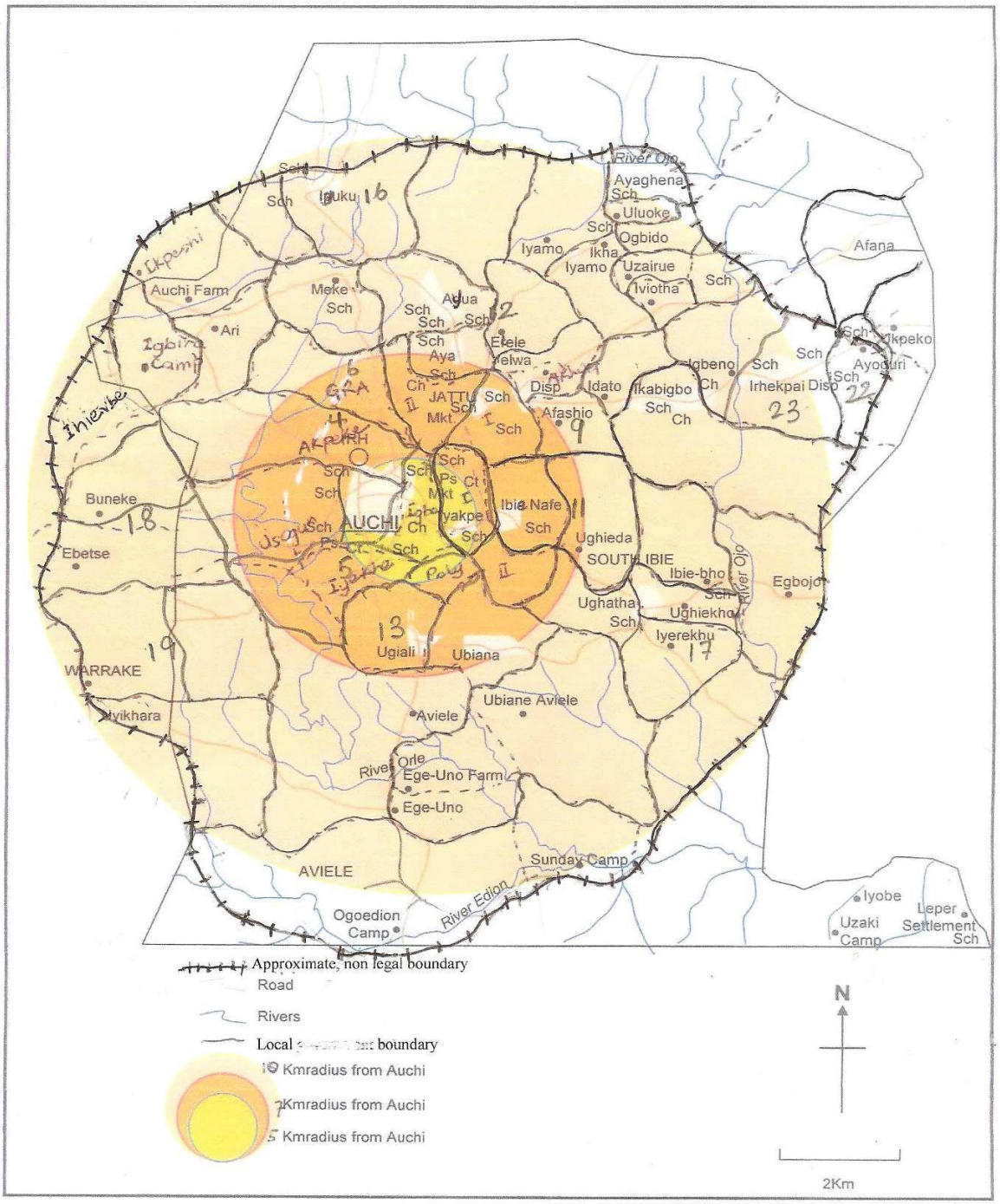
Source: https://scialert.net/fulltext/?doi=ajps.2007.490.495

Figure II: Map of Etsako West Local Government Area.



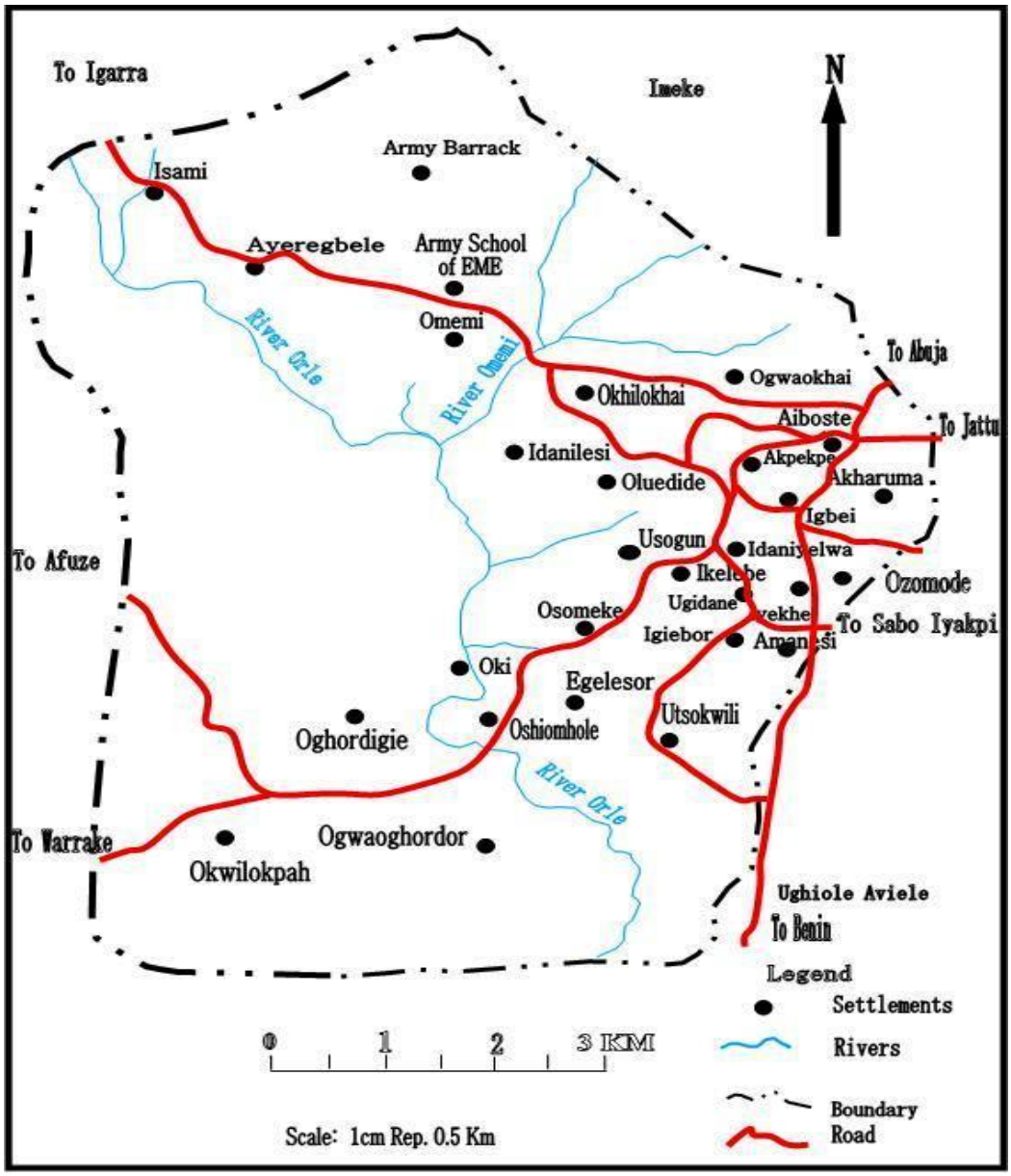
Source: Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, p. XVI.

Figure III: A map showing Auchi and neighbouring towns and villages.



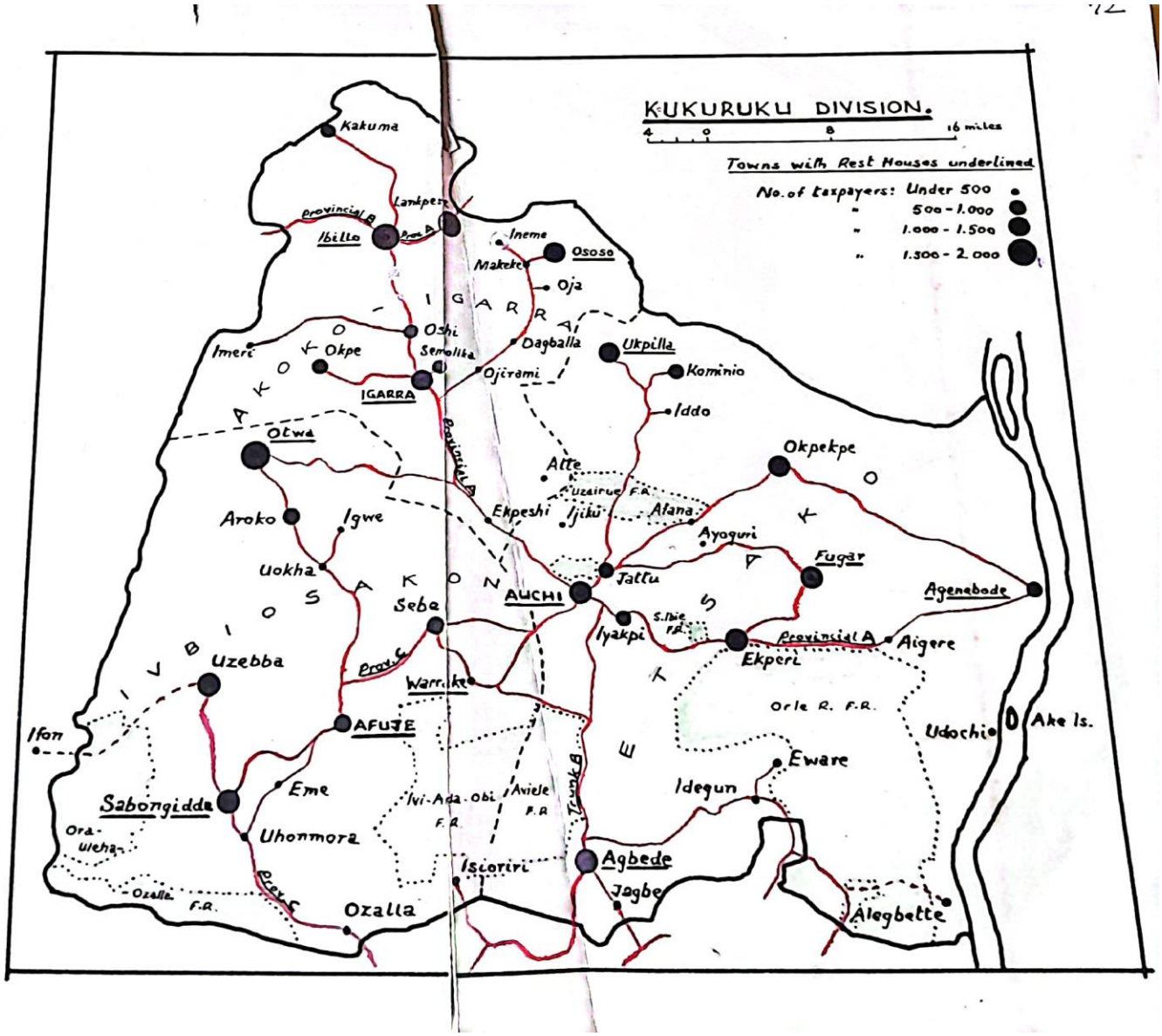
Source: D. N. ONAIWU - F. O. ONAIWU, "Dimensioning Environmental Indicators: A Principal Component Analysis of Auchi Region, Edo State" *FUTY Journal of the Environment* Vol. 10 No. 1, 2016, p. 54.

Figure IV: Map of Auchi showing its villages.



Source: A. SEGHOSIME, "Remote Sensing Assessment of Fadama Land for Agricultural Productivity in Auchi and its Environs" Master of Science project, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria, 2015, p. 8.

Figure V: Map of Kukuruku Division in 1952



Source: BEN PROF. 1, File 44, VOL. XI, Annual Report of Kukuruku Division by District Officer, Kukuruku Division, 1952.

2.2 Traditions of origin

The professional historian believes that any important history must have different versions and that of Auchi Kingdom is no exception. Most times the traditions of origin are told by words of mouth and this made the role of oral tradition to attract attention.[44] As quoted by Vansina in his article, "our books are in our heads."[45]This also implies that most traditions of origin are age-long. Chalaman reveals that the traditions of the origin of Auchi are of two versions. The first version, which is not widely accepted, is that there is the belief that the indigenous Auchi people migrated from the Bauchi region of the North Central part of Nigeria. The word "Auchi" and "Bauchi" are two very similar words.[46] Also, located very close to Auchi Kingdom is the Uzairhue clan, and within the Bauchi region there is a town called "Azare." The words "Uzairhue" in Etsako land and "Azare" in the Bauchi region are very similar and pronounced alike. This have made people to believe that the indigenous Auchi people migrated from the Bauchi region. [47]

The second and more popular version is that it is believed that Auchi people migrated from Benin Kingdom in the fifteenth century. The Evbiosakon and Etsako people of Northern Edo strongly believe that their root is in the Benin Kingdom.[48] Egharevba in his research explained that the people of the current-day Auchi Kingdom claim that their ancestors migrated from Benin.[49] Otite further backed up this claim when he stated that there was a similarity in language and culture. [50]Written and oral sources reveal that the indigenous society of the Auchi was founded between 1481 and 1500 by a man from the Benin Kingdom known as Uchi. He was the progenitor of Auchi.[51] Uchi was a prince and warrior who migrated from Udo in present-day Ovia Local Government Area of Benin city, Edo State. His flight from Benin Kingdom was caused by a

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[44] David HENIGE, *Historical Evidence and Argument,* London: The University of Wisconsin Press 2005, p. 87.
[45] Jan VANSINA, "Once upon a Time: Oral Traditions as History in Africa," *Daedalus* Vol. 100, No. 2, 1971, p. 442.
[46] Momoh CHALAMAN, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, July 14, 2024, (41), Businessman and royal prince.
[47] Mahmud Isah ALIYU, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, July 12, 2024, (44), Civil servant.
[48] Onigu OTITE, "Historical aspects of the sociology of the Bendel State of Nigeria" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria,* Vol. 9 No. 1, 1977, p. 50; Northcote W. THOMAS, "The Edo-Speaking peoples of Nigeria," *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Oxford University Press published on behalf of The Royal African Society Vol. 10, No. 37, 1910, p. 1.
[49] Ibid, p. 2.
[50] Onigu OTITE, "Historical aspects of the sociology of the Bendel State of Nigeria" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 9 No. 1, 1977, p. 48; Northcote W. THOMAS, *Anthropological report on the Edo-speaking peoples of Nigeria. Part I: Law and Custom*, London: Harrison and Sons, 1910, p. 5.
[51] A. O. IKHARO, "The founding and origin of Auchi," pp. 1-2; Suleiman YAKUBU, "Colonial Rule in Nigeria: The Auchi Kingdom Encounter with the British Colonialists and the Impacts" *Brazilian Journal of African Studies* Vol. 6, No. 12, 2021, p. 57; Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, March 30, 2021, Professor of Islamic and Arabic Studies.

dispute with his brother, the Oba of Benin at the time, over the right to keep a leopard's skin.[52] The leopard was regarded as a royal beast and political totem.[53] At that time, it was customary for anyone who killed a leopard to surrender the animal's skin to the Oba. Uchi, however, killed a leopard and chose not to comply with this custom, believing that the rule did not apply to him due to his royal lineage and that it was intended only for the Oba's subjects. The Oba, enraged by Uchi's defiance, suspended him from his position as commander of the western defences of the Benin Kingdom. Following his dismissal, Uchi was ordered by the Oba to return to Benin city and reside in the Ogbe quarters with his household.[54]

Robson revealed that Uchi feared for his life because he felt the Oba would plot against him to have him killed. He hatched a plan to flee Benin Kingdom to save himself and his family. Udo and his followers came up with a plan to escape from Benin Kingdom unnoticed. The secret code of the people who agreed to flee with him adopted was "UNA EGBIA, UNA LE" meaning "EARLY MORNING, IT IS RUNNING." Whenever Uchi's emissary passed by a compound on the appointed day and called out "UNA EGBIA," people in the various compounds who were his trusted responded "UNA LE." This was how Auchi got its early morning greetings "UNA GBBIA, UNA LE," and this has remained the early morning greeting till date.[55]

The flight from the Benin Kingdom took place in the late fifteenth century. The journey by Uchi in search of a new settlement for his followers was a difficult task because there were no good roads as we have them today. The only road was a rugged bush path created by hunters who hunted in that part of the forest. Uchi was scared that the Oba of Benin Kingdom would send his trusted warriors after them, to capture and bring them back to the Benin Kingdom where they would be punished and imprisoned. For this reason, the migration party had little or no time for rest as they embarked on the journey. The journey was rather slow because of the larger number of people, including children, women, and old people, that were among the migrating party. The

[52] Suleiman YAKUBU - Obomeghie WAJEED, "The Auchi Kingdom: A century of growth and innovations, 1920-2020*" Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research* Vol. 6, Issue 6, 2021, p. 2.
[53] R. E. BRADBURY, *The Benin Kingdom and the Edo-Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, London: *International African Institute*, 1964, p. 101.
[54] Umoru YAKUBU, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, March 30, 2021, (58), Civil servant.
[55] Ibid, p. 11.

migrating party also carried with them some necessary and valuable belongings and unnecessary things that were too heavy were abandoned along the way.[56]

After a very long trek for several days in search of a good location to settle, Uchi and his group arrived at a camp of huts which were not occupied by anybody. Some of the hunters in the company identified the place as the Oha-Usi Forest, meaning "the forest of fame." They eventually decided to make the place their place of refuge. The location of the settlement was about 130 kilometres away from the Benin Kingdom on Iyekhei Hill. A market was created at the location where Uchi and his group settled. The market is known as "Aku-Uchi," which means Uchi Market. It is not an everyday market but is held once every five days.[57] The market has been in existence till the present day and remains the biggest market in Auchi. Several centuries after the passing of Uchi, he was deified and a shrine was built in his honour at the first settlement at Uchi Market. People who were worshippers of the Uchi deity visited the shrine with native chalk, salt and other items to say prayers and make requests believing strongly in the potency of the Uchi diety. The shrine was later destroyed and uprooted during the spread of the Islamic religion in 1914.[58]

Uchi had five sons Ogun, Ekpe, Ortse, Igbei, and Ekhei, and five villages were created and named after them in the order of seniority. Thus, Utsogun (which was founded by Ogun, the first son of Uchi) became the most senior village in Auchi. Akpekpe, which was established by Ekpe, the second son of Uchi assumed the second position in terms of seniority in Auchi. Aibotse, which was founded by Ortse, the third son of Uchi, occupied the third position in Auchi. Igbei, which was founded by Igbei, the fourth son of Uchi, took the fourth position. Iyekhei, which was established by Ekhei, the fifth son of Uchi, became the fifth most important village in Auchi. Each of these five constituents of Auchi villages was separated by thick bush from the other before the arrival of the Nupe imperialist.[59]

It may be useful to mention, according to Arunah, that Utsogun as a village is situated on the Western side of the settlement; Akpekpe is in the north; Aibotse in the north-east, Igbei, in the east, and Iyekhei is located in the southern part of the Kingdom. Like in Benin, the Auchi people

[56] Momoh K, SEGHOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestel Global Digital 2011, p. 46.
[57] BEN PROF. 1, File 243, Re-assessment of Kukuruku Division by Assistant District Officer, Mr. F. M. Woodhouse, Kukuruku Division, 1933, p. 28.
[58] Momoh ROBSON, *New perspectives on the history and politics of Nigeria: The Etsako Experience*, pp. 13-14.
[59] Hakeem Billy HARUNAH,"The impact of Nupe invasion on Etsako society, 1860-1897: A sociopolitical and cultural analysis," PhD Dissertation, University of Lagos, 1990, p. 16.

dug a moat around their new settlement. The reason was that the moat would enable the people to protect their clan from easy destruction by the old enemies of the Auchi, particularly the Edo or Bini, whose Oba was determined to bring the inhabitants of the clan back to Benin, in an apparent effort to save the city of Benin from depletion in the 1400s and 1500s.[60] Harunah revealed that some of the Auchi villages, particularly Aibotse, Igbei, and Iyekhei refused to participate in digging the moat around the settlement. This was probably as a result of their resentment for both Utsogun and Akpekpe's domination in Auchi because the two villages were the most senior communities. Besides, they initiated the idea of the moat digging project during this period. However, the Utsogun and Akpekpe people went ahead with the plan and collectively dug the moat around their sections of the Kingdom. Thus, they excluded the other villages which were, Aibotse, Igbei, and Iyekhei. Thereafter, both the Utsogun and Akpekpe people began to refer to the Aibotse, Igbei, and Iyekhei villages, which sprouted outside the moat, as "Iraifili" meaning the communities across the moat.[61]

However, despite this tendency towards intra-group rivalry between the early Auchi communities as stated by Robson, the fact of common residence by all the people in a large single urban settlement known as Auchi Clan facilitated interaction and unity between the unifying factors were Auchi language or dialect, religion, festivals, propitiation of Uchi as the progenitor of the clan, etc. It is significant that the Auchi people, like many other Etsako communities, deified Uchi and named the clan after him.[62]

The prevailing tradition of origin among the people of present-day Auchi Kingdom is one of emigration from the Benin Kingdom. While their society originated as an offshoot of Benin, it gradually developed distinctive cultural features that set it apart. Written sources indicate that these differences are evident in their language, system of government, traditional religion, and title system. Most notably, unlike the Benin Kingdom, Auchi lacked the rigid centralisation of power and allegiance to a single revered ruler, which were defining characteristics of Benin's traditional polity. Some aspects of Auchi's traditional practices underwent significant changes due to "foreign

[60] Ibid, p. 5.
[61] Ibid, p. 21.
[62] Ibid, pp. 30-31

contact," with the most substantial external influence being the Nupe invasion in the late nineteenth century, before the arrival of the British in 1897[63]

2.3 kinship and Kingship

Kinship and kingship are two very important aspects of African cultural and traditional practice. For the understanding of any aspect of the social life of any African society, it is mandatory to have a vast knowledge of their system of kinship and marriage.[64] Africans are known worldwide for their sense of "kinship or family ties." Kinship, since the earliest times, have been a very important aspect of culture in Africa. Kinship can be understood as a cultural system of recognized family roles and relationships that define the obligations, rights, and boundaries of interaction among the members of a self-recognizing group. It is determined through genetic relationships, adoption, or other ritualised behaviour such as marriage and household economies. Kinship systems range in size from a single, nuclear family to tribal or intertribal relationships. Above all, kinship establishes a network that gives its members a sense of belonging.[65]

In Auchi Kingdom, according to Oseni, the kinship system is like a vast network stretching literally in every direction, to embrace everybody because it is a general belief that every indigene of Auchi Kingdom has the same ancestor, Uchi.[66] This, according to Ikechukwu, meant that everyone was closely related and had very close family ties. There are many kinship terms to express the precise kind of kinship between two individuals. When two strangers meet in a village, town or city and they both speak a similar language, his first duty is to sort out how they could be related to each other according to the accepted norms and behaviour set down by society. The Auchi people also see kinship as a respected cultural system of recognised family roles and relationships that define the obligations, rights, and boundaries of interaction within the members

[63] Edward O. ERHAGBE, "Etsako land in Transition, 1860-1948: An Analysis of Change in an Indigenous Nigerian Society," MA dissertation, University of Benin, Nigeria, 1982, p. 40; Suleiman YAKUBU, "The Socio-cultural and Political Practices of the People of the Auchi Kingdom Before the Arrival of the Nupe in Nigeria" *Athens Journal of History* Vol. 9, Issue 1, 2023, pp. 76-77.
[64] Alfred R. BROWN - Forde C. DARYLL, *African Systems, Kinship and Marriage*, London: Oxford University Press 1950, p. 1.
[65] Kanu A. IKECHUKWU, "Kinship in African Philosophy and the issue of development," *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE),* Vol. 1, Issue 9, September 2014, p.1.
[66] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

of a self-recognizing group. It could be defined through genetic relationships, adoption, or other ritualised behaviour such as marriage and household economies.[67]

The kinship system in Auchi Kingdom, as stated by Bradbury, varies in size and number from a single, nuclear family to a tribal or intertribal relationship. Above all, it creates a network that gives its members a sense of belonging. The African traditional life is centred around the family. The family is where life is generated; a basic unit of life which represents the life of the entire people.[68] Tony revealed that it was in the family that the values of the villages and quarters were transmitted. The family unit is also seen as a centre of learning for the younger generation.[69]Garba explained that due to the complexities of kinship relationships, some villages or Kingdoms do not allow intermarriages between men and women of the same kindred. This is due to their close kinship ties and same ancestry. The Iyofa kindred of the Akpekpe quarter in Auchi Kingdom is one of such kindred. This, to a very large extent, has made the people of that kindred to consider themselves as brothers and sisters despite having different parents. This has been the trend over the centuries as the kingdom gradually evolved.[70] It is no news that the Auchi Kingdom still holds strongly to its cultural practices and belief system.

On the issue of Kingship, according to Erhagbe, pre-colonial Nigeria was characterised by fragmented ethnic nationalities, each with its unique system of government or institutions of governance.[71] Before the conquest of Auchi in 1860, the Kingdom lacked a king, though it did have respected men and women who held influence within the community. This traditional system was structured in a manner that accommodated the unique characteristics of the ethnicity involved. In stateless societies, such as the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria, the lineage system plays a crucial role in defining political and social relations. In the absence of centralised political authority, power and authority are exercised within and between groups based on lineage, with external political relations often understood in similar terms.[72] Arunah explained that, despite the absence

[67] Ibid, p.3.
[68] Ibid, p. 102.
[69] Momoh TONY, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu via telephone, July 18, 2020, (83), Lawyer, Journalist, and former Federal Minister of Nigeria.
[70] Garba S. Zibril, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, March 30, 2021, (63), Businessman and politician.
[71] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu. March 21, 2024, (63), Professor of History.
[72] M. FORTES - E. E. EVANS-PRITCHARD, *African Political System*, London: Oxford University Press 1950, p. 14; John MIDDLETON and Tait DAVID (eds), *Tribes without Rulers*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1958, p. 6

of a formal kingship structure in pre-Nupe era Auchi, there existed an administrative system known as gerontocracy, which was a form of governance based on the authority of elders. At that time, African societies held deep respect for the elderly, associating age with wisdom. In Auchi, the administrative system was organised such that authority emanated from the family unit and extended through the quarter council, village council, and council of state. The introduction of a kingship structure in the Kingdom was initiated by the Nupe imperialists.[73]

Auchi was conquered in 1860 by the Nupe imperialist, an imperial power from current-day north-central Nigeria. Auchi put up a strong resistance to Nupe incursions in the third quarter of the 19th century for a relatively long time but was later defeated due to superior weapons.[74] Nupe invaders imposed tributes and taxes payable in the form of slaves, goats, and even fowls on the Auchi people. To achieve their aims, a novel kind of administrative system based under the authority of a man they could trust among the inhabitants was required as their liaison personnel. An official title “Otaru” was given to their newly Installed representative. This gave birth to the monarchical system of administration in the second half of the nineteenth century as explained by Oseni.[75]Mahmud also explained that this was the period when Auchi was formally transformed into a Kingdom after the introduction of the monarchical system of administration.[76]

At this juncture, it is ideal to give a proper description of the word "Otaru" and how it came about. The word "Otaru" is a Hausa[77] word and title that was bestowed upon a king in Auchi Kingdom by the Nupe in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Hausa word, "TARU" means or is interpreted as a gathering; a meeting of people or an assembly. Otaru could also mean, "One in whose abode people gather." The new Otaru was to coordinate the affairs of the Kingdom and must ensure he collected taxes and tributes from the Auchi people as at when due and remitted it to the Nupe imperialists. The Otaru’s palace became a court where cases were tried with the help

[73] Ibid, p. 20
[74] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, "Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy institution in historical perspective 1860-1973," Bachelor of Arts project, University of Ilorin, Nigeria, 1992. p. 41.
[75] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[76] Momoh. MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 5, 2021, (40), Businessman and a prince from the royal family.
[77] Hausa language is one of the three major languages spoken in Nigeria. The Hausa people comprise the largest ethnic group in Nigeria. The Hausa language is also the most widely spoken indigenous language in West and Central Africa. The language has gained international recognition because it is spoken in about eleven countries in Africa. It is also used to broadcast news on BBC and VOA

of his Chiefs who were all elders and were already part and parcel of the system. That was how the rivalry that existed between the old and the new political system that was introduced was settled once and for all.[78] This would be further explained under the sub-heading chieftaincy titles. Robson revealed that the people of Auchi Kingdom did not welcome the new principles of a monarchical administration that replaced their indigenous gerontocratic administration with open arms. Rather, there was a negative resentment toward the new system when it became certain that the new administrative system was aimed at undermining or disregarding the political organ of both the Village Council and the Council of State which always comprised the elders. The new development did not affect the Family Unit and the Quarter Council since it was not all from the existing ones that chiefs were selected for appointment[79]

The kingship system has persisted to the present day. Succession to the throne is not based on heredity but rather through selection or appointment. A highly capable and suitable candidate is chosen from within the royal family of Otsogun village to assume the position of Otaru.[80]The issue of Kingship will be further explained in a sub-section in chapter four of the dissertation.

2.4 Chieftaincy titles

Chieftaincy titles were introduced in Auchi during the Nupe hegemony. Before the emergence of the Kingship system in Auchi Kingdom, governance of the various villages was entrusted to the oldest men. Arunah explained that the introduction of the Kingship system by the Nupe imperialists, the Otaru did not govern the kingdom single-handedly. He ruled in conjunction with several Igbanusoi (turbaned chiefs). Among these were the Daudus (village heads), Yerima, Sedenu, Yama, Jagaba, Tomo, Bagudu, Galadima, Lerna (Imam), etc. These new title-holders were members of the central Igbai-Igbanusoi (a council of Turbaned Chiefs), which assisted the Otaru in performing his legislative, executive, religious, and judicial duties.[81]

While some of these new titles were given to certain kindred and families because of the roles they played in the creation of the monarchy, a source from within the palace explained that

[78] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, p. 24.
[79] Ibid, p. 12.
[80] Momoh H. Musa, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, January 4, 2024, Retired teacher and turbaned chief.
[81] Ibid, p. 77.

other titles were distributed between the villages in the kingdom, to ensure that they were evenly represented in the political administration.[82] Lawal added that there were also situations where non-indigenes of the kingdom were awarded chieftaincy titles to honour them due to their significant contributions and assistance towards the development of the Kingdom.[83] Information obtained from both oral and written sources revealed the major titles awarded to indigenes of the Auchi Kingdom. These are-

1. Daudu- Village head
2. Yamah- Deputy Daudu or Assistant to a Daudu
3. Tomoh- Messengers of a village
4. Alakobi- Sword bearer
5. Sarkin Samali- Leader of the youths
6. Osimua- Saviour of the Kingdom
7. Kaa-salaiki- Chief of market activities
8. Galadima- Chief administrative offer of the kingdom.
9. Sedenu- An assistant to the otaru (junior to Dania)
10. Gimba- The fearless one
11. Jagaba- Chief Security Officer
12. Waziri- Senior adviser to the otaru.
13. Ogbachi- Woman leader (in charge of woman affairs)
14. Madaiki- Commander of the army.
15. Yerimah- Heir apparent to the throne
16. Dania- A junior assistant to the otaru
17. Mogaji- The officer in charge of the treasury and finances.
18. Okakagbe- A honorary title for major achievements in a person's life.
19. Igechi- A title for a highly placed person in the society
20. Sarkin Hausawa- The chief of the Hausa community[84]

[82] Momoh H. MUSA, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu. January 4, 2023, (78), Retired teacher and turbaned chief
[83] Oseni LAWAL, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, March 17, 2023, (61), Businessman and farmer.
[84] Hakeem Billy HARUNAH, "The impact of Nupe invasion on Etsako society, 1860-1897: A sociopolitical and cultural analysis" PhD Dissertation, University of Lagos, 1990, pp. 282-283; Umoru YAKUBU, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, March 30, 2022, (58), Auchi, Civil servant.

Since the late nineteenth century, the highest policy and decision-making body of the new government in the Auchi Kingdom was the Otaru, functioning as the Otaru of Auchi and Chairman of the Council; Daudu of Utsogun representing the interest of Utsogun people; Daudu of Akpekpe representing the interest of Akpekpe people and the Daudu of Aibotse representing the interest of Aibotse people. According to Nelson, his ruling body deliberated on matters relating to the collection of tributes and taxes and their dispatch to Bida, the administrative headquarters of Nupe land.[85] Other issues included defence, budget, external affairs, religion, festivals, communal development, regulation of terms of trade and direction of trade, and a host of others.[86]

The council adopted a new order of procedure, which ensured that the Daudus spoke first on issues that were being deliberated upon before Otaru of Auchi concluded and made the final decision. None of the members had the right to challenge any decision announced by the Otaru. The decisions of the Otaru, as stated by Akim, were usually disseminated to the five villages by the Daudus.[87] Another channel of communication was through the ekabor[88] (Town-Crier), one of the Auchi palace officials, whose duty was to use the Ikelebe gong (Ulo-Ikelebe), to make announcements. Such decisions were, however, regarded as binding on every person in Auchi. Shaibu stated that feedback, particularly the opinions of the people on how they wanted to be governed or ruled by the monarchy were usually channeled through the Daudus and the other turbaned chiefs, who were members of the central Igbai-Igbanusoi Council, to the Otaru of Auchi.

[85] The Nupe are a Niger-Congo speaking people in West-Central Nigeria with probably about a million speakers. The Nupe were converted to Islam at the end of the eighteenth century, but they have retained a strong background of traditional religion, particularly in certain villages. They can be found in the north-central part of Nigeria in states like Niger, Kogi, Kwara and Abuja. See Blench ROGER, *Oral literature genres of the Nupe of Central Nigeria*, Cambridge: Kay Williamson Educational Foundation 2010.

[86] Elama NELSON, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, March 28, 2021, (82), Auchi, Islamic Scholar and farmer.

[87] Amedu O. AKIM interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, March 22, 2021, (65), Auchi, Civil Servant.

[88] During the pre-colonial times, most rural communities lack modern means of communication and transmitting information; therefore, they depend on traditional means of transmitting information, especially during tense situations and times. Town crying was a form of traditional communication in which a communicator known as a town crier/ messenger/reporter disseminated information in his immediate community. Royal proclamations, local bylaws, market days, adverts and newsworthy events were all proclaimed by the town crier. The crier generally carries one of the following instruments to attract people's attention: a handbell, gong, drums or horn. This was one of the efficient means of disseminating information in Africa during the precolonial period. This practice has been replaced with modern technological means of dispersing information. See Hakeem Billy HARUNAH, "The impact of Nupe invasion on Etsako society, 1860-1897: A sociopolitical and cultural analysis, PhD Dissertation, University of Lagos, 1990.

This was how Auchi people actively participated in the strong central administration under the Otaru from the second half of the nineteenth century.[89]

As earlier indicated, administration at the village level came under the Daudu who was assisted by the village Igbanusoi Council. This council, like the central Igbai-Igbanusoi comprised the Daudu himself as Chairman, and many other turbaned chiefs and ikpishai (elders), representing each of the quarters and kindred within the village. Also, like the central Igbai-Igbanusoi under the Otaru of Auchi, the village Igbanusoi Council met at the house of the Daudu and discussed matters affecting the entire village. Such issues, according to Sule, included security, age-grades, markets, enforcement of law and order, etc. The decisions reached at this Council were regarded as binding on every person within the village. People's participation in the day-to-day administration of the village was through the Igbanusoi chiefs and the Edafe (elders as heads of the quarters and kindred in the community).[90]

It was quite clear that the new monarchy, apart from depending on the holders of the new titles indicated above, also utilised many of the indigenous Auchi socio-political institutions to operate government and administration. Among these, as explained by Erhagbe, were (as already mentioned): Ekabor (Town criers), Ikor messengers, Irhuai (age-grades), Odafe, etc, whose roles and functions could not be performed by any of the externally generated institutions from 1860. This showed that the monarchy, though took over political power from the elders but still could not function effectively without the help of these old people because their wealth of wisdom and experience were very important. [91]

Similarly, even though the Council of Elders in each of these clans had been dissolved and replaced by the central Igbai-Igbanusoi councils headed by the turbaned Daudus, many of the decisions and laws made by them, particularly those that encouraged that mutual and peaceful co-existence, respect for leaders and authority, etc, were retained after 1860. This manner of adopting aspects of the indigenous Auchi government systems into Nupe's socio-political systems in the Kingdom, as explained by Iluokhauno, was a clear indication that the monarchy could not abolish

[89] Saliu SHAIBU, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 22, 2021, (50), Auchi, Civil Servantt.
[90] Richard E. SULE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, March 30, 2021, (60), Auchi, Civil Servant and farmer.
[91] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu,

completely, every institution and system that derived from the segmentary structures, which evolved in the pre-Nupe conquest times before 1860. It shows the manner in which these segmentary institutions helped to sustain the new monarchical systems from the second half of the nineteenth century.[92]

Wajeed stated that a very intriguing issue was the way and manner in which this institution adapted or adjusted its roles to reflect the emergent revolutionary changes at the time. For example, the edafe and the other elders, who were allowed to function before 1860, were instructed to restrict their activities to their quarters, kindred or villages. Even though they were excluded from being members of the central Igbai-Igbanusoi Council, they did not protest against the Otaru. They did not also incite the people to rebel against the Nupe administration which had encouraged, influenced, and ensured their being relegated to mere advisory individuals by the Otaru from 1860. And yet, they were not happy that they had lost control of the political administration of their villages and clans to the Nupe-elected king. However, one major reason why they did not show resentment against the emergent changes was that they wanted to avoid any situation that could lead to anarchy, confusion, and insecurity.[93]

Despite the presence and authority of the Otaru and his council members, another group of non-Auchi indigenes were appointed by the Nupe imperialist from Bida to represent their interests in Auchi Kingdom. These men were referred to as Azenis, a word which means "he to whom dues are paid". Odjugo's report stated they functioned as the ears and eyes of the Nupe imperialist government and were required to ensure that the collection of slaves, and payment of taxes in cowries and foodstuff through the Otaru and his village chiefs to Bida were carried out in the interest of their Nupe imperialist. Any form of disloyalty or dishonesty in the retrieval and dispatch of these tributes and taxes to the Bida government was to be promptly reported by these Nupe authorities.[94] The Daudus, according to Wajeed, were given the responsibility of assisting the Azenis in the collection of tributes and taxes which were further assembled and taken to Nupe

[92] Dickson, O. ILUOKHAUNO, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 22,.2021, (56), Auchi, Civil Servant.
[93] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[94] I. K. ODJUGO, Report of the Inquiry into the Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy title, p. 8.

authorities in Bida by the Azenis and some members in the Council of the Otaru, on the order and authority of the Otaru.[95]

Nelson explained that over the years, other forms of chieftaincy titles were awarded to people from within the Kingdom and its surroundings. The beneficiaries of the chieftaincy titles are both indigenes and non-indigenes of Auchi kingdom. They are usually men and women of integrity, wisdom, wealth, courage, and influence. These people must have contributed immensely towards the development and progress of the kingdom. There are even instances where a representative of another ethnic group living in the Kingdom is given a chieftaincy title to oversee the activities of his or her ethnic group. This personality functions as their spokesperson and also, protects their collective interest within the kingdom.[96]

2.5 Religion

According to Oseni who was interviewed at Auchi, the pre-Nupe Auchi society like most cities and villages in Africa, was one where religion was a very important socio-cultural part of the people's lives. In recent times in Auchi Kingdom, majority of the people practiced the Islamic religion and a little fraction practiced Christianity. These two popular religions, however, are external influences, introduced into African countries by foreign missionaries.[97] An oral source has revealed that most Africans still practise their traditional and indigenous religions alongside Islam or Christianity. This practice is known as syncretism.[98] Africans had their means of worshipping whatever deity they believed in before the coming of Islam and Christianity.[99] Africans were animists and polytheists and Auchi Kingdom was no exception to this kind of worship. Before the arrival of the European Christian Missionaries, Islam had reached some parts of Nigeria like the entire Northern and south-western states of Kwara and Ibadan.[100] According to Yakubu, before Islam was introduced to the Auchi society, the people had many deities they trusted, worshipped, and called upon for assistance with conviction.[101] Such deities included Uchi,

[95] Obomeghie WAJEED Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[96] Elama NELSON, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, March 28, 2021, (82), Auchi, Islamic Scholar and farmer.
[97] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[98] Edward. O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[99] Idowu E. BOLAJI, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*, New York: S.C.M. Press, 1973, p. 27.
[100] Luka Nathaniel B. GIMBA - Abah DANLADI, "Islam in the Central Niger Delta of Nigeria up to 2011" Sokoto *Journal of History* Vol. 5, 2016, p. 142.
[101] Ibid, p.7.

the spirit of the founder of Auchi, Orle, the river goddess, Amanue, Ogholodio, etc. These deities had shrines built for them where they were worshiped by their devotees.[102]In those times, according to Oseni, the African Traditional Religion (ATR) was the official and only practised religion of the Auchi people. Every village and extended family in Auchi Kingdom had a shrine where the people worshipped or carried out their religious activities.[103]

Yakubu notes that the people of Auchi Kingdom possess a profound belief in a supreme God, known in their local language by names such as "Oghena" and "Ogie Okuli." This belief is prominently reflected in their prayers, where the uniqueness and supremacy of God are acknowledged. The Auchi people affirm God's absolute control over the universe and His universal presence. A significant expression of this belief is their practice of invoking the supreme God through lesser deities to seek protection against evil and the unknown. Their conviction in God's omnipotence and universality leads them to regard Him as the ultimate source of all human and spiritual power, affirming His status as the most superior deity in the entire universe.[104]

The Auchi people practised polytheism, worshipping and believing in multiple deities. According to both written and oral sources, some of these deities were venerated collectively by the entire Kingdom, while others were individually worshipped by members of various extended families. Many of these local deities, particularly those associated with specific clans and villages, were deified ancestors, which were men and women from early Auchi, who were honoured by their families for their significant contributions to the Kingdom's growth and security. Among these deities was Orle, the River Goddess, revered as the goddess of fertility. Another prominent deity was Uchi, regarded as the founder of Auchi Kingdom. It is widely believed that Uchi migrated from the Benin Kingdom over five hundred years ago and established what is now known as Auchi.[105]

An oral source revealed that the inhabitants of Auchi who practised African Traditional Religion were never engaged in human sacrifice to appease their local deities. Instead, they offered

[102] Ibid, pp. 63-64.
[103] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[104] Ibid, p. 7.
[105] Suleiman YAKUBU, "The Socio-cultural and Political Practices of the People of the Auchi Kingdom Before the Arrival of the Nupe in Nigeria" *Athens Journal of History* Vol. 9, Issue 1, 2023, p. 88; Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

certain domestic animals, such as goats, sheep, cocks, and ducks. Additionally, specific foods, particularly pounded yam and egusi (melon) soup, were presented as sacrificial offerings. Beyond ensuring the well-being of the community, these deities were also believed to aid in curing infertility in women.[106] Arunah explained that deities were consulted in other to find answers or solutions to some quasi-judicial issues. Among such issues were theft, sorcery, infidelity etc. Accused people were required to swear oaths to prove their innocence before the local deity in their shrines and results were known within a very short period and they were always accurate. This kind of practice was very similar in most countries in Africa.[107]

The pre-Islamic people of Auchi also held strong beliefs in the existence of spirits and ancestors. Yakubu noted that, in some instances, these supernatural beings were believed to inhabit material objects temporarily to manifest their presence and actions. For example, if a person's farm was mysteriously destroyed, it was often attributed to the actions of spirits. In such cases, individuals would typically consult spiritual authorities, such as native doctors or medicine men, to address or resolve the situation. There was also a widespread belief that the deceased played significant roles in the lives and activities of the living. The people of Auchi maintained a strong reverence for their ancestors and ancestral spirits. However, not every prominent man or woman would necessarily be deified as an ancestor.[108] Wajeed explained that most communities in Africa had their ancestors and forebears who were the founders and progenitors of their respective communities. After the deification of a deceased person, shrines and places for worship are built in their memory and honour because they are highly revered. It is ideal to note that ancestors in African communities are communicated with in songs, prayers, and epithets. In this way, ancestral spirits help to ensure the fertility of women, peace, good harvest, and peaceful coexistence of the inhabitants of Auchi Kingdom before the Nupe invasion of 1860.[109]

Mahmud further explained that certain religious festivals were organised to honour and pay respect to the ancestral spirits of their progenitors and other deities, as these entities were believed to play significant roles in the affairs of the kingdom. These festivals, conducted at specific times of the year, served both traditional and spiritual purposes. These purposes included

[106] Yakubu MAHMUD, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 5, 2021, (63), Custodian of the orle deity and farmer.
[107] Ibid, p. 136.
[108] Ibid, p. 8.
[109] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

paying homage to the Almighty God, making specific requests, celebrating major milestones in the history and evolution of the people, and reinforcing cultural resolutions. Additionally, these festivals provided opportunities for social interaction with individuals from within and outside the kingdom, a process believed to be facilitated by the ancestral spirits, who acted as intermediaries between God and the people.[110]

An oral source disclosed that a particularly significant festival, celebrated since ancient times, is the Uchi festival, which honours Uchi, the ancestral father and progenitor of Auchi Kingdom. During this festival, the entire community, especially women and children, gather in a celebratory mood. They proceed to the site where Uchi first settled upon his arrival in Auchi, located at the marketplace atop Ekhei Hill. As they approach the venue, they engage in clapping, singing, and dancing. The local priest then arrives to perform the propitiatory rituals of the festival. The people express their gratitude and present their prayers to Uchi, believing that he responds to their requests through the priest, offering thanks for their devotion and assuring them that their wishes and prayers will be fulfilled in due course.[111]

According to Oseni, another significant festival during the pre-Islamic period in Auchi was the Orle festival. Similar to the Uchi festival, the Orle festival encouraged the active participation of the entire Auchi community, though women and children predominantly attended. The prominent role of women in these festivals was rooted in the Etsako cultural system, which encouraged them to serve as seekers of cosmic protection for their communities.[112] Tony notes that it was believed that women, due to their perceived physical vulnerability and innate compassion, could effectively appeal to the ancestral spirits to assist the people in overcoming challenges. Furthermore, these festivals were thought to enhance women's procreative abilities. However, with the advent of Islam, many of these festivals were discontinued, and others were reduced to mere celebrations without the accompanying propitiatory rituals.[113]

Also, in Auchi Kingdom and other Nigerian communities, magic, medicine and religion were all interwoven before the introduction of Islam in the twentieth century. The inhabitants of

[110] Momoh MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[111] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[112] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu
[113] Momoh TONY, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

Auchi Kingdom strongly believed that the reason for any natural or supernatural phenomenon and happening was as a result of a spiritual power or force. Due to this belief system, most Auchi people who have problems consulted witch doctors and marabouts for solutions. These witch doctors and marabouts use various divinatory means and items such as palm kernel shells, kola nuts, cowries etc for consulting the oracle or gods. During the consultation, as stated by Oseni, incantations are made and the cause of the person's problem is revealed to the witch doctor. He was also able to tell who was responsible for the infliction, how it would be handled and the items that would be required for the treatment.[114] There were also situations where marabouts and witch doctors were consulted to acquire potent charms and talismans for protection against witches and wizards. They provided charms for the warriors of Auchi Kingdom to ensure their safety during times of war. According to Egbefo, it was believed that during those periods, the charms and local medicine administered by the witch doctors on the people of Auchi Kingdom made them fearless, brave, zealous and confident.[115]

Additionally, Yakubu explained that Auchi people have the belief in reincarnation and life after death. They believed in both the human and spiritual world. The spiritual world is the world that humans cannot see. These two worlds are not separated, but connected, and make up one continuous, complete world. This explains the African belief system in the human continuous life cycle, life after death, and reincarnation. The Auchi people believed that when a child is born, he or she grows old and dies after achieving his purpose on earth, and is then reborn again. The visible world is a world of mortals, natural forces and phenomena. The invisible world is a world of divinities and immortals, of friendly and evil spirits, and the ancestors. The visible and invisible worlds are side by side and interact with one other.[116]

Oseni disclosed that the pre-Islamic Auchi people believed that spirits were living amongst them. The Auchi people consulted marabouts, diviners, priests, and priestesses to help interpret the signs of the universe. These were people who were endowed with some special or spiritual powers and they could communicate with the dead. They were the link between the dead and the living. It must be said, however, that this was contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion

[114]Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[115] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[116] Ibid, p. 10.

because it was purely the African traditional religion.[117] In 1914, Islam was adopted then later Christianity, on a small scale, in the early twentieth century. Islam remains the most dominant religion in the Kingdom. People still practice the African Traditional Religion (ATR) but on a small scale. It must be noted, however, that most people tend to be syncretic on religious issues.

