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# E ditorial

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This issue of *Global South Sepsis e-Magazine* is the first of the ninth volume and coincides with the beginning of the new year of 2013 of the Gregorian calendar. Interestingly the end of 2012 marked the end of the 5,125 year-long cycle of the Mesoamerican Long Count Calendar, popularly known as the Mayan Calendar. The end of the thirteenth Baktun was on 21 December 2012. Mayan eschatology prophesied cataclysmic events, marking the end of the era or the much hyped doomsday – feeding the twenty-first century imagination – leading to the end of the world itself. Along with these, the last months of 2012 also saw the beginning of the new Islamic year, with the first month of Muharram.

It is interesting to note that the month of Muharram is remembered throughout the Muslim world not as the first month in the Islamic calendar. Rather Muharram is more readily recognised as being synonymous to a significant event in the history of Islam – the martyrdom of the Prophets' grandson, Hussain, on the tenth day (*ashura*) of the month of Muharram. This tragedy which unfolded in the battlefield of Karbala in current day Iraq in 680 A.D. changed the course of Islamic history. Apart from the wider political and religious ramifications it had within the Islamic world, the event deepened the schism between the Shi'ite and Sunni factions beyond repair. This division, considered the largest and the oldest in the history of Islam, seems ironical for a faith that claims to rest itself firmly on the unity of its community (*ummah*).

This sectarian division has its resonances throughout the world wherever Muslims reside in recognisable numbers. One of our contributors in an earlier issue had analysed one such confrontation in Trinidad and Tobago. There the Trinidad Muslim League (TML) and the Anjuman Sunnat al-Jamaat (ASJA) opposed the celebration of the event of Muharram leading to violent confrontation between different Muslim sects. Such clashes are also frequent between the Shi'ites and Sunnis in various parts of North India, especially in the state of Uttar Pradesh having a prominent Shi'ite population. Pakistan which holds the second largest Shi'ite population after Iran is familiar with severe clashes between these factions.



While Muslim clerics continue to pray for the unity of the *ummah*, extremist groups like the Taliban kill Shi'ites by the thousands in Iraq and the Middle East, simply because the latter are considered unbelievers and hence unworthy to be the true inheritors of the Islamic civilisation. Similar treatment is meted out to certain sub-sects of the Shi'ite like the Ismailis, who are attacked, harassed and their properties destroyed. The Ismailis again are subdivided into sects the important among which are the Nizaris and Bohras. They are highly organised communities visible throughout South Asia, and parts of Africa.

Other sects like the Ahmadiyya, established in the late nineteenth century, are boycotted to the extent that they are declared as 'non-Muslims' in Pakistan. Due to their preachings and practices they are not recognised as Muslims, and therefore are prohibited from praying in community mosques. In India and Bangladesh they face heavy discrimination from fellow Muslims who refuse to inter-marry or inter-dine with them.

Extremist outfits like the Taliban are supported by the Wahhabi faction, which dominate over Saudi Arabia in the form of the House of Ibn Saud. The conservative ideas of the Wahhabis oppose liberal and syncretistic beliefs of the Sufis. The former are strictly against any innovation in the name of religion and forbid the performance of rituals. Conflicts between Wahhabis and liberal-minded Muslims take various forms throughout the Islamic world from Africa to South Asia. Wahhabi ideals are also opposed by Chinese Muslims, like the Sufi Khafiya, Hanafi Sunnis and the Yihewani. They reacted sharply when Wahhabi Islam was attempted to be established as the primary form of the faith in China.

In India there is much hostility between the two sects of the Wahhabis and the liberal Sunni Muslims. The former are represented by the Darul Uloom, an Islamic seminary at Deoband in Uttar Pradesh. While the liberal trend is upheld by the Bareilvis, a movement originating in the north Indian town of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh. The differences between these two schools and their followers often turn violent leading even to loss of lives. Conservative Islamic sects operate through various names like the *Ahl i-Hadith*, *Tablighis* and *Salafis*. However their ideology and practices remain more or less similar throughout the globe.

Conflicts between the orthodox Wahhabi faction and the liberal believers of Islam can be seen in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon, between the Sunni-Wahhabiyya Brotherhood and the Tiganiyya Muslim Brotherhood. The followers of the former were trained in the Wahhabi madrasahs of Arabia where they had gone from Cameroon for their education. They returned to the Bamum land in the 1990s, as Jabiru Muhammadou argues in the first article in this issue, to spread the Wahhabi ideals among the population and establish their domination. Since the Tiganiyya Muslim Brotherhood had the majority of the Muslim population behind them, conflict raged between these two sects. Established almost fifty years ahead of the Sunni-Wahhabiyya in the Bamum land, the Tiganiyya were not ready to give up their control without a fight. The article looks into the conflict which later escalated into a rivalry with political dimensions.

The primary problems faced by itinerant communities are more often associated with finding the proper means for subsistence. Food and water being most crucial of them. Michael Lang looks into such problems through his case study of the Weh people who faced severe water crisis since their migration and settlement in Northwest Cameroon by the turn of the eighteenth century. Their desire to solve the water crisis led to the establishment of the Weh Water project. Its successful completion in 1978 ensured an uninterrupted water supply to the Weh population coupled with better hygiene and health facilities. It also gave a boost to gardening and agriculture which ultimately resulted in increasing the occupational options for

the Weh people.