2.6 Marriage and Birth Ceremonies

Marriage, which is a very important aspect of the lives of the Auchi people, was contracted customarily in the Auchi society before the infiltration of the Islamic and Western cultures in the nineteenth century. In those early years according to Oseni, the choice of a wife or husband was entirely the prerogative of the parents of the would-be couple. For example, the parents of the groom would choose a befitting girl for their son and also make necessary contact with the proposed bride's parents. It was when an agreement had been reached by both parents that the young suitor was allowed to carry on with the wooing of his wife-to-be until a date was fixed for the solemnization of the marriage. With the advent of Westernization and the introduction of the Islamic religion, this old marriage system was greatly modified to suit the modern trend of events.[118]

Mahmud stated that the family's economic strength, the interest in a bride-to-be and her family background were strong determinants in choosing a wife for the intending groom.[119] There were three forms of marriage. These were the Amhoya, Onabor, and Otse marriages. Amhoya and Onabor marriages were marriages in which full dowries were paid by the groom. The difference between the two was that in the latter, Onabor marriage, the wife was always from a different ethnic group. The children produced from Amhoya and Onabor marriages acquired full rights and privileges on the father's side. When the wife of the husband of Amhoya and Onabor marriages passed on, the widow was always inherited by her brother-in-law as tradition demanded. This was one of the reasons why the heads of various families declined to initiate two members of his family into manhood through the same age grade.[120]

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[117] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[118] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[119] Momoh MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[120] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Manhood Initiation Festival in Auchi Kingdom*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2014, pp. 39-40.

The Otse type of marriage was completely different from the two other marriages because it did not attract dowry or bride price due to its loose nature. Wajeed revealed that women who were engaged in this kind of marriage had more rights and privileges over their children and in this vein, such children only had rights and privileges on the mother's side. It was a very weak union with no binding laws. A woman in this kind of marriage could have sex or a relationship with any man that she deemed fit. The husband had no right to the custody of the children because only the woman could tell the true paternity of the child or children produced.[121] This kind of union, according to Oseni, was very cheap to contract because the husband was not expected to pay any dowry or bride price. This kind of marriage was usually done to prevent a father-in-law who was not privileged to have a son from laying claim over his daughter's son as his son and heir. [122]When there is a breakup in the marriage, or the husband dies, the wife has full custody of the children. It is worthy of note here that these forms of marriages were abolished by the Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh because they were considered to be un-Islamic as revealed by Erhagbe. They were subsequently replaced by the Islamic type of marriage and has remained the common practice till the present day.[123]

Yakubu explained that children that were born into any of the three marriages were named shortly after their birth. However, the time fixed for the naming ceremony was usually after three months or could be determined by the oldest man in the family. However, the elders, particularly the Odafe in the paternal family's compound or quarter of the child performed the ceremony. One of the things that he usually did was that he carried the child in his arms, kissed him and left some particles of alligator pepper in the child's mouth and then said some prayers for the spiritual wellbeing of the child and the parents. He then announced the name chosen by the parents of the child.[124] Oseni revealed that the ceremony continued after the child had been named. Indeed, friends, neighbours and siblings joined the celebrating family in eating and drinking to the good health of the child. The major food served to guests during this ceremony was pounded yam served with melon soup, a traditional food of the people. The kind of drinks served to guests were always palm wine and local gin. This merriment sometimes continued till the late evening when everyone

[121] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[122] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[123] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[124] Umoru YAKUBU, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

dispersed to their various homes. This practice was also abolished when Islam was introduced and made the official religion in the early twentieth century. The Islamic mode of naming a child was adopted and has continued to be the mode of naming a child till the present day.[125]

2.7 Funeral ceremonies

In typical African societies, burial ceremonies were taken very seriously. Burial rites and ceremonies vary from place to place, tribe to tribe across the world. This is due to the different cultural heritage passed on from one generation to another.[126]Burial ceremonies before the adoption of the Islamic faith in Auchi Kingdom were conducted by the established traditional and cultural practices of the indigenous Auchi people. Wajeed revealed that funeral ceremonies for elderly people were usually marked by fanfare and parade in the same way. There was no exception, even though it was an Odafe. The only difference was that when an Odafe died, the whole community was thrown into mourning. But in the case of an individual, mourning was limited to the family and friends of the deceased.[127]

In pre-Islamic times according to Oseni, when the death of an old man was confirmed, his corpse was laid in state in his house. The information was sent to his close and distant relatives. In the neighbourhood of the deceased, there was always a congregation of elderly people and palm wine would be served to them. This was usually accompanied by vigils, dances, and delivery of funeral speeches in ways that eulogised the deceased. The purpose of this process was to give the soul of the deceased its last respect as demanded by tradition. On the third day, the corpse is dressed in fine attire bought by the eldest son, and the corpse is paraded through the city streets in a procession of mourners. The procession was led by the daughters of the deceased with faces, chests, and backs decorated with black patterns made of camwood and crimson creams. They graced this occasion with cow and horse tails in their hands. The procession was carried out in a slow, back-and-forth motion with daughters and wives of the deceased family taking turns in telling the deeds of the deceased as they went around in the streets of the Kingdom. As the mourners continued to chant his praises, Dane guns were fired into the air at every stop or pause along the way. After the procession, the deceased was laid to rest. The elders were usually buried

[125] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[126] Clifford Meesua SIBANI - Charles EHISIENMEN, "Final Burial Rites and Ceremonies in Benin Kingdom, Nigeria: Socio-Religious Issues and Implications" *KIU Journal of Humanities* 5(4), 2020, p. 149.
[127] Ibid, p. 191.

in family compounds because it was believed that their spirits would continue to keep surveillance over the family.[128]

According to Elama, however, the demise of youth was different. Immediately the youth was confirmed dead, and the next point of call was usually the evil forest. The corpse would be buried there. There was no celebration at all because the consensus was that premature death was a sign of a bad omen. The young man's death was believed to be caused either by abominable acts committed by the deceased's mother or by the evil activities of witches and wizards. If the cause of death was traced to abominable deeds committed by the mother, for example, adultery, it attracted a fine of a she-goat. If the death was caused by charms, she was forced to surrender the charms.[129]However, if the death was traced to witches and wizards, the corpse was invoked during the funeral so that it did not rest in the grave until its untimely death was avenged. It usually did not take long for the killer to fall ill and confess the evil committed. According to Zibril, in a situation where the perpetrator confessed his or her bad deeds, the person in question would gradually be restored to good health. But where the perpetrator refused to expose his or her wrongdoing, it usually led to his or her death. If the perpetrator of the evil was a witch or sorcerer and refused to confess his evil deeds, such a person died.[130]

Regardless of age according to Akim, the corpse was desecrated and treated in the meanest and crudest way. A long rope was tied around his or her feet and pulled along the way to the evil forest in broad daylight. Everyone was allowed to stone the corpse as it was dragged down the road. How the corpse was tortured was believed to serve as a deterrent to others. The corpse was thrown into the evil forest, unburied for the vultures to feast on while the remains got decomposed and dried up in the sun. This was an era when the evil forest was always littered with human skeletons and skulls. All these processes are no longer practised with the advent of Islam and Westernization.[131]

[128] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[129] Elama NELSON, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[130] Garba S. ZIBRIL interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[131] Amedu O. AKIM, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

2.8 Abomination/Taboo

Taboo is a prohibition which attracts an automatic sanction. It exploits the true nature of the human psyche and is used to inculcate practical attitudes through dramatic symbolism.[132] Oseni stated that there were family taboos, a taboo of the local deities, a taboo of guardian spirit, a personal taboo, and some special taboos affecting priests, chiefs, or even the Kingdom as a whole.[133] Purification was required for being surrounded by taboos. Some special herbs were normally used as purification medicine if there was a defaulter and the effect was minimal. Yakubu revealed that all forms of disrespect or irreverence to a person, place, or thing set apart or dedicated are forbidden. Theft was also a taboo. It was a law to return or restore ill-gotten wealth and goods or else the taboo would not be overlooked or forgiven, so people were compelled to pay all their debts, because the native laws forbade all unjust taking or keeping what belonged to another person, either by robbery, theft or by fraud which consists all kinds of cheating in commercial activities.[134]

Wajeed explained that all forms of negligence were also considered taboo. For example, negligence of duty; performing carelessly any duty for which a person was paid. Even in usury, a usurer demanding too high an interest rate is considered involved in an abominable act. Willful destruction of another man's property was a taboo. It was forbidden to keep what belonged to another person by refusing to give the rightful owner. Other forms of taboo consisted of refusal to restore things entrusted in one's care, and payment of debts.[135] Zibril disclosed that it was taboo to contract marriage between people of a certain kindred because the people believed they were all related to one another through distant ancestry. No one can contract marriages with those who are related by blood unless they undergo a purification ceremony or are cast out of the community. Funeral rites are forbidden during major festivals. It was also taboo to take false or unnecessary oaths. It was also blasphemy to use cursing words. Cursing is the calling of evil or harm upon a person. All these were considered to be taboo before 1860.[136]

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[132] John MIDDLETON (ed), *Africa: An Encyclopedia for Students Vol. 1*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 2002, p. 217
[133] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[134] Umoru YAKUBU, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[135] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[136] Garba S. ZIBRIL interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

It is also worthy to note, according to Mahmud, that issues like incest or having sexual intercourse with a woman when she was mensurating were considered to be unclean and taboo. Homosexualism and having sexual relations with an animal were all considered to be taboos. These actions made the land unclean. In most cases, spiritual cleansing was required to set things right. The consumption of specific forbidden foods, animals, vegetables or plants brings infection or plague. Sanitation of households and environments was so important in the olden days and from ancient times. It was also a taboo if one failed to keep one's environment clean. Taboo moves like the air and touches those who go against the sanitary principles of their ancestors in the face of tradition and culture.[137]

Below are some cultural instructions for married women in the Kingdom during the pre-colonial times. Any woman who flouted any of these rules was considered to have committed a taboo and was expected to pay a fine. They are as follows below-

1. A married woman should neither allow another man other than the husband to lap her nor lap another man. She does not board a bike with another man sitting in front or behind another man
2. A married man should not eat from form the same plate with another man.
3. A married woman should not sit opposite another man on a bench to play games such as cards, ludo etc.
4. A married woman should not sleep on the same bed with another man apart from her husband.
5. A married woman should not allow another man, apart from her husband, to hold her waist or hips, touch her breast and tap her buttocks.
6. A married woman should take her husband's money from where it is kept without permission.
7. A married woman should not attend parties without her husband's permission.
8. A married woman should not allow another man to caress, peck, or kiss her apart from her husband.
9. A married woman should not insult her husband.
10. A married woman should not insult her husband's relatives.[138]

All the above-mentioned laws were obeyed and any woman that went against these laws was considered to have committed a taboo. She needed to undergo some cleansing for her to be

[137] Momoh MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[138] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu; Amedu O. AKIM, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

forgiven. Despite the invert of Westernisation, some of these taboos are still as effective as they were before 1860.

2.9 Totems

Totems could be spirit beings, plants, animals, sacred objects, or symbols that serve as an emblem of a group of people, such as a family, clan, lineage, or tribe. A totem could be a common ancestor of a clan and at the same time, their guardian spirit and helper, which sends them oracular messages or signs and, if dangerous to others, recognises and spares the people that take them as totems.[139] There may be rules and regulations to ensure the protection, preservation, and reverence of totems. In most African societies, it is a taboo and a violation of cultural and spiritual life to hurt, mishandle, or kill a totemic animal. Totems are handled with utmost respect and care.[140] Totems are connected with the matriarchal state of culture. The connection between a man and his totem is mutually beneficial to both parties. The totem protects the man, and the man shows his respect for the totem in various ways. This could be by not killing it if it is an animal, and not cutting or gathering it if it is a plant. A totem is always a class of objects, generally species of animals or plants.[141]

It is believed that every community in Nigeria has one or more totems. Akubor revealed that totems may differ in various communities in Nigeria. He disclosed that several years ago he had an encounter with a python, which was the totem in a community in Eastern Nigeria. He said he and the python slept in the same room unknowingly to him. He realised the presence of the python in the early hours of the next day when he awoke from sleep. When realised he was not alone in the room, he rushed out of the room terrified, and informed his landlord and family. One of the daughters of the landlord's daughters went to his room and began to sing some songs of praise and eulogised the python. The python was guided by the girl into the bush close to the house

[139] Sigmund FREUD, *Totem and Taboo*, London: Routledge Publishers 2001, p.14.
[140] Ejikemeuwa J. O. NDUBISI, "Totemism in Africa: A Philosophical Evaluation of its Significance in a World of Change" *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development* Vol. 1 No. 1, 2018, p. 27.
[141] Isaiah Ola ABOLARIN, "Totemism and Christian Religious Practices in Nigeria" *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 6 No. 4, 2019, p. 106.

without harming or killing it. This event shows that totems were real and still in existence in Nigeria.[142]

Wajeed revealed that it is believed that all African communities have totems which are highly venerated by the people.[143] Mutanebi revealed that the python is the biological totem of the Auchi people. It was and still is highly revered and respected. It did not attack or harm any Auchi indigene. If a python is sighted by any Auchi person who is on his or her way to the farm, or in the forest, instead of harming or killing the python, it is praised and eulogised in songs. Before the incursion of the Nupe, the inhabitants of the five quarters had roles to play in the service and protection of their people as well as protecting and persevering the cultural heritage and their Kingdom as a whole to prevent it from going extinct.[144]

In this regard, the Akpekpe people were the traditional warriors and hunters in the kingdom. They were strategically settled on the road leading to today's Akoko Edo Local Government Area because it was most likely that invaders would cross over from the Kukuruku Hills[145] into Auchi Kingdom to launch attacks as revealed by Akim.[146] Wajeed disclosed that the Akpekpe people farmed far away behind River Orle on the way to Uneme in Akoko Edo. During the rainy seasons when the river is flooded, they leave in large groups to live in and cultivate their farms for the entire duration of the flood leaving a handful of able-bodied men behind to guide their homes. On a particular season of flooding, while the Akpekpe people were in their farms, invaders struck at the farm and caught them unawares. Since river Orle was flooded, they were trapped and would have all been killed if not for the female python that emerged from the river and summoned other pythons which all stretched their length across the river in the form of a bridge for Akpekpe people to cross to the other side of the river which enabled them to flee to their homes. The bridge was collapsed by the pythons by the time the invaders arrived at the river bank. As such, the invaders had to retreat when there was no way for them to cross the river thus saving

[142] Emmanuel Osewe AKUBOR, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu via Telephone, July 17, 2024, (55), Professor of History.
[143] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[144] Seghosime Abdul MUTANEBI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[145] The Kukuruku Hills is located in the Akoko Edo area of Afemai land. The people of Afemai land were formally known as the Kukuruku people, until 1954, because they used the Kukuruku hills as a place of refuge during the invasion of Afemai land by the Nupe people. See the photo among the list of photos on the concluding page of the dissertation.
[146] Amedu O. AKIM, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

Akpekpe people and, indeed, Auchi people from foreign attack. It is for this reason that Akpekpe people reverence the python which they relate to as a spiritual mother and saviour. As such, they don't kill or eat it or even wish it harm. If it is mistakenly killed or caught in a trap and it dies in the process it is given a befitting burial like a normal human being.[147]

Till date, totems are still very important in most communities in Africa. The python has remained an animal that is highly revered by the people of Auchi Kingdom and it still does not attack or harm any Auchi indigene.

2.10 Age grade system

Age grade/group is an association of people of equal standing, the same age, or contemporaries operating within a given territory or area for individual, collective, and societal transformation. The organization, activities and structure of age-grade practices differ in most Nigerian communities. They serve as an organ for developing and maintaining peace, law, and order depending on the community they are located.[148] Oseni revealed that over the years Auchi Kingdom have recognised and respected the age grade system for it roles that it plays. This may not be unconnected to their roles in the maintenance of peace, law and community development. Age grade is a socio-cultural institution that has been in existence for a long time in Auchi Kingdom and Nigeria as a whole.[149] Wajeed revealed that it is one of the oldest institutions used in the administration of the local communities before the advent of colonialism and white missionaries in Africa.[150] People of the same age or within a two or three-year period identify themselves and unite to form an association. Since they are about the same age, democracy and equality become the order of the day as issues are raised and decisions are taken by a simple majority.[151]

Wajeed reveals that age grade is the most important agent of socialisation apart from the family in Auchi Kingdom. Each age grade has specific roles it plays for itself and the community.

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[147] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[148] Suleiman YAKUBU, "The Role and Duties of the Age Grade System in Socio-Cultural and Community Development in the Auchi Kingdom in Nigeria" *West Bohemian Historical Review* Vol. 9, Issue 2, 2022, pp. 119-120.
[149] Lawal OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[150] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[151] Cajetan NDUKWE, "Changes and continuity in age grade practices in Nigeria: A study of the Igbo traditional and modern administrative system," *Journal of Policy and Development Studies Vol. 9, No. 3*, 2015, p. 13.

Age grades perform services such as sanitation, security, and administration in their communities. They are organized under an appointed leader and other officials. They sometimes answer different names depending on the reasons, circumstances or time that warranted their formation. The activities of the age grades provide the platforms for the training and orientation of young ones most especially the males into adulthood and full membership in the Kingdom. It also leads to a kind of initiation which is known to be moving from boyhood to manhood,[152] However, a study of the age grade system in Auchi Kingdom and Nigeria as a whole, from early times to recent times, shows that it is a vital tool for promoting good human relations, unity, and developmental activities among communities in Nigeria. Bradbury disclosed that the role of age grades shifted from social organisation to initiating and executing important social and economic projects in the Kingdom. Membership of age grades in Auchi Kingdom is mandatory for all adult males. The change in the structure, organisation, and formation has been influenced by emerging globalisation, advancement and civilisation in societies but its role has been very significant in community development.[153]

In precolonial times, according to Bradbury, Auchi Kingdom was primarily agrarian in nature, where the most common source of livelihood was farming and hunting. The people were also involved in community services and the defence of their community against enemies and external intrusion.[154] Wajeed disclosed that the general organisation of this kind of integrated communal life resulted from the establishment of the Age Grade System into groups to stratify various segments: childhood, youths, adults and elders.[155]Segosime explained that the Otu (age grade) in the local dialect, was used to demarcate the various stages or segments. Ever before the Islamization of Auchi Kingdom, and the Nupe invasion in 1860, the Manhood Initiation was no longer a novel practice. It was already institutionalised as part and parcel of the people and was integrated into the cultural life.[156]

Irua'a in the Auchi dialect means "initiation into manhood." The Irua'a practice dates back to a time when the people that occupies the present-day Auchi Kingdom migrated from the Benin

[152] Ibid, p. 86.
[153] R. E. BRADBURY, *The Benin Kingdom and the Edo-Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, London: International African Institute, 1964, p. 103.
[154] Ibid, 104.
[155] Ibid, pp. 83-84.
[156] Ibid, p. 84

Kingdom.[157] How the Auchi people migrated from the Benin Kingdom and the series of wars that engulfed the area at the time is known as igodomigodo in Bini history.[158] The leader of the Auchi people at the time, according to Wajeed, found it very necessary to establish an army of high-spirited young and able-bodied men that could be quickly assembled when war and invasion of the Auchi community were imminent They were also expected to also carry out communal activities.[159] Tony explained that this army of young men became so indispensable in the community that they took the role of community warriors. They were also responsible for repelling the frequent slave raiding activities which was very rampant at the time before the colonisation of Nigeria as well as the maintenance of law and order throughout the community.[160]

As the community evolved, according to Akim, and most of the young men had grown into adults with personal responsibilities, it became necessary to create a system with stratas where they would be graded and drafted into regiments according to their respective ages. To further expand this tradition, the leader of the community found it ideal to create a system of initiation into the age-grade system vested with the responsibilities of safeguarding lives and properties. Thus, every young male of 20-23 years of age was initiated into manhood. This practice, according to Oseni, later became a popular cultural practice and celebration that was performed at the market or village square once every two years. Since the adoption of the Islamic religion as the state religion in 1914, the Irua'a celebration has always been held during the Islamic feast known as Eid-el-Kabir once in every two years. During the Manhood Initiation celebration, the Otaru was always in attendance to give the newly initiated young men a befitting name and offer prayers and spiritual blessings to the age grade members.[161]

According to Oseni, there are three stages that every young man in the kingdom must pass through. These are Itsebaa, Isoigbama and Omorhua'arogbomi. The Itsebaa group is open to the boys of 15 to 17 years of age. This group of boys closely follows the footsteps of the Isoigbama group. This is the group where a young boy begins to identify with his peer group and contemporaries to form a loose association in readiness to be moved to the next stage. The next

[157] Momoh TONY, *Each man, his time: The Biography of an Era*, Lagos: Pumark Nigeria Ltd 1995, p. 117.
[158] This was a period in which the Benin kingdom was in crisis for many decades due to kingship tussles. This period is also known as the interregnum in the history of the Benin Kingdom.
[159] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[160] Momoh TONY, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[161]Amedu O. AKIM, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

stage, which is the Isoigbama, is made of boys of between 18 to 20 years of age. This group of boys believes that they are capable of handling any situation with positive results. This adolescent stage was from where most of the warriors of the Kingdom were drawn from during the precolonial period in Nigeria.[162] Zibril revealed that members of this group were always brave, high-spirited, and fearless. They were always in a hurry to step up into the shoes of the Irua'a.[163]

Wajeed discloses that the first two stages, the Itsebaa and Isoigbama were more like preparatory stages towards the final initiation. Here, members were subjected to various duties in the Kingdom. Some of these duties were manual labour of various kinds, such as clearing of the prayer ground and cemetery, boundary demarcation, communal farm labour etc. The members of these two stages were always under the supervision of the entire community for guidance and character moulding. The third stage which is, Omorhua'arogbomi, is the last stage that a young man who is over twenty years of age passes through before he is eventually initiated into manhood but this stage starts from the Isoigbama stage. The last stage is a sign that the boys are ready to be initiated into manhood after engaging themselves series of communal activities and participating in other activities in the community.[164] These three stages enabled the community to have a track record of the progressive development of the forthcoming intending initiates. Below is a table revealing the different stages in order of seniority-

Table 1: Age grade seniority stages

s/n	**Stage**	**Name**	**Age bracket**
1	First	Itsebaa	15 to 17 years
2	Second	Iso-igbama	18 to 20 years
3	Third (Final)	Omorhua'arogbomi	21 to 23 years

Source- Obomeghie WAJEED, *Manhood Initiation Festival in Auchi Kingdom*, p. 87

[162]Lawal OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[163]Zibril S. GARBA, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[164]Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

Mohammed revealed that the age-grade ceremony, which has become a major cultural event, is a great moment for tourist attraction and cultural display as it provides excellent opportunities for indigenes, visitors, foreigners, etc. to enjoy the marvellous rich cultural heritage, fun, and entertainment of the Kingdom.[165] In the pre-Nupe period, the Chief Priest of the Orle deity[166] was responsible for announcing the date and time for the commencement of the festival which was always during the harvest of new crops at the time. Mahmud explained that at that time there was always little or no farm work at hand and there was the availability of a variety of food crops in people's houses for feasting and merriment.[167]

The age grade celebration was usually under the supervision and support of senior age grades, parents, and elders. The celebration and merriment lasted for one week. There was always a fashion show, cultural display, and busy commercial activities. Before the commencement of the celebrations, the intending initiates and their parents usually send out kola nuts[168] to close relatives, family, friends, in-laws, and well-wishers inviting them to witness the manhood ceremony of their wades and children. However, Wajeed disclosed that current trends have changed this item from kola nuts to other Western commodities such as biscuits, sweets, and sometimes formal invitation cards.[169]

Arunah revealed that there were various rites that an initiate is expected to undergo before he is initiated into manhood. These rites are performed one after the other as the celebration progresses. On the eve of the age grade celebration, all the initiates assemble at the market square from the morning time until late in the evening. They must put the final touches to the venue before the rites begin to ensure a smooth take-off. Meetings are held to ensure that everything goes on as expected.[170] The booming of fireworks is heard all over the place to announce to everyone that the celebration will commence the next day. Segosime explained that it was a period of jubilation and merriment for parents and families whose children were being initiated into manhood. People were

[165] Jafaru MOHAMMED interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 1, 2021, (79), Auchi, Farmer and businessman.
[166] The Orle deity is one of the most revered deities in the history of Auchi Kingdom. It is believed that the Orle deity is a woman. She is also the goddess of fertility. See Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nigeria Ltd 2006.
[167] Momoh MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[168] In a typical African traditional setting, kola nut is a very important item. It is seen as a symbol of peace, unity and friendship. It is always presented to visitors and friends during marriages, funerals, naming ceremonies and festivals. It is a general belief in Africa that the bringer of kola nuts is the bringer of life.
[169] Ibid, p. 99.
[170] Ibid, p.192

treated to several traditional dances and shows at the market square. Sometimes, individual celebrants could invite some dance groups to entertain the audience at their various homes if they had the means to host the dance groups.[171]

Ikharo revealed that the first rite performed on the first day of the manhood celebration was the procession of all the initiates from the prayer ground on the day of Eid-el-Kabir, which is the Islamic celebration day, to the Otaru (King)'s palace. This was a time of great pride for the initiates.[172] The initiates, according to Arunah, would line up in several lines spread across the road and they are all dressed in the same clothes and lots of coral beads for the occasion. They walked slowly towards the Otaru's palace amidst chants, cheers and songs of praise by family, friends, and well-wishers. When they got close to the Otaru's palace they were carried shoulder-high into the palace. The Otaru welcomed and congratulated them for crossing the first hurdle and encouraged them to be good ambassadors of the Kingdom. The initiates then depart the palace for their various homes carried shoulder-high amidst songs and chants of praises.[173]

Oseni disclosed that the second rite is performed on the second day of the celebration. This is also the core aspect of the manhood initiation ceremony. All the initiates are expected to collectively take a solemn oath of shared responsibility. Some of them pledged to be men of good character in all their undertakings, to be good ambassadors of the kingdom, to be ready to uphold an ideal society of peace, development, and prosperity, to maintain a spirit of brotherhood among themselves, and to abide by all the spiritual obligations by not breaking the laid down regulations of their fidelity to protect and defend the integrity of the Auchi kingdom.[174]

Wajeed explained that oaths are taken at the residence of the chairman of the age grade who was elected by the members. The celebrants went back to their respective homes and later re-assemble at the market square. All members are dressed in uniform flowing gowns and are made to sit in rows. The initiates then proceed to the Otaru's palace for, yet, another significant event. The Otaru welcomed them and charged them with the code of conduct of adulthood and entrusted them with various responsibilities of fully grown men. The Otaru gives the age grade a befitting

[171] Ibid, p. 223.
[172] Ibid, pp. 14-15.
[173] Ibid, p. 193.
[174] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

name to serve as their symbol of identity.[175] The actions of the Otaru, according to Zibril, are always based on the recommendation of the chiefs and elders. From the day of the pronouncement of the Otaru onwards, that particular age grade was addressed in unity by their official name. All the initiates would then depart for their various homes in preparation for another important rite.[176]

The second important rite performed on the second day of the celebration is the "Iriorirhua." Segosimhe revealed that it was a rite that was performed to relieve the initiates of sexual restrictions. All the initiates are dressed in only flowing gowns "Buba" or "Babanriga"[177] without shorts or underpants. It was expected of the initiates to go into a room, one after the other, where there is a half-naked old woman from the waist upwards, that is beyond childbearing. The initiates are expected to walk over her out-stretched legs after dropping a little money on the ground beside the old woman. The initiates are then expected to run as fast as they can to their houses without looking back. This symbolises the transformation from childhood to adulthood and the freedom of the new initiates to have sexual intercourse after they decided to get married. It is only in recent times that young boys have sexual intercourse before the manhood initiation ceremony.[178]

Oseni revealed that on the third day of the festivity, there was a visitation by the chairman of the age grade to all the sub-villages in the Kingdom. All the arenas in the sub-villages are colourfully decorated to welcome the chairman. Chairs are arranged in a manner that all that would be present would have a nice view of the arena. There was usually a lot of merriment, dancing, feasting, and an elaborate cultural display. The chairman visited all the various arenas carried shoulder high. He is well-received and entertained with food and drinks. He then addresses his fellow new initiates and gives some words of advice to them as they begin their journey into manhood. He also repeated the same routine in all the sub-villages in the Kingdom. The visitation is quite long. After the visit to the last sub-village, he retires to his sub-village for more merriment which may continue all through the night.[179]

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[175] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[176] Garba S. ZIBRIL, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[177] "Buba or Babanriga" is an Islamic attire worn by Muslim men. It was introduced into Auchi Kingdom by the Nupe People.
[178] Ibid, p. 224.
[179] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

On the fourth day, there was usually a family outing and entertainment. Wajeed disclosed that the day commences with merriment at the family and kindred level. Most age grade outings are celebrated between the members of the same kindred. The most senior by birth is identified and they form a family age grade where they have regular meetings from time to time to discuss how to improve the wellbeing of their members. The family age grade would discuss and deliberate on how to welcome and entertain other family age grades that may visit them. During this period the new initiates are flamboyantly dressed in beautiful outfits. Parents and family members express their love by presenting gifts and some present money in whatever amount that they can afford.[180] Segosime disclosed that sometimes, some families choose the day that they would invite and entertain their visitors. After this was done, the new initiates were recognised as mature men who could participate in any activity that concerned adults.[181]

Age grade is an important organ of the social structure especially in traditional Nigerian communities. After the manhood ceremony is celebrated, there are many roles that the new initiates are required to be engaged with. The age grade is expected to create a sense of oneness and brotherhood within their fellow members.[182] Mohammed stated that the members are bound together by common experiences and challenges such as funerals, marriages, building of houses etc. Over the years, age grades in different communities have distinguished themselves in the performance of such duties that aims at enhancing the socio-economic and cultural life of the people.[183] Mohammed further explained that age grades know their terrain, and their community better than strangers in their various communities. The social solidarity between and within age grades will spur them on to ensure that programmes attain their set goals, projects and programmes. Age grade, in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, concerned themselves with traditional functions such as the settlement of disputes between warring members, maintenance of law and order, construction and maintenance of roads and markets, maintaining the cleanliness of local streams and above all, protecting their communities from enemies. In recent times age grades have expanded their roles and duties to include newer activities that aid development. They have

[180] Ibid, p. 134.
[181] Ibid, p. 229.
[182] R. I. ENEJI - N. S. NWAGBOSO - A. E. ANAM, "Age Grade-Facilitated Projects and the Socio-Economic Development of Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria" *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 24, Issue 8, 2019, pp. 15-55.
[183] Jafaru MOHAMMED, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

contributed immensely to the educational, infrastructural, political and socio-cultural development of their various communities.[184]

The role and duties of the age grade is very vital in the growth of the kingdom. The Irhua'a ceremony qualifies and enables new initiates to participate in communal labour and other communal activities. Akim explained that whenever some duties are available for execution the Otaru would summon his council of chiefs to discuss the issue. The duties to be executed would be clearly outlined and the particular age grade that would be required to carry out the duty would be identified.[185] Shaibu revealed that in the early times, the decisions of meetings were announced by the town crier but in recent times the decisions are announced by mosques through microphones and public address systems. The age grade concerned will be notified of their assigned duties and they will subsequently have a meeting to decide when and how to execute the duties. Projects that were executed through this means in Auchi Kingdom included the Government Reserved Area (GRA) and administrative colonial office period in the 1920s. The buildings are still standing to the present day. There was also the construction of a Baily bridge over river Orle in 1969.[186]

Secondly, before the advent of organised and well-established administration and system of government in Auchi Kingdom, it was the responsibility and duty of age grades to protect and police the indigenes and non-indigenes of the Kingdom.[187] They were also responsible for the repelling of other tribal encroachments. The various age grades functioned as the local military who were responsible for the enforcement of laws and order. The defence and security of the kingdom was the duty of the age grades after their initiation into manhood. They were trained for military warfare before British colonisation. Various age grades were drafted into the services of the Umareghe and Umakpogho[188] forces when the need arose. Tony disclosed that they always stationed their base on the top of hills and functioned as community vigilantes during the Nupe slave raids. The kind of weapons used by the age grades to defend themselves were short and long battle knives, clubs, sharp spears, poisonous arrows, short and long battle knives, and metal-coated

[184] Jafaru MOHAMMED, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[185] Amedu O. AKIM, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[186] Saliu SHAIBU, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[187] B. BELLO-IMAM, *An ethnographic survey of South Ibie Clan of Etsako West Local Government, Edo State, Nigeria*, Ibadan: Vantage Publishers International Ltd 1995, p. 115.
[188] This was the name given to the local army that was drawn from the age grade of the Auchi Kingdom before the Nupe invasion of 1860. See Obomeghie WAJEED, *Manhood Initiation Festival in Auchi Kingdom*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2014.

arrows. These weapons were manufactured or forged by the indigenous local blacksmiths who were highly skilled. The Auchi resistance to Nupe imperialism was carried out by the selfless participation by the local people. The initiated young men were also usually given local talismans, charms and protections by spiritual men, marabouts, and witch doctors to ensure that they were not harmed.[189] In recent times, according to Oseni, the Otaru would from time to time, appoint a particular age grade to periodically, function as internal police known as a vigilante group, to guard the entrances and exits of the Kingdom to provide adequate security and to prevent the Kingdom from being overrun or taken over by enemies. When people are accused of theft the Vigilante group intervenes and when unable to resolve the issue, it is usually referred to the palace to handle.[190]

Thirdly, Wajeed explained the clearing of bushes around bush paths, farmland paths, streams, cemeteries, prayer grounds, etc. was coordinated and carried out by the various age grades as ordered by the Otaru. There was also the maintenance of boundary areas of the kingdom by the various age grades in the Kingdom. Matters relating to civil defence and communal labour were other important duties of the age grade.[191] Oseni revealed that in 1920 during colonial administration in the kingdom, a particular age grade called as "Okeloya" constructed a road that linked the kingdom to a town called Igarra. This was beneficial to traders and visitors who visited the Auchi kingdom from other parts of the country. The colonial government in collaboration with the age-grade known as "Umakhabamhai" built a Health Care Center in 1949. It was immediately put to use to take care of the health needs of the inhabitants of the kingdom.[192]

Fourthly, age grades, according to Zibril, also rendered social aids to the inhabitants of the Kingdom. For example, when a member of the age grade dies the social effect of age grades manifests more prominently. The age grade members would rally around the family of the deceased to console and render support to them. If the death occurred outside the kingdom, the age grade members would ensure that the corpse is preserved and returned home. The age grade would also ensure that their deceased member was given a befitting burial. Sometimes if a dead member had no befitting accommodation, members would ensure that a befitting accommodation is

[189] Momoh TONY, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[190] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[191] Ibid, p. 134.
[192] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

provided for his family.[193] Arunah stated that this was a type of social security insurance for the families of the deceased.[194] Age grades, according to Wajeed, also assist bereaved families bury their dead even if the deceased was not a member of their age grade. The graves are dug by the age grade members and all the burial rites are carried were also their responsibility under the close supervision of their elders.[195]

Also, age grades according to Lawal, kept the community lively with cultural festivals and dances with masquerade displays. They also ensured the decent morality of their members by having rules guiding the social conduct of their members. Age grade kept alive the cultural heritage of the community through participation, identification, and association.[196] Age grade defines the social privileges and social activities of members such as war-making, ritual and other communal activities to the fullest.[197]Oseni revealed that age grades have contributed greatly to the educational, political and social development of their various communities.[198] Wajeed explained that in Auchi Kingdom, age grades are the agents of industrialization, modernization, and urbanization. The role of age grades remains very significant and impactful. New initiates sometimes task themselves to raise funds to build or construct infrastructures that they will always be remembered such as boreholes, roads, renovation of schools and institutes, town halls, and scholarship schemes, among other projects. Village halls, that have been built by various age grades, are found all over Auchi kingdom and this is where meetings at the village level are held.[199]

Another very significant role of the Age grade that could be regarded as one of the most important displays of cultural practice and heritage in Auchi Kingdom is the role that they play during the burial and coronation of a new king. This significant role of the age grade would be clearly explained because of the level of its importance. A vivid picture is ideal at this point to show the importance of the age grade of a rich cultural heritage. The coronation of a new king is known as the "Umogbai ceremony." The word “Umogbai” means coronation in the local dialect. It is a ceremony or festival performed during the installation of a new king and the age grades that

[193] Garba S. ZIBRIL, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[194] Ibid, p. 35.
[195] Ibid, p. 138.
[196] Oseni LAWAL, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[197] Robert U. JOHNSON, *Traditional Age grade system in West African Religion*, Lagos: Oak Publishers 2011, p. 73.
[198] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[199] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

spearhead the coronation are called the "Umaireghe." It is celebrated just before the installation of a new king. It is very different from all other festivals celebrated in the kingdom and there is no fixed time for this festival. It is celebrated only when a new king is being installed. This kind of festival is celebrated only a few times in a lifetime.[200]

The festival, according to Oseni, dates back to the coronation of Chief Ikelebe, the first king of the Kingdom.[201] Ikharo disclosed that the Umogbai festival was done after the forty-day funeral rites of the deceased king, about seven days before the coronation day. When a king passes on the members of the Ikelebe Ruling House present a candidate to the kingmakers who would then announce the king-to-be to the people. The king-to-be does not assume the duties of the king until his appointment is confirmed by the government of the state and then the Umogbai rites will be done. The Umogbai ceremony is spearheaded by the seventh-grade sets beginning with the latest celebrants. They are usually very powerful men who will take charge of security on the coronation day. This is the reason why they are drawn from the most agile groups because of the enormous tasks ahead of them. Men of this age are mature and capable of giving capable leadership to the age sets coming behind them in the execution of any communal project.[202] Segosime stated that the ceremony commences with the declaration of a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the kingdom by the leaders of the seven age grades. During this period women and children are prohibited from night outings.[203]

Members of the seven age grades appear dressed like warriors and hunters and they converge at the market square according to Arunah. They move around the kingdom sounding their drums and dancing and later reconverged at the market square again from when they initially took off. While parading around the Kingdom, stray livestock are confiscated for consumption and no one dares raise an eyebrow. The animals and livestock that are confiscated are used to prepare meals that they eat. Other ingredients that would be required to prepare their meals are made available by the prospective king. Sometimes their activities could be offensive because they sometimes use whips on people that flaunt the curfew. They are to keep surveillance for six days

[200] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom, Twenty Decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 Ad and Beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019. p. 190.
[201] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[202] Ibid, p. 18.
[203] Ibid, p. 225.

and nights preceding the seventh day which is the day of coronation. The curfew aims to maintain orderliness, peace, and calm.[204]

The rounding-off ritual takes place on the sixth day with a dance staged at the market square and this marks the end of the curfew. Wajeed revealed that the members celebrated this day with a hot meal cooked and eaten the traditional way with bare hands. There is also the chanting of hunting expedition songs by some of the members followed by loud ovations and praises from spectators. There is usually the display of acts of prowess by seasoned hunters with the intermitted booming of guns. By midnight, the dancing is stopped and all the hunters amongst them go into the forest to hunt for animals in a contest to determine who is the bravest amongst them. This set the pace for the climax of activities before the coronation. The winner was the one who brought home the largest animal and this animal was used to prepare the new king's first meal. The importance of the Umogbai ceremony is that the people involved would display their prowess, with regard to agility and strength in order to justify the confidence in them.[205] On the eve of the coronation rites, which begin at midnight, the proposed king is taken around the five villages that makes up the Auchi kingdom. Rituals are usually performed at the market square. The type and details of the rituals are known only to the kingmakers.[206] The proposed king, according to Segosime, then heads to Aibotse village where the first king was coronated. On getting to Aiboste village the king-to-be would perform the Uge tree rites. This rite is regarded as a customary rite to be observed before the enthroning of a new king.[207]

On the day of the coronation, as revealed by Tony, the king-to-be would be dressed in a kingly regalia of white robes knitted in golden threads. He and the council of elders would take a long walk round the kingdom then they would retire to the inner chambers of the king's palace to discuss and wait for the coronation to commence while spectators waited outside the palace. When it was time for the coronation proper, the king emerged from the inner chambers then all the spectators would rise and sit after the king-to-be had sat as a sign of respect. The kingmakers then proceeded with the necessary rites before the king-to-be was turbaned. The eldest man in the

[204] Ibid, p. 288.
[205] Ibid, p. 207.
[206] The details of this ritual remain a secret since the enthronement of the first Otaru. The activities of this kind of ritual are always a secret in most African societies.
[207] Ibid, p. 223.

Utsogun village is the person charged with the responsibility of installing a new king. The king-to-be is made to sit on the throne seven times and he is turbaned after some prayers and recitation from the Holy Koran. He is then declared the King, Otaru of Auchi Kingdom. [208]The Chief Imam then leads a prayer before the audience for the success and prosperity of the new King. This is normally after a representative of the State Government presents him with the Staff of Office. The event is usually well attended by friends, well-wishers, and government officials from far and near. There was also lots of fun fare and activities lined up for the occasion. Different dance groups and musicians are invited to perform in the festival. The various dance groups bring the event to a close late in the night at the King's courtyard.[209]

The age grade system has survived extinction in Auchi Kingdom and contemporary Nigeria because of its important roles in the society. Wajeed discloses that age grade in Auchi Kingdom could be seen as a way of life among the people because it encapsulates every socio-political, economic, and religious activity of the people. Age grade is also seen as a makeup for human limitations because through it the people of Auchi Kingdom help themselves in times of need and other developmental strides. It is, therefore, on record that age grade has helped its members to complete their houses and set up businesses among other ventures. He further revealed that age-grade practices in Auchi Kingdom underwent slight changes following the societal transformation and modernity. Despite the above, there is also continuity in the age-grade practices in the Kingdom because it is considered a strong factor and instrument of societal development,[210] The age grade system has remained active until today despite the contact with the Nupe and British.

2.11 Summary of the chapter

This chapter describes the land and people of Auchi Kingdom, located in what is now known as Nigeria. Auchi Kingdom had well-organized socio-cultural and political practices before the arrival of the British. This chapter describes the socio-cultural, economic and traditional system of the Auchi people during the pre-Nupe and Nupe eras. This chapter briefly reveals the traditions of origin of Auchi Kingdom. The traditions of Origin have two versions. In the first version, it is said that the first inhabitants of Auchi migrated from the Bauchi region of north central Nigeria. This

[208] Momoh Tony, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[209] Ibid, p. 209.
[210] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

version is said to be wrong because people and the Bauchi people have no similarities in culture, traditional practices, and language. In the second version, it is said that the first people of Auchi migrated from the Benin Kingdom in the fifteenth century due to a dispute he had with his brother and settled with his followers in present-day Auchi. This version is said to be accurate because the Bini and Auchi people share some similarities in culture, linguistics, tradition and religious practices. Even though Auchi is an off-shoot of the Benin Kingdom, over time the Auchi people developed distinctive cultural features that set them apart.

Wajeed revealed that the land occupied by the Auchi people was invaded by the Nupe people in 1860, leading to the alteration of its indigenous practices. However, prior to this incursion, the people of the Auchi Kingdom had established socio-cultural institutions, distinct traditional practices, kinship systems, and community practices that served as the foundation of their society.[211] Oseni stated that the Nupe raiders invaded Auchi and established a new administration system and other cultural practices. The British dislodged the Nupe Empire in 1897, dismantling the authority of the Nupe Empire in the region where they had a stronghold including Auchi Kingdom. The British established their authority over Auchi Kingdom and all her surrounding communities and clans until 1960 when Nigeria was granted independence. Auchi Kingdom serves as the headquarters of the Etsako West Local Government Area. It previously served as headquarters during the regime of the |Nupe Raiders and also during the British colonial era. The kingdom is divided into five grand quarters or districts, which are further made up of 25 villages. The town has a tropical wet and dry climate with an average annual temperature slightly lower than the Nigerian average.[212]Tony stated that the people of Auchi Kingdom speak the Etsako language, which is an Edoid language dialect.[213]

The Auchi Kingdom is historically known for its cultural and religious diversity, with Islam being a prominent religion in the area. Auchi Kingdom is traditionally headed by a monarchy, with the traditional ruler known as the Otaru of Auchi. Robson disclosed that the kingdom celebrates Auchi Day on January 8th, previously known as Uchi Day.[214] The kingdom has a rich history dating back to the mid-15th century when it was settled by migrants led by a man named Uchi from Udo

[211] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[212] Ibid, pp. 62-63.
[213] Ibid, p. 1.
[214] Ibid, p. 63.

in present-day Benin City. This migration was believed to have been prompted by a misunderstanding between Uchi and the then Oba of the Benin Kingdom. The Auchi people settled in what is now known as Etsako land, in current day Edo State. [215]Its specific geographical location within Nigeria contributed to its interactions with neighbouring regions and cultures. The land itself would have influenced aspects of agriculture, trade routes, and territorial boundaries within the kingdom. Arunah explained that the socio-cultural institutions of the Auchi Kingdom encompassed various aspects of daily life, governance, religious practices, and social organization.[216] These institutions include systems for Kinship, kingship, judicial processes, marriage customs, religious ceremonies, communal celebrations, age grade systems etc.

Kinship and kingship are two very important aspects of African cultural and traditional practice that are very important. For the understanding of any aspect of the social life of any African society, it is mandatory to have a vast knowledge of their system of kinship and marriage.[217] Kinship can be understood as a cultural system of recognised family roles and relationships that define the obligations, rights, and boundaries of interaction among the members of a self-recognizing group. It is determined through genetic relationships, adoption, or other ritualised behaviour such as marriage and household economies. Kinship systems range in size from a single, nuclear family to tribal or intertribal relationships. Above all, kinship establishes a network that gives its members a sense of belonging.[218] Kingship in Auchi Kingdom was a system that was introduced by the Nupe Raiders. During the pre-Nupe era in Auchi Kingdom, there was a segmentary system of administration with the absence of kings or central authorities. Arunah stated that this was a system where the oldest people in all were allowed to make decisions on behalf of the entire family. It was a time when old people were highly respected and it was also believed that age was synonymous with wisdom.[219] Segosime revealed that the arrival of the Nupe raiders changed the socio-political scene of Auchi. A monarchical system of administration was introduced and chiefs were appointed to assist the king in his administration.[220]

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[215] Ibid, p. 46.
[216] Ibid, p. 4.
[217] Alfred R. BROWN - Forde C. DARYLL, *African Systems, Kinship and Marriage*, London: Oxford University Press 1950, p. 1.
[218] Kanu A. IKECHUKWU, "Kinship in African Philosophy and the issue of development," *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE),* Vol. 1, Issue 9, September 2014, p.1.
[219] Ibid, p. 20.
[220] Ibid, p. 84.