The rise of colonialism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries marked an end of empires and kingdoms, though not entirely. In many cases the colonial administration appeared to collaborate directly with these princely establishments, while in some they chose to mediate at times of crisis. Succession issues fuelled such crisis situations. Like the British in India, the Germans too were involved in arbitration in the chieftaincy crisis of the Zhoa chiefdom. In the Zhoa chiefdom the struggle for succession ensued between Zun Meh Achokum and Anjei Sein. The article by Tem Mbeum explores the various dimensions of this conflict which continued unabated over several years and argues that the only outcome of this struggle was the backwardness and underdevelopment of the Zhoa kingdom.

The last paper in the Articles section deals with the issue of underdevelopment in Igbomina, Nigeria. The focus of the paper is on communications, and how till the 1960s Igbomina was severely neglected in terms of development. Emmanuel Ibiloye discusses the role the rural community is taking to develop the infrastructure of their land. Away from the primary centres of commerce and governance and hence beyond the purview of development, it was left to the rural inhabitants of Igbomina to transform their surrounding from a rural enclave to an urban settlement.

In the Across the South section, Sarah Zipp reports on the conference on Sports in the Global South held in Fairfax, Virginia. The event witnessed academics and sports development practitioners convene from various regions of the global south to discuss on their experience and understandings with relation to sports, development and culture.

In the Reviews section, we carry two book reviews. The first by Anup Chakraborty of a collection of essays on north-east India, which in the opinion of the author has been the subject of much apathy from government agencies. The essays focus on how the marginalising the north-east has resulted in the erasure of internal differences. The second review by Percyslage Chigora is of an edited volume that looks into corruption as a major impediment in development. The study, centered on the developing countries of Latin America, tries to map the negative impact of corruption on various spheres of life – social, political and economic.

# Religious Conflict in Bamum Land: Tiganiyya Versus Sunni-Wahabiyya Muslim Brotherhoods – A Historical Investigation

Islam is the largest religion practised by the Bamum people of the Western Grassfields of Cameroon. The *Tiganiyya* brotherhood movement entered Bamum land in 1949 through Sheikh Sidi Benamor from Algeria on a maiden tour in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon. In the early 1990s, other Muslim movements, such as the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brotherhood movement, arrived in Bamum land through young Bamum clerics who traveled and studied in Arab countries. The presence of these three Muslim movements in Fumban generated a serious conflict of interest among the Bamum Muslims. Each brotherhood fought very hard for its Islamic doctrines to be adopted by a greater part of the population. As a result, conflicts between the *Tiganiyya* and *Sunni-Wahabiyya* Muslims in Bamum land raged constantly. Conflict pitting the *Tiganiyya* and *Sunni-Wahabiyya* in Fumban was always bloody, registering heavy loss of lives and destruction of properties. What is even more disturbing is the fact that the conflict later took a political dimension. It is time for all stakeholders involved in the conflict to bury their differences, join their hands in order to arrive at a lasting solution to this religious conflict which has almost torn the Bamum kingdom apart.



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## Introduction

The Bamums are a very prominent Tikar group and a major kingdom in the grasslands of Cameroon. Its people originated from the Tikar country from the Adamawa region. Due to internal squabbles, Fulbe raids, population pressure and the need for new lands, a new wave of migration started from their original territory called Rifum. From there, they subjugated peoples beyond the Mabe and Mui rivers, which is Fumban today. From Rifum, they moved to Njimom. The Bamum were let out of Tikar just ahead of the Nso by a prince of Tikar, Nchare, who eventually became the first Fon, and established the Bamum dynasty. Later the dynasty moved from Njimom and settled finally at Mfon-Ben which is Fumban today. A very long line of succession followed Nchare.<sup>1</sup>

Njoya succeeded Nsangou as the sixteenth Fon of the Bamum kingdom. During the reign of Njoya, Ghetkom, a councillor, attempted to dethrone the young king. To secure his throne Njoya solicited the aid of the Lamido of Banyo and Lamido Umarou, to quell Gbetkom's rebellion. After successfully crushing the rebellion, Njoya inquired from the Lamido about the Islamic religion he and his delegation were practising. Islamic scholars from Banyo and elsewhere took advantage of Lamido's and Njoya's friendship traveled and settled in Fumban. They constructed a mosque and opened an Islamic school where many were taught how to read and write Islamic scriptures. Many Fumbanese were converted into Islam.<sup>2</sup>

The *Tiganiyya* Muslim brotherhood movement made its appearance in the Bamum land in 1949 when the Algerian paramount chief of the *Tiganis*, Sheikh Sidi Benamor, during a tour, converted the Bamum aristocracy to the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood.<sup>3</sup> Since then the *Tiganiyya* Brotherhood movement has been dominant among Bamum Muslims. Beginning in the early 1990s, other Muslim movements, the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* made their appearance in Fumban. These movements were imported from the Arab countries by young Fumbanese who traveled to those countries to study. The presence of the Muslim brotherhood movements in Fumban became a serious point of disorder among Bamum Muslims. It ended up dividing them. On the one hand was the *Tiganiyya*, the old order with the majority of the population, and on the other the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* the new order with the minority population.<sup>4</sup> Who were at the origin of these movements and where were they founded? A brief look at their historical background will answer this question. Our study therefore sets out to examine the conflict involving the *Tiganiyya* and *Sunni-Wahabiyya* Muslim brotherhood movements in Bamum land. We also intend to investigate how a religious conflict later took a political dimension. And finally, what were the outcomes of those confrontations. Before that, let us throw a brief historical flash back regarding the origin of the *Tiganiyya* and *Sunni-Wahabiyya* Muslim brotherhood movements.