The people of the Auchi Kingdom are predominately Muslims in recent times. Before the introduction of Islam in 1914, the people practised the African Traditional Religion (ATR).[221]Arunah disclosed that Auchi people were animists and polytheists. They worshipped several gods such as uchi, orle, amanue, ogholodio etc. They called on these gods for help and distress and they believed that their prayers were always answered.[222] Another very important socio-cultural practice during the pre-Nupe era was marriage. Marriages, which is a very important aspect of the lives of the Auchi people, were contracted customarily in the Auchi society before the infiltration of the Islamic and Western cultures in the nineteenth century. This was also a time when the eldest man in the family was very active. It was his duty to choose wives for all the male adults in his family. He took charge of all the processes of contacting the bride's family, settlement of the bride price and the marriage ceremony.[223]

In typical African societies, burial ceremonies were a very important affair. The practice of burial rites and ceremonies varies from place to place, tribe to tribe all over the world. This is as a result of different cultural heritage passed on from one generation to another.[224] Wajeed stated that burial ceremonies before the adoption of the Islamic faith in Auchi Kingdom were conducted under the established traditional and cultural practices by the indigenous people of Auchi Kingdom. Funeral ceremonies for the elderly were usually marked by fanfare and parade in the same way. There was no exception, even though it was an Odafe. The only difference was that when an Odafe died, the whole community was thrown into mourning. But in the case of an individual, mourning was limited to the family and friends of the deceased.[225]

In Auchi Kingdom, there were prohibitions to which automatic sanctions were attached known as taboo. It exploits the true nature of the human psyche and is used to inculcate practical attitudes through dramatic symbolism.[226] Oseni revealed that there were family taboos, the taboo of the local deities, the taboo of guardian spirit, personal taboos, and some special taboos affecting

[221] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[222] Ibid, p. 136.
[223] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[224] Clifford Meesua SIBANI - Charles EHISIENMEN, "Final Burial Rites and Ceremonies in Benin Kingdom, Nigeria: Socio-Religious Issues and Implications" *KIU Journal of Humanities* 5(4), 2020, p. 149.
[225] Obom Ibid, p. 191.
[226] John MIDDLETON (ed), *Africa: An Encyclopedia for Students Vol. 1*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 2002, p. 217

priests, chiefs, or even the Kingdom as a whole.[227] Akubor revealed that totem is another very important aspect of culture that is common in all communities in Africa. The biological totem of the Auchi people is the python while the political totem is the leopard. The leopard was the cause of the dispute between Uchi and the king of the Benin Kingdom which led to the migration of Uchi and his people from Benin to present-day Auchi.[228]

The age grade system, till recent times, is one very important aspect of Auchi Kingdom's socio-cultural system. Age grade/group is an association of people of equal standing, the same age, or contemporaries operating within a given territory or area for individual, collective, and societal transformation. The organization, structure, and activities of age grade practices in most Nigerian communities differ. But mainly, they serve as an organ for the development, and maintenance of peace, law, and order depending on the community they operate. This is one very important socio-cultural practice that has survived till the present day.[229]Other practices that have survived till the present day are the African Traditional Religion (ATR) but on a smaller scale, belief in totems, abdominal taboos, Kingship and Chieftaincy title system.

[227] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[228] Emmanuel Osewe AKUBOR, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[229] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

CHAPTER THREE: INDIGENOUS RULE AND ADMINISTRATION IN AUCHI KINGDOM UP TO THE EVE OF COLONIAL INVASION

3.1 Pre-Nupe administration in Auchi Kingdom

Pre-colonial administration in Auchi Kingdom can be categorised into two epochs. These are the pre-Nupe and Nupe eras. These two epochs in the history of Auchi kingdom are majorly based on oral sources because there are limited written sources available but the available written sources are complemented with oral sources. These two periods predate the art of conventional writing. Before the colonisation of Nigeria by Britain, Auchi Kingdom had a well-organised administrative system. The administrative system was primarily based on a hierarchical structure. The appointment of elders and heads of extended families was based on age, which was a common practice in most African communities. Africans at the time believed that age was synonymous with wisdom. For this reason, Africans had great respect for aged people.[230]

In the first epoch, which is the pre-Nupe era as explained by an oral source, the people of Auchi Kingdom operated the gerontocratic and segmentary political system before I860. This points to the fact that there was the absence of monarchies or kingship institutions in the Auchi society before 1860. Through oral tradition, it was discovered that the system of administration of Auchi before the Nupe conquest was a segmentary political institution known as the Odion System.[231] The pre-Nupe administration in Auchi Kingdom, according to Dawood, was based on tradition and customary laws. The laws and regulations of the kingdom were passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition, and disputes were resolved through a system of traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms. The administration was based on a hierarchical structure with clear lines of authority and accountability, which helped to ensure that the kingdom functioned smoothly and efficiently.[232]

[230] Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nigeria Ltd 2006, p. 23.
[231] Erhagbe O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[232] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

The word "Odion" derives from the Edo word "Odio"[233] meaning "senior". It was a system where the priests, and age-grades played different roles in the governance and politics of the Auchi society before 1860. The oldest men, priests, and age grades functioned more as "social clubs" than as agencies that exercised real authority in the administration of the Kingdom. It was the oldest man who emerged as the most respected and the most powerful leader in Auchi. For instance, he was the one who assigned duties such as routine chores, clearing farm paths, building market stalls, defence, etc. In essence, Akim argued that governance was the business of the Edio (elders) as the ruling elite in each of these days before the Nupe invasion of 1860.[234] In essence, Iluokhauno revealed that the pattern of the Auchi segmentary system was described as a gerontocracy, which is a government of the people by the elders. It was also referred to as the Odafe system of administration. It is imperative to state that the age and membership of an age grade association acted as major parameters utilised for the selection and appointment of people to leadership positions in the community. The oldest person in the most senior age grade association was appointed the Odion and he performed the functions of central administrator.[235]

Oral sources have revealed that the administrative structure of the pre-Nupe Auchi society consisted of the family unit, Quarter council, Village Council, and the Council of State.[236] These would be examined one after the other. Arunah explained that the family was the basic and first unit under which authority was experienced and exercised in the Kingdom. This was also the first agent of socialisation of a nuclear family. It was at this level that true authority and power was exercised. Every nuclear family is comprised of a man, his wife, and children. The focal point here is the extended family and this comprises of people who were essentially of the same grandfather or grandparents. Hence, it comprised a large number of persons to be managed and controlled. In the family unit, a man's ascendance to the position of headship was usually based on his age. This

[233] The word "Odio" is a Bini word which means "senior or elder" for more explanation and emphasis see. R. E. BRADBURY, *The Benin Kingdom and the Edo Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, London: *International African Institute*.
[234] Amedu. O. AKIM, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 22, 2021, (65), Auchi, Civil servant.
[235] Dickson O. ILUOKHAUNO, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 22, 2021, (56), Auchi, Civil servant.
[236] Saliu SHAIBU, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 22, 2021, (50), Abuja, Civil servant and farmer; Erhagbe O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

implies that the eldest adult male was always the head of the family and all the adult males of the family must have been initiated into manhood.[237]

The eldest man type of administrative unit was known as Odafe system as explained above. It was a system where the oldest man in the extended family was the head of the family and was called Odafe. The Auchi people at the time equated wisdom with age and great respect was accorded to aged people.[238] Arunah revealed that internal problems like quarrels and fighting within the family and some other domestic disputes were automatically his duties to settle. He was generally in charge of governing the family and to also foster a good image of the family within and outside the community. The Odafe was responsible for representing the members of his unit of administration at quarter meetings after which he conveyed proceedings of meetings to the members his family. The Odafe was highly venerated and treated as a representative of the forebears. He also remained the head of authority as long as he carried out his duties and obligations to his family members and treated their issues with equity and fairness. However, he would lose his authority if he failed to discharge the duties given to him by the ancestors of the land or if found to be engaged in corrupt activities and constantly unjust in his actions when attending to his family issues.[239]

According to Tony, the heads of the family units played special roles within their households when it involved economic activities. Agriculture was the main source of livelihood for all families in the Kingdom before the Nupe invasion of the nineteenth century. Like most African societies of the early times, land and labour were vital means of production through which people earned their living and these factors of production were jointly owned by all members of numerous family units within the Auchi kingdom. These factors of production were managed by the family heads of units. Farming and cultivation activities was a collective affair where all members of the extended family actively participated. According to Yakubu, the farmlands that were collectively owned by all members of the family were shared among the adult males of the

[237] Ibid, pp. 321-322.
[238] It is a typical belief among the people of Africa that elderly people must be respected and held in high esteem. Elderly people are believed to have a rich store of wisdom and they need to be consulted for advice on marital, political and spiritual issues. This resulted in the handing over of the mantle of leadership and authority to the old people before the invasion of the Nupe in 1860. See Jamaine M. ABIDOGUN - Toyin FALOLA (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of African Education and Indigenous Knowledge*, Cham: Springer Nature, 2020, pp. 285-286.
[239] Ibid, pp. 18-19.

family for the cultivation of crops by the Odafe. He was represented when he became too old to go to farm for cultivation purposes.[240] Mahmud revealed that when it was time for bush following, the family head needed to make it possible for his family members to acquire more farmlands for the cultivation of crops. Harvested crops were placed at the Odafe's disposal to determine the crops to be stored for consumption and those to be sold. Besides agriculture, some adult males within the extended family unit engaged in hunting activities. It constituted another source of economic life where the family head also exerted much influence before the incursion of the Nupe in 1860.[241]

A written source stated that the presiding Odafe was required to ensure the protection of the life of hunters in his family, most especially by providing them with African traditional and spiritual powers. When a wild and ferocious animal such as an elephant or leopard was killed by a hunter, the family would liaise with the quarter head to share the meat among people in the quarter. After this, the entire family of the brave hunter, especially the brave hunter himself and the head of the family, commands a great amount of respect within the quarter. The family head also accorded huge respect during the dry season when fishing activities and competitions in rivers Orle and Edio were ongoing. The Odafe was always given the biggest fish during fishing competitions in recognition of his exalted position.[242] An oral source revealed that it was a common practice and tradition for the houses of the extended family to be built within enclosed apartments and there were always quadrangles in the houses. This kind of house accommodated the family head and his wives, children, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren, or at times his brothers. It was a house for all members of the extended family. By rights of his position as the Odafe, his apartment was usually situated at the main entrance of the compound to ensure adequate security and safety for all the members of his extended family, while other inner apartments were meant for all the other members of the family.[243]

Also, another oral source reveals a very significant feature of the socio-political organization of the pre-Nupe Auchi society where the Odafe exercised much authority before the invasion of the Nupe was the age-grade system which was a ceremony for all adult males. It is

[240] Momoh TONY, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[241] Yakubu MAHMUD, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 5, 2021, (63), Custodian of the orle deity and farmer.
[242] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Manhood Initiation Festival in Auchi Kingdom*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2014, pp. 41-42.
[243] Lawal OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 5, 2021, (61), Businessman and farmer.

important to note that the Auchi society, like in other typical African societies, was polygamous. Not more than a male youth of the same age within a polygamous family is allowed to be "registered" into the same age grade. Sometimes, though, more than one may be of the same age within a family if they are of different mothers. The normal practice was to allow the most senior male child, as directed by the Odafe, to register while the other male child or children would have to wait for his turn to participate in subsequent age grades. The rationale for this action was to create disparity in the order in which succession to family headship could be easily known without disputes. It was also very important to uphold the people's tradition and customs of making the next Odafe in line to marry the widows of the late Odafe since it was a taboo for age mates to marry the wife of a fellow deceased age mate.[244]

Marriage, as revealed by Wajeed, has been a very significant cultural practice of the inhabitants of the Auchi society since the early times as explained in a previous chapter. It was another aspect where Odafe exercised much of his authority. One of the first requirements that any adult male would fulfil before marriage was that he must have been initiated into manhood. After fulfilling all the rights as required in the manhood rites, the young man is made to look for a young and befitting maiden to marry. After a choice of a young maiden is eventually made, it was, essentially, the duty of the Odafe to contact the parents of the girl to ensure that the young girl is married to the young man from his family. In essence, it was the duty of the family head to ensure that all the plans of the marriage go on accordingly.[245]

In the area of religious affiliations according to Abdullai, Africans practiced the African Traditional Religion (ATR). The family unit was also very committed people when practising the African Traditional Religion. The Odafe used sanctions to punish any member of his family who defaulted in practising the religion.[246] As already stated previously, because he was taken as a representative of the forebears according to Wajeed, the Odafe remained in authority as long as he carried out his duties fairly and treated all members of his family without bias. The typical African sees God as the sole and artful master of the universe. Hence, God is referred to by every family

[244] Richard E. SULE, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, March 30, 2021, (60), Civil Servant and farmer.
[245] Ibid, pp. 38-39.
[246] Osumah. ABDULLAI, "The origin of Auchi Kingdom in Edo State" (unpublished), A pamphlet on the history and tradition of the Auchi people, pp. 5-6.

member in Auchi Kingdom as Oghena, meaning God in the local dialect.[247] Since African Traditional Religion (ATR) was the popular faith before the invasion of the Kingdom by the Nupe, Oseni revealed that the head of the family had the sole duty to perform some spiritual and religious rites expected of him on behalf of all members of his family. He was expected to notify his family members of the religious and spiritual activities of the Quarter Council, Village Council, and the Council of State at all times. Some of these rites include sacrifices during wars and epidemics, for a good yield in harvest, before commencing the planting season, festivals, etc. The family unit, before the conquest by the Nupe, was the basic and most important unit for political, economic, and socio-cultural interactions among the Indigenous people of the pre-Nupe era in Auchi Kingdom[248]

Jimoh explained that the Quarter Council was the next level of the administrative structure and leadership before 1860. The Quarter unit was known as "Ede" in the local dialect of the Edo language. It was a combination of more than two closely related families or households who may have the same ancestry.[249] The quarter, as revealed by Mahmud, was an important unit on which the socio-administrative, political and cultural organisations of the village were based. The governance of the Quarter unit was placed under the authority of the family heads within each quarter under the leadership of the oldest man. This oldest man was known as the Okpishia-ede (the oldest man in the village). The method adopted in the selection of the eldest man in the Quarter Council was always through a careful and thorough study of the names of the surviving members of the oldest age grades. The surviving oldest man of all family heads within each quarter are automatic members of the Quarter Council and they owned their responsibilities and allegiance to the Quarter head.[250]

There was an open-door policy and channel of communication between the Odafe-in-council and his people. According to Arunah, discussions and decisions of the council were communicated to the people through their representatives, e.g. the heads of the component kindreds, compounds, and families within the quarter. Of course, the opinion of the people were

[247] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[248] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[249] Jafaru S. JIMOH, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, April 1, 2021, (79), Retired civil Servant and farmer.
[250] Momoh MAHMUD, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, 5 April 2021, (40), Businessman and a prince from the royal family.

noted and conveyed to the heads of Quarter through the Odafes as heads of their respective families. This was how the people participated in the socio-political and cultural administration of their quarters before the nineteenth century.[251] The Quarter Council, as explained by Sule, and the various family heads discussed issues that affected the entire quarter and took binding decisions. Other issues such as disputes between the various families in the quarter that could not be settled at the family level were always referred to the Quarter Council meeting for further deliberations before decisions were taken.[252]

One very important role of the quarter head, according to Tony, was to inform the people in his quarter about the decisions of the village council. He also made important announcements to his people on behalf of the village council because he was his quarter's representative to the village council.[253] An oral source revealed that at harvest seasons, the people of the quarter paid tribute in the form of farm produce to the head of the quarter. He also ensured an equitable sharing of the deceased estate amongst his children as custom demanded.[254] It should be noted that the bulk of the economic and socio-cultural duties are performed by the Odafe and are never exercised by the Quarter Council. Iluokhauno explained that the family unit performed most of the roles and it was only issues that could not be handled that were referred to the quarter council. The Quarter Council also had the duty of dishing out punishments to adulterers. This offence was said to be very serious and the punishment for this was a fine and the item of this offence was a matured she-goat.[255]

The judicial process of the pre-Nupe Auchi society ensured the swift passage of justice at the quarter level as revealed by Sule. The division of the area into graded units, e.g. the family, the compound, the kindred, and the quarter, signified that a quarter had four types of court for the passage of justice. The lowest was the court of the family head and it charged no fees and imposed no fines. The duty of this court was to ensure peace and harmony by settling quarrels among wives and children as members of the same family. The second court was that of the compound head. It also did not charge any fees and imposed no fines. Its main function was to promote peaceful co-

[251] Ibid, pp. 320-321.
[252] Richard E. SULE, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[253] Ibid, pp. 18-19.
[254] Akim O. AMEDU, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[255] Dickson O. ILUOKHAUNO, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

existence by judging cases involving the family members of the numerous family units living within the same compound. It helped to maintain kinship relations, family ties, and solidarity in the area. It also helped to bring to book family members within the compound who had committed grave offences that only upper courts within the village or clan had the jurisdiction to handle.[256]

The third court was that of the kindred head. It was as stated by Wajeed, unlike the other two which was composed up of the Odafe of the kindred functioning as chairman, and Odafe(s) as compound heads within the kindred. The court attended to all civil cases involving persons from various compounds within the kindred. Some of those cases were usually those which the courts of the compound heads could not handle. It usually handled cases involving persons from different compounds within the kindred,[257] Oseni explained that it transferred difficult cases to the highest court within the quarter, i.e. the court of the Quarter Head. Membership of the above court comprised the Okpisha-ede, who acted as President of the court, and several other elders and leaders of the compounds and kindred in the quarter. The court attended all civil cases involving persons belonging to different kindred or compounds but living in the same quarter that the lower courts could not handle and in addition, settled cases that concerned property and inheritance. All complaints and appeals from the subordinate courts within the quarter were brought to this court. This court imposed fines depending on the gravity of the offence committed. Fines were usually paid with cowries or live stocks, e.g. goats, sheep, etc. It usually conducted some investigations into criminal cases occurring within the quarter. When the Quarter Head and his court had no jurisdiction over some cases, such cases were transferred after some investigation to the most superior court, which is the village court. This was the Igbai Ikpishai Evho (council of elders of the village.[258]

The Quarter Head also performed roles described as extra-judicial functions. Oseni revealed that among these were: planning the annual farming programme for the quarter and receiving yearly tribute from the farmers, receiving bride-price and other ritual payments on women in the quarter and arranging marriages for them, acting as the representative of the forebears of the quarter and offering sacrifices of various kinds to them on behalf of his kinsmen

[256] Richard E. SULE, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[257] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[258] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

in the quarter, etc.[259] Therefore, the Quarter Head functioned, not only as a connecting link between his community and other component quarters in the village, but also as an intermediary between his people living in his quarter and those who had died. This, according to Zibril, was the situation of Auchi society before the Nupe invasion of 1860.[260]

The next level of authority above the quarter, according to Jimoh, was the village council. The village was a number of merged quarters and large kindred. based on an egalitarian structure with a gerontocracy kind of administration. The headship of the village council was the oldest man among members of the council. The emergence of the head of the village council was predicated the on age-grades system because it was the only way the surviving oldest man could be known in the village. It must be mentioned here that the Quarter Head, despite his elevated position in the village, was more of an advisor than a venerated authority, when compared with the Quarter Head during this period. It should be noted that authority in the Village Council consisted more of the quarter heads within the same village.[261] Oseni revealed that the Village head was only answerable to the Auchi Council of State which was headed by Okpishia-evbo (Oldest man in the village). Meetings were organized and presided over by him and were mostly held at the village market square or his house. Security, political, economic, spiritual, and socio-cultural issues were discussed at the Village Council as they affected the village.[262] Appeal, murder, other serious cases from the various Quarter Councils, and cases beyond the legal jurisdiction of both the family unit and quarter councils, as disclosed by Iluokhauno, were brought to the village council for final settlement. Decisions taken at the Village Council meetings were not difficult to convey to the people that they affected because the composition of the council was always an equal representation of the various quarters, which were all the Quarter Heads.[263]

Momoh revealed that the most difficult task was getting all the Quarter Heads under their areas of administrative influence and getting them informed of the decisions of the Village Council for effective enforcement. Religion always played a very significant role in precolonial times in Africa. The Village Council was a place where the African Traditional Religion took precedence.

[259] Lawal OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[260] Garba S. Zibril, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu, 3 March, 2021, (63), Businessman and Politician
[261] Jafaru S. JIMOH, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[262] Lawal OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[263] Dickson O. ILUOKHAUNO, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

The local priests performed very vital roles in this regard. Through their mystical and spiritual powers, they consulted and interpreted the signs and directives of the local gods and goddesses. Sometimes the gods or goddesses needed to be consulted before certain decisions or actions are carried out so as not to incur their wrath. The local priest made sacrifices on behalf of the village to the gods and goddesses. The priests commanded significant political influence within the village as a diviner and advisory member of the Village Council of Elders.[264]

The Village Council played a very significant role which cannot be under placed especially when it has to do with the economy. Arunah stated that the much-increased volume of commercial activities, which was the result of continuous growth in population and an increase in agricultural products, necessitated the creation of more markets in the village that boosted trading activities. All the quarters had their markets (Ughele), where commercial activities were carried out from sunrise to sunset. A price control mechanism was worked out by the Village Council to prevent any unnecessary customer-client crisis.[265] However, despite the extent of autonomy exercised by various heads through the Village Council before the invasion by the Nupe in 1860, there were still some crucial functions that were far beyond their jurisdiction or authority. Such issues were handled by the highest level of policy formulation and implementation organ. This organ was known as the Council of State.

Zibril stated that the Council of State was the highest policy formulating and decision-making body of Auchi society before 1860. It was composed of village heads whose ascendance to the council depended on them being the oldest surviving member of their age grades in their respective villages.[266] The Chief Priest, as disclosed by Oseni, was always present at the Council of State meetings for certain spiritual and religious conveniences. He was heavily relied upon to consult the divinities when the members were in difficult stages of their meetings. The issues of common interest that were of huge significance that affected Auchi like communal labour, security, religion and inter-village disputes were deliberated upon by the Council of State under the headship of Utsogun village. This was so because it was believed that Utsogun village was the most prominent village in the Auchi. This made the Utsogun village to be respected and

[264] Momoh TONY, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[265] Ibid, pp. 123-124.
[266] Garba S. Zibril, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

collectively regarded as the head of all the other villages with a royal staff of authority, known as "Ituke" which represented a symbol of office and royalty.[267]

It must be noted here that the meetings of the Council of State were convened depending on the importance of the issues to be deliberated upon. Tony disclosed that before such meetings were convened, the Utsogun village head usually sent out the Ukabo-n 'evbo (town crier) to notify the village heads of the forthcoming meeting. Decisions taken during such meetings were communicated to all the quarter councils by the village heads that made up the Council of State. The Quarter Heads would also communicate the decisions to family heads who would also passed on the message to their wards for their information and necessary actions. Decisions of such importance were never disobeyed by village, quarter and family heads. Vital information and decisions of the various organs of administration and authority were disseminated to the people of Auchi.[268]

Wajeed revealed that when there was an outbreak of war with enemies from other kingdoms or communities, the Council of State summoned the local military forces, Umareghe and Umakpogho, to defend Auchi. This local military force was constituted from the various age grades of the kingdom. Judicial issues related to inter-village disputes and cases of serious crimes that village councils could handle were usually referred to the Council of State for deliberations, The Chief Priest was very important in this regard because it was his duty to consult the oracles, gods, and goddesses whose verdicts was final and nobody challenged it. He further explained that the Chief Priest was also expected to collaborate with other local priests to make sacrifices and cleansing of Auchi to make the new planting season blissful with a high yield of crops. it was also through his divine consultation with the divinities that major festival dates were known.[269]

Tony revealed that the Council of State also exercised its authority on Uchi market days. The market was a true symbol of the immortalisation of the originator of Auchi. The location of the market was the first settlement of Uchi, the progenitor of the kingdom. The settlement expanded and led to the establishment of the market. The location of the market was at the boundaries between Utsogu and Iyekhei. It was and to date, still attended by all traders of the

[267] Lawal OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[268] Ibid, p. 19.
[269] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, p. 210.

kingdom once every four days. The daily activities of the market were regulated by the Council of State to ensure the maintenance of peace and the stabilisation of market prices.[270] This epoch ended with the invasion of Auchi by the Nupe imperialists in 1860.

3.2 Nupe administration in Auchi Kingdom

The second epoch of pre-British Colonial Administration is the Nupe Administration in Auchi. The Nupe imperialist was an imperial power from the north-central part of Nigeria. They were able to exert their imperial power over several communities and kingdoms across the land mass known as Nigeria today. Written records on Nupe-Auchi intergroup relations before 1860 are very scanty. However, historians heavily relied on oral tradition for the reconstruction of aspects of the socio-cultural and economic history of intergroup contacts between the Nupe and Auchi during the period.[271] Oral tradition has it that the Nupe and Auchi, including other Afenmai communities, did enjoy some flourishing and symbiotic trading activities before 1860. It indicates that traders going to and coming from Nupe land to Auchi and other neighbouring communities passed through Akoko in present-day Ondo State, Nigeria.[272] The Nupe arrived, initially, as petty traders to carry out commercial activities. They came passing through Akoko land into parts of Ekiti and Afenmai i.e. Etsako, Owan, and Akoko-Edo, advertising their articles of trade. Such wares included potash, copper, glass, and shea butter exchanging these articles for kola nuts, palm oil, palm kernel oil, and camwood before 1800. This was a period when there was absence of money (banknotes and coins). A written source revealed that all transactions were carried out through the barter trade.[273]

However, some other important trade goods were secured by the Nupe as long-distance and external traders from their Etsako counterparts, particularly in Auchi, Uzairue, Aviele, Okpella, Okpekpe, three-Ibie, Weppa-Wanno, etc, at this time. Among these were ivory tusks, slaves, yams, hoes, cutlasses, traps, and livestock. Apart from Auchi people, several other traders, particularly those from other communities such as the Esan, Bini, the Urhobo/lsoko, etc, also actively participated in the local and long-distance external trade, and exchanged their goods with

[270] Momoh TONY, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[271] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[272] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu via telephone, May 6, 2024, (60), Researcher.
[273] Johnson O. AREMU - Solomon O. AFOLABI, "Akoko resistance to external invasion and domination in the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS) Volume II, Issue XI,* November 2018, pp. 67-68.

the Nupe in Auchi markets before 1860. Arunah agreed that the strategic location of the Auchi Kingdom on the Northern axis and the prevalence of developed trading economies in the communities already listed above encouraged traders from Northern and Southern Nigeria to come into the area during this period. The Auchi market served as a meeting point for traders from different communities to exchange their goods and farm products through the barter trade.[274] An archival source revealed that the Colonial Office had over the years used its funds to develop and maintain the market.[275]

There were other major commodities which played significant roles in this trade. Among these were spiritual objects, particularly magic items, traditional medicine, divination tools, talismans, magical regalia etc.[276] The functions and importance of these religious and spiritual materials were very significant before 1800. It needs stressing that both the sellers and the utilisers believed that they helped to wade off or weaken the activities of the wizards, witches, and evil-doers before 1800. Little wonder, therefore, that the Nupe and people from other Confluence Communities,[277] such as Lokoja, Ebira land, Ogori land, and Magongo, patronised, depended on, and continued to use the traditional divination and medicine obtained from the Auchi market before the Nupe intrusion into their territory in 1860. Mutanebi explained that the role played by these magic objects and traditional medicine as well as other indigenous Etsako religious institutions in the resistance movements put forward by the people in 1860 during the Nupe invasion of Auchi was very helpful but were eventually outrun by the Nupe.[278]

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[274] Ibid, p. 123.
[275] BEN PROF. 1, File 44/11, VOL. XI, Annual report of Kukuruku Division by Mr. S. J. Henry by District Officer, Kukuruku Division, 1951, p. 7.
[276] Religious and spiritual items or objects are directly related to the African Traditional Religion (ATR). Till date, many African still buy or acquire these items or objects because they still believe in their potency. See Aloysius M. LUGIRA, *African Traditional Religion*, New York: Chelsea House, 2009, p. 95.
[277] Confluence communities refer to areas located around the confluence point of two major rivers, the Niger and Benue rivers. The most prominent confluence community in Nigeria is Lokoja, which is situated at the confluence of these two rivers. This geographical feature has significant cultural, historical, and economic importance to the people living in these communities. The confluence communities in Nigeria hold cultural significance as they are often associated with myths, legends, and traditional beliefs. The convergence of two major rivers is sometimes seen as a sacred or spiritually significant location by local communities. In some cases, rituals or ceremonies may be performed at these confluence points to honor ancestral spirits or seek blessings for the community. The confluence communities also have economic importance due to their proximity to major waterways. The Niger and Benue rivers serve as vital transportation routes for goods and people, facilitating trade and commerce in the region. Fishing and agriculture are also important economic activities in these areas, benefiting from the fertile lands and abundant water resources provided by the confluence. See A. E. AFIGBO, "Southeastern Nigeria, the Niger-Benue Confluence, and the Benue in the Precolonial Period: Some Issues of Historiography" *History in Africa* Vol. 24, 1997, pp. 1-8.
[278] Seghosime Abdul MUTANEBI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

Oseni explained that despite the existence of such a viable link of religious and spiritual interaction between the Nupe and Auchi, Islam, which had already spread as a major religion in Nupe land at this time was not introduced by the Muslim Nupe traders into Auchi society before I860. This was, perhaps, due to the efficacy, effectiveness and pervasiveness of the indigenous religion during this period and also the desire to maintain economic relations.[279] Harunah, in his elaborate research, mentioned that the significance of certain trade goods, such as traditional wares, for the promotion and enhancement of the socio-cultural and economic relations between the Nupe and the Etsako society before I860. He further revealed that other goods that were traded included woven cloths, red long fez caps, ivory bracelets and anklets, bracelets, etc. The Nupe traders and those of the other "Confluence Communities" already mentioned above, had also exchanged these for Etsuko's products. No doubt, these traditional wares influenced, encouraged and impacted on the indigenous modes of dressing of both Auchi men and women before the Nupe invasion of the area in 1860.[280]

The Nupe invasion of 1860 was as a result of the struggles and contests between two sons, Usman Zaki in Rabbah and Masaba in Lade, of the late Nupe sovereign on whom was to be crowned king. The roles played by the slaves in the prosecution of the various civil wars that broke out in Nupe land in the early nineteenth were very significant.[281] Arunah disclosed that the two princes sponsored the sporadic raids through their respective armies which greatly depended essentially on the slaves to increase the population of their forces. It was, however, noted that the demand for slaves became higher after the death of Mallam Dendo of Nupe land in 1833 during the succession war between his sons.[282] Mason stated that Masaba sent his armies on expeditions against Oworo, Bunu, Owe, and even as far south as Afenmai land where Auchi is located.[283] Wajeed revealed that the two princes in Nupe land, in a bid to increase their military power and to secure success against one another in the 1830s and early 1840s, increased their sponsorship,

[279] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[280] Hakeem Billy HARUNAH, "The effects of the Nupe invasion of 1860 on Auchi indigenous names and modes of clothing," *Lagos Notes and Record* Vol. 10, 2004, pp. 31-32.
[281] Siegfried F. NADEL, *A Black Byzantium*, London: Oxford University Press 1942, p. 80.
[282] Ibid, p. 167.
[283] Michael MASON, "The Jihad in the South: An outline of the Nineteenth Century Nupe Hegemony in North Eastern Yorubaland and Afenmai" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 5, No. 2, 1970, p.196.

supervision, and encouragement of sporadic raids against Auchi and her neighbouring communities where they captured and took away several people as slaves.[284]

Apart from the military aspect, according to Dawood, slaves were also needed for other important socio-political duties and functions by the Nupe/Fulani leaders at this time. For instance, both Usman Zaki and Masaba depended on their slave resources for the performance of their diplomatic and favour-seeking duties to Halilu, the Emir of Gwandu. These duties though were an effort to show respect and loyalty/allegiance to the Emir, they included sending to Gwandu a large number of slaves and foodstuff and these included yams, kola nuts, and even domestic animals such as goats, sheep etc, as well as birds, i.e. cocks and ducks, all of which were secured during the raids in the Auchi Kin and other neighbouring territories before 1850. Masaba, who was in a hurry to increase his influence in Gwandu, to enable him to overshadow Usman Zaki and emerge as the successor of Mallam Dendo in Rabbah, was said to have placed more emphasis on the utilisation of slaves for servicing relations between Lade and Gwandu during this period.[285]

It is certain, as explained by Dawood, that both Usman Zaki and Masaba adopted military policies, which were directed towards securing slaves and other socioeconomic benefits through raids on neighbouring communities such as Auchi in the early 1830s and 1840s. However, Masaba's exploits had a more devastating effect on the Auchi, due to his determination to succeed in his activities. This partly explains why he successfully supplanted Usman Zaki through the help of Halilu, the Emir of Gwandu, and became the ruler of Nupe land in 1845. Even after his success against Usman Zaki, Masaba continued to sponsor his slave raiders which went far into Afenmai land. They established some provincial administrations frequently disrupted by revolts and Nupe control was only of short duration.[286]

The surrender by the inhabitants of Auchi to the Nupe invaders in 1860, according to Wajeed, may have been precipitated by the refusal by the Oba of Benin to assist the people and oral tradition indicates that relations between the Auchi people and the Binis during this period were not cordial. Nearly all the Etsako communities had successfully revolted against the Oba of

[284] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[285] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[286] Obaro IKIME (ed), *Groundwork of Nigerian History,* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nig Ltd, 1980, p. 289.

Benin and had extricated themselves from his imperial rule which had been imposed on them from the period of Oba Ewuare's reign (1440-1473).[287] Therefore, the Auchi Kingdom did not get any assistance from the Benin Kingdom to stop the Nupe conquest of their territory in 1860. In essence, Erhagbe explained that the Oba of Benin was not under any moral or constitutional obligation to defend Auchi people who had refused to allow him to rule over them. By their decision to resist Benin's control over them, they had shown that they could do it alone, to achieve social, political, and economic stability, security, and progress without the help of an imperial state, including Benin before 1860.[288]

The Nupe imperialist, after invading the Auchi and her neighbours in 1860, had been advancing towards Benin from the Agbede- Ewu (Ishan) area during this period. Arunah stated that the reason for this was that both the Bida government under Masaba and the Sokoto Caliphate wanted to conquer and annex the Benin Kingdom down to the Atlantic sea coast for their economic and political gains from the second half of the nineteenth century. Hence the Binis would not have had the time, and the energy to assist the Etsako people to defend their territory against an acknowledged common external enemy, i.e. the Fulani/Nupe, whether the Etsako were still under Benin's control or not, would still appear to have moved ahead to invade the area in 1860.[289] Mahmud explained that several factors influenced Nupe's victory over Auchi Kingdom in 1860. First was the military and political organization and institutions of Nupe in the nineteenth century. Thus Usman Zaki, shortly after he had established through a Caliphate system, a strong central administration for the Nupe in Bida in 1857, decided to re-organize the army. This was to enable him to protect and defend the Nupe Empire, and ensure the success of its external expansionist policy. The result was the evolution and development of a centralised command structure in which the army came under the Maiyaki Bida in 1857.[290] Oseni revealed this new structure led to the introduction of the military title of Balogun whose holder took over power from the title of Maiyaki Bida, which was borrowed by the Nupe from the Hausa/Fulani military institutions in 1857.[291]

[287] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, pp. 66-70; Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[288] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[289] Ibid, p. 167.
[290] Momoh. MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[291] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

Furthermore, Harunah revealed that the new Nupe military organisation, unlike the old one, brought together all the private armies of the Fulani princes, particularly those of Usman Zaki, which had operated in Rabah from 1833 to 1845; and Masaba's, which had similarly operated in Lade from 1833 to 1850. This was in addition to the fact that many of the Nupe soldiers, who had served in the private armies of the two rival Nupe princes, Jimada and Majia, had also secured placements in the new Nupe army under the Etsu Nupe in Bida in the 1850s. The effect of this revolutionary change on the military strength and administration of the emergent Nupe/Fulani forces in Bida was very significant. Harunah also added that the armies comprised career fighters, adventurers, kidnappers, mercenaries, marauders, ex-slaves, etc. who, through the strong centralised command structure under the Maiyaki, put their previous war experience into practice to ensure success for Bida's rulers against the Auchi and her neighbours in I860.[292]

Garuba revealed that the major aspect of the role of the military in Nupe's success against the Auchi in 1860 was the superior weapons utilised by the Bida forces. The Bida forces were armed with superior guns and firepower of various descriptions. The guns and the ammunition were said to have been secured by the Bida government through the help of the European and African traders on the Niger river.[293] Prominent among these African traders who transported the superior firearms to Nupe land in the late 1850s and 1860s was Madam Tinubu,[294] the Ekerin Iyalode of the Egba, but based in Lagos. However, it included a heavy cannon. Earlier in 1851, she had helped the Egba government in Abeokuta to secure such firearms from the British in Lagos. The result was the success of the Egba people against their enemies, particularly the Fon of Dahomey in March of that year. Dawood mentioned that the Nupe under Masaba in Bida did, like the Egba in Abeokuta, have a great advantage over the Auchi Kingdom because their soldiers

[292] Hakeem Billy HARUNAH, "The impact of Nupe invasion on Etsako society, 1860-1897: A sociopolitical and cultural analysis," PhD Dissertation, University of Lagos, 1990, p. 205.
[293] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[294] Madam Tinubu, also known as Iyalode Efunroye Tinubu, was a prominent figure in Nigerian history. She was a merchant princess, a social advocate, and a warrior who played a significant role in the formation of modern-day Nigeria. Madam Tinubu later started trading to support herself and her family. She traded primarily in salt but also dealt with tobacco, firearms, and other commodities between Lagos, Abeokuta and along the river Niger. As her wealth grew, she also traded with the Europeans. she gained prominence in the region and earned the title 'Merchant Princess' or 'Iyalode'. She established a large following among traders and farmers across Yoruba land due to her political influence and fair business practices. Her wealth was equivalent to that of some kings in the region during her time. See LaRay DENZER, "Yoruba Women: A Historiographical Study" *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1994; Ọladipọ YEMITAN, *Madame Tinubu: Merchant and King-maker,* Lagos: University of Lagos University Press, 1987.

used effective, efficient, and technologically advanced weapons during their invasion of the area in I860.[295]

Other important weapons used by the Nupe forces, according to Wajeed, which enhanced their success in 1860, included swords of different shapes and sizes, spears, shields, bows and arrows, etc. There was always a constant supply of these weapons from the North, particularly from Hausa land, Borno, Sokoto, and Gwandu, and the use of horses. This enhanced the efficiency of both the Nupe infantry and cavalry in the nineteenth century. Thus, the unavailability of such military facilities in Auchi, particularly the horses which made it impossible for the people to establish a cavalry, during this period, ensured Nupe's success against Auchi in 1860.[296] Furthermore, Erhagbe revealed that there was the utilisation by the Bida government of some seasoned generals, many of whom were foreign army commanders recruited from different ethnicities outside Nupe land. They could be best described as mercenaries because they were working only for money or other reward such as slaves and other benefits. [297]

Harunah stated that the utilisation of non-Nupe and Fulani people for military actions and raids in 1860 explains the nature of the large-scale war on Auchi and other Etsako communities and also Masaba's continuation of Usman Zaki's aggressive external contacts with the people of Auchi during the period. It also shows the extent to which the position, image, and new authority of Bida, which rose and lived by war from the 1820s, 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, were to be protected, maintained, and ensured by the use of force in the 1860s and 1890s.[298] Tony disclosed that in the nineteenth century, Hausa land where Nupe Empire is located experienced rampant wars, and military duties and service were not restricted to the military chiefs alone. Tony explained that it was capability, bravery and tactfulness that were the essential qualities for eligibility into the military. The term war captain or army commander was also used to describe not only the regular Nupe/Fulani generals but also applied to the non-Nupe or non-Fulani generals, particularly those of the Hausa, Borno, Ilorin, Okun, etc. who collaborated with Bida in fighting Auchi in 1860, during the Nupe invasion and administration of Auchi before 1897.[299]

[295] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[296] Ibid, p. 110.
[297] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[298] Ibid, pp. 212-213.
[299] Ibid, p. 26.

The Nupe invaders, according to Wajeed, carried out their military expeditions against the Auchi people in the dry season of 1860. Not only was this the time when most farmers were fully engaged in the clearing of the forests and tilling the soils in readiness for planting also in their farms, it was a period when most houses, particularly their roofs responded very sharply to fire. The utilisation of straws or long grass for roofing at this time, and the dryness of the dry season encouraged houses to catch fire very easily. The Nupe took advantage of this situation to set fire to several houses in Auchi in 1860. Like the other strategies above, this idea of the destruction of settlements in Auchi caused confusion and general insecurity which influenced the weak resistance put up by the inhabitants of Auchi during the Nupe conquest of 1860.[300] Oseni believes that Auchi people had no large-scale military organisations which could be compared to the Nupe army. The Auchi people utilised their age-grade organizations to mount all counter-offensives against the Nupe forces in 1860. These age-grades, though helped their various communities to ensure internal security before 1860. The age grade was not a standing army so their functions were not centered around military duties. They performed other major duties in their respective villages and clans. Members of the age-grades had their respective duties or occupations, which they returned to after any military expedition. In essence, the age-grades constituted the armies comprised of farmers, hunters, fishermen, carvers, blacksmiths, magicians, diviners, medicine men etc.[301]

The Auchi society had no war heroes or seasoned generals having previous war experience and training to draw upon for launching counter-offensives against their external enemy before 1860. One major factor responsible for this was that they were not involved in fighting large-scale wars with some of their powerful neighbours before the invasion of 1860. Although certain Etsako communities were said to have put up stiff resistance to the Bini conquest in about the 1440s and early 1500s, it is clear that none of them undertook any major military expeditions against an external power in the period from 1550 to 1860. Hence, they were easily defeated by an external army under some powerful alien generals from Bida in the latter half of the nineteenth century as stated by Oseni.[302] Auchi, unlike the Benin Kingdom according to Wajeed, did not have very deep moats around the Kingdom during this period. The moats were man-made but they allowed it to degenerate to an extent that it could not prevent enemies from invading its villages. He further

[300] Ibid, p. 109.
[301] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[302] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

explained that in 1860, during the Nupe invasion of the area, the Auchi people vacated their homes and took refuge in the forest and kukuruku hills, when they sensed the Nupe forces were advancing towards their homes in 1860. Although the aim was to avoid bloodshed or loss of lives, this pre-emptive measure advertised the military weakness of Auchi and facilitated its easy defeat by the Nupe invaders in 1860.[303]

Erhagbe revealed that after taking over the administration of Auchi in 1860, the Nupe encountered some problems. Prominent among them was the problem of political administration which could not be solved without causing some radical modifications in the indigenous government and institutions of Auchi. The issue on ground was the fact that the segmentary system of administration in Auchi encouraged the system which did not provide for a strong central administration. The reason for this structural deficiency in the political system was the fact that there was no monarchy in Auchi and this made the segmentary system operational before 1860.[304] Again, Arunah explained that after the conquest of Auchi, the Nupe people began to search for certain desirable qualities in an individual for his consideration for appointment as King of Auchi. The Nupe insisted that the man should be a man of wealth, forceful personality, ability, character and influence. Ikelebe of Auchi (Momoh), who was found to have possessed these qualities, emerged as the ideal leader of the people. Ikelebe had previously visited Nupe land and acted as a Nupe agent, and collaborator, and helped the Bida forces to procure slaves. He also acted as a local Nupe Consul. No doubt according to Arunah, his appointment to the position of monarch in 1860 was a vote of confidence in his leadership abilities and an appreciation for his contribution to the success of Nupe's imperial administrative structure based on a monarchical system in the nineteenth century.[305]

The Nupe warlords had, from the outset, chosen the right collaborators who were not only loyal to their rulers and government, but also showed adequate sensitivity to the aspirations, expectations and interests of the Sokoto Caliphate. This, according to Tony, had a significant influence on the emergence of peaceful co-existence between Auchi and the Nupe authorities from the late nineteenth century. It also ensured the success of the monarchy during this period.[306] The

[303] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[304] Edward, O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[305] Ibid, p. 323.
[306] Ibid p. 30.

new sociopolitical system allowed the monarchy to exercise enormous political, judicial and spiritual authority from the second half of the nineteenth century. For example, the Otaru of Auchi in 1860, acted as both head of state and head of government. As the head of state according to Oseni, he performed purely ceremonial functions, e.g. receiving and sending out emissaries or diplomats, conferring official and nonofficial titles on those who deserved such honours, ratifying treaties, etc. As the head of government, he carried out certain administrative functions, e.g. coordinating the activities of other institutions, including the village heads, ensuring that laws, particularly those concerning tax or tribute collections, which were passed on to him by his over-lords in Bida and Gwandu, were enforced by his chiefs, age-grades, etc. Besides, he was the head of the Auchi judicial institution. To this extent, he tried all serious cases within his domain and acted as the final authority in matters of appeal. Moreover, he functioned as the spiritual leader of the Auchi people.[307]

In a bid to avoid despotic administration, Wajeed revealed that the Nupe home government introduced many "checks and balances" in 1860. First was the placing of the king of the new Kingdom under the royal authority of the Etsu Nupe who supervised how he carried out his day-to-day political, social, and judicial roles from the 1860s and 1890s.[308] Secondly, the king was not allowed to rule his kingdom all alone. Rather, according to Dawood, he was assisted by many Igbanusoi (turbaned) chiefs, who were holders of the Nupe/Hausa/Fulani titles from 1860. Among these were Daudu (village heads), Dania, Yerima, Sedenu, Yama, Jagaba, Tomo, Bagudu, Galadima, (Imam), etc. as already explained in a previous chapter. These new title-holders were members of the central Igbai-Igbanusoi (Council of Turbaned Chiefs) which assisted the king in performing his legislative, executive, religious, and judicial functions as explained in a previous sub-topic.[309]

The new monarchy in Auchi Kingdom, according to Segosime, apart from depending on the holders of the new titles also utilised many of indigenous Auchi sociopolitical institutions for operating the government and administration. Among these is the ekabor (Town-Criers), ikor or messengers, irhuai (age-grades), edafe, etc, whose roles and functions could not be performed by

[307] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[308] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[309] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

any of the externally generated institutions from 1860.[310] This shows that the monarchy, though took over political power from the elders as the traditional rulers but could not function well without their help. Similarly, despite the disbanding of the igbai-ikpishai or Councils of Elders in all the clans, councils headed by the turbaned chiefs were difficult to control. Erhagbe believes that many of the decisions and laws were made by the senior elites, particularly those that encouraged mutual co-existence, and respect for leaders and authority. This kind of acculturation or assimilation of aspects of the indigenous government was structured into the Nupe's sociopolitical systems in Auchi Kingdom. He further revealed that the monarchy could not really brush aside completely every institution that derived from the segmentary structures, which flourished in the pre-Nupe conquest era. It shows how this segmentary institution helped to sustain the new monarchical system from 1860.[311]

Oseni revealed that an interesting thing was how these institutions adapted or adjusted their roles to reflect the emergent revolutionary changes. For example, the Edafe and the other elders, who were allowed to function before 1860, were compelled to restrict their activities to their respective quarters, kindred or extended family. Even though they were precluded from the membership of the central Igbai-Igbanusoi Council, they did not protest against the monarchs nor did they incite the people to rebel against the Nupe administration which had encouraged, influenced and ensured their being relegated to the background as mere consulting or advisory institutions by the Otaru from1860.[312]

Segosime believes that the elders were not happy that they had lost control of the political administration of their villages and clans to the Nupe-appointed officials. One major reason why they did not show resentment against the emergent changes was that they wanted to avoid any situation that could lead to anarchy and wars in the kingdom with the Fulani/Nupe leaders whose army commanders were determined to capitalise on any crisis to unleash terror on the people and procure more slaves from the kingdom. [313]Arunah stated that this was how the people accepted the new sociopolitical institutions from 1860. The influence of the King and leadership styles which

[310] Ibid, p. 90.
[311] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[312] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[313] Ibid, pp. 86-88.

was adopted did, however, encourage the success of the monarchy in the period before the incursion of British colonial administration in 1897.[314]

The Nupe reign in the Auchi Kingdom was for a short period of thirty-seven years, from 1860 to 1897. From 1860, the British had begun to gradually acquire territories within the West Africa sub-region. This was further accelerated after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. Before the 1890s, Idrees revealed that the relationship that existed between the Nupe empire and various European traders on the bank of the Niger, particularly the British traders, was friendly. Bida derived a lot of material benefits as revenue in terms of taxes and goods from the European traders. Idrees revealed that one of the greatest advantages to Bida was the regular supply of firearms and ammunition which enhanced its military strength among the middle Niger Basin emirates of Sokoto Caliphate. The cordial relationship based on the spirit of give and take changed into hostility arising from what Bida might have considered over-ambitious and unwarranted antics of the British traders. The root cause of this strained relationship was the desire of the British traders to monopolise the middle Niger enterprise by eliminating other European merchants. Bida authorities did not desire the exit of the French and the German merchants ostensibly because of the material benefits derived from them. However, according to Idrees, the British were more determined to leave no stone unturned in acquiring the monopoly. This development generated tension between Bida and the British that culminated in the war of 1897.[315]

The Royal Niger Company,[316] a trading British-owned company, which also had a standing army, under Sir George T. Goldie, ordered its forces to attack the Nupe Empire in Bida which had over time, emerged as one of the most powerful Nigerian empires in the area during this period. It was this military expedition against Bida that led to the withdrawal of all the Nupe soldiers and their war commanders from Auchi Kingdom in 1897. Folola explained that the troops, like those who were similarly withdrawn from other parts of Nigeria at this time, were to increase the numerical strength of the Nupe army in Bida, and to enable it put forward a strong resistance to the Royal Niger Company's forces in 1897. However, despite such efforts towards ensuring large-

[314] Ibid, pp. 323-324.
[315] Aliyu A. IDREES, "Collaboration and the British conquest of Bida in 1897: The role and achievement of the indigenous interest groups" *African Study Monographs* 10(2), 1989, pp. 77-78.
[316] Royal Niger Company, See Ed Emeka KEAZOR, "Nigeria and the Royal Niger Company: The real story," An unpublished article on the Royal Niger Company and its activities in Nigeria, Nigeria_and_the_Royal_Niger_Company_1879.pdf,

scale defence, the Nupe communities were defeated by the British who assumed control of the political administration of Bida from 1897.[317]

It is of importance to note that the withdrawal of the Nupe forces from Auchi Kingdom was not what led to the fall of Bida in 1897. Dawood revealed that it was actually the activities of the British with their more superior weapons that facilitated the collapse of Nupe rule. The British forces, which was the Royal Niger Company under the command of Sir George T. Goldie, were able to strategize and simultaneously attack the stronghold of the Nupe Empire. This made the Nupe imperialists withdraw her forces from all the locations that they were in control of, to return back to Bida to engage the British in a battle to win back their kingdom. This was not possible because the British had more superior weapons which aided them in the fierce battle against the Nupe. The Nupe forces were defeated and this resulted to the intrusion of the British into their territory in 1897. Dawood further explained that the defeat of the Nupe troops in Bida by the British subsequently led to the annexation of all the former territories of the Nupe in 1897. This led to a transfer of power from the hands of the Nupe to the British.[318]

3.3 Britain and the signing of treaties

Treaties between natives before and after the creation of Nigeria were entered into solemnly and were usually regarded as binding and sacred. The binding nature of treaties amongst the natives of Africa was always enforced with the swearing of oaths which were often formidable undertakings. Sometimes, animals are slaughtered to commemorate the sacred event.[319] This, according to Tony, was a common practice in all the communities in the land mass later known as Nigeria. This was the same scenario when the Nupe imperialists made the newly appointed Otaru swear an oath of loyalty to them after they occupied Auchi in 1860.[320] On the other hand, written sources have claimed that treaties signed between Europeans and natives of Africa were spurious and deceitful.

[317] Toyin FALOLA, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, pp. 6-28; Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[318] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[319] Robert S. SMITH, *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial West Africa*, Norwich: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1976, p. 31; Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, pp. 141-143.
[320] Ibid, p. 49.

African chiefs who rejected the European treaties had their territories forcefully taken by military bombardment.[321]

British colonial acquisitions of lands and colonies in Nigeria were preceded by treaty-making phases during which the British signed agreements with the local authorities.[322] A very significant number of treaties were signed between the British colonial government and various indigenous chiefs and kings to formalise their imperial interests. Some of such kings were the kings of Old Calabar, Warri, Benin etc.[323] These treaties played a crucial role in shaping the relationship between the British colonial administration and the local communities, to secure agreements on issues such as land ownership, trade, and governance, as well as determining the boundaries of British influence and control in Nigeria at the time. As a result of the several treaties which Goldie had concluded with many indigenous rulers, the British had no difficulty in claiming the area around the Niger. The mania for colonisation in Africa with which a number of the European nations were seized proceeded largely from a desire to provide outlets for surplus products.[324]

From their coastal settlement, European officials moved far into the African interior to proclaim the territories as directed by their superiors in Europe. European military expeditions hastened concluded treaties with African chiefs and rulers in which they were forced to surrender their sovereignty or to request for European protection.[325] Obstacles hitherto regarded as insurmountable were quickly overcome. Several spurious treaties which were not fully understood but signed by the African rulers, were regarded as the complete surrender of sovereignty right to the European invaders in disguise for protection. Archival sources revealed that several treaties

[321] Haruna Abdallah IMAM - Salifu ALHASSAN, "Colonialism in Africa: A Dynamic Process of Negotiations and Concessions by European Officials, African Elites and Subject Populations?" *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies (IJIRAS)* Vol. 2, Issue 5, 2015, p. 48; Anietie A. INYANG - Manasseh Edidem BASSEY, "Imperial Treaties and the Origins of British Colonial Rule in Southern Nigeria, 1860-1890" *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* Vol. 5 No 20, 2014, pp. 1946-1947.
[322] Toyin FALOLA - Chukwuemeka AGBO, Colonial Administrations and the Africans" in: Martin S. Shanguhyia - Toyin Falola (eds): *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History,* New York: Springer Nature, 2018, p. 86.
[323] FO 403/484: Africa (West Coast): treaties with native chiefs; Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Lagos; 1642-1891.
[324] R. Olujemi EKUNDARE, *An Economic History of Nigeria I860-1960,* London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1973, p. 63.
[325]Charles G. THOMAS, "Secession and Separatism in Modern Africa" in: Martin S. Shanguhyia - Toyin Falola (eds): *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History,* New York: Springer Nature, 2018, p. 729.

were signed at Benin, Warri, and Sapele which are located at the Southern part of Nigeria.[326] This is the same location that Auchi is situated but details of the treaty that was signed in 1904 are not known. More information on this will be given in other sub-topics and in chapter five.[327] Sometimes the kings and chiefs signed away their sovereignty unknowingly because they did not comprehend the provisions of the treaties or could not understand the language of the Whiteman,[328]

Different kinds of treaties were signed between the British imperialist and African chiefs. Some of the key treaties signed during this period include the Treaty of Cession. This was a common type of treaty used by the British colonial government to acquire territories in Nigeria. Through these treaties, indigenous leaders would cede control of their lands to the British in exchange for various promises or benefits. There was Protection treaties which was another important category of agreements signed during this period. These treaties were aimed at establishing a protectorate relationship between the British government and indigenous groups, with the promise of protection in exchange for certain concessions or privileges. There were boundary treaties that were signed to delineate the borders between different territories and regions under British control. These treaties often involved negotiations with neighbouring indigenous groups to establish clear boundaries and avoid conflicts over land ownership. The signing of these different categories of treaties under the British colonial government had far-reaching implications for Nigeria's economic, social, and political landscape.[329]

The very first Crown Colony of Lagos was instituted through a combination of conquest and a treaty. While British gun-boat diplomacy against Lagos in 1851 was engendered by a need to stop ongoing slave trading activities, the annexation proper in 1861 was achieved through a cession treaty with King Dosunmu. This treaty subsumed Lagos under British control was a

[326] NA, CO 879/113/8- Collection of treaties with chiefs, etc., in West Africa, Part I - Gambia; Part II - Sierra Leone; Part III - Gold Coast; Part IV - Lagos and Southern Nigeria, 1892-1908.
[327] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, "Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy institution in historical perspective 1860-1973," Bachelor of Arts project, University of Ilorin, Nigeria, 1992, p. 57.
[328] Olofu Godwin OGBECHE - Isa Mohammed OZEGYA, "History of European Acquisition of African Territories and Definition of their Boundaries, 1884 up to the 20th Century" A seminar paper presented at the Department of History & International Studies, Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, 2017, pp. 9-11.
[329] Felix Oludare AJIOLA, "British Colonial Land Use Policies and Housing Development in Lagos" *African Journal of Housing and Sustainable Development (AJHSD)* Vol. 2, No. 1, 2022, p. 33; Ekpotuatin Charles ARIYE, "Treaties as a central diplomatic tool in the 'legal' pacification, and colonisation of the Western Lower Niger, 1884-1914." PhD Dissertation, Keele University, United Kingdom, 2020, p. 12; Adiele E. AFIGBO, "Background to Nigerian Federalism: Federal Features in the Colonial State" *Publius* Autumn Vol. 21, No. 4, 1991, pp. 20-21.

precursor to future treaty-making in the Nigeria area, and represented the first step towards the formal take-over of Nigeria by the British. Clearly, despite their military capacity the British resorted to a treaty with Lagos because of the need legality in the colonization process. The significance here is that the treaty served the purpose of giving Great Britain recognition over its control of Lagos internally and externally.[330]

Several other treaties were signed between the British imperialists and kings in Nigeria. The British conquest of the Yoruba in the southwest relied on the use of Lagos to control its hinterland. The penetration was slow, originally involving British intervention in local politics and the complicated Yoruba internal wars of the nineteenth century. To protect trade, the British colonial administration of Lagos successfully brokered a peace agreement in 1886 to end the Sixteen Years' War between the Ibadan Empire and its numerous enemies.[331] Even at that stage, the British government had to strive to conclude a number of treaties with the local chiefs in order to have a strong foothold. Treaties were not enough to force all the Yoruba groups into an emerging British colony. Some had to be visited with violence. By 1897, however, the whole of the Yoruba land had been annexed to the Colony of Lagos as its protectorate.[332]

The people in the Northern part of Nigeria rejected British colonial administration when the imperialists arrived on their land in the 1890s. After refusing the British treaties, some tribes as the Fulani, the Hausa and kingdoms, as Sokoto Caliphate and small emirates was forcefully occupied by British troops. Between 1900 and 1906, the colonial army attacked the emirates of Bida, Yola, Kontagora, Kano, Bauchi, Sokoto, Borno, Zaria, and Katsina.[333] In these and other places, the leaders and their followers fought to protect their states and their religion. The conquest was not easy for the British, because of the nature of the region. After the conquest, the British were faced with the administrative problem of how they would rule the vast northern territory with a few numbers of British officials.[334] The northern region of Nigeria was famous for the inner

[330] Ekpotuatin Charles ARIYE, "Treaties as a central diplomatic tool in the 'legal' pacification, and colonisation of the Western Lower Niger, 1884-1914." PhD Dissertation, Keele University, United Kingdom, 2020, pp. 58-59; Cynado C. N, O. EZEOGIDI, "British Conquest, Colonization and Administration in Nigeria" A paper presented at Department of Political Science Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam Anambra State, Nigeria, p. 3.
[331] Toyin FALOLA, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, p. 11.
[332] Ekundare R. OLUJEMI, *An Economic History of Nigeria I860-1960*, London: Methuen & Co Ltd. 1973, p. 12.
[333] Toyin FALOLA, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, pp. 14-16.
[334] Fatma Zohra BOUTI, "The Rule of the British Empire in Nigeria (1861-1960)." Masters project, Ahmed Draia University-Adrar, 2022, pp. 33-34.

conflicts, in which the British faced a problem of instability in colonial administration and commerce. Due to the vast lands and the instability of the colony, the British invited defeated chiefs and emirs to solve this problem by appointing them as their representatives but all of this was after they guaranteed their loyalty by taking oaths and signing treaties of allegiance. The British-African representatives ruled according to their laws, traditions, and customs as they were before the British conquest.[335] In the same vein, when the British took over the affairs of Auchi Kingdom, they used the Otaru to rule over the people.

3.4 The arrival of the British Colonial Masters to Auchi Kingdom

The Nupe people, according to Oroh, who had firm control over Auchi Kingdom were seen as a threat to the imperial moves by the British to take over Auchi Kingdom at the close of the nineteenth century as mentioned in the previous sub-chapter. It is necessary to explain the main reason why the British took over Nupe Empire. Egbefo revealed that Colonial British felt that there was a great need to dislodge the Nupe to have full monopoly over the trade in cash crops along the Niger. The Royal Niger Company (RNC), in this regard, was instrumental in the formation of Colonial Nigeria as it enabled the British colonialists to establish firm control over the Niger area for trading relations and administrative purposes.[336] Both Orji, Dike, and Olujemi have a similar opinion that Sir George Tubman Goldie, who established the Royal Niger Company, upheld the dream and spirit of the new era of mercantilism and Social Darwinism that was sweeping across the West African sub-region during the global depression.[337] In their research, Olujemi and Rodney believe that the RNC's monopolistic policies impoverished the local palm produce farmers and traders, as it began the suffocation of the local factories. The RNC appealed to the Consular Office for military support and intervention to protect the lives and property of RNC trading on the river Niger. Goldie also used his company to undermine the trading interests of rival foreign firms, undercutting their sales by 24%.[338] Orji revealed that Goldie used the RNC to establish a para-

[335] Moses E. OCHONU, *Colonialism by proxy: Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle Belt Consciousness in Nigeria,* Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2014, pp.3-6; WILLIAM F. S. MILES, *Hausaland Divided: Colonialism and Independence in Nigeria and Niger*, London: Cornell University Press, 1994, pp. 92-94.
[336] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[337] John N. ORIJI, *A Political Organization in Nigeria since the late stone age*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2011, pp. 155-156; K. Onwuka DIKE, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885,* London: Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 11; Ekundare R. OLUJEMI, *An Economic History of Nigeria I860-1960*, London: Methuen & Co Ltd 1973, p. 31.
[338] Europeans looked for territories to exercise their military might and dominance over and Africa was the most ideal location. This explains how Europe underdeveloped Africa to develop Europe. See Walter Rodney's book, *How*

military outfit to protect the commercial empires and interests along the Niger river and the coastal communities.[339]

The Royal Niger Company, being controlled by Sir George Tubman Goldie, ordered his military forces to attack the Nupe Empire at Bida, which had emerged as one of the most powerful forces in the area during the period. It was this military expedition against Bida that led to the withdrawal of all the Nupe soldiers and their war commandants from Auchi Kingdom and Etsako land as a whole in 1897. The Nupe troops were similarly withdrawn from other places that they were controlling at the same time to increase the numerical strength of the army in Bida to enable it to put up a strong defence against the armies of the Royal Niger Company in 1897. Tony explained that despite the strong resistance put up against the British by the Nupe, their Kingdom collapsed due to more superior weapons of the British. The British then assumed political administration over the Nupe Empire in 1897.[340] It is very important to note that the withdrawal of the Nupe troops from Auchi Kingdom and other communities enabled not just the fall of Bida but also the incursion of the British into the Auchi Kingdom and other communities in 1897.[341]

There were two logical reasons why the British occupation of Auchi Kingdom and other parts of Afenmai land was conveniently taken over without resistance from the people. Erhagbe explained that the first reason was the fear envisaged in the consequence of going into military warfare with a more militarily superior power than even their former conquerors, the Nupe. He further revealed that the second, and perhaps much more important reason, was the desire to see to the end of giving out their kinsmen and children as slaves, which had been the main pastime of the Bida government in the area. Thus, despite the position in which Auchi Kingdom was already placed during Nupe imperial rule, the coming of the British colonialists was still welcomed as a veritable step to save the people from the yoke of the oppressive Nupe rule.[342]

Europe Underdeveloped Africa, London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1971, for more information. Also see Ekundare R. OLUJEMI, *An Economic History of Nigeria I860-1960*, London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1973.

[339] John N. ORIJI, *A Political Organization in Nigeria since the late Stone Age*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan 2011, p. 156.

[340] Ibid, p. 31.

[341] The British strategy was to attack and conquer the Nupe Empire, the homeland of the Nupe people. The British succeeded in doing so in 1897, and this resulted in the establishment of firm imperial rule over the Auchi Kingdom. The year 1897 is very significant in Nigerian history because Britain used their military might to conquer major kingdoms in 1897. Some of these Kingdoms include the Nupe, Benin etc.

[342] Edward O. ERHAGBE, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

The result of this, therefore, was that by the tail end of 1904, the then Otaru of Auchi, Idaoh Ikelebe, in consultation with his Council of Chiefs, signed the British protection treaty.[343] This was a formal recognition of British colonial administration in the area.[344] According to Garuba, it has not been found easy to interpret the full nature of the treaty signed by the Otaru with the British colonisers, the fact remains that almost all the treaties of the British signed with African rulers were done within the same understanding of the central framework. It is a known fact that the contents of the treaties were hardly understood by African rulers who never realised that they were only signing away their sovereignty through persuasion and negotiations. But as earlier opined, Otaru Idaoh and members of his council may have foreseen much satisfaction with British protection than giving out their kinsmen and children for slavery to the Bida authorities. Thus, the signing of the British protection treaty in 1904 consequently led to the formal establishment of British colonial administration in the Kingdom with Idah as its administrative headquarters.[345] This also enabled the British to begin to get all the benefits, such as farm produce, taxes, tributes, and royalties like the Nupe people after they were dislodged in 1897

3.5 Britain and the total abolition of slavery and slave trade

The industrial revolution which kicked off in Britain in the eighteenth century and subsequently spread to other parts of Europe and the world, had played a significant role in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and the beginning of colonialism. Falola and Heaton revealed that after the British abolished the slave trade in 1807, the trafficking of slaves from the Bights of Benin, Biafra, and other slave trade zones continued for several decades. Many slaves taken during the first half of the nineteenth century were intercepted by the British anti-slaving squadron along the coast of West Africa and were deposited in the newly founded British West African colony of

[343] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, "Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy institution in historical perspective 1860-1973," Bachelor of Arts project, University of Ilorin, Nigeria, 1992. pp. 56-57.

[344] Britain was ready to remove all obstacles that were on the way preventing them from establishing imperial control over the Auchi Kingdom and Nigeria as a whole. This made Tubman Goldie to establish and attach a military outfit attached to the Royal Niger Company. This was to ensure that resistant regions were conquered and had firm imperial control was established in such regions. This implies that the British did not want just trading relations, but also wanted firm imperial control over the Auchi Kingdom and beyond. See Ed Emeka KEAZOR, "Nigeria and the Royal Niger Company: The real story," an unpublished article on the Royal Niger Company and its activities in Nigeria, Nigeria_and_the_Royal_Niger_Company_1879.pdf

[345] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, "Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy institution in historical perspective 1860-1973," Bachelor of Arts project, University of Ilorin, Nigeria, 1992. p. 57.

Sierra Leone.[346] Several scholars share similar views that the Industrial Revolution was a time when the demand for manual labour was no longer needed due to the invention of machines and implements that replaced manual labour.[347] Endalcachew, in his research, argued that the Industrial Revolution in Europe accelerated production output and this increased the demand for raw materials and markets. This made the Europeans to turn towards Africa for supply of both raw materials and new markets for their excess products. Therefore, colonialism was born out of the need of European countries to exercise direct political and economic control over their African colonies to ensure the protection of their economic and political interests.[348]

Oluremi argued that Britain took over the administration of the landmass known as Nigeria today, after embarking on several explorations and expeditions to several locations in West Africa as a whole to have a better knowledge of the West African terrain as explained in a previous chapter. Hirshfield revealed that during the slave trade era, European contact with West Africa was confined to the coastal areas. Some fearless and determined travellers including Mungo Park, the Lander brothers and Hugh Clapperton had explored several areas of the Western Sudan to have a good knowledge on the terrain that they were venturing into.[349] Olujemi explains that the West African kings and their subjects did not like the presence of Europeans in their territories because it could affect their trading interests and activities as middlemen between the people in the interior and the European traders themselves. The unfriendly conditions for Europeans in the West African hinterland made exploration very difficult.[350]

Several studies have revealed that the British government's sphere of influence in the region later known as Nigeria commenced in I85I when the British attacked Lagos and attempted to force

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[346] Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, p. 251; Colonial Office Report on Nigeria for the year 1955, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957, pp. 184-185.

[347] Susan M. MARTIN, *Palm Oil and Protest*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 6-7; Olofu Godwin OGBECHE - Isa Mohammed OZEGYA, "History of European Acquisition of African Territories and Definition of their Boundaries, 1884 up to the 20th Century" A seminar paper presented at the Department of History & International Studies, Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, 2017, pp. 5-6; Nelarine CORNELIUS - Olusanmi AMUJO - Eric PEZET, British "Colonial governmentality: slave, forced and waged worker policies in colonial Nigeria, 1896-1930" *Management and Organizational History* Vol 14, No 1, 2019, pp. 27-28.

[348] Bayeh ENDALCACHEW, "The Legacy of Colonialism in Contemporary Africa: A case for intrastate and interstate conflicts," *International Journal of Innovative and Applied Research* Vol. 3, No. 2, 2015, p. 23.

[349] Claire HIRSHFIELD, *The Diplomacy of Partition: Britain, France and the creation of Nigeria 1890-1898*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers 1979, p. 3.

[350] Ibid, p. 26-27.

Kosoko, the King of Lagos who had several slaves in his possession, to abolish the slave trade in his territory. After the incident, the British imperial government had no immediate plan or action to administer Lagos as a colony. The refusal of the King of Lagos to stop the slave trade resulted in the British forcing him to stop the slave trade and eventually taking over the administration of Lagos in I861.[351] Lagos was made a British colony in 1861. An archival source revealed that the King of Nupe land, before 1892, was still heavily involved in the trade in slaves but treaties were signed with him to encourage him to end the trade in slaves.[352]

The raw materials and markets in Africa became increasingly important to the growing industries in Europe. The commercial drive of many European nations was very strong, and this resulted to the political claims on some territories in which they had established trade or treaty. This was the case for Britain in West Africa. It was clear that the major reason for colonisation was the acquisition of wealth and the political ambitions of most European nations in acquiring African territories was of great importance to them. However, the scramble for African territories was set in motion, and it reached its climax in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. When the major European countries decided on the scramble and partition of Africa, Germany insisted that only the areas which were effectively occupied could be claimed. As a result of the several treaties which Goldie had concluded with many indigenous kings, the British government had no difficulty in laying claims to the area around the Niger.[353]

The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, according to Oluremi, was very beneficial to Britain because she already had spheres of influence in Lagos since 1850 but was still concentrated largely in the coastal areas. In an attempt to increase British influence in the area, several treaties, even though they did not know the content, were signed with the traditional rulers and chiefs in the interior by which the British government offered protection to the people. Between 1861 and 1900, the legal system in Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was governed by ordinances enacted by the local legislature, which required the assent of the British colonial government. It

[351] Paul E. LOVEJOY and Toyin FAIOLA (eds), *Pawnship, slavery, and colonialism in Africa*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003, p. 116; Obaro IKIMẸ, "Colonial Conquest and Resistance in Southern Nigeria" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1972, p. 254; Anietie A. INYANG and Manasseh Edidem BASSEY, "Imperial Treaties and the Origins of British Colonial Rule in Southern Nigeria, 1860-1890" *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* Vol 5 No 20, 2014, p. 1947.
[352] FO 403/548: Africa: correspondence; Royal Niger Company, part 6,1892, p. 3.
[353] Ekundare R. OLUJEMI, *An Economic History of Nigeria I860-1960*, pp. 60-61; Andrew O. IGBINEWEKA, "The British occupation of Southern Nigeria, 1851-1906," Masters project, North Texas State University, 1979, pp. 30-31.

was primarily the responsibility of the British colonial authorities to enact significant legislation affecting the region that would later become known as Nigeria. In addition to the acts of the British parliament, the Niger area, like any other British colony, was controlled by the obligations and trading treaties that Britain signed with other nations. This signified that legislation affecting all economic activities, even if started by the colonial governors, had to be signed by Britain; and all these were based squarely on British political and economic interests. This indicated that Britain had full authority over the Niger area politically and economically.[354]

Before the arrival of the British imperialist to Auchi Kingdom as claimed by Segosime, the Nupe invaders had already enslaved a great number of Auchi people. The capture of Auchi people as slaves eventually stopped when the Auchi people began to assist the Nupe invaders in raiding and capturing people from neighbouring communities. The Nupe invaders used Auchi as its garrison from where raids were launched against other villages and communities in other to capture unsuspecting victims as slaves and transport them to Bida. This continued until 1897 when the Royal Niger Company attacked Bida and defeated its forces due to more advanced weapons. The king of Bida, at the time, fled from Bida in the company of his loyal guards. The servants of the fled king, that were mostly of Etsako descent, stayed behind and revealed to the British officials that the fled king was not the rightful king of Bida and that the rightful king was somewhere in exile known to them. The rightful king was eventually recalled back to Bida and crowned king.[355] An oral source revealed that the king signed some treaties with the British colonial officers which formally ended slavery and the slave trade in Bida. In the same vein, after the fall of Bida, the Nupe troops stationed at Auchi Kingdom and other neighbouring communities left Etsako land and journeyed back to Bida. Auchi people were shocked to discover that the Nupe troops suddenly left Etsako land unannounced. When the British eventually arrived Auchi Kingdom, they also signed a treaty with the Otaru formally ending the Slave Trade.[356]

The British abolition of the slave trade in Auchi Kingdom, according to an oral source, was part of a broader movement towards the end of the transatlantic slave trade. The abolition of the slave trade by the British Empire had significant implications. The slave trade had been a

[354] Ibid, p. 64
[355] Ibid, pp. 95-96.
[356] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu

significant source of income for individuals who were directly involved in the trade in Auchi Kingdom and other regions in Etsako land. The abolition of the slave trade led to a decline in this source of income, leading to economic hardship. However, it also led to a shift towards other forms of trade, such as the production and export of palm oil and other agricultural products. It weakened the power and authority of slave traders, as they were no longer able to profit from the slave trade. However, it also opened up opportunities for new forms of political organization and resistance.[357]

3.6 Summary of the chapter

Pre-colonial administration in Auchi Kingdom can be categorised into two epochs. These are the pre-Nupe and Nupe eras. These two epochs in the history of Auchi kingdom are majorly based on oral sources because of limited written sources but the available written sources are complemented with oral sources. These two periods predate the art of conventional writing. Both written and oral sources confirm that before the arrival of the Nupe raiders and British imperialists, Auchi had a well-established system of governance. The pre-Nupe administration in Auchi was characterized by a traditional system of government that was a non-centralized one. Individuals were ranked based on factors such as age, lineage, and social status. The administrative structure of the pre-Nupe Auchi society consisted of the family unit, Quarter council, Village Council, and the Council of State. These units of authority had their different duties and roles to play in other to maintain law and order at the time in Auchi. The economy of Auchi was primarily agrarian, with farming being the main occupation of the people.[358]

Both primary and secondary sources reveal the Nupe era began in 1860 when Auchi was invaded by the Nupe raiders and established a new administrative rule over the area. A monarchical system of administration was established over the area making it to achieve the status of a kingdom. The political structure of Auchi Kingdom was centred around the Otaru of Auchi, who was the traditional ruler and paramount chief. The Otaru wielded significant power and authority over the kingdom and was responsible for making important decisions regarding governance, justice, and administration but under the supervision of the Nupe overlords. The new administrative system in Auchi Kingdom was also decentralised, with power distributed among

[357] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[358] Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nigeria Ltd 2006, pp. 88-102; Jafaru MOHAMMED, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

various chiefs and elders who assisted the Otaru in governing the kingdom. These chiefs and age grades were responsible for overseeing different aspects of governance, such as security, land administration, and resolving disputes within their respective domains. The justice system in Auchi Kingdom was based on traditional customs and norms. Disputes and conflicts were resolved through a combination of mediation, arbitration, and customary laws. The Otaru and his council of chiefs played a crucial role in ensuring justice and maintaining order within the kingdom.[359]

The British Empire, according to Talibu, sought to expand its territories and control the trading activities of all its dominated territories and influence in Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries.[360] This resulted to the colonisation of various regions, including the Auchi Kingdom, as part of Britain's broader imperial ambitions. An oral source revealed that the British imperialist forces defeated the Nupe raiders at Bida in 1897 resulting to the fall of Nupe Hegemony. All territories that were formally controlled by the Nupe overloads then came under the British. Upon establishing control over the Auchi Kingdom, the British colonial administration implemented a system of indirect rule. The type of rule involved governing the people through local traditional rulers or chiefs who were loyal to the British Crown. This approach allowed the British to maintain control with minimal direct involvement.[361]

Upon the arrival of the British imperialists to the Auchi Kingdom in 1904, The British Colonial Officers signed a treaty with the Otaru of Auchi just as they signed several other treaties with several kings in other Kingdoms and Empires that make up the current-day Nigeria. Since the abolition of the slave trade, the British government has been searching for a good way to end the slave business and introduce a legitimate trade, especially in Africa. The British imperialist had also made great progress in the abolition of the trade of slaves in other parts of Nigeria.[362] The British went ahead to fully enforce the total abolition of the trade in slaves because it had already been abolished several decades ago in 1807. Oseni argued that this might be one of the obvious

[359] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications, 2019, pp. 85-108; Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[360] Oladimeji TALIBU, "Nigerian's foreign policy under the British colonial rule, 1914-60" *Journal of History and International Relations*, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria Vol. 6, No. 1, 2019, pp. 2-8; A. D. ROBERTS (ed), *The Colonial Moment in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990, pp. 3-6.
[361] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[362] Cynado C. N, O. EZEOGIDI, "British Conquest, Colonization and Administration in Nigeria" A paper presented at the Department of Political Science Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam Anambra State, Nigeria, pp. 2-4.

reasons why the British were accepted by the Auchi people because they were not interested in the enslavement of people and the trade in slaves.[363]

[363] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

CHAPTER FOUR: BRITAIN AND THE IMPACT OF HER COLONIAL POLICIES

4.1 Britain and Colonial Activities in Nigeria

British colonial administration in Nigeria is essentially part of European history as well as global history. Throughout history, Britain has played a significant role in colonial activities around the world, including Nigeria and Africa. At its peak, the British Empire had the largest empire in history, and it had a profound impact on the African continent.[364] Britain's colonisation of nations and empires in Africa began in the late 16th century, with the establishment of trading zones and posts along the West African coastline. These trading posts focused on the lucrative trade in gold, ivory, and slaves. However, it was not until the 19th and 20th centuries that Britain's colonial activities in Africa increased. The colonisation of Kingdoms and Empires in the landmass known as Nigeria began in the 19th century and continued until Nigeria gained independence in 1960. The British colonial activities in Nigeria had far-reaching impacts on the social, economic, political, and cultural landscape of the region.[365] During this period, Britain sought to expand its influence and control over various regions for economic, political, and strategic reasons. The process was long and involved several hardline measures including the elimination of all opposition to the impositions of British central authority over the land mass known as Nigeria today.[366]

Prior to the colonisation process, the British government and private companies embarked on expeditions to explore and exploit the vast resources of the area. These private companies employed the services of experienced individuals to embark on several explorations and expeditions to several locations in West Africa as a whole to have a better knowledge of the West African terrain. During the era of the slave trade, European contact with West Africa was only confined to the coastal areas. Between 1788 and 1830, several fearless and determined travellers including Mungo Park, the Lander brothers, and Hugh Clapperton explored several areas of

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[364] David W. MCINTYRE, *The Imperial Frontier in the Tropics, 1865-75: A Study of British Colonial Policy in West Africa, Malaya and the South Pacific in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli*, London: Macmillan and co ltd 1967, p. 4; John D. HARGREAVES, *The end of colonial rule in West Africa*, London: Macmillan Press, 1979, pp. 3-5.

[365] Oladimeji TALIBU, "Nigerian's foreign policy under the British colonial rule, 1914-60, *Journal of History and International Relations*, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria Vol.6 No. 1, 2019, pp. 2-8; A. D. ROBERTS (ed), The Colonial Moment in Africa, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990, pp. 3-6."

[366] Obaro IKIME (ed), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nig Ltd, 1980, p. 393.

Western Africa.[367] The West African kings and their subjects did not like the presence of Europeans in their territories because it affected their trading activities and interests and as middlemen between the people located in the interior and the traders from Europe themselves. The unfriendly and unhealthy conditions for Europeans in the West African hinterland made exploration difficult and expensive. The desire and determination of British merchants to explore the trade prospects in the interior led to the inauguration of the African Association in 1788.[368] The association was willing to financially support any person or group willing to explore the interior of West Africa. In 1796, the association employed the services of a man called Mungo Park to trace the source and course of the river Niger. Mungo Park embarked on two strenuous voyages but lost his life in the second one in 1806 without completing the expedition.[369]

On another expedition, Scottish explorer Hugh Clapperton was also commissioned to explore the Niger River to complete the unfinished expedition of Mungo Park and find out where the Niger River flowed into the sea, but after suffering from malaria, severe depression, and chronic dysentery, he died before confirming it. Hugh Clapperton's servant, Richard Lander, and his brother John were the people who completed the voyage. They demonstrated that the Niger River flowed into the sea. At the request of the British government, the English explorer Richard Lander, who had earlier travelled with Hugh Clapperton, returned to Western Africa with his brother. The Lander brothers sailed to the Bight of Benin. They arrived in Badagry, Nigeria, on March 22, 1830. From there, they travelled inland to Bussa and explored the Niger River upstream for about 100 miles (160 kilometres). The brothers then began a hazardous canoe trip downstream to the river's delta. They were recognised as the first Europeans to reach the mouth of the Niger River. They then established the fact that the river Niger emptied its content into the Atlantic Ocean.[370] While exploring the delta in Nigeria, the Lander brothers were kidnapped by the local

[367] Claire HIRSHFIELD, *The Diplomacy of Partition: Britain, France and the creation of Nigeria 1890-1898*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers 1979, p. 3; E. D. MOREL, "British Rule in Nigeria" *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* Vol. 60, No. 3103, 1912, pp. 631-632.
[368] Several explorations took place in West Africa to discover and find out more about the hinterland in West Africa. See Toyin FALOLA and Ann GENOVA, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria*, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2009.
[369] Ekundare R. OLUJEMI, *An Economic History of Nigeria I860-1960*, London: Methuen & Co Ltd. 1973, pp. 26-27; L. I. IZUAKOR, "Patterns of Pre-colonial Exploitation" In: Toyin FALOLA (Ed): Britain and Nigeria. Exploitation or Development? London: Zed Books, 1987, p. 80.
[370] John N. ORIJI, *A Political Organization in Nigeria since the late Stone Age*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2011. P. 152; Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, pp. 91-92.

tribe's men. They were taken into captivity but were released after a huge ransom was paid.[371] Thus, the two young men were able to solve the long-disputed problem of the course of the Niger to the sea. This was a discovery that for several years older and more experienced men could not solve. The Royal Geographical Society (RGS) presented Richard Lander with a gold medal and a cash prize of fifty guineas. The discoveries by the Lander brothers heightened the desire for the extension of trade to the northwest coast of Africa and other towns in the inland.[372]

In the 1830s, Britain established a commercial sphere in the Delta area of the Southern part of present-day Nigeria. Independent British merchants, agents of large Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow firms, built several trading settlements on that part of the coast where the Niger, via a network of innumerable small rivers and streams, flowed into the Bights. The British had several unpleasant competitions with the trading houses for whom to control the market space. The legitimate trade had replaced the slave trade by the mid-nineteenth century, and several British colonies such as Ghana and Sierra Leone as well as the informal sphere in the Delta area became the sources of the profitable trade in palm produce. The volume of trade in the Niger Delta area steadily rose more than that of other West African colonies by the mid-century. Palm oil was in high demand for the production of soaps, lubricants and candles. In England, soap for cleansing urban populations, candles for lighting towns, and lubricants for factory machinery were in high demand.[373]

The high demand for more raw materials and lubricants triggered the Scramble for African territories. This was a time when there was rapid colonisation activities and division of Africa among European powers. Britain acquired several African territories during the period. One of the major reasons for Britain's colonial activities in Africa was the desire to have cheap access to natural resources such as timber, minerals, rubber and agricultural products[374] In Nigeria, British companies established plantations and mines across different parts of West Africa to extract these

[371] Robin HALLETT (ed), *The Niger Journal of Richard and John Lander*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc. Publishers, 1965, pp. 254-258.
[372] Prescott HOLMES, *The story of exploration and adventure in Africa*, Philadelphia: H. Altemus 1898, p. 50; Robin HALLETT (ed), *The Niger Journal of Richard and John Lander*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc. Publishers, 1965, p. 291.
[373] Claire HIRSHFIELD, *The Diplomacy of Partition: Britain, France and the creation of Nigeria 1890-1898*, Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1979, p. 5
[374] Inge Van HULLE, *Britain and International Law in West Africa: The Practice of Empire*, New York: Oxford University Press 2020, pp. 160-161.

resources. For example, in present-day Ghana formerly Gold Coast, British settlers established large-scale farms for cash crops like tobacco and cotton.[375]

Another significant factor driving British colonialism in Africa was the pursuit of strategic interests. The British Empire sought to establish naval bases and secure trade routes to facilitate its global dominance. The Cape Colony, modern-day South Africa, became an important stopover point for ships travelling between Europe and Asia. Moreover, Britain aimed to extend its political influence and control over African territories. This involved establishing colonial administrations and implementing indirect rule systems in some regions. The indirect rule allowed local chiefs or rulers to maintain authority while being subject to British oversight. This approach was employed in territories such as Nigeria, where the British relied on traditional rulers to govern on their behalf.[376]

British colonial administration in Nigeria had a great impact on the country's social, economic, and political landscape. The imposition of colonial boundaries often disregarded existing ethnic, linguistic, and cultural divisions, leading to conflicts and tensions that persist to this day. The introduction of cash crops and the transformation of local economies disrupted traditional agricultural practices and contributed to economic dependency. The British colonial administration also implemented policies that favoured their interests, leading to the exploitation of African labour and resources. Forced labour, taxation systems, and land dispossession were common practices under British colonial administration.[377] These policies had long-lasting effects on African societies and economies. It is important, however, to note that British colonialism also brought some positive changes to Africa. The introduction of modern infrastructure, such as railways and ports, facilitated trade and communication within and outside the continent. The

[375] Martina Miotto, "Colonialism, Cash Crops and Women in Africa" *Working Paper Series*, Charles University, Center for Economic Research and doctoral studies *(CERGE-EI*), Prague, April 2023, pp. 5-19; Ekundare R. OLUJEMI, An Economic History of Nigeria I860-1960, London: Methuen & Co Ltd. 1973, pp. 63-64.
[376] Bekeh U. UKELINA, *The Second Colonial Occupation Development Planning, Agriculture, and the Legacies of British Rule in Nigeria,* London: Lexington Books 2017, pp. 47-48; Martin S. SHANGUHYIA - Toyin FALOLA, *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 81-86.
[377] Arthur N. COOK, *British enterprise in Nigeria*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1943, pp. 225-226.; Anne PHILIPS, *The enigma of colonialism: British policy in West Africa*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989, pp. 16; A. D. ROBERTS (ed), *The Colonial Moment in Africa,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990, p. 69.

establishment of educational institutions by the British contributed to the spread of literacy and knowledge among Africans.[378]

The land mass later known as Nigeria was an important colony for Britain due to its resources and strategic location. British colonisation of the Southern part of Nigeria was confined only to the coastal areas while the Northern area was confined to the banks of the Niger and Benue rivers on the eve of colonialisation.[379] The British colonisation of Nigeria began with the annexation of Lagos in 1861 and continued with the incorporation of other regions through treaties, conquests, and agreements with local rulers. In 1899, the Queen of England directed that Nigeria be divided into two distinct regions, Northern and Southern Nigeria and should be administered by High Commissioners. The High Commissioner of the Southern Protectorate, Sir Ralph Denham Rayment Moor, declared that all lands located in his protectorate were owned by Britain and that anyone who should lay claim on any land must have written consent from the High Commissioner.[380]The two protectorates were later amalgamated into one entity in 1914 by Lord Federick Lugard.[381] British colonial officers visited several areas in Nigeria in other to established direct contact with the people. In a correspondence of the Colonial Office, it was revealed that a bronze tablet was placed at Katsina to commemorate Lord Lugard's visit in 1939.[382]An archival source revealed that in other for British's colonial policy to be successful in Northern Nigeria, colonial officers needed to establish good relationships with the chiefs and have some respect for wives and that they must always notify the chiefs prior to their visits.[383]

In the mid-20th century, a wave of nationalist movements emerged across Africa, demanding independence from colonial powers. Britain faced increasing pressure to grant self-rule or independence to its African colonies. Many African countries gained independence from

[378] Salmon A. SHOMADE, *Colonial Legacies and the Rule of Law in Africa: Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe*, New York: Routledge 2022, pp. 178-179; Saheed ADERINTO, *Animality and Colonial Subjecthood in Africa*, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2022, p. 11

[379] NA, CO 879/119/8 The amalgamation and administration of Northern and Southern Nigeria, 1912-1919; Report by Sir Frederick D. Lugard, 1919. pp. 6-7.

[380] NA, CO 588/1 Proclamations- Colonial Office: Southern Nigeria Protectorate Acts.

[381] Paul Ilesanmi AKANMIDU, "The British's Contact with Nigeria's Peoples, Amalgamation and the Question of Minority" *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* vol. 12 No.1, 2018, pp. 429-430; NA, CO 879/119/8 The amalgamation and administration of Northern and Southern Nigeria, 1912-1919: Report by Sir Frederick D. Lugard, 1919, p. 7.

[382] NA, CO 583/243/12 Nigeria: original correspondence, Exchanges regarding the memorial to Lord Lugard at Katsina, 1939.

[383] NA, CO 583/213/18 Nigeria: original correspondence, Social relations between officers, Moslem chiefs and their women-folk, 1936, pp. 3-4.

Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, marking the end of formal British colonial administration in Africa. Britain's colonial activities in Africa had a significant impact on the continent's history and development. The pursuit of economic resources, strategic interests, and political control drove Britain's colonisation efforts. While British colonialism brought both positive and negative consequences for Nigeria, its legacies continue to shape the region till the present day.[384] British colonial administration had profound effects on Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Economically, the British exploited the resources of these regions for their benefit, leading to the development of cash crop economies that were geared towards meeting the needs of the colonial power. Socially, colonial policies often disrupted traditional societies and imposed new systems of governance that favoured British interests. The legacy of British colonialism in Nigeria is complex and continues to shape the region today. The arbitrary borders drawn by colonial powers have led to ethnic tensions and conflicts in many African countries. The imposition of Western education and legal systems also had lasting impacts on Nigeria.[385]

4.2 The British Courts of Equity and Justice

After the penetration of the interior of the southern part of the area known as Southern Nigeria, the British imperialist appointed consuls to regulate trade between the British and the indigenous merchants. The British appointed the first consul in 1849 and in 1850 the Court of Equity was established in Bonny in present-day Rivers State and other major delta ports. The court was made up of a majority of European supercargoes and leading traders in Bonny. The primary function of the court was to arbitrate disputes between European traders and the middlemen that may arise due to disagreements over trading rights and activities. The jurisdiction of the equity courts covered the whole of the coastal area that makes up modern Nigeria.[386]

The British courts of equity and justice in colonial Nigeria were instrumental in shaping the legal landscape and administration of the region during the colonial era. There was a dual

[384] Richard BOURNE, *Nigeria A New History of a Turbulent Century*, London: Zed Books Ltd 2015, pp. 14-15; Andrew O. IGBINEWEKA, "The British occupation of Southern Nigeria, 1851-1906," Masters project, North Texas State University, 1979, pp. 32-33.

[385] Justina ADALIKWU-OBISIKE - Ebere E. OBISIKE, "The Legacy of Imperialism in Nigeria" *European Scientific Journal* June Vol.15, No. 16, 2019, pp. 242-244: Raid KHAN - Asif SALIM - Zarmina BALUCH - Komal MEHREEN - Muhammad KALEEM, "British Colonialism and the Indirect Rule: A hierarchical administrative structure to control the unruly tribes" *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews* Vol 9, No 3, 2021, p 1368.

[386] Anietie A. INYANG - Manasseh Edidem BASSEY, "Imperial Treaties and the Origins of British Colonial Rule in Southern Nigeria, 1860-1890" *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* Vol 5 No 20, 2014, p. 1948; Michael MULLIGAN, "Nigeria, the British Presence in West Africa and International Law in the 19th Century" Journal of the History of International Law 11, 2009, p. 277.

system of courts in which one was for common law and the other for equity. This system was inherited from the British legal system. Equity courts were established to provide a more flexible approach to resolving disputes, especially in cases where common law was deemed inadequate or unjust. Equity courts in colonial Nigeria had jurisdiction over a wide range of cases, including trusts, mortgages, specific performance, injunctions, and fraud. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council served as the highest court of appeal for Nigeria during the colonial era. This committee heard appeals from both common law and equity courts in Nigeria and had the power to interpret and clarify Nigerian laws.[387] The influence of equity courts in colonial Nigeria extended beyond the legal sphere, as they played a significant role in shaping social norms and values. By promoting fairness, justice, and conscience, these courts helped to establish a more equitable society in Nigeria.[388]

The courts were granted full legal powers to try and punish British subjects, under certain conditions, by awarding fines up to £200 or by imprisonment up to twenty-one days or by banishment for twelve months, for breaches of the regulations which he should make under the powers given him, or by trade treaties with the natives. Of particular interest was the fact that this Order recognised the Courts of Equity and provided for their co-operation with the Consul in dispensing justice. It was a tribute to the work which these irregularly constituted tribunals had done to bestow some kind of order on a disorderly community. Two or four members of the court were to sit as assessors with the Consul when the punishment was likely to exceed a fine of £40. The Court of Equity could deal with simpler cases but had to submit its decision for the sanction of the Consul. All British subjects had to enrol as a member of a court or forfeit their right to protection. British subjects and foreigners might also be tried if the latter consented and gave sufficient security that they would stand by the decision.[389]

By 1896, Natives Courts with natives presiding over replaced earlier Courts of Equity and Consular Courts in the Warri and Benin River Districts of the Niger Protectorate, while by 1905, ninety-one Native Courts were established and were operating in the whole of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. In doing this, the British admonished the people to settle their disputes in a more

[387] John N. ORIJI, *Political Organization in Nigeria since the Late Stone Age: A History of the Igbo People*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 218.
[388] Toyin FALOLA, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, p. 43.
[389] k. Onwuka DIKE, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966, pp. 201-202.

civilised way rather than in their indigenous ways, thus further taking away the peoples' political, cultural, traditional and judicial rights and placing them under the control of the institutions of Great Britain.[390]

4.3 The Royal Niger Company and its Activities

The British Empire was interested in expanding and protecting its economic interests by all means necessary. They had to devise all means possible at their disposal to ensure they achieved their aims. In the years before 1879, British traders were very concerned by the intrusion of French and German traders into the Niger Delta area. The French had already established an empire, based on military conquest, in West Africa. There was fierce trade competition among the European nations on which nation would dominate the trade in the area. In 1879, Sir George Goldie formed the United African Company (UAC) through the amalgamation of several smaller trading companies that had been operating in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It was a herculean task for Sir George Goldie to amalgamate the disparate British trading interests under a single conglomerate umbrella. The UAC was a representation of British Commercial presence in the Niger Territories and it overshadowed all other European countries' interests in the area. The company's primary objective was to trade in palm oil, which was a major export commodity from Nigeria at the time. However, it also engaged in other trading activities such as ivory, rubber, and spices. The company's operations were based in the Niger Delta with communities in the riverine area, but it had agents and trading posts throughout Nigeria. The UAC was reorganised and all the senior African managers and agents of the firms the UAC took over from were laid off. The UAC was renamed the National African Company (NAC) in 1882 after it had full control of the trading zone with no trading rivalries.[391]

In a bid to keep the industries running there was a need to seek for a means to have a steady supply of raw materials. The best means of getting the raw materials was from Africa. Africa as envisaged by the Europeans offered new cultivatable land for the production of food crops. The

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[390] Ekpotuatin Charles ARIYE, "Treaties as a central diplomatic tool in the 'legal' pacification, and colonization of the Western Lower Niger, 1884-1914." Ph.D Dissertation, Keele University, United Kingdom, 2020, p. 192-193;

[391] Michael MULLIGAN, "Nigeria, the British Presence in West Africa and International Law in the 19th Century," *Journal of the History of International Law* 11, 2009, 282-285; David Olayinka AJAYI, "British Colonial policies and the challenge of national Unity in Nigeria, 1914-2014*" Southern Journal for Contemporary History* 47(1), 2022: pp. 232-235; Ed Emeka KEAZOR, "Nigeria and the Royal Niger Company: The real story, an unpublished article on the Royal Niger Company and its activities in Nigeria, Nigeria_and_the_Royal_Niger_Company_1879.pdf; Stephen OCHENI - Basil C. NWANKWO, "Analysis of Colonialism and Its Impact in Africa" *Cross-Cultural Communication* Vol. 8, No. 3, 2012, p. 48; Klas RÖNNBÄCK - Oskar BROBERG, *Capital and Colonialism: The Return on British Investments in Africa 1869-1969,* Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2019, pp. 101-104.