### The *Tiganiyya* Brotherhood Movement

The largest brotherhood in Bamum land is the *Tiganiyya* Brotherhood. It was founded by Cheikh Amadou Tigani of Laghounat in the south of Algeria at the end of the eighteenth century. From there, it spread to other Arab and African countries south of the Sahara. It finally entered Cameroon in general and Bamum land in particular in 1949.<sup>5</sup>

### The *Sunni* Brotherhood Movement

The *Sunni* brotherhood Movement rose as a result of succession problems after the death of Prophet Mohammed. This was between the different Caliphs. Abu Bakr and Ali struggled to succeed the prophet. At the end of it, Abu Bakr, not Ali was made the first Caliph. Ali later became the fourth Caliph. Hussein, the son of Ali, later on, also struggled to take over the Caliphate but was killed in a battle and buried in Najaf. The followers of Abu Bakr became known as the *Sunni* while those of Ali became known as *Shia*. The *Sunni* arrived in Bamum land in the early 1990s.<sup>6</sup>

### The *Wahabiyya* Brotherhood Movement

The *Wahabiyya* brotherhood movement is not just a religious but also a political movement. It was founded in Arabia in 1740 by a Muslim scholar called Mohammed Abd Al-Wahhab (1703-1792). The movement extended to almost all towns of Mecca and Medina. *Wahabiyya* finally became the main doctrine of the Saudi government. It later spread to other Arab countries. The movement finally reached

Africa and Cameroon in the twentieth century. By the early 1990s, the *Wahabiyya* movement had arrived in Bamum land.<sup>7</sup>

It is worth noting here that from the onset, the *Sunni* and *Wahabiyya* brotherhood movements had some points of divergence. Members of the *Wahabiyya* even fought the *Sunni* members. Later the two movements converged at some point; they even started working together. This is the reason why they arrived in Bamum land at almost the same time.<sup>8</sup> The main objective of this study is to examine the conflict involving the *Tiganiyya* and the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* Muslim brotherhood movement in Bamum land.

### Methodology of Study

Data for this study was collected from a variety of sources, which can be divided into primary and secondary sources. For primary sources, we conducted interviews through the use of questionnaires. Secondary sources included books, journals and articles. Chronological and thematic methods were used in developing the work. The topical and analytical approaches also helped in the interpretation and analysis of data.

### Manifestation of the Conflict

It is approximately one hundred years now since Islam made its appearance in Bamum land with the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood. The *Tiganiyya* brotherhood called for the strict respect of Islamic principles. Since the advent of Islam into the Bamum land, the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood had been dominant and widely followed by Fumbanese Muslims.<sup>9</sup> Beginning from the early 1990s, the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brotherhood made their appearance and started gaining ground in Fumban. Those who were at the origin of the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brotherhood were young Fumbanese who traveled to the Maghrebian countries of North Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Sudan with the main objective of studying the Islamic religion.<sup>10</sup>

Most of these Fumbanese studied the *Quran* and *Hadith* very well. They studied the Arab language and some of them could speak it fluently. As a matter of fact, majority of them were well-versed in Islamic teachings, its literature and principles. After their studies, most of them returned home. While in Fumban, they started preaching and teaching the Islamic religion to other Fumbanese who never had the privilege of traveling out to study like them.<sup>11</sup> These Fumbanese *Sunni-Wahabiyya* faithful as they were called soon discovered the shortage of mosques in the Noun Division. They started preaching on the advantages of building a mosque. Some of them even went as far as quoting the *Quran* and the *Hadith* which says that 'who so ever build a mosque in this world have constructed a house for himself in paradise'. Most of them led campaigns and clamoured for the building of more mosques in Bamum land. They themselves made it known that they were ready to contribute financially and manually.<sup>12</sup>

It was then that new mosques started seeing the light of the day in Fumban. Wealthy Bamum Muslims seized the opportunity by constructing mosques in their villages and quarters. The *Tiganiyya* Muslims who were not happy with the initiative,<sup>13</sup> saw it as a challenge by their *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brothers. The *Tiganiyya* Muslims needed to stop this ever increasing popularity of their rivals.<sup>14</sup>

Worth mentioning is the fact that majority of the Fumbanese Muslims, especially the elders and prominent authorities were from the *Tiganiyya* Muslim brotherhood. Sultan Ibrahim Bombo Njoya and Adamou Ndam Njoya were from the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood. As a matter of fact, almost ninety per cent of Fumbanese Muslim faithful were from the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood. It was only from the beginning of 1990s, when the *Sunni-Wahabi's* made their appearance that the *Tiganiyya* started losing some of their members. Sultan Ibrahim Bombo Njoya himself became a member of the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* movement. The attempt by the *Tiganiyya* faithful to preserve their members from the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* culminated into an open confrontation in Fumban. Competition between the *Tiganiyya* and *Sunni-Wahabiyya* degenerated into enmity and conflict.<sup>15</sup>

Prominent leaders of the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood like Mallam Sani, Mallam Nji and Mallam Alassan held meetings and decided on the strategy they could use to counter the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brotherhood. Those leaders headed campaigns, preaching against the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* Muslims. The



*Sunni-Wahabiyya* Muslims were subjected to criticisms and sabotage. Despite all the blackmailing by the *Tiganiyya* on their rivals, it never yielded fruit. The popularity and followers of the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* kept on increasing.<sup>16</sup> There was need for another strategy to be adopted by the *Tiganiyya* Muslims against their rivals.