Industrial Revolution required raw materials such as palm oil and kernel, Cotton, rubber, timber, ivory, hides, and skins. Significant in this regard was the demand for expanding markets for European manufactured goods especially of the inferior types. This to a large extent necessitated the extension of the political sovereignty of European nations over African territories. As a result of this, the stage for the scramble and partition of Africa was set. Even though European annexation of some African states began many years back before 1884, this particular period laid the foundation for the total political and economic colonisation of territories in West Africa and Africa as a whole.[392]

The Berlin conference[393] was convened by Otto von Bismarck, the German Chancellor in Berlin Germany in 1884. The primary objectives of this conference were to divide Africa among European powers, regulate the exploration and colonisation of the continent, and prevent conflicts between various imperial powers over territories in Africa. The Berlin Conference was attended by representatives from fourteen countries, including Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway (unified at that time), Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Although the United States did not have any territorial claims in Africa during this period, it participated in the conference to protect its economic interests in Africa. During the conference, several critical agreements were reached. The major resolutions were the division of Africa into territories controlled by European powers, the right to establish stations and trading posts along African rivers that flowed into the Atlantic Ocean and the introduction of the "Free Trade Principle" for the Congo River and Niger River basins. The Berlin Conference had long-lasting consequences for West Africa and Africa as a whole.[394]

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[392] K. Onwuka DIKE, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885,* London: Oxford University Press, 1966, pp. 215-220; Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, 93-103; Toyin FALOLA, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, pp. 6-22.

[393] The Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 was a forum convened by Otto von Bismarck to fashion out a peaceful way of resolving the disputes among European powers over claims and counter claims of trading rights on African territories. The conference decided on the principle of 'effective occupation' as the basis of the validity of the claim of any European power to exclusive trading interests in any part of the African territory. The contact that ensued resulted to a new form of relations in which European powers carved African societies and peoples into extensions of their Imperial empires. See Martin EWANS, *European Atrocity, African Catastrophe: Leopold II, the Congo Free State and Its Aftermath*, London: Routledge Publishers, 2017.

[394] Sunday M. A. ALOKO, "The Royal Niger Company and the founding of Nigeria, 1879-1914" *International Journal of Arts, Sciences and Education* Vol. 4 Issue 1, 2023, pp. 40-45; Anietie A. INYANG - Manasseh Edidem BASSEY, "Imperial Treaties and the Origins of British Colonial Rule in Southern Nigeria, 1860-1890" *Mediterranean*

The Berlin conference ended in 1885 and in 1886, the NAC was granted a royal charter by Queen Victoria, giving it the authority to act as a sovereign power in the territories it controlled. The charter for the incorporation of the Royal Niger Company stated that on the 10th of July 1886, a Royal Charter was granted by the Queen in Council to the National African Company, known as the Royal Niger Company, Charted and Limited. In the Petition of the National African Company for the Charter dated 12th February 1885, it was stated that the objectives of the company, among others, were to trade, to form factories, to acquire monopolies. The company then had more authority and autonomy and it was renamed the Royal Niger Company to administer those territories to which it had signed protectorate treaties with rights in the Niger basin. This led to the company's expansion beyond the Niger Delta and into the interior of Nigeria. The company established several forts and trading posts along the Niger River, including at Lokoja, where it built a fort and established an administrative centre.[395]

The Royal Niger Company's expansion into the interior of Nigeria brought it into conflict with local African rulers and communities. The company's agents were often involved in disputes over land and resources, and there were several instances of violence and bloodshed. In 1897, the company was involved in a major military expedition against the cities of Benin Kingdom and the Nupe Empire which resulted in the sacking of the areas and the deaths of thousands of people.[396] The RNC's treatment of local African communities such as the Tivs[397]in North Central Nigeria and its involvement in military expeditions left a lasting legacy that continues to be debated today.[398] Despite these controversies, the Royal Niger Company continued to expand its operations in Nigeria.

Journal of Social Sciences Vol 5 No 20, 2014, pp. 1948-1952; John N. ORIJI, *Political Organization in Nigeria since the Late Stone Age: A History of the Igbo People,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 155-157.

[395] Martin S. SHANGUHYIA - Toyin FALOLA, *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 81-86.

[396] Toyin FALOLA, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, pp. 6-28.

[397] Tiv is an ethnic group in Nigeria with a population of over 5 million individuals throughout Nigeria and Cameroon. Its Nigerian speakers are located in Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau, Rivers, Adamawa, Kaduna, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The language is a branch of Benue–Congo and ultimately of the Niger-Congo family group. They depend on agricultural produce for commerce and sustenance. See Terngu S. NOMISHAN, "Perspectives on the Origin, Genealogical Narration, Early Migrations and Settlement Morphology of the Tiv of Central Nigeria" *International Journal of Academic Pedagogical Research (IJAPR)* Vol. 4 Issue 8, 2020, pp. 26-32.

[398] Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, pp. 93-104; David Craig DORWARD, "The Development of the British Colonial Administration among the Tiv, 1900-1949," *African Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 273, 1969, pp. 316-317.

In 1899 the charter of the RNC was revoked and on 1st January, 1900, its territories came under formal Government control, compensation being paid to the Company in respect of its administrative expenses and its existing buildings and stores. This marked the end of the company's formal role in governing the Northern and Southern Protectorates which later became Nigeria.[399] In 1906, the British government took full control of the company's territories and incorporated them into the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The Royal Niger Company's assets were nationalised, and it ceased to exist as a separate entity. Despite its controversial history, the Royal Niger Company played an important role in shaping Nigeria's economic and political development. The company's involvement in trade helped to stimulate economic growth and development in Nigeria, while its establishment of administrative centres and forts laid the foundation for Britain's colonial administration over Nigeria.[400]After the revocation of its charter, the RNC continued to operate as a trading company in Nigeria, focusing primarily on the export of agricultural products such as palm oil, cocoa, and groundnuts. The company also maintained a presence in other parts of West Africa, including Ghana and Sierra Leone. However, the RNC's influence and power in Nigeria were greatly diminished compared to its previous role as a chartered company. The company faced increased competition from other trading firms and had to contend with new regulations and taxes imposed by the British colonial government.[401]

Despite these challenges, the RNC remained a significant player in Nigeria's export trade for several decades. However, by the mid-20th century, the company's fortunes began to decline as Nigeria gained independence from British rule and moved towards a more diversified economy. In recent years, the RNC has continued to operate as a subsidiary of various multinational corporations. Today, it is known as the Nigerian branch of Unilever, one of the world's largest consumer goods companies. While the RNC no longer plays a significant role in shaping Nigeria's economy or politics, its legacy as a pioneering force in Nigeria's colonial history remains an important part of the country's cultural heritage and history.[402]

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[399] Colonial Office Report on Nigeria for the year 1951, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1953, p. 100
[400] Colonial Office Report on Nigeria for the year 1947, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1949, p. 89.
[401] Scott R. PEARSON, "The economic Imperialism of the Royal Niger Company," A resource material from AgEcon Search, fris-1971-10-01-278.pdf; Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, p. 121.
[402] Ed Emeka KEAZOR, "Nigeria and the Royal Niger Company: The real story, an unpublished article on the Royal Niger Company and its activities in Nigeria," Nigeria_and_the_Royal_Niger_Company_1879.pdf; NA, CO 879/119/8: The amalgamation and administration of Northern and Southern Nigeria, 1912-1919: Report by Sir Frederick D Lugard, pp. 7-8.

4.4 The Indirect Rule System

The Indirect Rule System in Nigeria was a method of colonial administration introduced by the British during their imperial rule in Nigeria. It was a system where local indigenous rulers were allowed to maintain their authority and administrative structures under the supervision of British colonial officers. This system was implemented in various parts of Nigeria, particularly in the northern region where it recorded success. [403]This idea of involving indigenous rulers owed something to policies practised in India, adopted in Buganda early in the century, and applied by Lugard in Nigeria.[404] Indirect rule was intended to ensure only minimal interference with indigenous conduct of public affairs, but its practice placed enormous constraints on the 'minimal' and ensured great changes in the system. The colonial authority introduced new institutions and superimposed them on the so-called old systems. The superimposition of the new on the old was dictated by expediency, for although the old courts and laws were regarded as inferior to those of the British, and sometimes by the natural justice, equity, and good conscience test were regarded as barbaric, the experience of these courts and other judicial institutions and their political significance would help to shape the response of the indigenous population and its political leadership to the new institutions being established by the British.[405]

In 1900, Sir Frederick Lugard was appointed High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Between 1900 and 1903, he conquered and occupied the Sokoto Caliphate. Part of Borno was also occupied. According to Hargreaves, the occupation of the non-Muslim areas was much lengthier and more difficult, in particular Tivland, Igboland and other parts of southern Nigeria. By 1905, however, most of northern Nigeria was virtually under British control. Upon conquering the north, Lugard reasoned that it would be unwise to attempt any drastic reforms which would lead to the dislocation of traditional administrative methods no matter how faulty they have had the sanction of traditional rulers. Lugard therefore, decided to keep all emirs and

[403] Saheed ADERINTO, *Guns and society in colonial Nigeria*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2018, pp. 57-58; A. D. ROBERTS (ed), *The Colonial Moment in Africa,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990, p. 34; Moses E. OCHONU, *Colonial Meltdown,* Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2009, pp.14-16.
[404] David KILLINGRAY, *Fighting for Britain: African Soldiers in the Second World War,* Suffolk*:* Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2010, p. 16.
[405] R. D. PEARCE, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48*, England: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 2005, p. 6-8; Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, p. 110.

other traditional rulers in power over their various communities and rule the protectorate through them instead of ruling directly.[406]

The Indirect Rule System was highly successful in the Northern part of Nigeria due to the structure of their pre-colonial political administration which was highly centralised and the existence of a taxation system before the advent of the British. In the Western part of Nigeria, amongst the Yorubas, Indirect rule was not a complete success due to the limited powers of the Yoruba Obas. They lacked the type of centralised government machinery and absolute powers that enabled their northern counterparts to sustain indirect rule. The western part of Nigeria was also blessed with a large number of highly educated people who were alienated and disregarded by the colonial masters during the period of indirect rule. This elite criticised the rationale behind the use of illiterate traditional rulers to control government machinery for their isolation from the administration. Indirect rule was a total failure in the Eastern part of Nigeria because there were no traditional rulers or any centralised authority to be used as intermediaries between the colonial government and the people. Taxation was not in existence in the east and when the warrant chiefs imposed it on the people, it resulted in riots. A good example is the Aba women's riot of 1929 which was a revolt against the attempt to levy taxes on every adult female.[407]

Another reason for the failure of the Indirect Rule in some parts of Nigeria was that the colonial authorities failed to find out the traditional institutions of the people. Hence, in most cases, they appointed the wrong persons as rulers of the people. Several written sources have claimed that the newly appointed rulers were given warrants or certificates to legalise their new positions and give them government support. They were then known as warrant chiefs as explained above. They were closely supervised and directed by the political officers. For each local area within a district, a Native Court was created that consisted of the warrant chiefs in the area. This Court was an all-purpose body which performed executive, legislative and judicial functions. It was later given the more appropriate name of a Native Authority. As in other areas of Nigeria, the real authority rested with the British political officer. It was he who presided over the Native Court. The Native Court could be presided over by a local chief when it met away from the district

[406] John D. HARGREAVES, *The end of colonial rule in West Africa*, London: Macmillan Press, 1979, pp. 25-26; Obaro IKIME, "Reconsidering Indirect Rule: The Nigerian example" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 4, No. 3, 1968, pp. 424-425.

[407] Obaro IKIME, "Reconsidering Indirect Rule: The Nigerian example" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 4, No. 3, 1968, pp. 421-424; Z. O. APATA "Lugard and the Creation of Provincial Administration Northern Nigeria 1900-1918" *Transafrican Journal of History* Vol. 21, 1992, pp. 111-123.

headquarters but its work was always subject to review by the political officer. The warrant chiefs were as in other Nigerian areas paid employees of the colonial government. They were responsible to the political officers placed above them. As elsewhere in Nigeria, the colonial administration was supported by detachments of the colonial army and police.[408]

This enabled the British political officers to have too much power in the areas under their charge. Hence, they were often autocratic in the discharge of their duties. This was the case in Auchi Kingdom when the Otaru was used by the British Colonialists to rule over his people and he was empowered to carry out his assigned duties to the fullest.

4.5 Native Authority

The Native Authority (NA) system was the initial colonial framework for local government administration, characterised primarily by indirect rule and exploitation. A unified local government structure was first implemented in Northern Nigeria before being extended to Southern Nigeria, albeit with varying degrees of success. According to Egbe, this system, as embodied in the Native Authorities, failed to meet the needs and aspirations of the local populace. Consequently, there were intense agitations, particularly from the educated elites in Southern Nigeria, who sought greater participation in the governance of their affairs.[409]

From the early days of the British colonial administration, Yahaya stated that the emirates of Northern Nigeria districts and Southern Nigeria were developed into units of local government headed by emirs' chiefs and kings. By the end of World War II Native Authorities had evolved into powerful political forces. Native Authority as the unit of local government, was supported by a bureaucratic organisation known as the Native Administration. Since the N.A. was constituted under a traditional ruler, the legal authority for local government in the emirates and districts during British rule was vested in the office of the traditional rulers, and the traditional rulers thus became recognised as the authorities responsible for local government.[410] An archival source disclosed that Native Authorities are statutory and a basic percentage of generated tax should be

[408] Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, pp. 113-115; Anthony C. DIALA, "A butterfly that thinks Itself a bird: The Identity of Customary Courts in Nigeria," *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* Vol. 51 Issue 3, 2019, pp. 381-405; Cynado C. N, O. EZEOGIDI, "British Conquest, Colonization and Administration In Nigeria" A paper presented at Department of Political Science Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam Anambra State, Nigeria, pp. 11-12, SSRN-id3563173.pdf,

[409] Enyi John EGBE, "Native Authorities and Local Government Reforms in Nigeria Since 1914" *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 19, Issue 3, 2014, p. 113.

[410] A. D. Yahaya, *The Native Authority System in Northern Nigeria 1950-70: A Study in Political Relations with particular reference to the Zaria Native Authority*, Zaira: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1980, p. 3.

allocated to the Native Authorities for their running cost and expenditure. However, continuous interaction between the Native Authority and other political organizations, like political parties, and state bureaucracy resulted in them being very much part of the total political system.[411]

The Native Authority operated within the established boundaries and the District Officer functioned as an advisor to him. For a traditional ruler to become a Native Authority, he had to be appointed as such by the Governor. Officially, British policy was to select the senior traditional ruler of an area as the Native Authority. This process was complicated by the diverse types of traditional rulers in Nigeria. Sokoh stated that in the North, an aristocratic and autocratic hierarchical system of traditional rule was clearly designated, and the senior traditional rulers, which were the Emirs, were easily identified. In the south, however, the traditional rulers rarely ruled alone but derived their authority from their position in the council. In the East, political organisation was highly decentralised and rarely went beyond the village level. Even at the village level, though, few central traditional rulers existed. Rather, village councils operated which were representative of the major clans in the village.[412] Thus, the very act of selecting individual traditional rulers who could then be integrated into central colonial administration interfered with the notion of the traditional ruler ruling not above society, but rather in it. In addition to the problem of identification, the problem of succession also arose. In most instances, the selection of a traditional ruler was a political process which took place between members of a given community. Political battles were fought and the winner emerged as the traditional ruler.[413]

With the integration of traditional rulers into the national administration, Native Authorities began to participate more in the governance of Nigeria. There was a need for reforms within the structure of the Native Authority System as a result of the failure of the colonial local government system to meet the needs and aspirations of the people. Thus, after the Second World War in 1945, the colonial policies on local government changed coupled with the demands for greater participation and this led to the adoption of the representative or liberal democratic system of local government in the 1950s. By this time, self-government in Nigeria was gradually being introduced and a federal system of government had been entrenched in the Macpherson

[411]NA, CO 583/244/1- Apportionment of revenue and duties between the central government and Native Administrations, 1939, p. 16.
[412] G. C. Sokoh, "A Historical Analysis of the Changing Role of Traditional Rulers in Governance in Nigeria" *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 23 Issue 1, 2018, pp. 52-53.
[413] Rotimi AJAYI, "Politics and Traditional Institutions in Nigeria: A historical overview" *Transafrican Journal of History* Vol. 21, 1992, pp. 128-129.

Constitution of 1951. In the same year, the Colonial Office organised visits to all the clans of Kukuruku Division to enable them to consult with the people to get information on how to carry out reforms in the Native Authority. When discussions of this same issue started, issues discussed included to reduce the large number of councils; to reduce the number of paramount chiefs and subject chiefs interested in positions to contest for them in elections; increase the number of literates in the administration and separating the council and council membership. This was a great step towards the reorganisation of the Native Authority.[414]

The Otaru of Auchi was appointed the Native Authority and was used to rule over his people. After the Independence of Nigeria in 1960, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation, there were further reforms that were still carried out within the Native Authority System.[415]

4.6 Native Court Authorities

During the British colonial administration in Nigeria, native courts played a significant role in the administration of justice and governance. These courts were established by the British colonial authorities to handle local disputes and maintain law and order within the indigenous communities. This was a replacement for earlier Courts of Equity and Consular Courts in the Warri and Benin River Districts of the Niger Protectorate. The native courts operated alongside the British-style legal system and were instrumental in integrating traditional African justice systems with European legal principles. The establishment of native courts in Nigeria was part of the British colonial administration's strategy to govern the diverse ethnic groups effectively. These courts were set up to adjudicate cases involving customary laws, land disputes, marriage issues, and other local matters. The British recognised the importance of traditional justice systems in maintaining social order and sought to work collaboratively with indigenous leaders to administer justice.[416]

Native courts in Nigeria were typically presided over by traditional chiefs or village heads who knew local customs and traditions.[417] These courts operated informally, with an emphasis on mediation and conciliation rather than strict legal procedures. The proceedings were conducted in

[414] BEN PROF. 1, File 44/7, VOL. XI, Annual Report of Kukuruku Division by Mr. S. J. Henry, District Officer, Kukuruku Division, 1951, p. 5.
[415] Kingdom E. ORJI, "Traditional Rulership and Local Governance in South-South Nigeria" *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 16 Issue 2, 2013, pp. 41-42; J. D. OJO, '"he changing role of Traditional Rulers in the Nigerian political set up" *The Indian Journal of Political Science* Vol. 37, No. 4, 1976, pp. 123-124; Olufemi VAUGHAN, "Chieftaincy Politics and Communal Identity in Western Nigeria, 1893-1951*" The Journal of African History* Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 291-192.
[416] Ralph FOX, *The Colonial Policy of British Imperialism,* Paris: Foreign Languages Press, 2023, pp. 98 -99; Colonial Office Report on Nigeria for the year 1947, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1949, p. 67-68.
[417] Colonial Office Report on Nigeria for the year 1951, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1953, p. 71.

local languages to ensure that all parties could understand and participate in the legal process. Native courts operated autonomously within their communities and they were subject to oversight by British colonial officials. The colonial authorities appointed Native Court Assessors to assist in legal matters and ensure compliance with colonial laws and policies. This dual system of justice allowed for a degree of flexibility in resolving disputes while also upholding British legal standards.[418]

The Native court system was instituted in Northern Nigeria with the coming of the British rule in 1900 and spread, not only to the rest of the country but over many parts of tropical Africa. The system was instituted in the Northern Emirates where African rulers acting under the supervision of British administrative staff. Under them, district heads and village heads were responsible to their superiors for the smaller areas under their charge. Native Treasuries were established into which monies were paid as a share of the fines collected as well as the receipts of the Native Courts and various minor fees like in the Benin Province where Auchi Kingdom is located.[419] Native Courts were also established throughout the country to administer native laws and customs. Their jurisdiction varied and was in each case laid down in the warrant establishing the court. In the Northern Region, however, the native law and custom administered in a majority of the courts was Islamic.[420] The British colonial authorities recognised the traditional system of justice. The Alkalis were allowed to administer justice to the people as before under Muslim law but were warned against corruption and the infliction of barbarous punishments. In Southern Nigeria, the colonial authorities stayed outside the Native Courts just like in Northern Nigeria and allowed the kings and traditional authorities to take charge but under their supervision. This was a similar process in Auchi Kingdom and Nigeria as a whole.[421]

In 1936, when issues affecting the Judicial system of Nigeria arose, the issue was referred to Mr. H. C. F. Cox of the Colonial Office, who recommended an overhaul of the Nigerian Judicial

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[418] Ejembi Anefu UNOBE, "Class-formation, State Construction and Customary Law in Colonial Nigeria" *Africa Development / Afrique et Development* Vol. 14, No. 4, 1989, pp. 99-100; Anthony C. DIALA, "A butterfly that thinks Itself a bird: The Identity of Customary Courts in Nigeria," *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* Vol. 51, Issue 3, 2019, pp. 381-405.

[419] Philip IGBAFE, "British Rule in Benin 1897-1920: Direct or Indirect?" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 3, No. 4, 1967, p. 710.

[420] Colonial Office Report on Nigeria for the year 1955, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957, p. 131; Colonial Office Report on Nigeria for the year 1951, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1953, p. 107.

[421] Obaro IKIME, "Reconsidering Indirect Rule: The Nigerian example" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 4, No. 3, 1968, p. 434; A. E. AFIGBO, "The consolidation of British imperial administration in Nigeria: 1900-1918" *Civilisations* Vol. 21, No. 4, 1971, p. 445.

System which he regarded as "unsatisfactory and capable of simplification." In the summary of Mr. H. C. F. Cox's proposal for the overhaul of the Judicial System in Nigeria, he recommended that the Native Courts be retained because of their importance to the people of the rural and interior areas of Nigeria.[422] He also recommended that offices be created for the position of Attorney-General, Solicitor-General and Crown Counsel of Nigeria. These offices were earlier created by Statute in 1900 but were never implemented so they never came into being[423]

4.7 British Colonial Administrative Policies in Nigeria

British colonial policies in Nigeria refer to the establishment of the British administration and all the various strategies and policies formulated in running the affairs of the country.[424] British colonial policies were policies formulated for enslavement and exploitation through the military, political, and economic coercion of peoples, countries, and territories. British colonial policies were implemented for the major purpose of exploiting their colonised territories, establishing and maintaining foreign rule over a set of people to get maximum economic benefits.[425] British Colonial policies equally contributed to stimulating national consciousness as traditional rulers and educated elites were dissatisfied with these policies because they undermined their positions as traditional rulers.[426] It is also asserted that British colonial policies created a new form of poverty that increasingly spread over time because colonial policies undermined the local economy and destroyed the self-sufficiency of the household economy, which formerly provided for the welfare needs of individual members of Nigeria.[427]

After the British imperialists had taken over the administration of the Nigeria, they introduced the Policy of Association. This policy permitted the natives of the numerous ethnicities of Nigeria to maintain the practice of their own culture and enjoy their local rights but at the same time, they still had to deal with the practices of the coloniser and execute their wishes. It was the

[422] NA, CO 583/213: Colonial Office- Nigeria Original Correspondence, A proposal for the overhaul of the Nigerian Judicial System by Mr. H. C. F. Cox, 1936.
[423] NA, CO 583/213/15: Colonial Office: Nigeria Original Correspondence. Nigeria: original correspondence. Law Officers Ordinance, 1936.
[424] Paul Ilesanmi AKANMIDU, "The British's Contact with Nigeria's Peoples, Amalgamation and the Question of Minority" *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* Vol. 12 No.1, 2018, p. 462.
[425] Frances Jumoke OLOIDI, "The Colonial Administrators and Income Policies in Nigeria Before Independence (1900-1960)" *Webology* Vol. 18, N0. 5, 2021, pp. 1193.
[426] Ubaku Kelechi CHIKA - Emeh Chikezie ANYALEWACHI - Anyikwa Chinenye NKIRU, "Impact of Nationalist Movement on the Actualization of Nigerian Independence, 1914-1960" *International Journal of History and Philosophical Research* Vol. 2, No.1, 2014, p. 81.
[427] Uyilawa USUANLELE, "Poverty and Welfare in Colonial Nigeria, 1900-1954" PhD Dissertation, Queen's University Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 2010, p. 44.

best way for the British to pursue their objectives while respecting partly the existing structures. They could not hold themselves from destroying the structures that did not suit their interests and ideologies. It can be said that the British imperialists had some level of respect for the natives and their traditions, but they still wanted to impose their ways of life. This policy recorded success after it was introduced.[428]

The British imperialist embarked on a policy of massive construction of several railway lines across their colonies. The railways lay across the colony, from the west to the north, from the north to the south, and from the east to the south. Later from east to north-westwards, forms the national grid. the construction of the railway can be said to have started in 1898 Iddo in Lagos. However, the background to the policy of railway dates back to 1877. Although many projects had been put forward for other parts of British West Africa since 1872, it was not until 1877 that the first railway proposal was sketched for Lagos which was the only British colony in the area at the time. The railways and other means of communication made possible for the evacuation of Nigerian products to coastal cities from where they were transported to Britain and other European countries on trade terms decided by the colonial authorities and, of course, to the disadvantage of the Nigerian owners of the commodities.[429] Erhagbe mentioned that the rail tracks were constructed to mainly satisfy the needs of the British Colonial Government not necessarily to satisfy the local people but the people still benefited from it.[430] The British colonial administration implemented other policies and practices that significantly impacted Nigeria's socio-economic, and political landscape. There was also the issue of enactment of the Gibraltar Stamp Duty

[428] Salime Milzat Saidat FATMA, "The French and British Colonial Rule in Africa: A comparative analysis of colonial governance and its impacts on the post-independence political and economic development of the colonies" Bachelors project, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2021, pp. 10-12; Martin S. SHANGUHYIA - Toyin FALOLA, *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 23-24.

[429] Adeyeri OLUSEGUN - Adejuwon Kehinde DAVID, "The Implications of British Colonial Economic Policies on Nigeria's Development" *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences* Vol. 1 No. 2, 2012, p. 8; Nwachukwu J. OBIAKOR - Abuoma C. AGAJELU, "British Colonial Economic Policies and Infrastructure in Nigeria: The Rail Transport Example, 1898-1960," *African Journal of Arts and Humanities* Vol. 2, No 3, 2016, pp. 18-20; Saheed ADERINTO, *Animality and Colonial Subjecthood in Africa*, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2022, pp. 47-48.

[430] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

Ordinance in 1932 as proposed by H. C. F. Cox, the then Attorney General of Nigeria.[431] This Stamp Duty Ordinance was deliberated and enacted by the British Colonial Office in 1939.[432]

The British colonial administration implemented education policies that were designed to produce a workforce skilled in specific areas, such as agriculture, mining, and transportation. However, these policies were primarily focused on training an elite class of Nigerians to serve the colonial administration rather than promoting widespread education and social mobility. The colonial education aimed at creating a small class of skilled technical and administration functional and agricultural raw materials plantation farmers, possibly perpetuating the continued domination of the society by the offspring of members of the overthrown ruling autocracy. The emphasis of Western education was on reading, writing, arithmetic and religion. This new education prepared the recipients for job opportunities as teachers, church evangelists, clerks and interpreters. The educational system was also divided along ethnic and religious lines, with the Northern and Southern protectorates having different curricula and educational opportunities.[433]The Colonial Government in 1951, according to archival sources, issued scholarships and bursaries to Muslims of Northern Nigeria for studies within and overseas. [434] In 1952, the Colonial Government realised that the turn-up of children at schools was very low due to high school fees. In other to encourage parents of the children, the Colonial Government created an Education Fund from which many children from the Division, including Auchi, benefited. They also ensured to provide first-aid kits to schools that were more than three miles from the dispensary.[435]

4.8 The creation of the Kukuruku Division and Auchi as its administrative headquarters

During the colonial period, Nigeria was divided into various administrative units known as divisions and provinces. These divisions were further subdivided into districts for effective governance. The Kukuruku Division in Nigeria was created in 1918 during the colonial era by the

[431] NA, CO 583/213/12- Proposed revision of the laws of Nigeria, H. C. F. Cox proposal for the adoption of the Gibraltar Stamp Duty Ordinance in Nigeria, 1936, p. 2; BEN PROF 1. File 1933-1935, Acknowledgement of Letters by District Officer: Procedure on the issue of receipts for Government Revenue, Auchi, 1932.

[432] For more information on the Gibraltar Stamp Duty Ordinance in 1932 see Stamp Duty Ordinance 1932 (unpublished), https://www.paclii.org/ws/legis/consol_act_2020/sdo1932204.pdf, Accessed on: June 16, 2024.

[433] Safiya J. GARBA, "The Impact of Colonialism on Nigerian Education and the Need for E-Learning Technique for Sustainable Development" *Journal of Educational and Social Research* Vol. 2(7), 2012, pp. 56-57; Fatma Zohra BOUTI, "The Rule of the British Empire in Nigeria (1861-1960)." Masters project, Ahmed Draia University-Adrar, 2022, pp. 41-42.

[434] NA, CO 554/520- Colonial Office: West Africa Original Correspondence, Granting of scholarships to Muslims at Muslim universities, p. 48.

[435] BEN PROF. 1, File 44, VOL. XI, Annual report of Kukuruku Division by District Officer, Kukuruku Division, 1952, pp. 49-50.

British Colonial Administration. The division was established as part of the British colonial government's administrative structure in Nigeria. Wajeed revealed that the primary purpose of creating divisions like the Kukuruku Division was to facilitate governance and control over the diverse regions within the country. The Kukuruku Division was one of these administrative units created to streamline the governance of the region and ensure efficient administration.[436] At the time of its creation, Kukuruku was bordered from the North-West by Kakuma, to Agenebode at the North-East by the Kabba Province, on the East from Agenebode to Anegbette by the Niger river, on the South by Esan Division of the Benin Province, on the West by Esan Division of the Benin Province, and the West by the Owo Division of the Ondo Province.[437] After the independence of Nigeria in 1960, there were several changes and boundary adjustments.

Erhagbe revealed that in 1904 when British rule became established in the Auchi Kingdom, the first organ of British administration that was introduced was the Native Court (NC) which exercised both executive and judicial functions together.[438] Tony disclosed that the Native Court was situated at Idah, a city that was situated beyond the eastern part of Etsako land across the great river Niger, which served as a springboard for the acquisition of Auchi territory by the British. The Otaru was one of the fifteen members of the Native Court. Other members were clan heads of other clans and communities neighbouring the Auchi Kingdom. Court sessions were held once a month and the Otaru, like other members of the native court, had no form of absolute authority during court proceedings which were presided over by a British official, the District Commissioner or the Assistant District Commissioner. The reason for this, as revealed by an oral source, was that the basis for judgement during this period was the English legal laws which were completely alien to the Auchi people's customs and traditions.[439] However, it is important to mention that the Otaru usually received the various policies and orders of the British imperial government as they were to be implemented in his domain during this visit to Idah for court sessions. This was the situation until 1914 when the system was reorganised with the enactment of the Native Court Ordinance (NCO) No. 8 of 1914.[440]

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[436] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[437] BEN PROF. 1/44 VOL II, Annual Report of Kukuruku Division by Acting District Officer, 1933, p. 26.
[438] Edward O. ERHAGBE, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[439] Ibid, p. 41.
[440] This Native Court Ordinance provided for a system of local and native matters and authorized the administration to convene conferences of chiefs and clan heads with a view of creating peace and finding lasting solutions to the issues and cases of the Native population. It comprised of native judges and they administered customary laws while Native Treasuries based on the Native Revenue Ordinance were responsible for levying taxes, collecting revenue and

Egbefo explained that the ordinance was enacted to perfect the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria. The ordinance was also meant to provide for a new system of local administration where the indigenous court members shall fully deliberate on cases but under the watch and authority of a British Officer. At this point, many courts were established, and clan heads or paramount rulers were made judges of these courts. The Otaru who was designated paramount chief of his kingdom was allotted a seat in the court which, at this time, had been transferred to Ubiaja the then headquarters of Esanland, another major Edo-speaking group situated between Afenmai and Benin. The reason for the transfer from Idah to this place was due to the exclusion of the former and some other Etsako towns from Southern provinces and merged with the Northern provinces.[441]

In 1916, according to an oral source, the Native Authority Ordinance was enacted by the British. to allow for the appointment of a traditional ruler or a representative as a Native Authority as explained previously. The Otaru was in this vein, appointed as the Auchi Native Authority. It should be noted at this point that the Native Authority Ordinance effected some changes in the power and authority of the Otaru.[442] An oral source disclosed that it is difficult to explain in practical terms how the new attainment in both phases altered his status quo but one thing for sure was that collective decisions had to be made. This was because he, like other members of the native court at Ubiaja, was still under the supervision of British officials, hence free hand was absent because he had to consult others to make decisions. This, to a large extent, did not make his impact much felt.[443] This same year, 1918, marked the creation of Kukuruku Division as disclosed above.

After the establishment of British colonialism in Auchi Kingdom and other surrounding communities in 1904 and beyond, there was a need for them to have an ideal administrative headquarters for effective administrative activities. This made the British to look out for a very suitable location for their administrative headquarters. However, according to Wajeed, the history behind the making of Auchi Kingdom as the Headquarters started during the reign of the Nupe. On Emir Abubakar's ascension to the throne as king of Bida in Nupe land in 1895, he made some changes to enhance his administration. He made Auchi Kingdom his headquarters of the territories

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determining how these were disbursed. For more information on the Native Court Ordinance see Joseph B. EBUNE, "The application of British Indirect Rule in the Kumba Division: A decolonial assessment 1916-1961" *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Arts and Humanities* Vol. 4, No. 2, 2016, pp. 29-30.

[441] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

[442] Edward O. ERHAGBE, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

[443] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

around the Kukuruku area which he had firm control over. Tributes and taxes collected from surrounding towns and villages like Warrake, Ivbiaro, Uzairue, Ibie, Ihievbe, Avianwu, Okpekpe, Agenebode and others were conveyed to Bida by some selected Azenis and carriers, and at least one specially picked Daudu of the Otaru. In return as a sign of goodwill, the Emir of Bida usually sent gifts to the Otaru of Auchi Kingdomi as reported by an oral source.[444]

British started their tour of the regions that were taken over from the Nupe imperialists. Momodu explained that the tour started from their base at Idah, now part of current-day Kogi State. The British patrols crossed the river Niger and marched into the southern area of Etsako land and gradually proceeded towards the Auchi Kingdom. This was the period that marked the creation of the Kukuruku Division which was later renamed Afenmai Division in 1954. This had to be done to unite all the Afenmai communities under a single authority.[445] Oral sources revealed that to bring the administration and governance nearer to the people, Auchi and other Afenmai communities and villages that were formally under the Northern Protectorate were transferred to the Southern Protectorate after the amalgamation in 1914.[446]

Subsequently, the administrative headquarters had to be moved from Idah, which was under the Northern Protectorate, to Ubiaja in the Southern Protectorate in Esan district of the current day Edo State. Robson explained that the British, still not satisfied with the location which they felt was too far away, transferred the headquarters to Iddo-Okpella in 1916. The administrative headquarters was, again, further moved from Iddo-Okpella to Fugar in 1918. The demise of the District Officer at Fugar in 1919, which was questionable, made the British Colonial Office to begin the search for another more suitable location for the district's new headquarters. This was the same year that Chief Momoh Idaoh was appointed the new Otaru of Auchi Kingdom.[447]

Both a written and oral source disclosed that Auchi Kingdom and Ayua, a village that was a few kilometres away from the Auchi Kingdom, were the two choice locations for the siting of the new district headquarters. Ayua was the first location that was visited, but the white inspectors

[444] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[445] Aminu O. MOMODU, "The Role of Otaru Momoh I in the Islamisation of Auchi and its Environs," Bachelor of Arts project, University of Ilorin, Nigeria, 1986, p. 44.
[446] Uyilawa USUANLELE, "The Decline of Islam among the Benin and Esan of Edo State, Nigeria: A Historical Perspective" Al-Qasemi Journal of Islamic Studies, vol. 7, issues 1&2, 2022, p. 8; Dauda Saliu GARUBA, "Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy institution in historical perspective 1860-1973," Bachelor of Arts project, University of Ilorin, Nigeria, 1992. p. 119.
[447] Ibid, p. 57.

were not satisfied with the location. On arrival at the second location in Auchi kingdom, the inspectors were very impressed with the site. It had beautiful vegetation, fresh and warm spring water, and the location was at a hilltop in present-day Aiboste. The white inspectors hurriedly recommended the location as a suitable site for the establishment of a government station in 1920. Major C. M. Dunn moved the government station from Fugar to the Auchi Kingdom that same year when it was officially designated as the new administrative headquarters of the Kukuruku Division. Otaru Momoh Idaoh was subsequently appointed the first district head because he was already known to the British Colonial officers and was known to be very cooperative.[448]

The establishment of the Kukuruku Division and Auchi as its administrative headquarters played a crucial role in the British colonial government's efforts to exert control over the territory and its inhabitants. It provided a framework for local governance, law enforcement, tax collection, and other administrative functions essential for colonial administration. The creation of divisions like Kukuruku also had implications for the socio-political landscape of Nigeria. It influenced local power dynamics, traditional authority structures, and interactions between different ethnic groups within the region.[449] The divisional boundaries often cut across ethnic lines, leading to complexities in governance and inter-group relations.

4.9 British Colonial Economic Policy in Nigeria

The British incursion into what is presently referred to as Nigeria was mainly motivated by the search for cheap human and material resources necessary for the sustenance of the British Empire. Economic policies were formulated to ensure that their goals were achieved.[450] The economic exploitation of colonial territories was one cardinal objective of colonialism. The British colonial economic policy was anchored on the belief that a colonial territory existed primarily for the benefit of the metropolitan country. The economic relationship between Britain, the metropolitan country and her colonies was expected to be governed by the principle of comparative advantage, implying that a country should specialise in the production of what she was best suited for.[451] The

[448] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu; Momoh K. SEGOSIMHE, Momoh, *Origin and development of Auchi*, pp. 118-119.
[449] Edward O. ERHAGBE, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[450]Rotimi Ajayi - Joseph Yinka Fashagba (eds), *Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development*, Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2021, p. 245.
[451] Adeyinka Theresa AJAYI - Ajibade Idowu SAMUE - Oladiti Abiodun AKEEM, "Produce Buying and Marketing Boards in Nigeria: Interrogating the Fiscal Role of Western Nigeria Marketing Board 1942-1962*" European Journal of Management and Marketing Studies* Vol. 2 Issue 3, 2017, p. 62; Frances Jumoke OLOIDI, "The Colonial Administrators and Income Policies in Nigeria before Independence (1900 – 1960)" *Webology* Vol. 18, N0. 5, 2021, p. 1191.

British colonial government, therefore, did not relent in the exploitation of resources found in the area. Nigeria which was agriculturally endowed by Mother Nature with suitable geography for cultivation of different types of crops was given serious attention by the British colonialists through the introduction of an agricultural system that ensured maximum exploitation of the agricultural resources of Nigeria. This was done with outright impunity despite the glaring devastating effects on the local economies.[452]

The British imperialists adopted an economic policy that was mostly beneficial to Britain. In Nigeria, the colonial economy depended on major cash and export crops which were cocoa, rubber, palm produce and groundnuts.[453] Among them, they accounted for about 70% of Nigeria's total exports in colonial times. [454]It is therefore not unexpected that British colonial policies and practices in the field of agriculture were geared towards organising and galvanising all human and material resources in Nigeria towards the utmost production and export of these cash crops needed to feed British industries. This had very serious implications for the Nigerian economy. Poor Nigerian peasants were forced by circumstances imposed on them by colonial economic policies to ditch the production of food crops to focus on cash crops.[455]

British colonial officials formulated and executed policies of exploiting the local economy of the Northern Provinces in Nigeria. Colonial officials in collaboration with the British commercial interest in northern Nigeria adopted various measures to ensure the achievement of their colonial objectives. British colonial policies and practices in the field of agriculture were geared towards organising and galvanising all human and material resources in Nigeria towards the utmost production and export of these cash crops and animal products needed to feed her (British) industries. This had very serious implications for the Nigerian economy. Poor Nigerian peasants were forced by circumstances imposed on them by colonial economic policies to ditch

[452] Dahiru RABE, "The impact of export crops production on colonial Northern Nigeria" An unpublished paper, 2004, p. 2.
[453] Frances Jumoke OLOIDI, "The Colonial Administrators and Income Policies in Nigeria before Independence (1900-1960)," 2021, p. 1193.
[454] J. O. AHAZUEM - T. FALOLA, "Production for the Metropolis: Agriculture and Forest Products." In: T. Falola (Ed): *Britain and Nigeria. Exploitation or Development?"* London: Zed Books, 1987, p. 80.
[455] Abiodun AFOLABI, "The colonial taxation policy among Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria and its implications for socio-economic development," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 19, 2010, p. 82.

the production of food crops to focus on cash crops. This was a time when the concept of cash crops was introduced to Nigeria.[456]

The significant effects of colonial economic policy on hides and skins were visibly witnessed when the British government put restrictions on the buying of locally tanned skins of Northern Nigeria and also taxed heavily the internal processes of providing locally tanned skins to discourage the internal consumption of such products. In Nigeria, goats and sheep were used to prepare some delicious traditional meals and also used for many other purposes but the demand for hides and skins at the international affected the meals prepared in the home of many people in Nigeria.[457] However, due to the economic depression of the 1930s, the internal markets of hides and skins flourished temporarily for a while before it turned into full-scale colonial economic exploitation. In the long run, colonial government in Northern Nigeria implemented some measures that pushed the local tanning industries and local usage of the raw and tanned hides and skins into colonial realm. Colonial firms ensured that hides and skins in the local markets were exported to Europe instead of local industries.[458]

The Nigerian colonial economy depended on its major export crops which have been mentioned above. Among them, they accounted for about 70% of Nigeria's total exports in colonial times. Of the palm oil exported to Europe and America the major part is used for soap-making. Various technical difficulties have hitherto prevented its use in Europe and America as an edible fat, although its high melting point would otherwise make it particularly valuable for this purpose.[459] In 1937, the combined value of all agricultural exports of Nigeria amounted to £15,000,000. Of this, oil palm products represented 40%, ground nuts 27%, cocoa 25%, and all other products 8%. Palm oil earned a total of £32.4 million for Nigeria in 1955, while palm kernel accounted for £19.2 million. The agricultural industry was almost entirely in the hands of the local

[456] S. A. SHOKPEKA - Odigwe A. NWAOKOCHA, "British Colonial Economic Policy in Nigeria, the Example of Benin Province 1914-1954" *Journal of Human Ecology* 28(1), 2009, p. 58; Adeyeri OLUSEGUN - Adejuwon Kehinde DAVID," The Implications of British Colonial Economic Policies on Nigeria's Development" *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences* Vol. 1 No. 2, 2012, p. 2.
[457] A. G. ADEBAYO, "The Production and Export of Hides and Skins in Colonial Northern Nigeria, 1900-1945" *The Journal of African History* Vol. 33, No. 2, 1992, pp. 274-276.
[458] Dahiru RABE, "The impact of export crops production on colonial Northern Nigeria" An unpublished paper, 2004, p. 9; Dele Toyin JEMIRADE, "The Colonial Economy: Prosperity and Depression in Kano Province of Northern Nigeria, 1899-1939" PhD Dissertation, York University, Toronto, Ontario, 2021, p. 160.
[459] COLONIAL REPORTS No. 1842- Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of Nigeria, 1936, Published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, p. 35, 1938.

farmers.[460] It should also be noted that to boost the yield of the Nigerian farmers agricultural funding and assistance were rendered to them.[461]

In 1960, the combined earnings of both palm oil and palm kernel accounted for £40.1 million. The economy of Eastern Nigeria is rightly based on palm oil products, which account for 82.4% of the value of total exports of the region, compared to 30.7% and 48.9% for Western and Northern Nigeria respectively. Cocoa, which was another very important cash crop before and after World War II, has remained a foreign-exchange-earning commodity next in rank to oil palm products. Nigeria was the third largest producer of cocoa, exporting almost all of its total annual production. About 95% of Nigeria's output of cocoa comes from Western Nigeria, where it is the mainstay of the economy. For example, cocoa earned £36.7 million in foreign trade in 1960, compared to £305,000 in 1937.[462]

Other agricultural products that were cultivated and exported included cotton, cassava and rubber. The policy encouraged large-scale cultivation of all the above-mentioned agricultural produce. The strategies adopted by colonialists for buying and acquiring these commodities were exploitative in nature. Buying and exporting agricultural produce from Nigeria and Africa in general dates back to the introduction of the legitimate trade, after the demise of the obnoxious slave trade and the advent of the Industrial Revolution. European traders explored Africa in search of raw materials to feed their nascent industries and get a market for their finished goods in the late 19th century. Trading companies were established by these European merchants primarily for the export of primary products. Exports of farm crops including minerals were in the hands of a very few Europeans and American concerns. The United African Company UAC for example handled nearly half of West Africa's overseas trade.[463] To facilitate the efficient administration of the colonial government in Nigeria, a system of uniform taxation was implemented nationwide,

[460] NA, CO 859/80/4 Social welfare work in the colonies: Survey of the progress of co-operation in British West Africa, 1943.
[461] NA, CO 583/274/6: Colonial Office: Nigeria: original correspondence. Agricultural policy, 1945.
[462] M. O. IJERE, "Colonial Policy in Nigerian Agriculture and Its Implementation" *Agricultural History Society* Vol. 48, No. 2, 1974, pp. 303-304; Olusola Samuel AFOLAYAN, "Cocoa Production Pattern in Nigeria: The Missing Link in Regional Agro-Economic Development" *Analele Universităţii din Oradea, Seria Geografie*, 30(1), 2020, pp.88-96.
[463] Adeyinka Theresa AJAYI - Ajibade Idowu SAMUE - Oladiti Abiodun AKEEM, "Produce Buying and Marketing Boards in Nigeria: Interrogating the Fiscal Role of Western Nigeria Marketing Board 1942-1962*" European Journal of Management and Marketing Studies* Vol. 2 Issue 3, 2017, pp. 62-63.

contrasting with the diverse tax practices of the pre-colonial era.[464] Before the reorganization of the Local Government Administration in the early 1930s, the British Colonial Government were very emphatic on the collection of tax in Nigeria. An archival source revealed that in Yola of the Adamawa Province, great efforts were made in the retrieval of tax from farmers.[465] The same efforts might have been made in all provinces in Nigeria.