The *Tiganiyya* brotherhood members embarked on different methods aimed at combating and blackmailing their *Sunni-Wahabiyya* rivals. The very first thing they did was to carry out some investigations behind the ever-increasing popularity of their rivals in Fumban. After some investigation, they finally realised that the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brotherhood was sponsored by certain individuals in the Noun.<sup>17</sup> More to that, the *Tiganiyya* members also had the firm conviction that their rivals were also being sponsored by the United States for destabilising Islam all over the world. As for the Saudi government, it was alleged that they also had the hidden agenda of spreading the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brotherhood movement since that is the dominant brotherhood in Saudi Arabia.<sup>18</sup>

According to *Sunni-Wahabiyya* principles, any person be he Muslim or not, who categorically refuses the truth should not see the light of day. The *Sunni-Wahabiyya* are of the opinion that Islamic practices should be restricted just to the teaching of the *Quran* and *Hadith*. They strongly oppose the mixture of religion and culture. To the *Sunni-Wahabi's*, any action that is not in the *Quran* and was not done by Prophet Mohammed should be forbidden and disallowed. As a matter of fact they are of the opinion that unbelievers or Muslims who are not preaching the religion well should be fought wherever necessary. Some intellectuals were of the opinion that the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* are extremists who want to spread the Islamic religion with the use of force.<sup>19</sup>

In the late 1990s, attempts were made in Fumban by some stakeholders to reconcile the *Tiganiyya* and *Sunni-Wahabiyya* Muslim brotherhoods, but it proved futile. When the members of the two brotherhoods were invited to the palace by the Sultan, not all of them respected the meeting. Those who respected the Sultan's call never agreed to reconcile. The *Tiganiyya* Muslim brotherhood members even started accusing the Sultan of allying and supporting the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* members. Instead of bringing down the tension between the two groups, tension kept on mounting. The *Tiganiyya* and *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brotherhood became adversaries and bitter enemies in Fumban. It sometimes degenerated into open conflicts with injuries and casualties.<sup>20</sup>

Blackmailing on both sides became the order of the day. The *Tiganiyya* members used to condemn, criticise, expose and harass the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* members. All types of names were labeled on them. According to the *Tiganiyya* members, anyone who killed one *Sunni-Wahabiyya* member will have a reward equivalent to seventy camels in the Kingdom of God. They were also of the opinion that anyone who killed or murdered a *Sunni-Wahabiyya* in Fumban will go straight to paradise.<sup>21</sup>

Faced with this hostile situation, the Sultan of Fumban, Ibrahim Bombo Njoya started looking for a lasting solution to the crisis. In early 2000, he set up a committee that investigated the origin of the conflict between the *Tiganiyya* and *Sunni-Wahabiyya* Muslim brotherhoods in Fumban. A fact-finding mission was set up and programmed with a delegation to travel to Sudan and investigate the genesis of the conflict. Members of the delegation included the deputy Sultan, Nji Fewou Abdoulaye, Imam Nji Tidjani Sin, Cheikh Assan, and Imam Sani among a host of others.<sup>22</sup> While they were absent, a cross examination of the conflict between the two groups was carried out in Fumban by the Sultan. At the end of the examination, the Sultan decided that Imam Sani should be relegated to the background, being one of the instigators of the crisis. Moreover he should be classified as the last Imam of the Fumban central mosque. It is important to note here that the *Tiganiyya* Muslims were not happy with the Sultan's decision, taking into consideration that Imam Sani was from the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood.<sup>23</sup> When the delegation sent to Sudan returned to Fumban, they discovered what had been done in their absence. The *Tiganiyya* members of the delegation immediately accused Sultan Njoya of siding with the *Sunni-Wahabiyya*. This later turned out to be true following the fact that Sultan Ibrahim Bombo Njoya made it clear himself that henceforth he was a member of the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* Muslim brotherhood.<sup>24</sup>

Irrespective of the above, the Sultan was bent on bringing the crisis to an end for as he often said, he is the Sultan of all Bamum Muslims whoever they are and wherever they belonged. He asked the committee he had earlier put in place to continue working and furnish the results of their findings to him. He also requested them to be as neutral as possible. After the work of the committee, the Sultan realised

that one of the major reasons behind the conflict was the practice of *Wiridit* by the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood in the Fumban central mosque. *Wiridit* was an invocation by the *Tiganiyya* Muslims during which the members sat around a white piece of cloth after the morning prayers and in the evening before the *Maghrib* (evening) or *Ihshah* (night) prayers respectively to glorify Allah.<sup>25</sup>

The *Sunni-Wahabiyya* vehemently condemned this practice of the *Tiganiyya*. According to the former, *Wiridit* has not been mentioned anywhere in the *Quran* or in the *Hadith* of the prophet. And that the manner in which their *Tiganiyya* brothers were practicing it had to be totally modified. To do that there were some steps and conditions to be followed. First the abandonment of the white piece of cloth that the *Tiganiyya* placed on the floor to sit round it and pray. Second the name of Allah should be recited instead of singing. That could be done by any faithful Muslim without passing through any initiation. Third the recitation of *Salati Fati* ought to stop.<sup>26</sup>