The colonial authorities were faced with the urgent need to generate internal revenue to finance recurrent expenditures, including the payment of African soldiers, policemen, and native authority officers employed in the day-to-day administration of the colony. To address this, tax-related policies were formulated, and penalties for tax evasion were introduced as a warning.[466] The British Colonial Authority successfully transformed Nigeria into a cash-based economy centred on the British pound sterling, compelling Nigerians to earn and utilise this currency through both direct and indirect means. Also, a uniform legal tender was introduced as the generally accepted currency across the country, facilitating the transaction of goods and services. However, this currency was closely tied to the British sterling, with Nigeria's foreign reserves and exchange rates being directly managed from London. This linkage meant that Nigeria's economy was heavily influenced by the economic conditions in England and was vulnerable to international price fluctuations in goods and services. Consequently, the currency policy of the colonial period effectively rendered Nigeria's economy an extension of Britain's domestic economy.[467]

Transportation served as a vital tool for the colonial government in Nigeria, enabling them to achieve their objective of transforming the colony into an export-oriented economy. Vast quantities of goods were exported via transport network that linked production centres to the coastal ports. Among the various modes of transportation, the railway played a particularly significant role in this process. The colonial economic policy aimed to modernise local transportation, distribution systems, currency and banking, labour distribution, and transportation, all with the goal of expanding export production and facilitating the distribution of European

[464] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, "Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy institution in historical perspective 1860-1973," Bachelor of Arts project, University of Ilorin, Nigeria, 1992, pp. 68-69.
[465] NAK, YOLA PROF. File, 1395, General tax in 1930-1931, Muri Division, 1931, p. 5.
[466] NA, CO 583/213- Nigeria: original correspondence, income (colony) legislation, 1936, p. 14.
[467] Rotimi Ajayi - Joseph Yinka Fashagba (eds), *Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development,* Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2021, pp. 251-253; Frances Jumoke OLOIDI, "The Colonial Administrators and Income Policies in Nigeria Before Independence (1900-1960)" *Webology* Vol. 18, N0. 5, 2021, pp. 1193-1197.

manufactured goods. Following the discovery of various production centres in the hinterlands, it became evident that the railway system, which had proven instrumental in industrial Europe, was also essential for the colony's economic development.[468] In 1939, an archival source revealed that when it was evident that Nigeria was confronted with transportation problems. The Colonial Office in collaboration with Lever brothers and Unilever Limited were able to procure maps showing the layout of certain roads earmarked for construction in Nigeria.[469] The colonial government subsequently undertook the construction and maintenance of several roads such as the Bauchi-Borno-Yola trunk road in northern Nigeria. An archival source revealed that about 10,000 pounds was spent on the maintenance of this road in 1936.[470] Other major transport systems like railways, sea ports, etc. were constructed and these encouraged foreign merchant companies and their domestic agents to open up and expand the market economy.[471]

It is crucial to emphasise that the transport system was established not to meet the economic needs of the colonial subjects, but rather to enhance and expand British trade and distribution networks. The railways traversed the colony, extending from west to north, north to south, and east to south. Subsequently, they expanded from the east to the northwest, strategically covering regions rich in the needed agricultural produce in Britain.[472] The construction of railway lines started in 1898 and it was done in three main phases. The initial phase of railway construction involved the development of penetration lines originating from key ports. The Western line began in Lagos in 1898, reaching the Niger river at Jebba by 1909, while the Eastern line commenced in Port Harcourt in 1913 and extended to Enugu by 1916. During the second phase of railway development, additional interior centres were connected to the ports through lines such as Baro-Kano and Enugu-Kaduna. By 1927, both primary North-South routes were established, providing Northern regions access to the ports of Lagos and Port Harcourt. The third phase focused on

[468] Nwachukwu J. OBIAKOR - Abuoma C. AGAJELU, "British Colonial Economic Policies and Infrastructure in Nigeria: The Rail Transport Example, 1898-1960," *African Journal of Arts and Humanities* Vol. 2 No 3, 2016, p. 12-13.
[469] NA, CO 583/243/2- Transport in Nigeria, correspondence on transport problems in Nigeria, 1939, p. 13.
[470] NAK, File, 3892, Correspondence from the District Officer Bida to Resident Office of Niger Province on development: Bauchi-Borno-Yola trunk road: Yola-Garkiddo section, 1936, p. 31.
[471] Ebitu Ezekiel TOM, "The Impact of Colonialism on the Development of marketing In Nigeria: A dyadic analysis" *British Journal of Marketing Studies* Vol. 4, No. 2, 2016, p. 5;
[472] Dozie OKOYE - Roland PONGOU - Tite YOKOSSI, "On the Dispensability of New Transportation Technologies: Evidence from Colonial Railroads in Nigeria" A working paper of the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, Canada, 2016, pp. 8-11.

constructing branch lines and extensions, such as the Zaria-Kaura Namoda and Kano-Nguru routes. By the conclusion of this phase in 1931, the railway network was 3,067 kilometres long.[473]

The need for railroads for agricultural purposes was much greater in the North of Nigeria than in the South. The South had already been trading with Europe for centuries, through the slave trade and the palm oil trade replaced it, while trade in most of Northern Nigeria was directed towards North Africa. The railway was crucial in diverting the trans-Saharan caravan trade to the Nigerian coast by lowering transportation costs.[474] The railways' transportation system impacted greatly on Nigeria during and after the colonial period. A significant feature of the railway's contribution to the colonial administration was its connection to major cities such as Kano, Jos, Ilorin, Ibadan, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Makurdi, and others. These cities served as key commercial hubs for various types of produce. Railways were strategically constructed along routes with substantial traffic volumes, resulting in high initial construction costs, but comparatively low operating and maintenance expenses.[475]

The railway's impact was profound across Nigeria, as it facilitated the emergence of local merchants who traded alongside European firms. The railway triggered a rapid and significant increase in groundnut, cocoa and cotton production for export, thereby strengthening economic ties between the communities along its route and industrial Europe. Additionally, it bolstered internal commerce, as evidenced by its use in transporting agricultural produce from the North to the Lagos coast. The railway also influenced food production growth in towns situated along its routes. Moreover, it facilitated the movement of European manufactured goods into the interior,

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[473] Dozie OKOYE - Roland PONGOU - Tite YOKOSSI, "On the Dispensability of New Transportation Technologies: Evidence from Colonial Railroads in Nigeria" A working paper of the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, Canada, 2016, pp. 10-11; Dele Toyin JEMIRADE, "The Colonial Economy: Prosperity and Depression in Kano Province of Northern Nigeria, 1899-1939" PhD Dissertation, York University, Toronto, Ontario, 2021, pp. 118-220; Rotimi Ajayi - Joseph Yinka Fashagba (eds), *Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development*, Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2021, p. 255; Ibrahim Khaleel ABDUSSALAM, "The Role of Rail and Other Transport Systems in the Colonial Consolidation and Exploitation in Central and Eastern Nigeria: 1897-1929" A paper published in academia https://www.academia.edu/1151826/The_Role_of_Rail_and_Other_Transport_Systems_in_the_Colonial_Consolidation_and_Exploitation_in_Central_and_Eastern_Nigeria_1897_1929,

[474] Dozie OKOYE - Roland PONGOU - Tite YOKOSSI, "On the Dispensability of New Transportation Technologies: Evidence from Colonial Railroads in Nigeria" A working paper of the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, Canada, 2016, p. 29.

[475] Alexander C. UGWUKAH - Anthony Danladi ALI, "The Role of Transport in the Colonial Economy of Nigeria 1900 1960" *Journal of Nigeria Transport History* Vol. 1, No. 1, 2020, p. 158.

leading to the development of major rail stations as European commercial hubs. These stations became pivotal trading centres where farmers could exchange goods. The trains connected traders from various northern regions such as Kano, Kaduna, and Jos to the southern regions through Ilorin, Ogbomosho, Ibadan, and Abeokuta. However, the railway revolution also had adverse effects, most notably in terms of environmental degradation. Before coal deposits were discovered in Enugu, timber was the primary source of fuel, and the railway's demand for timber significantly contributed to the rapid deforestation that occurred during the early colonial period. [476]

4.10 Nigerian Foreign Policy under British Colonial Administration

British colonial administration in Nigeria extended from the late 19th century until the country gained independence in 1960. Throughout this period, foreign policy was exclusively dictated by the British, aligning fully with British interests and objectives. The primary aim of British foreign policy in Nigeria was to retain control over the colony and its resources while safeguarding British economic and strategic interests in West Africa. Nigeria's external affairs were entirely managed by the British Governor-General, a position reserved for a British national, ensuring that such matters remained under direct British oversight.[477]

Under British colonial administration, Nigeria was divided into different administrative regions, each with its colonial governor appointed by the British government. The colonial administration in Nigeria was primarily focused on exploiting the country's natural resources, such as palm oil, coffee, rubber, and tin, for the benefit of the British Empire. This economic exploitation shaped Nigerian foreign policy by prioritising trade relations with Britain and other European powers. Nigerian foreign policy during the colonial period was closely aligned with British interests in Africa and globally. The local authorities in Nigeria, which was essentially a puppet regime controlled by the British colonial authorities, followed Britain's lead on

[476] Nwachukwu J. OBIAKOR - Abuoma C. AGAJELU, "British Colonial Economic Policies and Infrastructure in Nigeria: The Rail Transport Example, 1898-1960," *African Journal of Arts and Humanities* Vol. 2, No 3, 2016, pp. 21-23; Dozie OKOYE - Roland PONGOU - Tite YOKOSSI, "On the Dispensability of New Transportation Technologies: Evidence from Colonial Railroads in Nigeria A working paper of the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, Canada, 2016, pp. 23-32.

[477] Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, p. 258; Joseph C. EBEGBULEM, "The Evolution of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: From the Pre-Independence and Post-Independence Perspectives" *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies* Vol 6, Issue 11, 2019, p. 1; Richard OLANIYAN, "British Imperial Politics and Diplomacy in West Africa, 1860-1865" *The Historian*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1972, p. 665.

international issues and supported British policies in various international forums. This alignment with British interests limited Nigeria's ability to pursue an independent foreign policy agenda.[478]

It is, therefore, accurate to assert that Nigerian foreign policy from 1914 to 1960 was shaped by colonialism. In other words, Nigeria did not possess an independent foreign policy before 1960, as its foreign policy was formulated and directed by the British through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London. The foreign policies that impacted the lives of Nigerians were crafted in London, reflecting the needs of the British Metropole within the context of global politics at the time. Moreover, these policies were influenced more by the political climate in metropolitan Britain and international events than by developments within Nigeria itself. It is important to note that Nigeria was regarded as an extension of Britain, administered by a small cadre of European colonial officers whose loyalty lay with the Metropole. This loyalty ensured that the national interests of the British colonial government were paramount in the formulation of Nigeria's foreign policy.[479]

Given Nigeria's limited autonomy in shaping its destiny, Britain took the opportunity to design a foreign policy that prevented cooperation or alliances between Nigeria and other African nations. Domestically, deliberate efforts were made to ensure that Nigerians of various ethnic groups remained divided, with different regions governed separately. As the movement toward independence progressed posing a significant threat to British global political dominance there was a strategic effort to secure the loyalty of former colonial territories even after they gained independence. The establishment of the Commonwealth of Nations became a crucial instrument in ensuring Nigeria's continued allegiance post-independence. Consequently, Nigeria's foreign policy remained closely aligned with British interests even after it gained independence in 1960.[480]

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[478] Adeyeri OLUSEGUN - Adejuwon Kehinde DAVID, "The Implications of British Colonial Economic Policies on Nigeria's Development" *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences* Vol. 1 No. 2, 2012, pp. 2-3; Edwin G. CHARLE, "English Colonial Policy and the Economy of Nigeria" *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* Vol. 26, No. 1, 1967, pp. 80-82; E. D. MOREL, "British Rule in Nigeria" *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* Vol. 60, No. 3103, 1912, pp. 631-641

[479] David MEREDITH, "The British Government and Colonial Economic Policy, 1919-39" *The Economic History Review*, 1975, Vol. 28, No. 3, 1975, pp. 485-487; J. O. AHAZUEM and T. FALOLA, "Production for the Metropolis: Agriculture and Forest Products." In: T. Falola (Ed): *Britain and Nigeria. Exploitation or Development?* London: Zed Books, 1987, pp. 80-87.

[480] Joseph C. EBEGBULEM, "The Evolution of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: From the Pre-Independence and Post-Independence Perspectives" *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies* Vol 6, Issue 11, 2019, p. 1; John D. HARGREAVES, *The end of colonial rule in West Africa*, London: Macmillan Press, 1979, pp. 18-20.

Another key objective of Nigeria's British foreign policy was to secure dominance in global commerce and finance. By 1920, the Nigerian market had already come under the control of British trading companies such as the United African Company (UAC), the United Trading Company (UTC), Peterson Zochonis (PZ), and John Holt. The establishment of these foreign firms ensured the dominance of the import-export market, effectively marginalising indigenous traders and other foreign competitors and leaving British conglomerates in control. As a result, Nigeria was reduced to a cash crop-producing estate, with the British colonial office dictating what should be produced, the prices, and the terms of export.[481] Foreign economic policy was designed in such a way that no external European or American firms were allowed to exist unless those companies wanted to form partnerships with British companies. A prominent example in this regard was Shell BP, jointly owned and operated in Nigeria by Britain and the Netherlands since the beginning of prospecting for oil in 1903.[482]

The colonial economic policies that shaped Nigeria's foreign policy exposed the country's economy to the global market, positioning it primarily as a producer of agricultural and mineral resources. This exposure rendered the Nigerian economy vulnerable to the complexities of the global economy at the time. In 1956, the Shell-BP Development Company discovered significant oil reserves in the Niger Delta region of Eastern Nigeria. This discovery prompted the British to intensify policies aimed at maintaining their economic dominance in the territory. By the early 1950s, however, nationalist leaders had begun demanding full independence for Nigeria, making it increasingly difficult for the British government to retain control over the territory.[483] By the time the British colonial government proposed Nigerian independence in 1957, with the official declaration set for October 1960, British economic foreign policy had become deeply embedded in Nigeria's foreign policy formulation and implementation. Given that Nigeria lacked an

[481] Oladimeji TALIBU, "Nigerian's foreign policy under the British colonial rule, 1914-60" *Journal of History and International Relations*, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria Vol.6 No. 1, 2019, pp. 8-9.
[482] Phia STEYN, "Oil Exploration in Colonial Nigeria, 1903-58," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 37 No. 3, 2009, pp. 21-22.
[483] Y. N. ADU - G. A. NWALIE, "The Historical Basis of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Towards Africa in the First Republic," *ЧЕЛОВЕЧЕСКИЙ КАПИТАЛ*, 2022, N0. 10, Issue 166, pp. 56-57; Judith M. BROWN - Roger LOUIS (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: VOL IV, The Twentieth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, 524-527.

independent foreign policy, it is important to recognise that the policies in place at the time were primarily designed to serve the interests of the British colonial authorities.[484]

4.11 Auchi Kingdom during World War I and II

The two World Wars were periods of both continuity and change.[485] Olukoju explained that the two World Wars had far-reaching, though uneven, impact on the entire world. Britain, whom had several colonies spread across the globe, was greatly involved in the two wars. This necessitated the mobilisation of men and materials essential for the execution of the war. As one of the British dependencies, Nigeria was involved in different ways and capacities in the execution of the war against Germany. Like other colonial territories, Nigeria 'was drawn into the conflict as the appendage of the belligerents. African contributions to the war efforts of Britain and France have been documented in several studies.[486] Lugard, the Governor-general, set out the economic impact in terms of imports and exports as well as taxes and other financial aspects, comparing current with pre-war and previous-year figures, splitting costs which were incurred as a result of the fighting from those which were associated with the general running of the territory. Samson believes that there was the need for people to focus on war-related work and join the army led to shortages which needed to be filled both during the fighting and more especially when peace was restored. For example, it was noted that 13 education staff in Nigeria had been involved in war work and between 1916 and 1917 there was a decrease in the number of secondary school children.[487]

Osuntokun revealed that Nigeria, the biggest of the British dependencies in West Africa and the most populous of British African possessions, found herself involved in World War I barely eight months after the amalgamation of the separate southern and northern Protectorates, to form a single unified British possession. The country naturally did not have time to digest the new administrative changes that had just taken place before the first war broke out. The policy of federating contiguous but separate political units had become one of the cardinal principles of

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[484] Oladimeji TALIBU, "Nigerian's foreign policy under the British colonial rule, 1914-60" *Journal of History and International Relations* Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria Vol. 6, No. 1, 2019, pp. 6-8.
[485] Judith A. BYFIELD, "Feeding the Troops: Abeokuta (Nigeria) and World War II" *African Economic History* No. 35, 2007, p. 78.
[486] Ayodeji OLUKOJU, "Buy British, Sell Foreign: External Trade Control Policies in Nigeria during World War II and Its Aftermath, 1939-1950" *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* Vol. 35, No. 2/3, 2002, p. 363.
[487] Anne SAMSON, "The End of the 1914-1918 War in Africa" *Anglica. An International Journal of English Studies,* Special Issue: The Great War 27/3, 2018, p. 93.

British imperial policy.[488] Before the start of World War I, the local troops of Northern and Southern Nigeria had been merged into a single brigade of five battalions, around 5,000 troops in all, to be known as the Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment.[489]

The involvement of Britain in World War I, according to a written source, also aided the expansion of waged employment opportunities as Nigerian troops and sailors were recruited between 1914 and 1918 into the Royal West African Frontier Force. By 25 August 1914, thousands fought against German forces at the Battle of Tepe, which led to the withdrawal of German troops between 1914 and 1916. More than 15,000 combatant and 30,000 noncombatant soldiers were enlisted or conscripted to participate in the war.[490] Falola and Heaton revealed that Nigerian troops travelled to East Africa to aid in the British occupation of German East Africa. After helping to drive the Germans from their African colonies, Nigerian troops were in line to be sent to the Middle East to help with the fight against the Ottomans, but the war came to an end before the final preparations were completed.[491]

Matthews reveals that the enlistment and conscription of combatants and non-combatants in Nigeria during World War I represented an unprecedented mobilisation of the country's labour force. In September 19I4, the Nigeria Regiment supplied shock troops for the Cameroon Expeditionary Force, and in December 1917 the Nigeria Overseas Contingent entered the campaign in Tanganyika. By September I9I9, when Nigeria's military recruitment drive ended, 17,000 combatants, 2,000 enlisted carriers, and some 35,000 non-enlisted carriers had participated in the Southern Cameroons and German East Africa campaigns. In addition, the British recruited thousands of Nigerians for military service along Nigeria's northern and eastern borders, and for related duties inside the country.[492]

It is necessary to note that this demonstration of loyalty by Nigerians was a country-wide phenomenon. An oral source reveals that there were proclamations of loyalty to the British

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[488] Akinjide OSUNTOKUN, "Disaffection and Revolts in Nigeria during the First World War, 1914-1918" *Canadian Journal of African Studies* Vol. 5 No. 2, 1971, p. 171.
[489] Richard BOURNE, *Nigeria: A New History of a Turbulent Century*, London: Zed Books Ltd 2015, p. 16;

[490] Nelarine CORNELIUS - Olusanmi AMUJO - Eric PEZET, "British 'Colonial governmentality': Slave, forced and waged worker policies in colonial Nigeria, 1896-1930" *Management and Organizational History* Vol. 14, No. 1, 2019, p. 20.
[491] Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, p. 258.
[492] James K. MATTHEWS, "World War I and the Rise of African Nationalism: Nigerian Veterans as Catalysts of Change" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1982, p. 493.

government from all parts of the country. The Oba of Benin who was the most paramount traditional ruler close to the Auchi Kingdom and other kings in Nigeria made comments about solidarity with Britain. The Oba of Benin further said that the Bini people and Nigerians should bury all their differences and use their strength, money and everything in defence of Nigeria and Britain. An oral source revealed that several young Auchi men travelled to the Western part of Nigeria, Lagos precisely, to be recruited into the military to enable them to make a living and to fight for the liberation of their country and also be of service to Britain.[493] Anne revealed that the signing of the armistice marked a significant turning point in world history. It led to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which formally ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers.[494] The aftermath of World War I had far-reaching consequences that shaped the 20th century.

World War II, according to a written source, was another global conflict that lasted from 1939 to 1945. It involved the majority of the world's nations, divided into two opposing military alliances: The Allies and Axis powers. The war was primarily fought in Europe, North Africa, and Asia, with significant battles also taking place in other regions, including the Pacific and the Atlantic. During World War II, the British Empire, which colonised Nigeria, was heavily involved in the conflict just like in World War I. During World War II, Nigerian troops served in transport and support roles in the North African campaign, and the Nigerian economy was geared towards increasing the production of necessary war materials such as palm oil and tin to aid Britain's war effort.[495] Stapleton explained that there was an enormous military mobilisation from the southeastern part of Nigeria where Auchi Kingdom is located during World War II and this led to the decline in oil palm production due to limited farmers. The colonial office needed literate soldiers for technical services They were also needed to serve in support roles such as clerks, drivers, mechanics and signalers.[496] In 1939, the Colonial Office planned to encourage the Christian missionaries to carry on with their schools and mission activities and would sometimes

[493] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[494] Anne SAMSON, "The End of the 1914-1918 War in Africa" *Anglica. An International Journal of English Studies*, Special Issue: The Great War 27/3, 2018, pp. 83-90.
[495] Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, p. 258.
[496] Timothy STAPLETON, *West African Soldiers in Britain's Colonial Army, 1860-1960*, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2022, p. 86.

assist them financially during World War II. This was a planned action in 1939 in other for the British to achieve the goals and aims of their policies.[497]

It is necessary to note that an oral source explained that the demonstration of loyalty by Nigerians, just like in World War I, was a country-wide phenomenon. An oral source reported that abled-bodied men were also recruited from the Auchi Kingdom towards the war efforts but sadly many of them were killed during the war.[498] Written sources revealed that Lagos was known to be the centre of organised activities before the outbreak of the war. One would expect that the support and loyalty given by the country was centred in Lagos. But this was not the case. There were proclamations of loyalty to the British government from all parts of the country. The loyalty was from businessmen, traditional rulers and influential people in different parts of Nigeria. These people made donations in cash and kind to Britain towards winning the War. Nigerian women's contribution to the fundraising effort and the war was essential. Nigerians, generally also, contributed to the war effort both directly from provincial budgets and through individual subscriptions and contributions by businesses. In 1939, an archival source revealed that the Native Administration of Nigeria made several donations towards the World War efforts and this was greatly appreciated by the Colonial Office.[499] By 1940, substantial amounts of money were collected from business people and organisations. It is not surprising that European women in Nigeria and their Nigerian counterparts cooperated in the humanitarian sector.[500]

It must also be taken into account that during and after World War II, the British colonial office formulated economic policies for the increase in the production of agricultural products which has been explained previously. Britain had developed a great interest in cassava which contains starch.[501] Falola revealed that both the production and export of cassava starch reveal the extent to which the imperial government could go in the search for resources. The nature of response by subjects in the colonies to new opportunities, and the unpredictability of the market

[497] NA, CO 859/19/16, Social Services Department: activities in wartime, 1939.
[498] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[499] NA, CO 583/244/17- British war expenditure: financial offers from Nigerian Native Administrations, 1939, p. 4.
[500] Chima J. KORIEH, *Nigeria and World War II: Colonialism, Empire, and Global Conflict,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 95-161; Levi Onyemuche AMADI, "The Reactions and Contributions of Nigerians during World War II: Agents of political integration in Nigeria, 1939-1945" *TransAfrican Journal of History* Vol. 6/7, 1977-78, pp. 3-7.
[501] Cassava is a root crop that forms the basis for many staple foods in Nigeria, such as fufu, garri, and eba. Cassava contains starch and is low in protein; therefore, it is usually accompanied by other foods with higher protein, vitamin, and fat levels to form a balanced diet. It was and still is the most important food item for all Nigerians. See Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008.

in export commodities. The export of starch was largely influenced by the extensive control measures taken during World War II. The quantity exported was regulated because shipping space was scarce, the price was dictated by the government, and other major developments were determined not by market forces but by the colonial bureaucracy in Lagos and the Ministry of Food in London. Due to the lack of male farmers, who were busy at the war front, Nigerian women were the people who were greatly involved in the cultivation of cassava.[502] This has remained a crop that is commonly grown and processed by women in Auchi Kingdom and other communities across Nigeria. An archival source referred to cassava and some other crops as "woman's crop."[503] The Kukuruku division, which Auchi Kingdom is part of, was and still is famous for the cultivation of cassava. An oral source reveals that the Auchi Kingdom was also involved in the growing and trade of cassava during this period.[504] Another oral source revealed that cassava remains the most commonly grown crop in the kingdom till date.[505]

World War II led to the further incorporation of the Nigerian economy into the global capitalist system. The most important structural change that occurred in postwar Nigeria was the establishment of produce marketing boards. The experiences of wartime marketing demonstrated that statutory marketing organisations could achieve stability in seasonal prices and improve producer prices. The origin of the marketing board system[506] can be traced to the harsh global economic conditions of the late 1930s, which triggered a wave of anticolonial protests and the

[502] Toyin FALOLA, "Cassava Starch for Export in Nigeria during World War II" *African Economic History* No. 18, 1989, pp. 73-78.

[503]Toyin FALOLA - Matthew M. HEATON, A History of Nigeria, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press 2008, p. 125; Fred Ekpe AYOKHAI, "Food Technology in Colonial Nigeria: The Experience of Uzairhue Women of Benin Province" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 23, 2014, pp. 48-66; Abdulkadir Baba AIKOYE Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu; BEN PROF. 1, File 243, Re-assessment of Kukuruku Division by Assistant District Officer, Mr. F. M. Woodhouse, Kukuruku Division, 1933, p. 37.

[504] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

[505] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

[506] Marketing boards were a significant aspect of the economic system in colonial Nigeria. The British colonial government established them to regulate the production and sale of cash crops, such as cocoa, palm oil, and groundnuts, the primary sources of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. The marketing boards aimed to ensure a stable supply of these crops to the international market, protect farmers from price fluctuations, and generate revenue for the colonial government. The first marketing board was established in 1939, following the recommendations of the Gorell Committee on the Marketing of West African Produce. The committee was set up to investigate the marketing of produce in West Africa and make recommendations for improving it. The committee's report led to the establishment of the Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB), which was responsible for regulating the production and sale of cocoa in Nigeria. See Adeyinka Theresa AJAYI - Ajibade Idowu SAMUE - Oladiti Abiodun AKEEM, "Produce Buying and Marketing Boards in Nigeria: Interrogating the Fiscal Role of Western Nigeria Marketing Board 1942-1962*" European Journal of Management and Marketing Studies* Vol. 2, Issue 3, 2017, pp. 63-67.

demand for self-rule after 1945.[507] Familugba explained that World War II also created a food crisis for the British government at home, which the colonial authority sought to solve by tapping the human and material resources of the colonies. Mr. F. C. Royce of the Colonial Office complained of the rising price of cocoa and other food crops as a result of the War.[508] This was a time when Cassava became a very important export crop. Little wonder, as an oral revealed that, it was a time when people in Auchi Kingdom began to massively go into the cultivation of cassava.[509]

The objectives of the Colonial Department of Agriculture in Nigeria until about 1938 among others includes: the expansion and improvement of existing export crops, carrying out investigations with the aim of developing new export crops, and effective marketing of agricultural produce. This was also a time when the British Colonial Government began to encourage the local farmers to make a shift from small-scale agriculture to the Plantation system. [510]The Colonial Annual Report of 1952 revealed that cocoa was the main cash crop at the time while the Marketing Board ensured that the price was good and the quality of the cocoa was greatly improved.[511] It should also be noted that the new ideas and technologies brought about by the wars influenced societal norms. This was as a result of the Nigerians who fought in the war interacting with the soldiers from other countries making them more informed and enlightened. These new ideas triggered the agitation for self-rule in Nigeria.[512] Shanguhyia and Falola explained that the war also strained the resources of the British Empire, leading to a gradual decline in colonial administration. This eventually paved the way for Nigeria's independence in 1960.[513]

The two World Wars impacted significantly on Auchi Kingdom and other parts of |Nigeria as a whole. This period experienced the introduction of cash crops and cassava became a very

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[507] Chima J. KORIEH, *"Nigeria and World War II: Colonialism, Empire, and Global Conflict"* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 234-235; Ayodeji OLUKOJU, "Buy British, Sell Foreign: External Trade Control Policies in Nigeria during World War II and Its Aftermath, 1939-1950" *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* Vol. 35, No. 2/3, 2002, p. 380.

[508] NA, CO 583/244/21- Situation in Nigerian: views of Captain F C Royce, former district officer in Southern Nigeria, 1939, p.3.

[509] Jonathan Oluropo FAMILUGBA, "The Economic Implications of the Second World War on the Nigerian Economy" *Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* Vol. 4, Issue 3, 2023, p. 45.

[510] NA, CO 583/243/19- Nigeria: original correspondence, Economic development of Nigeria, 1939, p. 2.

[511] BEN PROF 1/44 VOL. XI, File 1951-1954, Annual Report of Kukuruku Division by District Officer, 1952, p. 42.

[511] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

[512] Cheikh Anta BABOU, "Decolonization or National Liberation: Debating the End of British Colonial Rule in Africa" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 632, *Perspectives on Africa and the World*, November 2010, pp. 44-42.

[513] Ibid, pp. 645-646.

important crop for export. Till date, cassava is one of the most grown crops in Auchi Kingdom. The economy was also badly affected because local farmers were encouraged to grow crops for export neglecting food crops.

4.12 Auchi Kingdom during the struggle for independence in Nigeria

The aftermath of World War II, as revealed by several written sources, saw the gradual decline of colonial empires as European powers were weakened by the war. This created an opportunity for colonies to agitate for independence and self-rule, fueled by a desire to break free from colonial oppression and assert their own national identities. There was a significant rise in nationalism and the demand for self-rule across various regions globally. This surge in nationalist movements can be attributed to several key factors, including the decline of colonial empires, the impact of the war, ideological shifts, global solidarity, struggles for independence, and the decolonisation process. Some prominent nationalists in Nigeria before 1960 include Sir Nnamdi Azikiwe, Herbert Macaulay, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, Ahmadu Ibrahim Bello, Anthony Enahoro, Chief Obafemi Jeremiah Awolowo and Michael Iheonukara Okpara Nationalist movements emerged as powerful forces advocating for independence and sovereignty, ultimately reshaping the world order in the post-war era.[514]

Auchi Kingdom, before the independence of Nigeria, witnessed several innovations and development. Written sources revealed that from the late 1930s and 1940s, western education had made several positive impacts on the Kingdom. This was a period that witnessed the advent of political participation in Nigeria. In 1939, Sir Bernard Bourdillon the Governor-General of Nigeria recommended the that Nigerian unofficial members be appointed into the Executive Council so that they could participate more in the governance of their country.[515] There was also the formation of pressure groups in Nigeria that were of great influence in the political scene. A class of educated Auchi people who had decided to travel to large cities like Kano, Lagos, Benin city, Warri, Ibadan, and a host of other places in search of high-profile jobs came together and agreed to form the Auchi

[514] Erin MYRICE, "The Impact of the Second World War on the Decolonization of Africa" Africana Studies Student Research Conference, Bowling Green State University, 2015, pp. 1-10; Cheikh Anta BABOU, "Decolonization or National Liberation: Debating the End of British Colonial Rule in Africa" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 632, *Perspectives on Africa and the World*, November 2010, pp. 41-54; Ubaku Kelechi CHIKA - Emeh Chikezie ANYALEWACHI - Anyikwa Chinenye NKIRU, "Impact of Nationalist Movement on the Actualization of Nigerian Independence, 1914-1960" *International Journal of History and Philosophical Research* Vol. 2, No.1, 2014, pp. 61-65.

[515] NA, CO 583/244 - Nigeria: original correspondence, Future political development in Nigeria, Memorandum on the future political development in Nigeria by Sir Bernard Bourdillon the Governor-General of Nigeria, 1939, p. 12.

Progressive Union (APU) under the able leadership of U. O. Musah who was the first chairperson of the union. This was a pressure group which later created serious problems for the local authority of Auchi Kingdom with its views and criticism. There was the opening of branches of the union in other cities like Benin, and Ibadan, among others, where the population of Auchi people was high. The branches of all the unions always received briefings on the activities of the Kingdom.[516]

The 1950s witnessed another memorable event in the history of local authorities in Nigeria. There was the establishment of the Federal Native Authorities,[517] Erhagbe explained that this marked the introduction of a modern local government system in Nigeria. This time also coincided with the emergence of a new class of enlightened elites that attempted to bring radical change to the nation's political space. This new class of elites had a positive but radical attitude towards traditional institutions during this period because they constantly demanded new reforms. The reason for this demand was that the Native Authority system was no longer at par with the new local government system as a result of the innovative economic and socio-political changes. Their disdain was also a result of their non-inclusion in the running of the affairs of government.[518]

Both oral and written sources claim that the new elites, under the umbrella of APU, began to actively function as a pressure group and it continuously questioned the activities of the Native Authority System which they claimed was too authoritarian and apportioned too much powers and authority to the Otaru of Auchi Kingdom. The Auchi branch of the APU was an active vessel in ensuring the regular dissemination of information on the unethical activities and actions of the Otaru of Auchi to the Lagos Chapter of the APU. The Lagos branch of the APU commenced its attack on the Otaru and members of his Council due to their activities that were not acceptable. The APU had earlier supported the candidacy of the then Otaru because of his acquisition of both

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[516] Abdulrahman Osioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, pp. 305-306; Momoh ROBSON, *New perspectives on the history and politics of Nigeria: The Etsako Experience*, Edo: Afenmai Grafix 2016, p. 131-132.

[517] The system of local government administration practiced anywhere in the world is dependent largely on the historical, geographical, sociological, political and economic life of the people. This is no less true of Nigeria, with a long history of slavery and colonization as well as civilian and military administrations, and these have to a large extent, determined the system of local government administration in Nigeria up till today. The Federal Native Authority system was the first colonial system of local government administration, whereby indirect rule and exploitation were the order of the day. A unified local government system was established in Northern Nigeria before it was extended to Southern Nigeria with varying degrees of success. This system of local government, as found in the Federal Native Authorities, did not satisfy the needs and aspirations of the local people. Hence there were intense agitations from the local citizens, particularly the educated elites in Southern Nigeria, craving for greater participation in their own affairs. For information see Joseph B. EBUNE, "The application of British Indirect Rule in the Kumba Division: A decolonial assessment 1916-1961" *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Arts and Humanities* Vol. 4 No. 2, 2016.

[518] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

Western and koranic education. Some of the allegations levelled against him and his Council, according to oral and archival sources, were issues relating to bribery and corruption, constant rape of justice in the Auchi Native Court and high rate of divorce cases in Auchi Native Court, which were encouraged by the Otaru and his Council, instead of discouraging them as true Muslims would have done.[519]

The appointment of the sister of the Otaru as the Ogbachi, a women leader, was claimed to be a new introduction by the Otaru in Auchi Kingdom, by the Lagos branch of the APU. Sources revealed that the APU frowned at it and called it an act of favouritism, and subsequently demanded that it must be reversed and cancelled outrightly. Much of the allegations levelled against the Otaru by the Lagos branch of APU was that the Otaru had either bribed or subdued all the chiefs of his clan council because they could not question or oppose his authority. A letter was sent by the APU to the district officer, informing him of all the atrocities that were going on behind his back. They further protested that despite his despotic methods of handling the issues of Auchi Kingdom, his clan chiefs were all in support of his wrongdoings.[520]

The confrontational and aggressive relations between the enlightened elites and the Otaru continued for a while but was later resolved through a peace meeting organised between the two sides at Ibadan on August 15, 1950. Tony disclosed that the successful outcome of the meeting accorded the APU the opportunity to achieve some significant goals which were part of the idea behind the establishment of the APU. The wrangling between local authorities, under the control of Britain, and the enlightened elites reached its peak in the 1950s when political party politics became widespread, had legal standing and federal assemblies were earmarked for the inauguration. This time triggered the official inauguration of the decolonisation process of the Nigerian nation.[521]

This turn of events signalled the commencement of party politics in the evolving Nigerian nation of which the Auchi Kingdom was a part before the independence in 1960. The educated elites of Auchi Kingdom were also part of this scenario, especially those that were members of the APU in the struggle to be part of the government. The Otaru at the time encouraged his kinsmen and subjects to associate themselves with the new political system and also with political parties

[519] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu
[520] Abdulrahman Osioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, pp. 315-316; Egbefo O. DAWOOD, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[521] Ibid, p. 112.

in other to contest and win elections. At the same period, the Action Group Party (AG)[522] was formed. The Otaru's younger brother Alhaji K. S. Y. Momoh contested under the political platform of NCNC,[523] defeated his political opponent, won the election and became a member of the Western House of Assembly in 1951. Robson revealed the British had earlier warned all traditional rulers not to get involved in politics but the Otaru went against this directive and gave his brother full support. He went ahead to mobilise his people and some other trusted Etsako villages and clans outside the Auchi Kingdom to vote for his younger brother and this made his brother win the election.[524]

Arunah explained that after the inauguration of the first democratic and representative government of the Western Region in 1951 before the independence of Nigeria, rapid action was taken by the Action Group (AG) dominated parliament at Ibadan in Western Nigeria, to pass the Western Region Local Government Law in 1952, which was also applicable to the Auchi Kingdom and other parts of the Mid-Western region in current day South-South Nigeria. When the law was eventually passed, it abolished outrightly the 1916 Native Authority Ordinance that established the Otaru-in-Council and was replaced with a three-tier local government system which was similar to that of the colonial government of Britain.[525] It should be noted that the implementation of that new law greatly changed the duties and roles of the traditional rulers in Auchi Kingdom, clans and villages within Etsako land. Robson reveals that after the first local government elections in 1952, the Otaru was, in line with the 1952 law, appointed an authorised and recognised traditional ruler to the Etsako Local Council which eventually emerged as an NCNC-dominated government. It should be noted, in this regard that Otaru and most of his followers and subjects had already crossed carpet to the Action Group Party. This information was announced at the Western House of Assembly session at Ibadan in 1952 by the Otaru's brother, K. S. Y. Momoh who also crossed carpet from his party to the AG at the time.[526]

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[522] The Action Group (AG) on the other hand, was formed in 1951, as an offshoot of a Yoruba cultural organisation known as Egbe Omo Oduduwa formed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo and his friends. This party made it clear that it intended to operate principally from the regional level. In a press release issued in 1951, the party announced that it was a Western Regional Political Organisation, pure and simple. Its aims and objectives were for the advancement of the Yoruba race. See Osita AGBU, "An Overview of Party Formation in Nigeria, 1960-1999" In: Osita AGBU (ed): *Elections and Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic,* Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa CODESRIA: 2016, p. 28.

[523] See Osita AGBU, "An Overview of Party Formation in Nigeria, 1960-1999," p. 28

[524] Ibid, pp. 139-140.

[525] Ibid, p. 267.

[526] Ibid, pp. 142-143.

Like all the other numerous traditional rulers appointed to Etsako Council, the Otaru was retained because of his influence, importance and the series of other activities he had been engaged in over the previous years. But in the later years before 1960, Oral sources disclosed that the powers of the Otaru that were allotted to him by the Native Authority Ordinance of 1916, were passed to the democratically elected councillors who were themselves of the educated class. The same enlightened elites saw the smooth process of decolonisation and the eventual independence of Nigeria in 1960.[527] At this juncture, it is important to note that as the British Colonial Office prepared the stage for the independence of Nigeria, Auchi Kingdom participated in politics in its little way by getting involved in active politics in other to be part of the government before and after the independence of Nigeria.

4.13 Summary of the chapter

Before the colonisation of current-day Nigeria, the British embarked on several expeditions into communities and kingdoms located in current-day Nigeria to have a better knowledge of the terrain. It has been established that the primary motive of colonialism in Africa was purely for economic gains.[528] The Royal Niger Company was established to sign treaties and trade with the natives of the area, most especially those that were located along the Niger river. Several treaties were signed with the kings and chiefs even without them knowing the kind of treaties they were signing.[529]

British colonial policies in Nigeria were characterised by a combination of economic exploitation, political control, and social engineering schemes. Several economic, agricultural, tax policies etc were formulated and implemented by the British Colonial Government. British Colonialism lasted from the late 19th century until Nigeria gained independence in 1960. During this period, the British implemented various policies that shaped the socio-economic and political landscape of the country. One of the key features of British colonial policy in Nigeria was the system of indirect rule. This system, pioneered by Lord Frederick Lugard, involved governing through local traditional rulers and institutions through the Indirect Rule Policy. The British

[527] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu; Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

[528] Nwachukwu J. OBIAKOR - Abuoma C. AGAJELU, "British Colonial Economic Policies and Infrastructure in Nigeria: The Rail Transport Example, 1898-1960," *African Journal of Arts and Humanities* Vol. 2, No 3, 2016, p. 12; Ejembi Anefu UNOBE, "Class-formation, State Construction and Customary Law in Colonial Nigeria" *Africa Development / Afrique et Development* Vol. 14, No. 4, 1989, pp. 99-101.

[529] Toyin FALOLA, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, p. 11.

appointed traditional rulers and set up native courts to administer local affairs under the supervision of British District Officers. This approach allowed the British to control Nigeria with minimal direct involvement and reduced administrative costs.[530]

The British colonial administration in Nigeria was primarily driven by economic interests. This made the British colonial masters sign several treaties with the local chiefs. The chiefs signed treaties that they were oblivious of the content, thereby signing away their sovereignty to the British. The exploitation of Nigeria's natural resources, particularly palm oil, rubber, and later on, cocoa, played a significant role in shaping colonial policies. The British imposed taxes on Nigerians to generate revenue for the colonial government and encouraged cash crop production for export to Britain. Under British colonial administration, significant investments were made in infrastructure development in Nigeria. The construction of some basic infrastructural facilities such as roads, seaports and railways facilitated the extraction and transportation of natural resources for export. However, several written sources have revealed that these infrastructure projects were primarily designed to serve British economic interests rather than benefitting the local population.[531]

Several written sources revealed that British colonial administration also implemented policies aimed at social engineering and cultural assimilation. The introduction of Western education sought to create a class of educated Africans who would serve as intermediaries between the colonial administration and the local population. British colonial policies in Nigeria sparked nationalist movements, agitations for self-rule and resistance among the local population. The exploitation of natural resources, imposition of taxes, land alienation, and discriminatory practices fueled discontent among Nigerians. These policies had a lasting impact on Nigerian society and laid the foundation for the challenges faced by independent Nigeria after gaining independence in 1960.

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[530] Colonial Office Report on Nigeria for the year 1947, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1949, pp. 67-68.
[531] Toyin FALOLA - Chukwuemeka AGBO, "Colonial Administrations and the Africans" in Martin S. Shanguhyia · Toyin Falola (eds): *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History*, New York: Springer Nature, 2018, pp. 86-87; Adeyeri OLUSEGUN - Adejuwon Kehinde DAVID, "The Implications of British Colonial Economic Policies on Nigeria's Development" *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences* Vol. 1, No. 2, 2012, pp. 2-3; Anthony Danladi ALI, "The Development of Transport Infrastructure in Colonial Nigeria, 1901-1960" *Ilorin Journal of History and International Studies* Vol. 5, No.2, 2015, p. 149.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE IMPACT OF BRITISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION ON AUCHI KINGDOM DURING THE OTARU SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION

5.1 The Otaru System before the arrival of the British imperialist

The history of the Otaru System of administration in Auchi Kingdom before 1900 relies heavily on oral sources which were complemented by limited written sources. The history of the traditional kings of Auchi, dates back to a time before the arrival of the British imperialist in Nigeria. The history of the lineage of the Otaru System of administration in Auchi provides a glimpse into the traditional leadership structure and succession within the kingdom. Arunah reveals that the first known Otaru of Auchi Kingdom was Ikelebe Osimhe. He was a central figure in Auchi since 1819 before the Nupe invasion of 1860.[532] Wajeed noted that he was the son of Aneke, one of the direct descendants of Uchi, the founder of Auchi. He was installed the first Otaru in 1860 by the Nupe imperialist after they took over Auchi. As the inaugural traditional ruler, Ikelebe played a significant role in establishing the foundations of governance and leadership within the Auchi Kingdom.[533]

The enthronement of Ikelebe Osimhe as the first Otaru, as explained by Segosime, marked the beginning of a new era of leadership style and a shift from the Odion system of administration to a monarchical style of administration. During Otaru Ikelebe Osimhe's reign, the political administration of the Auchi Kingdom was well-organized. He implemented effective governance structures such as appointment of palace chiefs selected from the various villages that ensured peace and order within the kingdom but under the strict supervision of the Nupe overlords.[534] Under his leadership, according to an oral source, there were significant developments in trade and commerce. Auchi Kingdom became known for its thriving markets and economic activities, which contributed to the prosperity of the kingdom. Otaru Ikelebe Osimhe placed a strong emphasis on preserving the cultural heritage of Auchi Kingdom. He supported traditional practices, rituals, and customs that were integral to the identity of the kingdom.[535] Another oral source revealed that the welfare of his subjects was also a priority during his reign. Otaru Ikelebe Osimhe implemented social programs that aimed to improve the living standards of the people and ensure their well-

[532] Ibid, p. 42.
[533] Ibid, p. 222.
[534] Ibid, p. 100.
[535] Obomeghie Wajeed, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

being. He also maintained cordial relations with neighbouring kingdoms and tribes. This helped to foster peace and cooperation in the region, contributing to overall stability after he was made Otaru.[536]

The demise of Otaru Ikelebe Osimhe led to the selection of Imoudu Eburogamhe as the second Otaru of Auchi Kingdom in 1861. Wajeed, in his book, explained that he was generally accepted by Auchi people because he was dependable. His reign was characterised by significant developments and events that shaped the socio-political landscape of the region during that time. During his rule, Otaru Imoudu Eburogamhe was known for his leadership skills and ability to maintain stability within the kingdom. He implemented various policies and initiatives aimed at promoting unity among his people and fostering economic growth.[537] Arunah believes that one of the key aspects of Otaru Imoudu Eburogamhe's reign was his focus on expanding trade relations with neighbouring communities and regions. This helped to boost the economy of Auchi Kingdom and enhance its position as a prominent trading hub in the area. He also promoted cultural practices and traditions within the kingdom. He played a crucial role in preserving the heritage of Auchi Kingdom and ensuring that its customs were upheld during his reign. He ruled for fourteen years before his demise in 1875.[538]

5.2 Otaru Idaoh Ikelebe under British rule (1875-1905)

Idaoh Ikelebe was Otaru at the time of the arrival of the British imperialist. Segosime and Mahmud revealed that he was crowned in 1875 after the demise of Imoudu Eburogamhe. He was the eldest surviving son of Ikelebe Osimhe.[539] He was crowned Otaru of Auchi during the reign of the Nupe Raiders before the arrival of the British. It was a serious contest between Idaoh Ikelebe and two of his late father's cousins, which were Odifili and Omoaka, to succeed the late king. Idaoh Ikelebe eventually emerged victorious. After his coronation, these rivals refused to accept and acknowledge him as their new Otaru. Odifili and Omoaka, who were brothers, allied and decided not to be loyal to Idaoh Ikelebe despite the unanimous decision of the elders. They fermented one trouble after the other in other to disrupt the smooth running of affairs of the kingdom. They also

[536] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[537] Ibid, pp. 228-229.
[538] Ibid, pp. 47-48.
[539] Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, p. 105; Momoh. MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

tried to get support from elders outside the royal family but to no avail. They even secretly connived with King Omogbai of Jattu[540] in Uzairue to usurp Idaoh Ikelebe in 1881.[541] This plot was, however, not successful. This event is also referred to as the "Omoaka War."[542]

The 1881 war was a bloodbath among Auchi and Uzairue warriors to the extent that the armies of the two communities marched through the main streets carrying the decapitated heads of their victims amidst war chants. The war between Auchi and Uzairue triggered an age-long rivalry between the rulers of the two communities, as a phase of the political struggle for supremacy between the Auchi and Uzairue. Written sources have revealed that the consequences of the 1881 Auchi-Uzairue War endured up to the colonial and post-colonial periods. This lingering distrust in the post-colonial era led to the second Auchi-Jattu war of 1981, exactly a century after the first one. In recent times, both communities are still at loggerheads.[543]

Idaoh Ikelebe was the first Otaru, according to an oral source, to have experienced British imperial rule towards the tail end of this rule as Otaru. The same oral source further revealed that disclosed that Otaru Idaoh Ikelegbe focused on strengthening the political and social structures within the Auchi Kingdom. He continued with the various administrative reforms of his predecessor to improve governance and ensure stability within his domain. He also encouraged intergroup relations with neighboring kingdoms and communities to foster peace and cooperation in the region. Otaru Idaoh Ikelegbe promoted trade and commerce within the Auchi Kingdom. He encouraged local industries and agriculture, leading to economic prosperity for his subjects.[544] Another oral source disclosed that Idaoh Ikelebe was crowned Otaru at a time when the British Colonial Administration was gathering momentum in several locations in current-day Nigeria. It was not fully extended to Auchi Kingdom but it brought about a gradual reduction in the obnoxious

[540] Jattu is a town located in Edo State, Nigeria, specifically serving as the headquarters of the Uzairue Clan in the Etsako West council of Edo State. The Uzairue Clan comprises twenty-one villages, with Jattu being one of them. It is surrounded by Auchi, Afashio, Elele/Iviamho, Ayua, and South Ibie. The town is significant in Etsako land and has a substantial population of Etsako people living there. See Chukwu C. JAMES, "Colonial Impact on Jattu and Auchi Relations 1960-1981" *International Journal of Research in Academic World* Vol. 1 Issue 1, 2022, p. 68.
[541] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, pp. 230-231: Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[542] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[543] Mariam I. MOMOH and Olukayode A. FALEYE, "Impact of the 1981 Auchi-Jattu Boundary Conflict on Afemai Society" *Jalingo Journal of African Studies* Vol. 13 No. 5, 2024, p. 261; Momoh ROBSON, *New perspectives on the history and politics of Nigeria: The Etsako Experience*, Edo: Afenmai Grafix 2016, pp. 36-40.
[544] Obomeghie Wajeed, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

trade of slaves. At the same time, Western influence was gradually being introduced into Auchi Kingdom but the effect of Nupe raiders was still felt in the Kingdom.[545]

Auchi kingdom experienced growth and development under his leadership, with increased trade routes and exchanges with other regions. He was a lover of arts and encouraged traditional practices and customs within the Auchi Kingdom like his predecessor. He preserved the cultural heritage of his people and promoted unity among different ethnic groups residing in his kingdom. His reign witnessed the arrival of the British imperialist in 1904 after the Nupe Empire fell in 1897. The most significant impact of his reign as Otaru was that he was responsible for the signing of the treaty with the British Colonial Officers in 1904 after consultation with his council of chiefs giving Britain full control of the area.[546]He, however, passed on in 1905.