The *Tiganiyya* Muslim brotherhood could not tolerate, let alone apply those conditions. The aforementioned conditions, instead of calming down things, aggravated them. Anger kept mounting between the two camps. Serious differences arose between the *Tiganiyya* and the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brotherhood in Fumban. Things finally reached a level where the *Tiganiyya* Muslims started refusing to follow the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* Imams in prayers. According to them, those Imams were not credible and true believers as far as Islamic teachings were concerned. The Sultan was confused where to start solving the problems, since he had been branded as supporting one side to the detriment of the other. The only thing he could do was to turn back to the Sudan delegation and get the results of the fact-finding mission.<sup>27</sup>

The Sudan delegation after returning to Fumban was in disarray, taking into consideration the classification of Imams that was done in their absence. Imam Sani and the other *Tiganiyya* delegation members boycotted the Sultan's call. The *Sunni-Wahabiyya* members of the delegation went to the Sultan and gave their own results of the fact finding mission. Their answer of course was to their advantage and to the detriment of the *Tiganiyya* camp. The Sultan being one of them did not hesitate to take that for the ultimate truth. Most of the practices of the *Tiganiyya* were qualified as false.<sup>28</sup>

The reaction of the *Tiganiyya* camp under the leadership of Imam Sani was drastic. He accused the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* delegation members of having received a bribe in Sudan. He also confirmed the thesis in favour of the United States and Saudi Government sponsoring the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brotherhood in Fumban in particular and Cameroon at large to destroy the Islamic faith.<sup>29</sup>

On 27 January 2001, during Ramadan, an open conflict pitted the *Tiganiyya* and *Sunni-Wahabiyya* groups in the Fumban central mosque. It occurred the day after the *Asri* afternoon prayers. Since there were divisions between the two groups, they hardly prayed together. One group usually went to the mosque, prayed and came out for the other to go in and pray. Most often it was the *Tiganiyya* group that began praying, followed by the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* group. On that Saturday, of the month of January, the *Tiganiyya* majorities went into the mosque and prayed their *Asri* prayer, shortly after which the minority *Sunni-Wahabiyya* also went into the mosque to perform their *Asri* prayers.<sup>30</sup>

It so happened that by the time the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* went into the mosque; there was still one *Tiganiyya* faithful inside the mosque praying. From all indications, it appears that there was some exchange of words between the two camps. It was as if the *Tiganiyya* lone faithful inside the mosque was just waiting for that opportunity. With the help of the loud speaker, he shouted, 'invaders have come to take away our mosque from us.' The rest of the *Tiganiyya* faithful waiting outside quickly surrounded the mosque with the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* faithfuls inside. They forced themselves their way into the mosque and attacked the *Sunni-Wahabiyyas*.<sup>31</sup>

After almost an hour, of serious combat between the two camps, the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* struggled and pushed the *Tiganiyyas* out of the mosque. They then closed the doors of the mosque and took refuge inside the *Minaret*. Nonetheless, heavy casualties and injuries were recorded by both sides, with greater part of it on the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* members. From all indications, it appeared to be a planned act, taking into consideration that the *Tiganiyya* members were armed with cutlasses, spears, sword, knives, axes and even stones.<sup>32</sup>

Two hours later the public security commissioner, the Gendarmerie company commander, the assistance state council Amman Boubou Francois, alongside huge contingents of the forces of law and

order embarked on a heavy operation to free the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* hostages who were still trapped inside the mosque. The *Tiganiyya* faithful who were still stationed around the mosque performed a serious stone shooting war against both the forces of law and order and the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* faithful. It was a clear example of the *Intifada*, usually performed by the Palestinian civilians against the Israeli forces in the Middle East.<sup>33</sup> The first attempt to free the hostages proved futile. The *Tiganiyya* Muslim population overpowered the forces of law and order.

Heavy damages were incurred among which windscreen of cars were destroyed, the principal assistant injured by a stone on his left eye and blood oozed from the head of some *Sunni-Wahabiyya* faithful. A second attempt to free the remaining hostages was carried out that same day around midnight. This time it was headed by the divisional officer of the Noun division, Bekono Mama with a huge contingent of forces of law and order. After some serious fight with the *Tiganiyya* members whose number by then has considerably risen, they ended up freeing the hostages inside the mosque. All these were made possible thanks to the heavy reinforcement of the forces of law and order, the application of tear gas, anti-riot tanks and the shooting of rubber bullets by the combined forces. It was even alleged that some *Tiganiyya* members lost their lives in that incident.<sup>34</sup>

The next day, all activities were suspended from taking place in the Fumban central mosque. The mosque was put under lock and key for six months. Towards the end of the holy month of Ramadan, questions were raised about the appointment of a new Imam in the Fumban central mosque. Also, taking into consideration that the Central Imam was the one to officiate prayers on the day of the feast, the Sultan took everyone by surprise by appointing a neutral Imam to officiate prayers in the prayer ground commonly referred to as the 'Holy Mountain'. What was even more amazing was the fact that the Imam appointed a Hausa and not a Fumbanese, by name Danladi Ibrahim. The *Tiganiyya* faithful kept on agitating and called on the Sultan to reinstate their Imam as the Central Imam.<sup>35</sup>

On the day of the feast of Ramadan, heavy contingents of Gendarmes and police were sent from Yaounde to Fumban. Having arrived at Fumban, they were deployed on the prayer ground during prayer. The faithful started assembling by nine thirty and by ten o'clock the Holy Mountain prayer ground was packed to capacity. Following the order of arrival of important personalities, the administrative authorities were followed by the Sultan and finally the Imam for that day, Mallam Danladi Ibrahim. The prayer began in total security and serenity. The first *Rakkat* was done successfully. During the second *Rakkat*, the Imam suddenly stopped at the level of the *Sujuud*. Most started wondering what was happening. It was then that they realised that one staunch supporter and member of the *Tiganiyya* camp by the name of Mallam Radidan walked up to the Imam and stopped his loud speaker. As such, most of the faithful who were some distance away from the Imam were unable to listen and follow him for prayers.<sup>36</sup>

Taking into consideration the tense atmosphere under which prayers were conducted, coupled with the confusion ahead, most of the faithful stopped praying and started running for their dear life. Members of the *Tiganiyya* camp began throwing stones at the direction of the Sultan. The Sultan was only protected by his royal umbrella. This was the very first time such an event occurred since the founding of the Bamum kingdom; a king shot at by his subjects with stone. The forces of law and order quickly intervened and brought back everything to normal. But this ended up not without some casualties mostly on the side of the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* faithful as well as some forces of law and order. This was the second *Intifada* that occurred in Bamum land.<sup>37</sup>

As this happened, a certain cameraman was busy taking videos shots of the *Taganiyya* assailants. At the end of the incident when everything came back to normal, the cameraman took the video tapes to the Sultan. The perpetrators of the atrocities were identified and punishment meted out to them. Majority of them being the *Tiganiyya* members who were arrested and taken to jail. They were given maximum prison terms of two to three months in the Fumban prison. It is worth mentioning here that at one point in time, this conflict took a political dimension.<sup>38</sup>

The *Sunni-Wahabiyya* minority were protected by the Sultan, Ibrahim Bombo Njoya who belonged to the ruling party, Cameroon People Democratic Movement (CPDM), while the majority of *Tiganiyya* faithfuls were protected by Adamou Ndam Njoya through his Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU) commonly known by its French acronym U.D.C. Before the advent of the *Sunni-Wahabiyya*



brotherhood to Bamum land, both Sultan Ibrahim Bombo Njoya and Adamou Ndam Njoya were members of the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood.<sup>39</sup> By then, all the Bamum subjects were fully behind their king in all religious and political matters. Beginning from the late 1990s, and early 2000, with the advent of the *Sunni-Wahabiyya*, there was a big division among the Bamum Muslims. Majority of them supported Adamou Ndam Njoya because he remained faithful to their *Tiganiyya* brotherhood, while a few minorities supported the Sultan because he changed from the *Tiganiyya* to the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* camp.<sup>40</sup>

This rift between the Sultan and the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood accounted for the loss of popularity of the Sultan among Bamum Muslims. Since then, he tried to win back the support of his subjects politically, but to no avail. Taking into consideration that he was a diehard supporter of the ruling C.P.D.M Party. He has also been a minister in the Biya regime, and more importantly, he was a member of the central committee, and political bureau of the C.P.D.M. He greatly needed the support of his subjects for the ruling party. In order to win his chairman's confidence, he needed to win elections in his constituency for the party. Unfortunately that was not the case.<sup>41</sup>

The Sultan has always lost elections in the Noun division to the benefit of the U.D.C party since the advent of multipartism in Cameroon. Beginning with the presidential, legislative and municipal elections organised in Cameroon in 1992, the C.P.D.M. lost in the Noun to the advantage of the U.D.C. Investigations were even carried out by the C.P.D.M. barons of the division as for the reason behind their constant defeat. It was finally realised that the main reason was the Sultans' support for the minority *Sunni-Wahabiyya* brotherhoods.<sup>42</sup> Taking into consideration that the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood withheld the majority of the population, they easily made use of their numerical number to win elections for the U.D.C. Party of Adamou Ndam Njoya. Some of the sultan's close allies and subjects even advised him to switch from the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* camp to that of the *Tiganiyya* so as to change the tide of things, but he refused.<sup>43</sup>

Most of the religious manifestations of the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood, including the *Wiridit* was forbidden by the Sultan were henceforth done in Adamou Ndam Njoya's compound and premises. This developed into serious enmity between Ndam Njoya and Sultan Bombo Njoya. Coupled with the fact that they were earlier political rivals from different parties canvassing for seats in the same town. Legislative and municipal elections had become a serious tug-of-war between the two rivals. Unfortunately, victory had always been in favour of Adamou Ndam Njoya.<sup>44</sup>

The Sultan once made an attempt to win back the support of his subjects by re-opening the Fumban Central Mosque which he closed following the 2001 riots. As if that was not enough, he even went to the extent of appointing an Imam of the *Tiganiyya* brotherhood as the permanent Imam of the Fumban Central Mosque. All these moves by the Sultan did not convince the majority *Tiganiyya* Bamum Muslims to support him. It instead went a long way to strengthen the support they had for the U.D.C. president. As a matter of fact, during elections, the U.D.C *Tiganiyya* supporters composed a song which went thus: 'The president of the U.D.C is a *Mumuni*, true believer while that of the CPDM is not a true believer.'<sup>45</sup>

## Conclusion

Islam arrived in the Bamum land in the nineteenth century. This was during the reign of Njoya, the sixteenth ruler of the Bamum kingdom. It was through the initiative of Lamido Oumarou of Banyo who helped quell an uprising in the Bamum royal palace to secure Njoya's throne from the rebel, Gbetkom. Muslim scholars from Banyo and elsewhere traveled and settled in Fumban. They constructed mosques and built Islamic schools. Many Bamums beginning with their ruler, Njoya converted to Islam. With time, some social, economic and political factors helped spread Islam to other areas of the Bamum land.