5.3 Otaru Odifili Okeregie-Nokhua under British rule (1905-1905)

Odifili Okeregie-Nokhua emerged as the fourth Otaru after the death of Idaoh Ikelebe in 1905. Arunah revealed that he was the Otaru with the shortest reign in the history of Auchi Kingdom. Odifili was crowned Otaru at a time when the people of Auchi were still recovering from the pains of Nupe rule. The circumstances surrounding his emergence as the new king were not the normal procedure.[547] Segosime noted that the position of Otaru was contested by both Ikharo and Odifili. Ikharo was Osimhe Ikelebe's son while Odifili was his nephew. Odifili was much older than Ikharo and that gave him an edge over Ikharo. Odifili was also a very skilled and experienced hunter. It was also believed that he possessed mystical powers which made almost everyone wary of him at the time.[548]

Immediately after the demise of Idaoh Ikelebe, Wajeed disclosed that Odifili fired cannon guns into the air and pronounced himself Otaru without the approval of the elders and people. The elders and people had no choice but to accept him because of the fear of what he might do to anyone who opposed him. Wajeed disclosed that there was an earlier oracular pronouncement that revealed that the successor of Idaoh Ikelebe would have a very short tenure in office. This prophecy soon came to pass because Odifili ruled for less than six months before he died in 1905, the same

[545] Momoh. MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[546] Edward. O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[547] Ibid, pp. 49-50.
[548] Ibid, p. 111.

year he emerged as Otaru.[549] Arunah explained that some views have it that his death was as a result of his forcing himself on the people while others revealed that his death was a result of the earlier oracular pronouncement that the next Otaru after Idaoh Ikelebe would have a short tenure.[550]

It should be noted that Odifili emerged as Otaru after the British had already established their imperial rule over Auchi Kingdom but British imperial rule was still fresh and the impact of their rule was very minimal at the time.

5.4 Otaru Ikharo Ikelebe under British rule (1905-1919)

Ikharo Ikelebe was crowned Otaru after the demise of Odifili in 1905. Ikharo had several wives and numerous children. He was one of the sons of Ikelebe Osimhe. Ikharo Idaoh had several things in common with his late father. Ikharo Ikelebe was the second and last direct son of Ikelebe to reign in Auchi. Wajeed disclosed that he was known for his strength, intelligence, loyalty, and accommodating nature. He did not want the ruling line of Ikelebe to be disrupted but Odifili struggled to break the line and he ruled for some months. Ikharo maintained cordial relations with the members of his extended family and upheld the line of succession from Ikelebe Ikharo's reign was marked by stability and cooperation among different clans under British rule while preserving Auchi's traditions and customs.[551] Segosime disclosed that his leadership during a period of transition from Nupe domination to British Colonial Rile reflects his adaptability and commitment to his people's welfare. He witnessed the amalgamation of the different clans and took part in meetings with Chiefs of the following clans: Uzairue, Avianwu, Ekperi, South Ibie, South Uneme, and Weppa Wanno. These were clans that were of very close proximity to Auchi Kingdom having similar traditions and cultural practices.[552]

Ikharo Ikelebe, according to Oseni, was known for his love for peace and respect within and outside his domain,[553] Mahmud revealed that Ikharo intervened in matters such as freeing men taken into bondage by other rulers. He got the men taken by King Omogbai of Uzairue out of bondage. Ege was one of them. Ikharo, at the time, sent money through Olimioke of Iyofa to

[549] Ibid, p. 235.
[550] Ibid, p. 50.
[551] Ibid, p. 236.
[552] Ibid, p. 112.
[553] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

Omogbai and Ege was released. The mother of Ege offered herself to marry Ikharo after mourning her dead husband as a sign of appreciation. Instead of Ikharo marrying the woman, he was able to get her a befitting husband.[554] Written sources disclosed that Ikharo was a philanthropist and he did everything humanly possible to render assistance and hospitality to his people. As a result of old age when he felt he could no longer undergo all the journeys to Idah, Fugar and Ubiaja where Auchi was being administered to attend meetings and briefings of the British Administrators in those days, he asked Prince Momoh Idaoh for assistance and to help him go to all the areas he went to attend meetings. This was how Ikharo brought Prince Momoh to the stage as his representative (Ukor). The eldest son of Ikharo was Audulai and he was senior to Momoh Idaoh at that time but Momoh Idaoh was more active and resourceful.[555]

Dawood was able to shed some light on an important issue that Ikharo was able to handle due to his love for peace. Ikharo got an invitation to go to Lagos for a Conference and he told Momoh Idaoh to represent him. At this time Chief Imorhe was the Daudu of Usogun. The family member of Imorhe Inaboya had trouble with a member of the Idaoh family. The matter finally went to Court and Prince Momoh was fined the sum of £10 (ten pounds) which Ikharo paid. Prince Idaoh Momoh was aware of this trouble before leaving for Lagos. When he returned, he went to thank Ikharo for the help he rendered in respect of the case. He brought pressure that Imorhe did not treat his family kindly, consequently his Dauduship position should be withdrawn. The elders met and decided on Chief Imorhe's relinquishing the post which he eventually did. Prince Momoh also requested that the Daudushp should be made to rotate within the Ikelebe family. The post was then given to Igechi. After Igechi, it was rotated among members of the extended family of the Ikelebe.[556]

During his reign from 1905 to 1919, Otaru Ikharo Ikelebe played significant roles as the fifth Otaru of Auchi. From the early twentieth century, western education had begun to spread throughout Nigeria. Oseni disclosed that Otaru Ikharo Ikelebe took interest in both Islamic and

[554] Momoh. MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[555] Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, p. 113; Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nigeria Ltd 2006, p. 51; Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, p. 236.
[556] Egbefo O. DAWOOD, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

Western education.[557] Robson disclosed in his book that he encouraged several of his children to acquire both Western and Islamic education. To buttress the fact that Ikharo Ikelebe had a great interest in Western education, between 1911 and 1913, he got Mr. F. S. Algin Isesele from Jagbe town, a neighbouring town, to Auchi Kingdom, to establish the first private School at Auchi to bring western education closer to his people so that they will not have to travel long distances to attend schools. [558]

To make administration much easier and swift, the British Administrators set up Native Courts (NC) at the time for adjudication in 1904 as well as in other parts of Nigeria where regular courts were absent. An archival source reveal that the courts were presided over by the paramount chiefs and kings unlike in the far Northern part of Nigeria where the Sharia legal system was already very active. It further revealed that this was the first organ of British administration that was introduced and the courts exercised both executive and judicial functions together.[559] This regional Native Court was situated at Idah, a city that was situated in the Northern Protectorate beyond the eastern part of Etsako land across the great river Niger, which served as a springboard for the acquisition of Auchi territory by the British. The Otaru, according to Tony, was one of the fifteen members of the Native Court. Other members were clan heads of other clans and communities neighbouring the Auchi Kingdom. Court sessions were held once a month and the Otaru, like other members of the native court, had no form of absolute authority during court proceedings which were presided over by a British official, the District Commissioner or the Assistant District Commissioner. The reason for this was that the basis for judgement during this period was the English legal laws which were completely alien to the Auchi people's customs and traditions.[560] However, it is important to mention that the Otaru usually received the various policies and orders of the British imperial government as they were to be implemented in his domain during the visits to Idah for court sessions. This was the situation until 1914, when the system was reorganised with the enactment of the Native Court Ordinance which conferred on the

[557] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[558] Ibid, p. 106.
[559] BEN PROF 1/44 VOL. XI, File 1951 - 1954, Annual Report on Kukuruku Division, 1952, p. 5.
[560] Ibid, p. 41.

Resident of a province the right to appoint a Native Court of Appeal at the capital city of his province.[561]

This ordinance was mainly enacted to perfect the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria. The ordinance was also meant to provide for a new system of local administration where the indigenous court members shall fully deliberate on cases but under the watch and authority of a British Officer. Egbefo revealed that many courts were established, and clan heads or paramount rulers were made judges of these courts. The Otaru was designated Auchi clan head and was allotted a seat in the court which, at this time, had been transferred to Ubiaja the then headquarters of Esanland, another major Edo-speaking group situated between Afenmai and Benin. The reason for the transfer from Idah to this place was due to the inclusion of Afenmai and some other Etsako towns to the Southern protectorate which was formerly under the Northern protectorate[562] Afenmai, under this new arrangement, was now under the Southern Region of the new country, Nigeria.

In 1916, the Native Authority Ordinance was enacted by the British. to allow for the appointment of a traditional ruler or a representative as a Native Authority. Wajeed disclosed that the Otaru was in this vein, appointed as Auchi Native Authority. It should be noted at this point that the Native Authority Ordinance effected some changes in the power and authority of the Otaru. It is, however, difficult to explain in practical terms how the new attainment in both phases altered his status quo, but one thing, for sure, was that collective decisions had to be made. This was because he, like other members of the native court at Ubiaja, was still under the supervision of British officials, hence free hand was absent because he had to consult others to make decisions. This, to a large extent, did not make his impact much felt.[563]

In 1914, a significant event resembling a revolution occurred in Auchi Kingdom, as detailed by Oseni. This event was the adoption of Islam as the official religion by the Auchi people, leading to the abandonment of the African Traditional Religion previously practised. This marked the beginning of a new era, fundamentally altering the community's quality of life and worldview.

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[561] This Native Court Ordinance provided for a system of local and native matters and authorized the administration to convene conferences of chiefs and clan heads with a view of creating peace and finding lasting solutions to the issues and cases of the Native population. For more details see Obaro IKIME, "Chief Dogho: The Lugardian System in Warri 1917-1932" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 3, No. 2, 1965, pp. 313-333.
[562] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[563] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

The shift towards Islam was first embraced by Oba Momodu of Agbede, a town near Auchi Kingdom, and was quickly followed by Auchi itself. Prince Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh, a beloved figure in the Kingdom and respected by the British, played a crucial role in the Islamisation of Auchi. He ensured that the Auchi people embraced Islam well before his eventual appointment as the Otaru of Auchi Kingdom.[564]

Around 1910, according to Tony, Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh started the process of the Islamisation of Auchi Kingdom by attracting mallams to Auchi Kingdom. Some of them were already in Agbede assisting Oba Momodu in the Islamisation process. Thus, Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh, alongside the Hausa, Nupe and Yoruba mallams, later destroyed the material representations of the gods and shrines whom the people had been worshipping in 1914 after Otaru Ikharo granted the request of Momoh Idaoh to create an avenue for the Islamic religion to be adopted as the state religion. Otaru Ikharo embraced Islam and took the Islamic name "Abubakar." His Royal Highness Chief Abubakar Ikharo Ikelebe renamed his children by giving them Islamic names in addition to their names. During his reign, all the Priests and elders of Auchi decided and shifted the meetings from Uchi's first site of settlement to Otaru's Palace (Eguale).[565]It was also during this same period, as noted by Bourne, that the Northern and Southern protectorates were joined together into one single entity known as Nigeria during the time of Sir Fredrick Lugard as Governor-General of Nigeria. Lugard subsequently introduced the indirect rule system in Nigeria for administrative convenience as a result of limited personnel and finances.[566] In Auchi like every other community or city that had a similar administrative structure, the kingship and chieftaincy institution was retained and the British ruled the country through the chiefs and traditional rulers.[567]

Numerous sources revealed that it was during the reign of Ikharo in 1918 that the Kukuruku Division was created as a district for easy administrative purposes. As a result of this, the customary court was moved from Fugar town to Auchi in 1919.[568] Ikharo's legacy includes his efforts to promote unity among clans, bringing Western education closer to his people and a host

[564] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu; Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, "The Islamization of Auchi Kingdom in South Central Nigeria" a paper presented at First Auchi Day celebration, Lagos Efua Media, 1998, p. 62
[565] Ibid, pp. 58-60.
[566] Ibid, pp. 14-15;
[567] Arthur N. COOK, *British enterprise in Nigeria*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1943, p. 225.
[568] Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nig. Ltd 2006, p. 51; Momoh ROBSON, *New perspectives on the history and politics of Nigeria: The Etsako Experience*, Edo: Afenmai Grafix 2016, pp. 55-57; Gary USMAN, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

of other innovations. Ikharo Ikelebe lived a life worthy of emulation due to his achievements. He passed on in 1919 due to old age.[569]

5.5 Otaru Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh under British rule (1919-1944)

Otaru Idaoh Oshiogbele Momh was a significant figure in Auchi Kingdom during the period of British Colonial Administration. He played crucial roles in the development and leadership of Auchi Kingdom under the British colonial administration. Momoh's leadership style and vision were instrumental in shaping the Kingdom during his reign as Otaru. Tony disclosed that he became active in the Auchi socio-political system even before he became Otaru. Auchi Kingdom produced several kings from its royal family in the past but he was the most respected and celebrated Otaru. He was a great traditional ruler, political administrator and arbitrator. He was also a very dedicated and tolerant religious leader. Chief Tony Momoh, one of his children, referred to him as a progenitor of what is considered as one of the largest and most organised families in the world and the foundation of the development of Auchi Sacred Kingdom as it is called today.[570]When Momoh Idaoh was enthroned in 1919, there was no opposition from anyone. With his maturity and experience on the job, he proved tougher than all his predecessors in office. To the Auchi people, he was a leader and mentor. It was, basically, all these qualities that the British Administrators saw in him that made them appoint him as the District Head (DH) in 1920 after Auchi was made the headquarters of the Kukuruku district that was created in 1918.[571] The details of how Auchi was made the District Headquarters have already been explained in chapter four.

At this junction, it would be necessary to give a brief biography of Otaru Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh. According to written and oral sources, he was born in 1875 to Iyami and Idaoh Ikelebe. Momoh Idaoh's youthful career years was, first, as a tailor and later as a trader. He traded in cocoa, gunpowder and dane guns, palm produce, coffee beans and elephant tusks. He traded with the Royal Niger Company, John Holt and UAC, when they set up offices in Auchi Kingdom. This was a rare opportunity for the Kingdom because many Auchi indigenes were employed. He travelled and traded as far as Calabar in present-day Cross Rivers State, Onitsha in present-day

[569] Momoh. MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[570] Momoh TONY, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[571] Momoh TONY, *Each man, his time: The Biography of an Era*, Lagos: Pumark Nigeria ltd 1995, p. 36; Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, p. 118.

Anambra State, Warri and Asaba in Delta State. He was able to learn how to speak many languages in the process of travelling to many places for trading purposes and also building a strong network of friends and associates. He was a dedicated prince of the Kingdom, maintaining strong ties with his kinsmen, understanding the challenges and plotting a path for projecting the Kingdom into a formidable and prosperous position for rapid development and growth.[572]

It is worth noting that Momoh Idaoh was married to forty-eight wives and had two hundred and sixty-five children born between 1903 and 1944, many of whom went on to become influential and recognised at both the state and national level in Nigeria carrying on the legacy of their father. He influenced the building of a school in the Kingdom and ensured his children and other children in the community received Western education. Momoh's passion for education was so great that he sent some of his children to the prestigious Government College at Ibadan, Oyo State and Kings College, Lagos State. Even before he passed on, he set up plans for his children who would eventually succeed him to be educated. British officials were marveled by the astonishing size of his family. They wondered how he was able to have total control of such a huge number of family members.[573]

During his reign as Otaru, according to an oral source, he created an avenue for rapid growth by attracting foreign direct investment to the Kingdom for job creation. He also set up a security outfit and task force to continue to dismantle the shrines within the Kingdom. Momoh built an Islamic school in his palace where the first generation of indigenous Islamic missionaries was trained and dispatched to neighbouring communities to preach the message of Islam to its inhabitants. Despite his choice of Islam, Momoh tolerated the Christian faith at the time, especially the Catholic faith.[574] He encouraged freedom of worship of God through Christianity and only frowned at those who embraced idolatry. Momoh donated a choice piece of land to the Anglican missionaries when they came to Auchi Kingdom to preach Christianity. This land is still occupied by them till date. He also sent one of his children, Aliu, to join their faith, the Anglican mission,

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[572] Momoh ROBSON, *New perspectives on the history and politics of Nigeria: The Etsako Experience*, Edo: Afenmai Grafix 2016, pp. 79-80; Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[573] Momoh TONY, "My father had 48 wives and they always took an oath every six months," PUNCH ONLINE, 10th September 2016. https://punchng.com/father-48-wives-always-took-oath-every-six-months-tony-momoh/; Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu; Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, p. 272-273.
[574] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

and the latter was trained by them and was active in the Anglican church most of his life. While it is unarguable that Momoh Idaoh Islamized the Kingdom, it is also true that he provided the pathway for Christianity to thrive in the Kingdom and Edo North. He also encouraged commerce, industry and infrastructural development.[575]

Due to his excellent leadership qualities, Momoh Idaoh was selected as the District Head of the Kukuruku Division comprising six local government areas in what is today known as Afenmai land. With Auchi as headquarters and an important trade route, Robson stated that the Otaru influenced road construction, for example, the Benin-Auchi-Okene road, and sundry infrastructure to link the Kingdom with neighbouring towns. He also influenced the increased volume of trade and commerce with other parts of Nigeria and the British colonialists. He supervised the administration of neighbouring towns in the areas of taxes, arbitration and development, most times, deploying his local army to do the hard tasks that were very strenuous.[576] Obomeghie stated that Momoh Idaoh was a bridge builder and maintained cordial relationships with his fellow traditional rulers. He also maintained peaceful and cordial diplomatic relationships with the British protectorate officials. Due to the significance of Momoh's excellent leadership and the friendship he cultivated with one of the British colonial officers, Major Dunn, he was able to extract a promise from Major Dunn to promote something significant for the Kingdom.[577] In a video documentary, it was explained that several years after Momoh's death, Major Dunn later became a member of the House of Lords in Britain and influenced the location of the Midwest Technical College in Auchi in 1963 as a technical aid from the British government to Auchi Kingdom. This college metamorphosed into the current-day Auchi Polytechnic, which was later handed over to the federal government to run and fund in 1994 by the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida.[578]

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[575] Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, pp. 18-19; J. A. ONIMHAWO - Emmanuel I. UKPEBOR, "The Non-Violence Pattern of Religious Interaction in Auchi-Edo State" *SAU: Journal of Humanities* Vol. 2, No. 1&2, 2014, pp. 8-10; T. O. EBHOMIENLEN - Solomon Ijeweimen IKHIDERO," Traditional Humano-Communal Ethics in Inter-Faith Relations: The Etsako (Edo) Experience" *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)* 10(4), 2019, p. 220.
[576] Ibid, pp. 144-145.
[577] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[578] Lawrence OYANIYI, Documentary on Auchi Polytechnic. Part 1, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_aEuAeSw_wk,

Tony observed that Momoh Idaoh significantly opened the Kingdom to several opportunities through his transparency, dedication, commitment to development, diplomacy, religious tolerance, extensive network of influential connections, and an administrative style that garnered admiration from British colonial officials, who documented commendable reports about him. A man of considerable wealth, Momoh Idaoh constructed the first one-story building in Auchi Kingdom and reportedly owned seven cars and horses during a period when even possessing a horse symbolized affluence. In addition to owning multiple horses, he maintained several farms cultivating export commodities such as cocoa, rubber, and coffee beans. His wealth enabled him to effectively manage and provide for a large family, numerous staff, and other dependents.[579]

After Auchi Kingdom was made headquarters of the division in 1920, Robson noted that Major C. M. Dunn was the first British official to be posted to Auchi Kingdom as a District Officer (DO). This marked the beginning of formal colonial administration in Auchi Kingdom. The first task that confronted Major Dunn was the construction of an administrative building. He built the District Officer's official residence, a modest bungalow at a hilltop overlooking the Kingdom under the strict supervision of Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh, Otaru of Auchi Kingdom.[580] The bungalow, built in 1920, has been preserved, more or less in its original form. History owes the present Otaru of Auchi, Alhaji A.H. Momoh, Ikelebe III, inestimable debt for preserving this historical antiquity for the edification of the present generation. Robson revealed that the building is now tucked in a private corner beside a mosque in the Otaru's sprawling palace annexe at the Government Reservation Area (GRA). It reflects the simplicity and functionality of colonial architecture in that age. After setting up the District Officer's residence, Major Dunn proceeded to build an office complex for the District Officer (himself) and his subordinate staff. The building was a simple bungalow of six large rooms lying within walking distance of the District Officer's residence.[581]

The modest building was the secretariat from where the Kurukuru District was administered. Oseni revealed that this same building is currently used, with minor modification, by Government Departments and agencies, including an arm of the State Ministry of Education, as offices. The Divisional Native Court established to serve the whole Kukuruku Division was also

[579] Momoh TONY, *Each man, his time: The Biography of an Era, Lagos: Pumark Nigeria Ltd 1995*, p. 45; Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nigeria Ltd 2006, pp. 52-53.
[580] Ibid, pp. 60-61.
[581] Ibid, pp. 59-60.

built in 1920. The administrative structure of the new Kukuruku Division complete with the coercive apparatus of state power, was firmly in place. Oseni stated that the Government, after the independence of Nigeria in 1960, did not demolish the old court building because of its historical significance. Today, the Native Court building, still in its original state, stands tucked behind the Unity Bank Plc. There was also the construction of a prison yard that was completed in 1921.[582] An earlier enacted proclamation stated that "every prisoner received in pursuance of this proclamation shall, until be discharged, be dealt with in Southern Nigeria in a like manner if his sentence has been duly awarded in that Protectorate, and shall be subject accordingly to all laws and regulations in force in Southern Nigeria…."[583] Michael Imoudu, the first National labour leader in Nigeria was detained in the Auchi prison between 1943 and 1945 after he had a series of confrontations with the British Colonial Government over wages and better working conditions for Nigerian workers.[584]

Major Dunn's tenure ended in 1921, after he had made significant pioneering contributions, leaving behind a well-functioning system. He was succeeded by Barrister Archer, an Oxford University-trained lawyer. Archer faced the challenge of further advancing the socio-economic development of Auchi Kingdom, specifically, and the Kukuruku Division more broadly. The Divisional Office required interpreters, clerks, and tax collectors to support its operations. An oral source revealed that none was found in Auchi Kingdom. Consequently, Archer looked to the Agbede and Ora districts for the recruitment of the urgently needed staff. Archer correctly attributed the difficulty of finding suitable staff in Auchi Kingdom to the absence of Western education.[585] Arunah noted that he went ahead to establish the Government School, Auchi, which took off in its present site along Warrake Road, in 1922.[586] This was the same year that the Clifford Constitution took effect and introduced the elective principle. This elective principle was fully effective until later in the 1940s when the Richard Constitution took effect.[587]

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[582] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[583] NA, CO 588/1 Proclamations- Colonial Office: Southern Nigeria Protectorate Acts.
[584] Samuel O. OLORUNTOBA (ed), *The Political Economy of Colonialism and Nation-Building in Nigeria*, Cham: Springer Nature 2022, p. 57.
[585] Momoh TONY, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[586] Ibid, p. 28.
[587] Uwem Jonah AKPAN, "Constitutional Development and the Evolution of the Nigerian State Since 1914" *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* Vol 7, Issue 2, 2019, p. 3.

Another of Archer's tasks was to link Auchi Kingdom by roads to the interior parts of the vast Kukuruku Division. The Auchi-Ikpeshi road, begun by Idaoh Momoh in 1919, was taken over and extended to Igarra in 1923 by the British administration. During the same period, the roads that linked Esan land and Auchi Kingdom were constructed in 1921 under the strict supervision of the Otaru.[588] Both oral and written sources indicate that Archer similarly undertook road construction which onnected Agenebode through South-Ibie and Ekperi, as well as another road linking Sabongida Ora through Warrake, Ihievbe, and Afuze-Emai, all within Afemai land.[589] There was also the construction of a road that linked Auchi Kingdom to Ekperi clan where a telegraph office was located at the time.[590] This made it much easier for the district officers to move around to carry out administrative duties because of the good road network. The local inhabitants of Auchi Kingdom and other neighbouring communities also benefited immensely because it made travelling for them to local and village markets very easy when carrying out their trading activities.[591]

According to an archival source, there was a request for the establishment of a telegraph office in Auchi Kingdom in 1923. With the introduction and establishment of new divisions and colonial offices within Nigeria, there was a need to establish telegraph and post offices in some strategic locations in the British protectorate. Auchi Kingdom, at the time, occupied a very strategic location because of its central location to enhance the free and rapid flow of information within and outside Kukuruku Division. There were already two telegram offices within the Kukuruku division situated at Ekperi and Agenebode clans. The issue of establishing a telegraph office in Auchi kingdom was deliberated for several years but was not approved due to the outbreak of World War II. The acting resident officer of Benin Province in 1943 revealed in his letter that it was only if the proposed Telegraph office in Auchi was important in the war effort that it would be approved at the time.[592] Due to its non-importance to the war efforts at the time, it was not

[588] Egbefo O. DAWOOD - Joseph I. OSAGIE, "Impact of Colonial Rule on Inter-group Relations between the Benin and the Esan Peoples of Nigeria," *Romanian Journal of History and International Studies (RJHIS)* 3 (2), 2016, p. 70.
[589] Momoh ROBSON, *New perspectives on the history and politics of Nigeria: The Etsako Experience,* p. 61. Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[590] NIA, BEN PROF. 1, File 292/3, Telegraph office at Auchi: Acknowledgement of Letters by District Officer, Auchi, 1925.
[591] Momoh ROBSON, *New perspectives on the history and politics of Nigeria: The Etsako Experience,* p. 61. Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[592] NIA, BEN PROF. 1, File 292/216, Telegraph office at Auchi: Acknowledgement of Letters by District Officer, Auchi, 1943.

approved but instead, a post office was later approved after the end of World War II in 1946[593] which was also after the demise of Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh. This will be explained in the next sub-topic.

British Colonial Administration abolished some very obnoxious practices that were prevalent in the Auchi Kingdom at the time. Oral sources reveal that the practice of trial by ordeal was one of such practice. Archer, the District Officer at the time, confronted the challenge of widespread accusations of witchcraft in the Auchi Kingdom, where belief in witchcraft and sorcery was deeply entrenched, often impairing rational judgment. These accusations stemmed from the prevailing ignorance, superstition, and poverty within the community. Fatima revealed that the people accused of witchcraft were forcibly brought before a traditional priest, who would compel them to consume a concoction known as 'Osaki,' a toxic mixture derived from the bark, leaves, and roots of trees.[594] Robson disclosed that various items, along with other ritualistic objects and herbs, were boiled for several days in a clay pot to create a toxic and foul-smelling concoction, which was then administered to the accused victim. A victim with a strong immune system who survived the ordeal was deemed not to be a witch, while one with a weaker immune system who died as a result of taking the concoction was declared a witch. The deceased's family mourned their loss and continued to live in disgrace, as their relative had been branded a witch.[595] Wajeed disclosed that the practice was abolished by the British, and legal means were adopted to settle issues of witchcraft and sorcery.[596]

In 1930, there was the establishment of a dispensary in Auchi Kingdom by the British Administrators. This was a time when malaria fever[597] and other ailments were causing the deaths of several adults and children in the Kingdom and its environs. The British Administrators did not

[593] NIA, BEN PROF. 1, File 292/221, Telegraph office at Auchi: Acknowledgement of Letters by District Officer, Auchi, 1946.
[594] Yakubu B. FATIMA, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu & Ayonote Vivian interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[595] Ibid, p. 62.
[596] Obomeghei WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[597] Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease caused by parasites of the Plasmodium genus. The disease is transmitted when an infected Anopheles mosquito bites a person, injecting malarial parasites into their bloodstream. Malaria symptoms can range from mild to severe and may include fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, and vomiting. In severe cases, malaria can cause organ failure, coma, and even death. Malaria is preventable with mosquito nets, insecticides, and antimalarial drugs. The World Health Organization recommends a malaria vaccine for children in high-risk areas. See Petra F. MENS, Gerard J. SCHOONE, Piet A. KAGER and Henk D. F. H. SCHALLIG, "Detection and identification of human Plasmodium species with real-time quantitative nucleic acid sequence-based amplification," *Malaria Journal* 5 (80), 2006, p. 6.

only fear for the health of Auchi people, they were also very worried about their health situation. There was the need to bring the ugly health situation under control. This resulted in the establishment of a dispensary. The dispensary provided primary health care for both adults and children and, was able to manage the health situation at the time. A permanent building was constructed and used for primary health in 1949. This building was situated close to the Auchi prisons. Dawood revealed that the dispensary is still operational to date.[598]

Written and oral sources have revealed that the British imperial government, in a bid to protect lives, and property, and maintain security and peace, established the Nigerian Police force, and a police post was opened in the Kingdom but the first official building for the Police Station in the Kingdom was built in 1932. At that time, the crime rate was on the increase, so there was a need to urgently do something about it before it got out of hand. This resulted in the replacement of the age grade with the police force that was responsible for the maintenance of law and order. It was later discovered that not much was done to maintain peace and security at the time, and this resulted in the mounting of a police post in the kingdom. The police station was built beside the prison yard. The cases of crimes and others were so many that more police officers had to be recruited to handle the situation. The police station was later converted to the Prison Staff Club after a new police station building was built after the independence of Nigeria in 1960.[599]

In the early 1930s, the non-Auchi clans began to protest against marginalisation of their various clans and this made the British reorganise the district system in manner that every clan head was given the authority to rule over his clan without the interference of other clan heads. This new direction by the British drastically reduced the power and authority of the Otaru.[600] Arunah explained that in 1938, Mr H. Spottswoode, the then District Officer, revealed that after the reorganisation of the district system of the Kukuruku Division, thirteen units were created. The thirteen clans were namely Uzairue, Auchi, South Uneme, The Three Ibies, Weppa Wanno, Avianwu, Okpella, Ekperi, Anwain, South Ibies, Jagbe, Aviele and Okpekpe.[601] Tony added that

[598] Egbefo O. DAWOOD, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[599] Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nigeria Ltd 2006, p. 29; Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[600] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, "Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy institution in historical perspective 1860 – 1973," Bachelor of Arts project, University of Ilorin, Nigeria, 1992, pp. 66 -67; Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, p. 263.
[601] Ibid, p. 28.

the thirteen units existed and functioned independently without interference from one another. After the creation of the thirteen new units, clan councils and clan courts were created in each of the units. The clan court created in Auchi Kingdom had the Otaru as its President. The Otaru of Auchi was empowered to try cases within his jurisdiction and not to interfere with the cases of courts in other clans.[602]

There were further reorganisations made in the Local Government Administration in the early 1940s. Robson disclosed that the most prominent among the reorganisation process was the creation of Federal Native Authorities. The Federal Native Authorities were established by the British Colonial Administration to oversee local governance and administration in various regions of Nigeria. The Federal Native Authorities played a significant role in the governance and management of local affairs in Auchi and other areas under their jurisdiction. They were responsible for implementing colonial policies, maintaining law and order, collecting taxes, and managing local resources. The authorities worked closely with traditional rulers and local leaders to ensure effective governance at the grassroots level. This system aimed to govern the country through existing traditional structures and institutions, using indigenous leaders as intermediaries between the colonial administration and the local population. In Auchi, the Federal Native Authority was created for Etsako District Council increasing the influence and popularity of the Otaru of Auchi by its location.[603]

Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh was Otaru of Auchi Kingdom when World War II started. It was a time when all the colonies of Great Britain needed assistance in the form of finances and military contingents towards the war efforts. All the regions of Nigeria during this period in one way or the other contributed towards the war efforts as a means of rendering support to their colonial master. Just as the Oba of Benin Kingdom declared support for Great Britain a week after the outbreak of World War II in 1939,[604] so did Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh of Auchi Kingdom. It is not clear how much in terms of finances and military contingents Auchi contributed but oral sources revealed that both finances and military contingents were contributed.[605] It must be stated here that, whether

[602] Ibid, p. 211.
[603] Ibid, pp. 63-64.
[604] Chima J. KORIEH, *"Nigeria and World War II: Colonialism, Empire, and Global Conflict"* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 95-96.
[605] Gary USMAN, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu; Momoh H. MUSA, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

little or large, Auchi Kingdom contributed her quota towards the war efforts as the war was being fought.

Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh passed on in 1944 after his reign of twenty-five years as Otaru of Auchi Kindom. Both oral and written sources revealed that he was, by all means, very powerful and influential during his reign as Otaru of Auchi Kingdom. He was on several occasions praised and honoured by the British Colonial Administrators. His legacy lives on through his descendants and the impact he had on Auchi Kingdom. His emphasis on service to humanity and faith in God influenced generations after him to dedicate themselves to serving their communities and country. His leadership qualities and ability to unite people from diverse backgrounds contributed to Auchi's growth and development.[606]

In this regard, British colonialism impacted greatly on Auchi Kingdom during the reign of Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh. Between 1919 and 1944 there was the construction of several roads, the establishment of schools, the establishment of a prison, the siting of a native court in Auchi, the Otaru was made the native authority, the building of an administrative office complex, Auchi was made the Administrative Headquarters and a host of others. Several of these structures are still in use in recent times.

5.7 Otaru Momoh Jimah Momoh under British rule (1945-1955)

Momoh Jimah Momoh (M. J. Momoh) was installed as the seventh Otaru of Auchi Kingdom in January 1945 after a fierce contest with Chief Kadiri Idaoh and Chief Braimah Ikharo both grandsons of King Ikelebe Osimhe. M. J. Momoh was the second son of Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh. This was the first time a son succeeded his father to the throne in Auchi Kingdom.[607] The first son, Saliu Erah Momoh was born blind so he could not have been an ideal candidate for the position of Otaru. Wajeed noted that this was the first time the British Colonial Administrators had to look closely at the issue of succession to the throne in Auchi Kingdom because it was a very tough struggle before Momoh Jimah Momoh was installed as Otaru. The contest led the then Resident Officer of the Benin Province accompanied by the then District Officer of Kukuruku Division to

[606] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, p. 283; Gary USMAN, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu; Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[607] A. O. IKHARO, "The founding and origin of Auchi," an unpublished manuscript, p. 6.

deliberate during a two-day inquiry held at Auchi to accept the majority view of the people in appointing Momoh Jimah Momoh as the new Otaru.[608]

Mahmud revealed that Chief Kadiri Idaoh and Chief Braimah Ikharo who lost in the struggle to emerge as Otaru took the defeat in good faith because it was one of their own that emerged as Otaru. It was the dream and desire of Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh to have a united family and that no member of his immediate and extended family should have fights or quarrels no matter the problems or issues that confronted them but there were still pockets of grievances.[609] Arunah revealed that right from the first day M. J. Momoh was installed as Otaru, he was confronted with several problems that could undermine his reign. There was the problem of reconciling members of the royal family who took sides during the selection process of M. J. Momoh. There was also the reconciliation of factions of non-members of the royal family who also took sides. M. J. Momoh was quite an enlightened man with some level of exposure. He was able to handle the reconciliation process tactfully.[610]

An oral source revealed that M. J. Momoh's reign as Otaru was similar to that of his father. He was previously groomed by his father in the art of governance so it was not difficult for him to rule the Kingdom. In addition to his other personal qualities as the spokesperson of all Etsako chiefs, Auchi remained the District Headquarters, so the District Headship was his right of succession, which automatically made him head of the district.[611] The Kings of Agbede, Uzairue and Avianwu tried to put a strong resistance against the District Headship of M. J. Momoh. Both physical and spiritual means were used in the struggle for the position of the headship of the District but M. J. Momoh's fearless, strong willpower and undisputed capabilities made him stand his ground against his opponents. Arunah noted that the three above-mentioned Kings had no option than to accept him as the new District Head because the elders, people and even the British Administrators were in support of him.[612] An archival source revealed that after the elections of

[608] Ibid, p. 294.
[609] Momoh. MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[610] Ibid, p. 57.
[611] Gary USMAN, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[612] Ibid, p. 57

1951 M. J. Momoh and Chief Idogu, Olokpe of Okpe, both of the same district were elected into the Federal Native Authority Council.[613]

Segosime explained that after the issue of headship of the District was solved, the next major task before M. J. Momoh was the problem of frequent bushfire outbreaks which was also a serious problem during the reign of his late father, Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh. The bush fire usually occurred during the dry season, especially during the windy harmattan period and it affected the thatched roofs of the dwelling houses of Auchi people. At the time, most of the houses in Auchi had thatch roofs. M. J. Momoh made it a top priority to solve this lingering problem. His first step in solving this problem was to educate the people about the dangers of the excessive and extensive use of fire. He told them to always ensure to completely put out the fire from the firewood or fire place after they finished cooking their meals to prevent the spread of fire. During harmattan periods, the town criers (Ekabor) were sent out to make announcements to the people to ensure that all fire, whether from cooking or other sources, be tactfully handled to prevent it from escalating into a bush fire.[614]Eventually, this problem was solved. Erhagbe revealed that M. J. Momoh was crowned Otaru of Auchi the same year World War II ended in 1945. This subsequently led to another round of deliberation on the issue of the establishment of Auchi post office. Approval was eventually given in 1946. The first post office building in Auchi Kingdom was situated at the heart of the Kingdom, very close to Otaru's palace, and was built in 1949. It was accessible to anyone who wanted to send and receive letters at the time. This made communication and the dispatch of correspondences very easy and swift.[615]

The economies of the major countries that were involved in the war were badly battered. These countries decided to adopt means of ensuring the restoration of their distressed economy within the shortest possible time. Britain, the colonial master of Nigeria at the time, formulated a new agricultural policy. Crops such as cocoa and cassava were designated as cash crops for export. When World War II was still being fought, the Colonial Office informed the governors in Western Africa of the possibility of developing an export of Cassava starch, a food item which became an

[613] BEN PROF 1/44 VOL. XI, File 1951-1954, Annual Report of Kukuruku Division by Mr. S. J. Henry by District Officer, Kukuruku Division, 1951.
[614] Ibid, p. 140.
[615] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

export crop like palm oil, palm kernel, and cocoa for the first time in Nigeria.[616]M. J. Momoh subsequently encouraged the mass production of cocoa and cassava in Auchi Kingdom after the war. Both the production and export of cassava starch revealed the extent to which the imperial government went in the search of resources to feed their industries. Cassava starch, like maize and potato starch, was used in the preparation of dextrin[617] and as the basis for industrial and other adhesives. There was a shortage of male manpower for agricultural activities because many of the men had left Auchi Kingdom for greener pastures or perished during War World II. As a result of this women were majorly in charge of cultivating and processing of cassava starch for export.[618] This is the reason why till date, women are majorly responsible for the growing and processing of cassava in Auchi Kingdom and areas where the cassava plant is cultivated in Nigeria.

Both oral and written sources have revealed that the Otaru encouraged Auchi people to use the monies that were realised from the cultivation of cocoa and cassava to purchase corrugated roofing sheets to further curb the outbreak of bushfires rather than spending their monies on unnecessary things. He further encouraged them to form cooperative societies so that they could pool their resources together and roof their houses with corrugated roofing sheets in turns. To ensure that this was achieved, he requested the managers of UAC and John Holts companies in Auchi not to give cash to Auchi people who sell farm produce to them but to pay in kind with corrugated roofing sheets. Auchi people soon realised that the arrangement made by the Otaru was in their best interest. With time most of the houses had changed their roofs from thatch roofs to corrugated roofing sheets through their cooperative societies.[619]

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[616] Jonathan Oluropo FAMILUGBA, "The Economic Implications of the Second World War on the Nigerian Economy" *Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* Vol. 4 Issue 3, 2023, p. 47; Judith A. BYFIELD, "Feeding the Troops: Abeokuta (Nigeria) and World War II" *African Economic History* No. 35 2007, pp. 79-80.

[617] Dextrin is one of the most famous modified starch products and has been used in various applications in food, paper, and textile industries. In the food industry, dextrin can be used as a crispness enhancer for food processing, such as in fried and baked food, also it can be used as a filler in food batters, coatings, and glazes. The European Union classifies dextrin as a food additive categorized in the class of additional chemicals. Dextrin is produced by a dextrinization process which is defined as partial hydrolysis of starch and dextrin can be precipitated from aqueous solution by alcohol. However, the term dextrin is used to name all starch degradation products regardless of which method they are produced. See. Achmat SARIFUDIN - Alhussein M. ASSIRY, "Some physicochemical properties of dextrin produced by extrusion process" *Journal of the Saudi Society of Agricultural Sciences* vol 13, Issue 2, 2014, p.100.

[618] Toyin FALOLA, "Cassava Starch for Export in Nigeria during the Second World War" *African Economic History* No. 18, 1989, pp. 73-78; Fred Ekpe AYOKHAI, "Food Technology in Colonial Nigeria: The Experience of Uzairhue Women of Benin Province" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 23, 2014, p. 64.

[619] Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, pp. 140-141; Obomeghie Wajeed, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

In the latter part of the 1940s, western education had made significant impacts on Auchi Kingdom. One of such notable impacts was the emergence of a class of educated elites of Auchi descent who migrated to big cities like Lagos, Benin city, Ibadan and Kano to search for greener pastures. These elites were inspired by the economic and socio-political state of things in Auchi to form the Auchi Progressive Union (APU) under the leadership of U. O. Musah as the first chairperson. Garuba revealed that this was the commencement of a new phase of resistance that created stiff opposition to the unchecked excesses and authority of the Otaru of Auchi. Amongst the allegations that were sometimes levelled against him and his council were issues relating to bribery and corruption, incessant rape of justice in Auchi Native Court and increasing rate of divorce cases being brought to the Auchi Native Court which was claimed to be encouraged by the Otaru and his clan council instead of frowning at such cases.[620] An oral source revealed that APU was always quick to criticise the activities of the Otaru when they felt he had overstepped his bounds. There was also the establishment of several branches of the APU in big cities like Benin city, Kano, Lagos and places where Auchi people had a sizeable or considerate population. These newly established branches were also always in contact with the home branch at Auchi where they regularly received briefings and information about the happenings in Auchi.[621]

The British Colonial Administrators also established a General Hospital in Auchi due to the increasing need for medical attention because of the numerous cases of malaria fever patients. In 1939, the British Colonial Office had earlier reported the outbreak of leprosy in Nigeria where hundreds of people were infected and several of them died.[622] All these health concerns made the issue of health in Nigeria to be taken more seriously. The siting of the General Hospital at Kukuruku Division was part of the general health programme of the defunct West Regional Government where every division was entitled to a General Hospital. The decision to build the hospital at Auchi was due to its central location. The nearest hospital to the Kukuruku Division was located at Idah which was too long a distance. Auch's strategic location was at the centre of the division which was not more than fifty kilometres away from the most remote village. For this

[620] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, "Otaru of Auchi Chieftaincy institution in historical perspective 1860-1973," Bachelor of Arts project, University of Ilorin, Nigeria, 1992, pp. 69-71.
[621] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[622] NA, CO 583/243- Nigeria: original correspondence, Leprosy in Nigeria, 1939.

reason, the General Hospital had to be sited in Auchi but this project was not completed during his reign.[623]

The outbreak of World War II accelerated the pace of political and constitutional developments beyond what was experienced in the pre-war years. The weaknesses of the Clifford Constitution following the emergence of Nigerian nationalism gave birth to a political organisation, in 1944, known as the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) under the leadership of Herbert Macaulay and later Nnamdi Azikiwe. This was followed, in quick succession, by the transformation of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a Yoruba socio-cultural organization, into a political party, the Action Group (AG) in 1950 under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the Northern People Congress (NPC) in 1959 with dominance in the northern region. These parties dominated the political landscape of the country, particularly in their respective regions in the struggle towards independence and the First Republic of Nigeria.[624]

The Richard Constitution came into force on the 1st of January 1947 but was not favourable for the Nigerian system because there was little consultation from the Nigerian elites in the course of drafting it, therefore, the document was regarded as an imposition so it was discarded. Robson revealed that the Macpherson Constitution was introduced in 1951 to replace the Richard Constitution. Nigerians were, for the first time, given the opportunity to choose the type of constitution they desired. Thus, a wide spectrum of public opinion was consulted at every level of Nigerian society. Under this constitution, a central legislature and central executive council were established for the whole country. Also, under this new constitution, Nigeria was divided into three regions, Northern, Eastern and Western regions.[625] The Constitution was drafted to foster national unity in Nigeria and to ensure greater involvement of Nigerians in their affairs. The structure and provisions of the Constitution also facilitated the expansion of nationalist and political activities. As part of these proposals, a new legislative council with jurisdiction over the entire country was established.[626] This period, according to Robson, subsequently ushered in an era of party politics

[623] Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nigeria Ltd 2006, p. 58; Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, p. 298.
[624] Mike OMILUSI - Ajibola, O. Peter ADU, "Party Politics and Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Historical Perspective" *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Research* Vol. 4, No. 4, 2016, pp. 8-9.
[625] Ibid, p. 127.
[626] Uwem Jonah AKPAN, "Constitutional Development and the Evolution of the Nigerian State Since 1914" *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* Vol 7 Issue 2, 2019, p. 3; Linus Onyekaozurule NWAUZI -

in Auchi Kingdom. People within and outside Auchi Kingdom began to actively participate in politics.[627]

In 1951, Segosime disclosed that M. J. Momoh was also elected by the chiefs of the various clans to represent the division in the defunct Western Region House of Chiefs. In the same year, M. J. Momoh's younger brother, Prince Kessington S. Y. Momoh was elected into the defunct Western House of Assembly and from there to the Federal House of Assembly under the platform of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) which was the only political party in the area at the time.[628] According to Garuba, M. J. Momoh was able to use his influence and position as Otaru and also representative of Chiefs of the Western Region House of Chiefs to reach out to his fellow chiefs and people of his division to massively vote for his brother who contested in the elections.[629]

After the elections in 1951, the first representative government in the Western Region was an Action Group (AG) dominated House. The AG-dominated House made a swift move to enact the Western Region Local Government Law. This law also applied to Auchi and other parts of the current-day Edo and Delta states. The Native Authority Ordinance of 1916 that established the Chief-in-Council, which was the Otaru-in-Council was abolished and replaced with a three-tier local government system of the British model. This amendment and enactment by the British Colonial Administration, according to Garuba, greatly affected the duties and roles of the Otaru of Auchi and all other traditional rulers in the district. This affected the influence and authority of the Otaru of Auchi.[630] Egbefo stated that after the first local government elections in 1952, the Otaru of Auchi was, by the 1952 law, appointed as one of the recognised one-third traditional rulers to the Local Government Council which became NCNC majority government. At this point, Traditional Rulers became ceremonial figures while the real political power was in the hands of the elected councillors of the Local Government Council.[631]

Martina Ebikake NWANYANWU, "Re-examining the Constitutional History and development of Nigeria" Constitutional Law, Politics and Good Governance: An interdisciplinary text in honour of Dr. Chukwuemeka Pius Ezeife: Princeton & Associates Publishing Co. Ltd., Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria, 2022, pp. 1101-1102.