The advent of Islam into the Bamum land also came along with the *Tiganiyya* Muslim brotherhood movement. This movement dominated Bamum Islamic practices for a greater part of the twentieth century. It was only in the 1990s that other movements, the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* Muslim brotherhood movement saw the light of day in Bamum land. The presence of these religious movements sowed the seed of bitterness and discord among the Muslim population of Fumban. Henceforth, the Bamum Muslims were divided into two. The first being the *Tiganiyya* majority headed by Dr. Adamou Ndam Njoya, president of the U.D.C. Party, while the second being the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* minority

headed by Sultan Ibrahim Bombo Njoya, a leading member of the ruling C.P.D.M. party. This conflict later on took a political dimension of the C.P.D.M versus U.D.C. political parties.

All efforts undertaken by the Sultan to resolve the conflict proved futile. This was especially a result of the fact that the Sultan took sides with the *Sunni-Wahabiyya* minority. In order to solve this conflict, Sultan Ibrahim Bombo Njoya as the leader of all the Bamum people must remain neutral and impartial. Both sides should come together, bury their hatchets and strike a final compromise which is amicable to everyone without any distinction. Bamum Muslim intellectuals must also make their followers understand that Islam is a peaceful and non-violent religion. As such any true Muslims must refrain from violence, and love his brother as himself. Finally, Bamum Muslim clerics should persuade their Muslim brothers to refrain from the phenomenon of brotherhoods which is more often than not associated to sects, and practise their faith according to the teachings of the *Quran* and *Hadith*.

The author traveled to the Bamum country with the intention of obtaining some illustrations to fit the article recently. Unfortunately he could not gather any. Most of the pictures that were taken concerning the conflict were seized and destroyed by the security forces and the Sultans' guards in an attempt to completely wipe out the memories of the conflict. As a result no illustrations could be provided for this piece.

1. V.G. Fanson, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges from Prehistoric Times to the Nineteenth Century*, Volume 1, Macmillan Publishers, London, 1989, pp. 41-42; V.J. Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Pressbook, Limbe, 1996, pp. 20-21.
2. Ibid.
3. H. Adama, *Islam and State in Cameroon: Between Tension and Accommodation*, p. 50. It should be noted that the Tiganiyya brotherhood movement originated from Algeria. From there, it started spreading to other part of the world including Cameroon and the Bamum kingdom. Sheikh Sidi Benamor was just merely continuing the action of his founder, Sheikh Ahmed Tigani who also happens to be an Algerian. The Bamum Muslims were very receptive to the ideas and teachings of the Tiganiyya brotherhood movement.
4. N.M.C. Georges, "Christianisme et Islam au Cameroun, Du Dialogué Informel au Dialogue Formel (1962-2004) : Le Cas de La Ville de Yaounde", *Mémoire de Maitrise*, Université de Yaounde I, 2005. pp. 30-31.
5. Ibid; Adama, *Islam and State in Cameroon*, p. 50.
6. A. Rahman, & I. Doi, *The Cardinal Principles of Islam*, Islamic Publication Bureau, Lagos, 1972, pp. 10-100; M.O.A. Abdul, *The Classical Caliphate, Islamic Institutions*, Islamic Publications Bureau, Lagos, 1988, pp. 36-74.
7. George, "Christianisme et Islam", pp. 30-33; *Arabia-Wahabi-Conquest of Mecca*, Voyager Press book; the Wahabiyya brotherhood movement originated from Saudi Arabia. While in Saudi Arabia, it gradually gain grounds and became the biggest movement being followed there. The Saudi ruling house was also part and parcel of the movement. In order to ensure the spread and influence of the movement all over the world, the Saudi government embarks on evangelical actions to propagate the movement. Taking into consideration the diplomatic relations between Cameroon and the Saudi government, it was but normal that the Wahabi movement find grounds in Cameroon soil. The Bamum kingdom got into contact with it in the early 1990s through Cameroon students who travel to Saudi Arabia to study Islam.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid, p. 56.
10. Taguem Fah, "When the Periphery becomes the Center: New Islamic Dynamics in Douala-Cameroon", 2010, pp. 1-15. worth noting is the fact that, Cameroonians were awarded scholarship to study in most of those Arab countries who were Wahabi inclined. In the course of studying in those countries, they were initiated into the Wahabi movement. Upon their graduation, they came back home with the ideas of those movement and began spreading it through out

- Cameroon, including the Bamum fondom. Interview with Mallam Tanko, Arabic Teacher, 3 March 2006.
11. Ibid; Taguem Fah, "When the Periphery becomes the Center", pp. 1-15
  12. Interview with Mallam Tanko; most of the mosques that will emanate in Fumban through the initiative of those newly trained Cameroonian Muslims will be purely Wahabi inclined. Most of the preaching done in those mosques will purposely be to further spread the Wahabi notion of Islam to the Bamum people.
  13. Ibid.
  14. Ibid.
  15. Interview with Mallam Balla, 10 April 2006.
  16. Ibid.
  17. Ibid.
  18. Taguem Fah, "When the Periphery becomes the Center", pp. 1-15; George, *Christianisme et L'islam*, pp. 30-33.
  19. Ibid.
  20. Interview with Mallam Balla.
  21. Ibid.
  22. Interview with Alassan, 15 March 2006.
  23. Ibid.
  24. Ibid.
  25. Interview with Mallam Tanko; Aboubakar, "Evolution de L' islam", pp 50-56. Most of the reasons enumerated above by the Sultan committee are practiced undertaken by followers of the Tiganiyya movement which according to the Wahabiyya followers is contrary to the Islamic teachings.
  26. Interview with Mallam Tanko.
  27. Interview with Alassan.
  28. Ibid.
  29. Ibid.
  30. Interview with Mallam Mama, 30 March 2006
  31. Ibid.
  32. Ibid.
  33. Ibid ; George, « *Christianisme et L'islam* », pp. 30-33.
  34. Interview with Mallam Tanko.
  35. Ibid.
  36. Ibid.
  37. Interview with Mallam Balla.
  38. Ibid.
  39. Ibid.
  40. Ibid.
  41. Interview with Mallam Mama.
  42. Ibid.
  43. Ibid.
  44. Ibid.
  45. Interview with Mallam Tanko.