[627] Ibid, p. 128.

[628] Ibid, p. 142.

[629] Ibid, pp. 73-74.

[630] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

[631] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

During the reign of Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh, there was agitation by the educated elites for the change of the name "Kukuruku Division" because they felt the name was derogatory. Several meetings were convened and attended by several educated elites from the Kukuruku Division. A series of letters were written to the British Colonial Government for the change of name. In 1939, a letter was written and sent to the Etsako society residents in Lagos requesting them to send a letter to the British colonial government requesting for a change of name of the Kukuruku Divison.[632]Chief J. M. Udochi, in 1941, also wrote a letter to the British Colonial Government appealing for a change of name of the Kukuruku Division. The letter was captioned, "Change of Divisional name- Kukuruku."[633]In 1945 the Colonial Government agreed to the change of the name stating that if the people in the Kukuruku Division had agreed to adopt a consensus name to replace the former name. Robson disclosed that the new name was debated among the educated elites of the Division, and "Afemai Division" was unanimously agreed to be the new name. This new name was communicated to the British Colonial Office on December 9th, 1954. It was approved and gazetted by the colonial government, still retaining Auchi kingdom as the Division Headquarters.[634] Auchi also witnessed the approval and construction of a concrete bridge over the Orle river along Warrake road which replaced the wooden bridge that was considered to be dangerous by the Colonial Office in 1952.[635]

The Colonial Annual Report of 1953 revealed that there was an increase in the cultivation and yield of palm kernel and cocoa in Auchi Kingdom. This boosted the economy of Auchi Kingdom, revenue of the district, and the profit of the flocal armers. The table reveals that Auchi Kingdom had the highest yield within the district in the year 1953. The table showing the yield is as follows below-

[632] BEN PROF 1/44 VOL. VIII, File 1939-1940, Kukuruku Division, letter to Etsako Society, Lagos- Petition by Etsako society in Lagos to A. P. Pullen, 1939, p. 32.
[633] BEN PROF 1/44 VOL. IX, File 1940-1942, Kukuruku Division, letter of change of Divisional name- Kukuruku by J. M. Udochi to the British Colonial Government, 1941, p. 15.
[634] Ibid, p. 138.
[635] BEN PROF 1/44 VOL. XI, File 1951-1954, Annual Report of Kukuruku Division by District Officer, Kukuruku Division, 1952, p. 54.

Table II: Table of farm produce (Palm Kernel and Cocoa) in Auchi Kingdom for the year 1953.

Station	**Palm Kernel 1952 - 1953 Tons**		**+ or -**	**Cocoa 1952 - 1953 Tons**		**+ or -**
Sabongidda	288	384	+156	354	279	-75
*Auchi	1030	1361	+331	567	722	+155
Agenebode	580	977	+397	8	-	-8
Ibilllo	326	466	+140	38	30	-8
Total	2164	3188	+1024	967	1031	+64

Source: BEN PROF. 1, File 44, VOL. XI, Annual report of Kukuruku Division by Mr. A. B. Ingledow, Acting District Officer, Kukuruku Division, 1953.

Towards the end of M. J. Momoh's reign as Otaru, there was the extension of telephone lines to Auchi from Ewu, a town just beyond the boundary of the Kukuruku Division. Engineers were drafted to Auchi to ensure that the process was hastily completed in the latter part of 1953.[636] M. J. Momoh was also confronted with the religious issues that was threatening the peace in Auchi at the time. In the wake of Islam of in Auchi, several Auchi people were sent out to other cities to acquire Islamic knowledge. After several years, many of these people returned to Auchi armed with great Islamic knowledge. This new group of Islamic scholars came up with the view that the Imam[637] of Auchi should no longer be a position reserved for the descendants of Nupe and Hausa settlers who were the first people who practised Islam in Auchi. In back this claim, they quoted verses of the Holy Quran where it was stated that prophet Mohammed was the head of the Muslim where he lived and he also doubled as the Chief Imam. Written sources disclosed that they further stated that the same should applied to Auchi. They also said that due to his numerous duties and tight engagement, he had the power to delegate the duties of the Chief Imam to any of the

[636] BEN PROF. 1, File 44, VOL. XI, Annual report of Kukuruku Division by Mr. A. B. Ingledow, Acting District Officer, Kukuruku Division, 1953, p. 105.

[637] The position of Imam is the most important religious functionary among Muslims globally. The term Imam is also explained to come from the "amam" and amam means 'in front of' while Imam is used to refer to the person who stands 'in front of'(amam) others when prayers are offered. For more details on this word see Abdulrazaq Kilani, "Imamship and the changing status in the contemporary Muslim world" *Dunama Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 2, No.1, 2022, pp. 11-23

indigenous mallams that he pleases but the position of Chief Imam should not be reserved for anyone, However, it was subject to the discretion of the Otaru.[638]

Segosime noted that M. J. Momoh was reluctant to unseat Momoh Bida, who was the Chief Imam, because it was his late father that appointed him. When the issue was finally being discussed in the Otaru's palace, the Chief Imam who was of Nupe descent did not buy the idea and he brought the issue to the notice of the District Officer at the time. The District Officer was passionate about the issue and he subsequently assembled all the concerned parties for a meeting. In the meeting, the District Officer inquired about the Islamic stand on the issue to avoid making the wrong decisions. When it was eventually established that the attempt at removing Momoh Bida as the Chief Imam was not discriminatory or out of political reasons, he approved his removal. Mallam Bawa was subsequently made the Chief Imam of Auchi Kingdom.[639] An oral source revealed that the removal of Momoh Bida as Chief Imam created a rift between the people of Iyekhei village where Momoh Bida was residing and people from other villages that supported his removal.[640]

The reign of M. J. Momoh which lasted a period of about ten years was filled with several issues that he tried to resolve before his demise in 1955. He, however, was able to record several achievements that have been mentioned above. After the demise of M. J. Momoh in1955, the Kingdom was once again thrown into mourning and a state of power tussle where the strong men of royal blood began another struggle for whom will eventually emerge as the next Otaru.[641] British Colonialism impacted significantly on his regime in several ways. These include the establishment of a post office, the introduction of party politics, the making of cassava, cocoa, and other crops as cash crops for export, the growth of the economy of the Kingdom, resolving several disputes, the establishment of a General Hospital, the extension of telephone lines to Auchi and a host of others.

[638] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, pp. 298-299; Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nigeria Ltd 2006, p. 59.
[639] Ibid, pp. 149-150.
[640] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[641] Gary USMAN, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

5.7 Otaru Abubakar Keremi Momoh under British rule (1955-1960)

Abu Keremi Momoh fondly known as A. K. Momoh was crowned the 8th Otaru of Auchi Kingdom after the demise of his brother, M. J. Momoh in 1955. Ikharo revealed that his father was Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh. Both A. K. Momoh and A. K. Momoh had the same father but were of different mothers. He succeeded his half-brother on the 21st of October, 1955.[642]It is important to note that A. K. Momoh and his predecessor M. J. Momoh were born in the same year in 1905. He was already fifty years at the time of his ascendence to the throne in 1955. Wajeed revealed that he was educated under Western and Islamic tutors. He learnt how to recite and memorise the Holy Quran under the tutorship of Mallam Isa Bawa who was later appointed Chief Imam of Auchi after the removal of Momoh Bida. A. K. Momoh later proceeded to the Government School in Auchi in pursuit of Western Education at the request of his father, Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh.[643]

On completion of his Western studies in 1929. He was employed by the Kukuruku Native Authority as a court clerk in 1931. Arunah noted that he also underwent and completed a series of induction courses which prepared him adequately for the job. This was like a coincidence because it was as if it was preparing him for the greater task ahead. He was very proficient in his job and was posted to serve as a court clerk in almost all the clans in the five local governments of the district in current day Edo North Senatorial District of Edo State, Nigeria. As a result of constitutional development, he was absolved as a tax officer by the Etsako District Council. This was a position he held until the demise of his brother in 1955.[644] Segosime revealed that after the burial rite of M. J. Momoh was over, the elders had a series of meetings on whom the next Otaru would be. A. K. Momoh, the tax officer at the Etsako District Council was consulted and requested to resign and contest for the exalted position of Otaru of Auchi Kingdom. After a few weeks of a fierce contest with Chief Kadiri Idaoh, Chief Braimah Ikharo and Saibu Momoh Jimah, M. J. Momoh was appointed the 8th Otaru on 21st October 1955. The decision of the elders was conveyed to the British Colonial Office for approval and this eventually was granted.[645]

Wajeed commented that A. K. Momoh was crowned Otaru of Auchi at a time when Nigeria was gradually getting preparing to be granted independence. He wanted more Auchi elites to be

[642] Ibid, p. 13.
[643] Ibid, pp. 302-303.
[644] Ibid, p. 61.
[645] Ibid, pp. 152-153.

active in politics to enable Auchi to continue to dominate the district by winning elective positions at the regional level as the country was being prepared for independence. Wajeed further revealed that his reign fell within a period of significant transition and change in Auchi's traditional monarchy. The British colonial presence influenced the dynamics of leadership and governance in Auchi, impacting the traditional structures and succession patterns within the kingdom. A. K. Momoh's tenure as Otaru coincided with a time when colonial powers had a considerable influence on local governance systems across Nigeria.[646] According to another oral source, one of the first things he did was to reconcile the grievances among his people. He was able to resolve the issue that arose from the removal of Mallam Momoh Bida as Chief Imam of Auchi Kingdom. He was also able to resolve the issues and conflicts that arose from members of the two dominant political parties, which were the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and Action Group (AG), in Auchi.[647] Wajeed disclosed that A. K. Momoh was very diplomatic in all his actions because the Indirect Rule Policy of strong support for traditional rulers had been relaxed. After all, Nigeria was gradually moving towards a self-rule political entity and independence. He sued for peace among his people. In his quest for peace among his people, he visited key aggrieved people and dialogued with them to find permanent solutions to the problems at hand. By doing so he was able to solve several pending issues that that were not solved by his predecessor.[648]

He went on to establish friendly relationships with other clan heads and chiefs within the district. His first point of call was the palace of Chief Kadiri Omogbai, the Ogieneni of Uzairua land. They discussed the political situation of the Local Government and the country as a whole. An important issue that was also discussed was the filling of the Etsako vacant position in the then Western Region House of Chiefs that had been vacant for a while after the demise of M. J. Momoh. A. K. Momoh requested that Chief Omogbai be nominated to the Western Regional House of Chiefs on a condition that Chief Omogbai's clan, which was Uzairua, would support the Action Group party which was the party of the late M. J. Momoh. A very significant political deal was struck because Chief Omogbai readily agreed to this proposal. Written sources disclosed that these two traditional rulers did not find it difficult to secure the approval and votes from the councillors

[646] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[647] Gary USMAN, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[648] Ibid, p. 306.

of the Local Government Council. Chief Omogbai was eventually elected into the Western Region House of Chiefs in 1956 for a tenure of three years.[649]

Mahmud noted that the leaders of the AG party, according to an oral source, queried A. K. Momoh on an allegation that he conceded a position at the Western Region House of Chiefs that was meant to Auchi to Uzairua without their consent and AG's approval and this was not acceptable by them. A. K. Momoh's response to this allegation was that his actions for the best for the interest of Auchi and his people. As time went on, events that unfolded revealed that A. K. Momoh was right.[650] Another oral source revealed that there was a very significant increase in the membership of the AG party over time. In appreciation of the wise decision that he took, the AG party appointed him member of several government boards. Some of the appointments include the Western Nigerian Agricultural Rubber Processing Board, Oba and Chiefs Conference of Western Nigeria, Etsako Local Loans Board, Auchi Prison Visiting Pamel and President of Auchi Customary Court.[651] He was also appointed a Justice of the Peace[652] an exalted position in Nigeria to date.

According to an oral source A. K. Momoh, like his father, had a great passion for the development of his community and kingdom.[653] During his reign as Otaru of Auchi Kingdom, several developmental projects and infrastructural facilities were completed. Some notable of these projects include the building of a permanent for General Hospital which was started in 1949, during the reign of M. J. Momoh, and was completed in 1956. The General Hospital took care of the health concerns of the people of the Division. The Auchi-Jattu-South Ibie water scheme was started during the reign of M. J. Momoh and was completed in 1956. This was a great relief for the Auchi people because they no longer had to trek several kilometres in search of water for their various

[649] Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, pp. 159-160; Abdulrahman Oshioke ARUNAH, *A history of Auchi Kingdom*, Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nigeria Ltd 2006, p. 61.
[650] Momoh. MAHMUD, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu
[651] Gary USMAN, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[652] In Nigeria appointing people as Justices of the Peace or of people adding "JP" as a suffix to their names is now a very common practice. Justices of the Peace are judicial officers appointed to conserve peace and perform quasi-judicial and administrative functions. They are appointed as officers of the courts and form part of the actors and drivers of the nation's legal system. However, it appears that, over time, their relevance within the Nigerian context is fading away and that the office is gradually being reduced to political patronage. See I. A. AKINLOYE, "An examination of the legal status, powers and roles of the Justices of the Peace in the Nigerian legal system" *Journal for Juridical Science* 43(1), 2018, pp. 26-38.
[653] Dauda Saliu GARUBA, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

home activities. Segosime revealed that the Benin-Auchi-Igarra road was completed and commissioned in 1957. This road linked Auchi to major communities and towns within and outside the Division. This also made travelling for the British Administrative Officials much more convenient. This road also made travelling for traders much easier boosting commercial activities in the area. Also, the first secondary school, Our Lady of Fatimah College was built and established in 1960. Several dignitaries of Auchi Kingdom are products of this college.[654]

Another very significant infrastructural facility that was constructed during the time of the A. K. Momoh was the Auchi Technical College which was built in 1963. This project was completed outside the scope of this dissertation but during the regime of A. K. Momoh. For the sake of emphasis and the events that led to the building and establishment of the college, During the reign of Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh as earlier explained, he maintained a cordial relationship with the District Officers. An oral and written source revealed that as a result of Momoh Idaoh's excellent leadership qualities and the friendship he cultivated with one of the British colonial officers, Major Dunn. he was able to extract a pledge from Major Dunn to do something significant for Auchi Kingdom.[655] Several years after Momoh's death, Major Dunn, the first District Officer of the Kukuruku Division, ascended to the House of Lords, where he played a significant role in securing the establishment of the Midwest Technical College in Auchi in 1963, as part of a technical assistance initiative from the British government. This institution later evolved into the present-day Auchi Polytechnic, which was subsequently transferred to the federal government for administration and funding in 1994. The origins of Auchi Polytechnic were revealed by the current Otaru, Haliru H. Momoh, in a recorded statement [656]

The reign of A. K. Momoh was for a period of fifteen years, which is from 1955 to 1970. He passed on in 1970 leaving the position of Otaru vacant for three years because of the violent struggles for whom would emerge as the next Otaru. The scope of the dissertation terminates in 1960 when Nigeria was granted independence and another epoch of Auchi history was opened under independent Nigeria. British Colonialism impacted very significantly the reign of A. K. Momoh. Some of the innovations of the British include the resolution of the issues and conflicts

[654] Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, pp. 160 – 161;
[655] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, p. 305; Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[656] Lawrence OYANIYI, Documentary on Auchi Polytechnic. Part 1, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_aEuAeSw_wk,

that arose from the members of the two dominant political parties, reconciling the grievances among his people over the Chief Imam, the completion of the structure of the General Hospital, the completion of the Auchi-Jattu-South Ibie water scheme, the construction of Benin-Auchi-Igarra road, the establishment of Our Lady of Fatimah College in 1960 and a host of others.

5.8 Summary of the chapter

The history of the Otaru System, which are the traditional kings of Auchi, dates back to a time before British imperialism in Nigeria. The history of the Otaru System in Auchi provides a glimpse into the traditional leadership structure and succession to the throne within the kingdom. The Otaru system was introduced by the Nupe imperialist for them to be able to have firm control over Auchi and for the collection of taxes and tributes.[657] British Colonialism had a profound impact on the Otaru System and has shaped the region's political landscape.

Before British Colonial Administration, the affairs of Auchi Kingdom were administered based on traditional customs, norms, and system of governance. The pre-colonial era was characterised by a system where power was centralised in the hands of the Otaru and other traditional chiefs. The arrival of British colonial masters in Nigeria in the late 19th century marked a significant shift in power dynamics within indigenous societies like the Auchi Kingdom. The British, according to oral sources, imposed indirect rule in many parts of Nigeria, including Auchi Kingdom retaining traditional rulers as intermediaries through which they governed the local population. Under British colonial administration, the authority of the Otaru was often constrained by colonial policies and directives. While they were allowed to maintain some degree of traditional governance structures, their powers were subject to oversight and control by British colonial administrators. The Otaru had to navigate between upholding traditional practices and fulfilling obligations to the colonial authorities.[658]

An oral source revealed that the influence of British colonial administration had a profound impact on Auchi Kingdom.[659] This is because the traditional roles and functions of the Otaru was redefined within the framework of indirect rule. Wajeed noted they had to balance their loyalty to

[657] Dawood O. EGBEFO, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[658] Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu; Edward. O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[659] Umoru YAKUBU, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

their people with compliance with colonial regulations and expectations. Moreover, British colonial policies often favoured certain elites or groups within the indigenous societies, leading to tensions and power struggles. The kings had to navigate within these complexities while trying to maintain stability and order within their domains. Ikelebe Osimhe was the first Otaru of Auchi Kingdom. He was installed Otaru after the Nupe invasion of 1860. The Nupe raiders established the monarchy system of administration. The Kingdom prospered and was peaceful during his reign.[660]

Arunah revealed that the demise of Ikelebe Osimhe led to the instalment of Imoudu Eburogamhe as the new Otaru. He was a half-brother of Ikelebe Osimhe and was generally accepted by the Auchi people. His reign was peaceful and he cooperated with the Nupe raiders.[661] After his demise in 1875, Ikelebe Idaoh was installed as the next Otaru in 1875. He was the eldest surviving son of Ikelebe Osimhe. His reign was relatively peaceful but experienced some conflicts with the people from Jattu. Segosime disclosed that it was during Ikelebe Idaoh reign that the Nupe raiders were defeated by the British imperialism in 1897 at Bida. This, subsequently, led to the fall of the Nupe Empire and all the towns, villages and communities that the Nupe had a stronghold including Auchi Kingdom. The British arrived Auchi Kingdom in 1904, signed a treaty with Ikelebe Idaoh and exerted their imperial rule over Auchi Kingdom. Ikelebe Idaoh passed on in 1905, one year after the arrival of the British imperialist.[662]

After the demise of Ikelebe Idaoh, Odifili Okeregie-Nokhua declared himself Otaru without the approval of the chiefs. He was one that everyone was afraid of because it was believed that he possessed mystical powers. He, however, died within six months as the new king. This was the shortest reign recorded in the history of Auchi Kingdom. Ikharo Ikelebe succeeded Odifili Okeregie-Nokhua as the fifth Otaru of Auchi Kingdom in 1905. He was a son of Ikelebe Osimhe. Ikharo's rule was characterised by his commitment to peace and respect within and outside his domain. He played a role in resolving conflicts and even intervened to secure the release of individuals taken into bondage by other leaders like Omogbai of Uzairue. His actions reflected a sense of justice and compassion towards his people. Ikharo's interactions with British authorities, including attending conferences in Lagos, demonstrate how colonial powers impacted local

[660] Ibid, p. 219.
[661] Ibid, pp. 47-48.
[662] Ibid, p. 105.

governance structures during his reign. His decision to delegate representation at meetings and conferences to Prince Momoh Idaoh highlights the evolving dynamics between traditional rulers and colonial administrators. Under his rule, the Islamic religion was introduced and made the official religion in 1914. He eventually passed on in 1919. [663]

Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh was installed as the sixth Otaru in 1919. Tony revealed that his reign was regarded as the greatest reign in the twentieth century and it experienced several developmental strides. He navigated the complexities of governance under British colonial administration. His leadership was marked by a strategic approach to modernising Auchi Kingdom while maintaining its cultural heritage and traditions. Momoh Idaoh's interactions with the British authorities were characterised by diplomacy, economic development initiatives, and a commitment to fostering religious tolerance within his kingdom. Momoh Idaoh established cordial relationships with British officials, which earned him favourable recommendations in their reports. His transparency, dedication to Auchi's development, and administrative style impressed the British authorities. Major Dunn, a British colonial officer with whom Momoh cultivated a friendship, later played a role in promoting significant developments for Auchi.[664]

Under Momoh Idaoh's leadership, Auchi experienced rapid growth through foreign direct investment initiatives. Companies like John Holt Trading Company, United Africa Company (UAC), and Royal Niger Company set up offices and warehouses in Auchi, creating job opportunities for many indigenes. Momoh's efforts attracted investments that stimulated commerce and industry in the region. James revealed that Momoh Idaoh promoted religious tolerance within his kingdom by embracing Islam personally and leading efforts to abolish idol worship. While he Islamized Auchi, he also facilitated the thriving of Christianity by supporting the Anglican mission and allowing freedom of worship.[665] This approach, according to an oral source, contributed to the cultural diversity and harmony within Auchi. Momoh Idaoh's legacy extended beyond his reign, as his children continued his work in various fields at state and national levels. He prioritised education by establishing schools and ensuring that his children and

[663] Ibid, pp. 233-237.
[664] Ibid, pp. 206-208.
[665] Ibid, pp. 68-69.

community members received Western education. He passed on in 1944.[666] Tony further revealed that he remains the greatest king to have ruled Auchi Kingdom.[667]

Momoh Jimah Momoh was installed as the seventh Otaru in 1945. He was the son of Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh. M. J. Momoh carried out his role and duties within the framework set by the colonial administration. His reign saw changes and adaptations as a result of working closely with the British Colonial Masters.[668] Both oral and written sources reveal that M. J. Momoh's reign was influenced by British policies, including those related to governance, administration, and agriculture. His regime started the same year that World War II came to an end. Major countries that were involved in World War II had their economies battered as a result of the efforts in the War. Britain encouraged Nigeria to grow cash crops such as cassava, cocoa and palm fruits which were needed by factories and industries in Europe. Several other internal problems confronted M. J. Momoh which he was eventually able to resolve. He was also able to embark on several developmental projects which was completed by his predecessor. He passed on in 1955. [669]

Abubakar Keremi Momoh was installed as Otaru of Auchi Kingdom in 1955. He was also a son of Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh. Wajeed revealed that he acquired both Western and Islamic education at a young age. On completion of his studies, he was employed by the Kukuruku Native Authority as a court clerk. After the demise of his brother in 1955, he was installed as the next Otaru. Under his reign, several notable achievements were recorded. These includes the completion and commissioning of the General Hospital and Auchi-Jattu-South Ibie water scheme in 1956. This saved Auchi people the trouble of walking long distances in search of clean water. The Benin-Auchi-Igarra road was completed and commissioned in 1957 making travelling across the district more convenient and faster. There was also the building and commissioning of Our Lady of Fatimah College in 1960. Another very significant infrastructural facility that was constructed during the time of the A. K. Momoh was the Auchi Technical College which was built

[666] Momoh TONY, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu,
[667] Ibid, p. 2.
[668] A. O. IKHARO, "The founding and origin of Auchi," an unpublished manuscript, p. 6.
[669] Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, pp. 140-141; Obomeghie Wajeed, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

in 1963. The circumstances surrounding the building of this Technical College which was later upgraded to a Polytechnic have been explained above.[670]

The impact of British colonial administration on the Otaru regimes in Auchi continued into the post-colonial period. Independence brought new challenges as indigenous rulers grappled with evolving political landscapes and demands for democratisation. The role of traditional systems like the Otaru System became a subject of debate as new forms of governance emerged, and novel epochs of Auchi history were opened under independent Nigeria, where new political trends emerged under new systems of governance and constitutions, infrastructure development, including roads and government buildings,

[670] Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, p. 305.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 General Summary

The Auchi people are part of the Edo-speaking ethnic group in Nigeria. Before British Colonialism, the Auchi people had a well-established socio-cultural, economic, and political system deeply rooted in their traditions and customs. Segosime stated that Auchi people have a rich cultural heritage characterised by strong family ties, communal living, and a deep sense of identity. They had traditional beliefs and rituals, with religion playing significant roles in their daily lives. Social structures were based on age grades, kinship ties, and hierarchical relationships within the community.[671] Arunah further added that the economy of the Auchi people was primarily agrarian before British colonialism, with farming being the main occupation. They cultivated crops such as yams, cassava, maize, and vegetables. Livestock rearing, hunting, fishing, and trading were also important economic activities. The Auchi people engaged in barter trade within the kingdom and with neighbouring communities and clans. Before British colonialism, the Auchi people had a decentralised political system with a traditional monarchy headed by an Otaru (king) who ruled over the kingdom.[672]

The Auchi Kingdom experienced some transformation under British Colonial Administartion despite its exploitative nature. The impact of British Colonialism on Auchi Kingdom led to the development of the Kingdom with the building of several infrastructural facilities such as schools, roads, post office, General Hospital, and a host of others. Tony revealed that Oshiogbele Idaoh Momoh, Otaru of Auchi Kingdom from 1919 to 1944 played a very significant role in the transformation of the Kingdom into a modern one because of his passion, charisma, and willpower.[673] The Nupe imperialist laid the foundation for the innovations that took place in Auchi kingdom. Erhagbe, in his article, stated that the main external reason for the change came via the Nupe domination of Auchi Kingdom in the second half of the nineteenth century.[674] In the twentieth century, the British also introduced series of developmental projects.[675] It is also

[671] Ibid, p. 1
[672] Ibid, pp. 3-4.
[673] Ibid, pp. 206-208.
[674] Ibid, p. 210.
[675] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

very important to mention here that Britain's colonisation of Nigeria is essentially part of both African and European history.

Erhagbe revealed that the British's conquest of the Nupe Empire in 1897 led to the collapse of the Nupe administration in Auchi Kingdom and other places where they had a stronghold and incorporated the area into the British Empire. [676] Oral sources revealed that at the beginning of British rule in Nigeria, the sociopolitical and cultural institutions and practices imposed on Auchi Kingdom by Nupe were initially retained but later modified. The monarchy was seen by the British to be very useful in ensuring a more convenient means of ruling over the people at a low cost and this was the Indirect Rule System. This made the various traditional rulers of Auchi Kingdom from 1904 to 1960 actively participate in the operations of the new system of indirect rule introduced by the British, even though the dynasty was created by the Nupe raiders that had been deposed by the British in 1897.[677]

Tony, one of the sons of Oshiogbele Idaoh Momoh revealed that the novel roles and activities of the British had a tremendous impact on the monarchy in Auchi Kingdom. Several colonial policies were formulated and implemented. There were policies on education, tax, and agriculture among others. These colonial policies were aimed implemented to achieve their colonial objectives. The policies was not necessarily meant for the development of Auchi Kingdom but for the convenience and needs of the Britain. However, Auchi people still benefitted from the implementation of the policies but not on equal basis. New duties and authority were assigned to the kings to enable them to have effective control of their Kingdom. The fact that Auchi Kingdom was made the headquarters of the Kukuruku Division in 1920 explains the confidence that the British had in the efficiency of the monarchy of Auchi Kingdom. It was also a major reason for the ascendancy of the Otaru as District Head in the new Division. The Otaru became regarded as the most powerful and influential monarch by the other rulers in the territory who were compelled by circumstances of British rule to obey and be loyal to the Otaru of Auchi Kingdom from 1920.[678]

[676] Edward O. ERHAGBE, interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[677] Egbefo O. DAWOOD, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[678] Momoh TONY, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

British intrusion also had a major impact on the chiefs in Auchi Kingdom. For instance, it retained the titles of chiefs in the Kingdom. This was in a bid to encourage the active participation of the chiefs in the administration and to enhance effective governance of the Kingdom in the indirect rule era. Among such ranks, like in the Nupe era, were Daudus, Sarkin Kasau, Tomos, etc.[679] According to Dawood, till the present day, the holders of these titles acted as the leaders of their various villages in the Kingdom.[680] According to another oral source, British rule did not accelerate the process of Islamisation but encouraged it because it did not interfere with the colonial policies. One reason for this was that the Muslim sovereign who was also the District Head in 1920 used his new political position to ensure the propagation of the Islamic religion. The Otaru posted some of his best Mallams of the kingdom to many neighbouring villages to persuade them to convert to Islam, particularly those which were under the influence of the indigenous religion and Christianity that was introduced from the 1880s and early 1900s from the Agenebode axis and Uromi in Esan Division.[681]

These missionary activities of the Muslim ruler in Auchi Kingdom, as revealed by an oral source, further accelerated the growth and development of both the Islamic and Nupe cultural practices in Auchi Kingdom and beyond. Indigenous names, dressing modes, Etsako language, festivals, marriage system, etc, were overwhelmingly affected by the rapid progress of Islam in the Kingdom during the late nineteenth century. Indeed, many words in the Nupe, Hausa, and Arabic languages, which were used for the teaching and preaching the religion, became incorporated into the Etsako language and dialects.[682]

From 1904 to 1960, six monarchs in Auchi Kingdom witnessed British Colonialism. These were the regimes of Idaoh Ikelebe, Odifili Okeregie-Nokhua, Ikharo Ikelebe, Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh, Momoh Jimah Momoh and Abubakar Keremi Momoh. This period covers a time frame of fifty-six years. This was a period that experienced very significant strides in development. There were certain periods when there were problems of succession to the throne after the ruling Otaru passed on. An oral source revealed that this was as a result of the struggles that ensued due to the number of potential candidates within the royal family who felt they were qualified and entitled to

[679] Shaibu SALIU, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[680] Egbefo O. DAWOOD, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[681] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[682] Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

rule over the Kingdom. There were certain times when the District Officers had to intervene in the process of installing a new Otaru in other to prevent the breakdown of law and order.[683]

Both oral and written sources revealed that several transformations took place between 1904 and 1960 when the British were in control of the Kingdom. Some of these innovations included the total abolition of the slave trade, the introduction of Western Education, the abolition of trial by ordeal, the introduction of Christianity but on a small scale, a new administrative system, modern buildings and architecture, English laws and native courts, police station, and a host of others. Many of the things that the British introduced during the colonial era in Auchi Kingdom are still visible till the present day. A good example is the administrative building that was built in 1921 over a hundred years ago. Others are the General Hospital, Post Office, Pipe-borne Water Scheme, and construction of several roads that connected numerous communities across the division, among others. Several of these facilities are still in use in recent times. This implies that British Colonialism impacted significantly on Auchi Kingdom, and thus, set the pace for a modern Auchi Kingdom despite the interior motives of the British[684]

6.2 Conclusion

This research has demonstrated, in essence, the impact of British Administration on Auchi Kingdom. There was a significant transformation in the socio-political, traditional, economic, cultural and religious situation of Auchi Kingdom from the beginning of the twentieth century when Auchi kingdom was under British Colonial Administration. Within the entire period under study (1904-1960), an analysis of what can be described as a time when Auchi Kingdom began to evolve and experience several drastic innovations due to its contact with Britain. It also took the willpower and determination of the traditional rulers, especially Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh, to ensure that development and progress were extended to Auchi kingdom. Attention was paid to the geographical strategic location of the Auchi Kingdom before the Kingdom was taken over by the British which later resulted in further innovations after Nupe Rule. It is necessary to point out that contrary to the belief that Africa was without an organised or established functional administrative,

[683] Umoru YAKUBU, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.
[684] Momoh K. SEGOSIME, *Origin and development of Auchi*, Auchi: Smilestal Global Digital 2011, pp. 118 – 160; Obomeghie WAJEED, Interviewed by Suleiman Yakubu.

cultural and traditional systems before British Colonialism, there was indeed an organised system in place in Auchi before the coming of the Nupe imperialist. It should be noted that several of these practices have survived till the present times. Some of the socio-cultural and political practices that have survived till date include the age grade system, African Traditional Religion (ATR) but on a small scale, respect for aged people because it is still believed that old people were the wisest people, strong kinship ties, belief in totems, belief in taboo system and several others. These enduring practices have impacted positively on the lives of the people of Auchi Kingdom as a whole.

The period, 1904-1960 was deliberately chosen for convenience. However, the date is significant as the period of the arrival of the British in Auchi Kingdom. Britain imposed colonialism on the Kingdom during the above mentioned period before it came to an end in 1960 when Nigeria was granted independence. Before the invasion of the kingdom by the Nupe in 1860, the operations and functionality of government and administration of the kingdom were managed by the family units, the Quarter Council, the Village Council and the Council of State. This above-mentioned system of administration has demonstrated that there was a functional mechanism in the governance of the pre-Nupe Auchi Kingdom. In this political arrangement, one's ascension to headship was based on the simple fact that having been born into the most senior surviving age grade system was one of the many reasons which strengthened cooperation among the various decentralised organs of the government.

The above analysis reveals what the structure of government was like during the pre-Nupe era. However, it was changed by the Nupe imperialist in the second half of the nineteenth century to satisfy their imperial taste, and quest and to aid collection of taxes and tributes for their home Kingdom in Bida. The result was the establishment of a centralised administrative government, a monarchical system and also chieftaincy titles and positions were awarded to trusted people to assist the Otaru in running the new system of government. Despite the initial resistance and reaction of the people to the new political system of monarchy, the institution was still forcefully imposed on the people because they had no choice in deciding thei fate at the time. Other aspects of the people’s lives that were also affected by the Nupe hegemony include names, religion, dressing patterns, facial tribal marks, etc. Some of these innovations still reflects in Auchi kingdom in the present day.

British colonialism started after the defeat of the Nupe raiders in 1897 and some further innovations were introduced into the Kingdom. Similar to the Nupe imperialism, Auchi people were unequal partners in the arena of trade and cooperation with the imperialist as their superiors. During British Administration in Auchi Kingdom, there was the signing of spurious treaties, and massive exploitation of the people. They were also made to pay taxes just like the Nupe imperialist did. The individual subjects of Auchi Kingdom experienced some personal gains in wealth, income, and standard of living, but nothing comparable to what was exploited by the British in those times. The administration of Auchi Kingdom and the entire district was possible because there was the employment of several administrative officials and the construction of an administrative building from where all administrative activities took place.

The Otaru system, which refers to the traditional monarchy in the Auchi Kingdom, had significant implications for the political, social, and economic landscape of the kingdom from 1904 until Nigeria's independence in 1960. Six monarchies ruled Auchi Kingdom during the period of fifty-six years, 1904-1960. These monarchies played significant roles in the development of Auchi but the most notable one that played the most significant role was Idaoh Oshiogbele Momoh. He impacted Auchi Kingdom between 1919 and 1944 through effective leadership that balanced traditional governance with advocacy for cultural preservation, economic development, political representation, social reforms, conflict resolution, and establishing a legacy for future generations. Several of his legacies such as the infrastructures and buildings that were constructed during in reign are still in use till date. His impact extended beyond his tenure. His contributions laid a foundation for future leaders in Auchi Kingdom who would continue to navigate the challenges posed by both traditional expectations and modern influences.

Between 1904 and 1960, the British formulated and implemented several policies that significantly influenced various aspects of life in the Auchi Kingdom. There were economic, educational, agricultural, transportation and a host of other policies that were implemented. These policies were intended to achieve their colonial objectives. These policies were meant for the needs and convenience of Britain. Schools that were established in Auchi were meant to render basic education to the people who would be employed by the colonial office. The rail tracks that were constructed were meant for the transportation of raw matrials and cash crops to the costal cities from where they would be transported to Europe. While there were advancements in education

and infrastructure that laid the foundations for future development, these changes often came at a cost or interior motive.

Conclusively, it should be noted that several innovations were introduced of which the impact is still felt till recent times. Hence, it should also be noted that both Auchi Kingdom and Britain benefited from the contact but on an unequal basis and there was no outright loser between the two parties. Between 1904 and 1960 in Auchi Kingdom, there was the introduction of a new administrative system, and new roads were constructed that linked several towns and villages, Western education, Christianity, and health care services among others were introduced. All the infrastructures that were put in place were mainly to satisfy the needs of the British Colonial Officers as mentioned above. Most of these innovations and creations of the British are still present to the present day. British Colonialism in Auchi Kingdom and Nigeria as a whole is all about exploitation and economic gains but without contact with Britain, the above-mentioned innovations would not have been possible and the evolution of Auchi kingdom and Nigeria to its current state would have been much slower.

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2.	Amedu O. AKIM	22.03.2021	65	Auchi, Nigeria	Civil Servant
3.	Emmanuel Osewe AKUBOR	17.07.2024	55	Via Telephone	Professor of History, Obafemi Awolowo, Ile Ife, Nigeria.
4.	Mahmud Isah ALIYU	12.07.2024	44	Via Telephone	Civil servant
5.	Momoh CHALAMAN	14.07.2024	41	Via Telephone	Businessman and a prince of the royal family.
6.	Dawood O. EGBEFO	21.7.2020	55	Iyamho, Nigeria	Professor of History, Edo University, Iyamho, Nigeria
7.	Edward O. ERHAGBE	21.04.2021	63	Benin city, Nigeria	Professor of History, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.
8.	Dauda Saliu GARUBA	6.5.2024	60	Via Telephone	Researcher
9.	Abibat HARUNAH	28.03.2021	82	Auchi, Nigeria	Princess and one of the surviving daughters of King Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh
10.	Abass IBRAHIM	20.07.2020	60	Auchi, Nigeria	Teacher and Islamic Scholar
11.	Dickson O. ILUOKHAUNO	22.04.2021	56	Auchi, Nigeria	Civil Servant
12.	Jafaru S. JIMOH	01.04.2021	79	Auchi, Nigeria	Farmer and retired Civil Servant
13.	Oseni LAWAL	17.03.2021	61	Auchi, Nigeria	Businessman and farmer.
14.	Charity MOMOH	30.03.2021	48	Auchi, Nigeria	Civil Servant
15.	Momoh MAHMUD	05.04.2021	40	Auchi, Nigeria	Businessman and a prince of the royal family.

16.	Yakubu MAHMUD	05.04.2021	63	Auchi, Nigeria	Custodian of the Orle deity and farmer
17.	Jafaru MOHAMMED	01.04.2021	79	Auchi, Nigeria	Farmer and businessman
18.	Momoh H. MUSA	04.01.2023	78	Auchi, Nigeria	Retired teacher and turbaned chief
19.	Seghosime Abdul MUTANEBI	23.07.2023	56	Via Telephone	Lecturer of Geography, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria.
20.	Elama NELSON	28.03.2021	82	Auchi, Nigeria	Islamic Scholar and farmer
21..	Audu OROH	15.08.2020	65	Via Telephone	Administrator
22.	Idrees-Oboh Z. OSENI	30.03.2021	71	Auchi, Nigeria	Retired Professor of Islamic and Arabic Studies, Federal University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
23.	Saliu SHAIBU	22.04.2021	50	Auchi, Nigeria	Civil Servant
24.	Richard E. SULE	30.03.2021	60	Auchi, Nigeria	Civil Servant and farmer.
25.	Momoh TONY	18.07.2020	83	Via Telephone	Lawyer, Journalist, and former Federal Minister of Nigeria
26.	Gary USMAN	21.04.2024	71	Via Telephone	Retired Colonel of the Nigerian Army
27.	Ayonote VIVIAN	16.03.2021	44	Jattu, Nigeria	Civil Servant
28.	Obomeghie WAJEED	19.07.2020	52	Abuja, Nigeria	Writer and Publisher
29.	Fatima B. YAKUBU	17.03.2021	71	Auchi, Nigeria	Full-time Housewife
30.	Umoru YAKUBU	30.03.2021	58	Auchi, Nigeria	Civil Servant
31.	Garba S. ZIBRIL	03.03.2021	63	Auchi, Nigeria	Businessman and Politician

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Source- Momoh TONY, *Each man, his time: The Biography of an Era*, Lagos: Pumark Nigeria ltd 1995, p. 323.

Note- This is the photo of the sixth Otaru of Auchi Kingdom. He was responsible for most of the innovations and infrastructural development in Auchi. He was also responsible for the introduction of the Islamic religion to the Kingdom. He ruled for twenty-five years.

Photo 2- Momoh Jimah Momoh (1945 - 1955)

Source- Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, p. 294

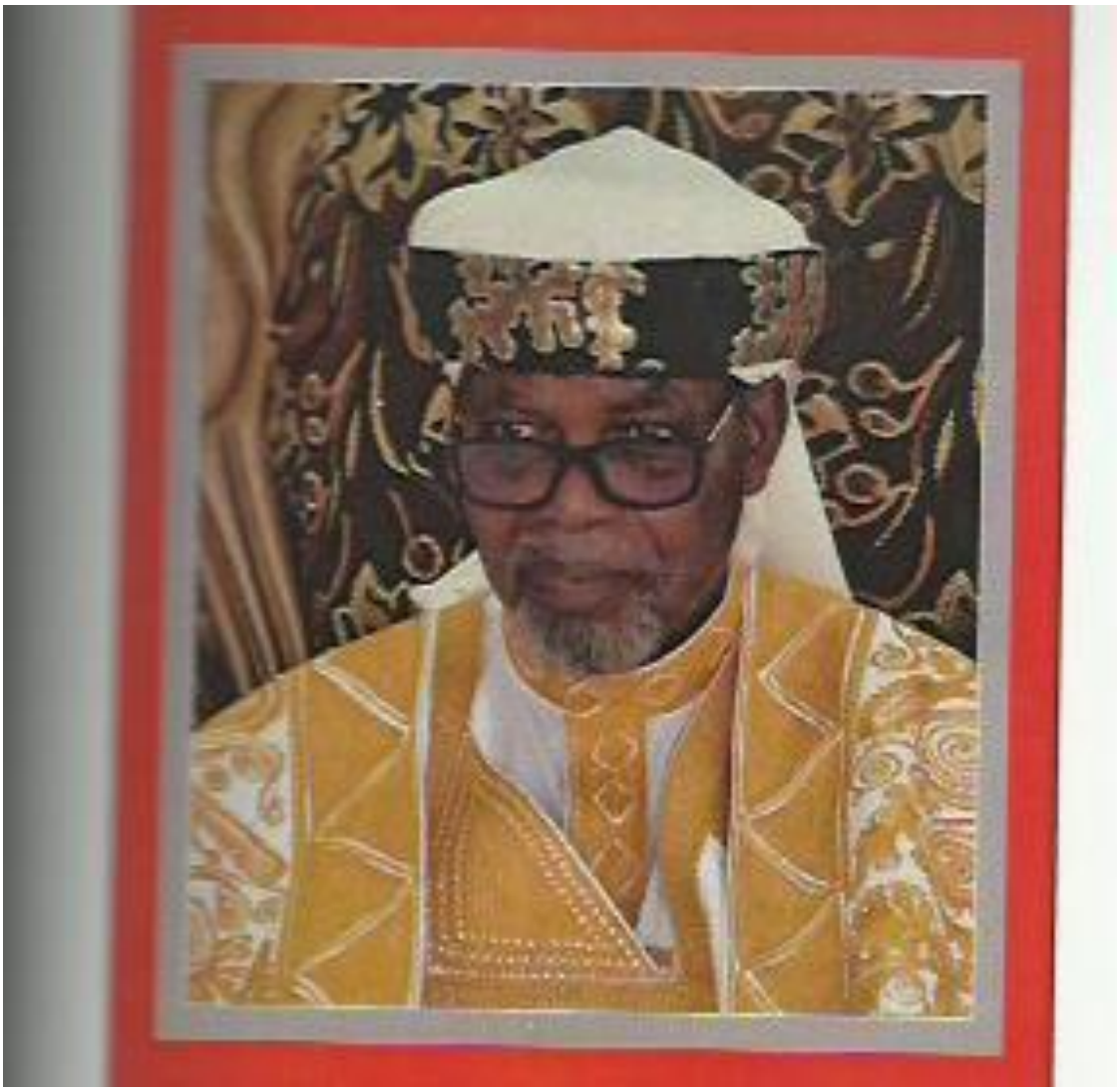
Note- This is the photo of the seventh Otaru of Auchi. He is also a son of Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh. He is the first person to succeed his father to become Otaru.

Photo 3- Abu Keremi Momoh (1945 - 1955)

Source- Momoh TONY, *Each man, his time: The Biography of an Era*, Lagos: Pumark Nigeria ltd 1995, p. 325.

Note- This is the photo of the eighth Otaru of Auchi. He ruled for fifteen years. The scope of this dissertation terminates in the fifth year of his reign in 1960.

Photo 4- The current Otaru of Auchi Kingdom, Alhaji Aliru Momoh, Ikelebe III (1996 – till date)



Source- Obomeghie WAJEED, *Auchi Kingdom twenty decades of Ikelebe Dynasty: 1845 AD and beyond*, Benin city: Wadorm Communications 2019, p. 493.

Note- This is the photo of the tenth Otaru of Auchi Kingdom. He is one of the surviving children of Oshiogbele Momoh Idaoh. He was born in 1933. He has been Otaru from 1996 till date.

Photo 5- The central mosque of the Auchi Kingdom

Source- Author's library

Note; It remains the biggest mosque in Edo State. It was built during the reign of the current Otaru, Alhaji Aliru H. Momoh in 2016.

Photo 6- The Cathedral in the Auchi Kingdom

Source- Author's library

Note- This church is a place of worship for both indigenes and non-indigenes of Auchi Kingdom.

Photo 7- The private quarters of the Otaru of Auchi Kingdom

Source- Author's library

Note- This is the private residential quarters of the Otaru and his wives.

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Photo 8- Residence of the Otaru's children

Source- Author's library

Photo 9- The Otaru's court.

Source- Author's library

Note- This is where the Otaru receives and addresses large audience. Communal disputes are also settled here. This disputes many be land, domestic and others issues that the villages and quarters cannot solve.

Photo 10- The Mosque in the palace

Source- Author’s library

Photo 11- A peacock in the garden of the palace.

Source- Author’s library

Note- There are several of this kind of birds in the Otaru’s palace with their bright coloured feathers

Photo 12- The royal tortoise in its resting place.

Source- Author's library

Note- It is believed that this giant tortoise has been living within the palace for over one hundred and twenty years. The current Otaru, Alhaji Aliru H. Momoh, was born in 1933 and this tortoise has been living in the palace during the reign of his father, King Momoh Idaoh whose reign was 1919-1944.

Photo 13- Uchi market

Source- Author's library

Note- Uchi market is an open-air where all kinds of food and fruits can be bought. This has been in existence since the founding of Auchi in the fifteenth century.

Photo 14- The Kukuruku Hills in Afenmai land

Source- Author's library

Note- This was one of the hiding places of the Afenmai people during the Nupe slave raids to avoid being captured and sold into slavery.

Photo 15- Another part of the Kukuruku Hills

Source- Author's library

Note- This part of the Kukuruku Hills is now a tourist centre. People from far and wide visit this part of the hills.