# The Role of Local Communities in Self-Help Development: The Case of the Weh Water Supply Project in Northwest Cameroon

One of the most crucial problems faced by the Weh people since their migration and settlement until 1978 was the lack of pipe-borne water. The desire to solve this problem led to the launch of the Weh Water Project in 1974. Its initiation, planning and execution were the product of the combined efforts of the Weh elite, Department of Community Development (DCD), Swiss Association for Technical Assistance (SATA), and Bread for the World. The project was expected to offer the Weh people an opportunity to roll back water-related problems, and had great potential to improve the socio-economic condition of the people. Perhaps the most fundamental questions that arose, following the decision of the Weh elite to undertake such a giant project, was: Would there be sufficient funds and technical know-how to plan and execute the water project? Would the Weh people welcome the initiative and commit themselves to its success? Would the project be properly managed after its completion and inauguration? This paper was born from a desire to understand how the Weh people addressed the above issues during the various stages of the water project. It focusses on the inception, gestation and delivery processes of the Weh Water Project in Northwest Cameroon.



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## Introduction

The chiefdom of Weh shares its boundaries with Esu on the northwest, Wum on the southwest, Kuk on the south, and Zhoa on the northeast.<sup>1</sup> Weh is located in the Fungom Subdivision in Menchum Division of Northwest Cameroon. The community lies about 1000 metres above sea level and consists of wide valleys and several mountains. The Weh people migrated from the Bamun country and finally arrived in their present site by the turn of the eighteenth century. With time, the Tikar chiefdom expanded its frontiers. It was headed by a fon and comprised five quarters (Uwert, Kefuum, Keghe, Azoh and Mbaukusu).<sup>2</sup> From the time of its establishment until Cameroon's reunification in 1961, the most serious problem encountered by the Weh people was the lack of access to potable water. This problem was not addressed by the Government of Cameroon during the federal period (1961-1972) and the immediate unitary era.<sup>3</sup> When these water-related problems increased, the Weh elite assembled in 1974 and agreed to initiate a water-supply scheme. They created the Weh Development Committee (WDC) and started surveys, fundraising, and necessary planning to commence the project. Weh collaborated with Bread for the World, SATA (German and Swiss-based non-governmental organisations, respectively), and the DCD (a governmental development-oriented agency) to execute the project. This project was done through various stages. This paper traces the origin, planning and execution of the Weh water scheme, and the management, impact and problems of the scheme since its completion in 1978.

## Origin and Planning

The Weh Water Project was a product of the desire of the Weh elite to check problems emanating from the absence of pipe-borne water. Before the onset of these initiatives, the Weh people, just like other people in the region, lacked a good source of water. Over 6,000 people, therefore, depended on water fetched from streams which flowed from slopes through farmlands, raffia bushes and isolated compounds. The polluted water was the source of some of the water-borne diseases which afflicted the people, for instance, cholera, diarrhea and worms. During the dry seasons, these streams often dried up, leaving a cross-section of the village

in dire need of water.<sup>4</sup> Water was

required for, among other things, mudding of bamboo houses, checking recurrent fire disasters, and the moulding of bricks.

Besides, the population growth witnessed by the village, together with the need to initiate health projects, gave a new kind of urgency to the need for pipe-borne water in the region.

Throughout the pre-colonial and colonial periods, the people grappled with the above problems.

Both the German and British colonial administrations did nothing to initiate a water scheme in Weh. It should be pointed out that the British provided potable water in towns like Buea, Bamenda, and Victoria, perhaps because these were the seats of colonial administration.

The 1961 reunification of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon was the catalyst of the Weh Water Project. This was a result of the technical cooperation accord signed in 1964 between the Government of West Cameroon and SATA. The agreement permitted the latter to construct water schemes in the state of West Cameroon. In 1968, SATA signed a similar accord with the Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon.<sup>5</sup> Between 1964 and 1972, SATA successfully constructed 122 water projects in West Cameroon. It worked in close collaboration with the DCD and the villages concerned. The pipe-borne water enjoyed by these villages probably motivated the Weh elite to take concrete action to plan a water project. It is worth mentioning that the absence of clean water in Weh did not attract SATA's attention during the aforementioned period.



The Two Chambers Tank of the Weh Water Scheme

It was against this backdrop that four of the Weh elites: Simon Ngha, Lucas Akwa Ning, Peter Lang, and Andrew Cham, together with Rev. Gerhard Rhim, met Fon Philip Bama I of Weh in late 1973 to explore ways of solving water-related problems. The six men resolved to initiate a water project as an appropriate solution. As a result, they advised the fon to summon an enlarged meeting of the Weh Traditional Council to further brainstorm and publicise the project. On 15 May 1974, the meeting was held and was attended by thirty people.<sup>6</sup> During the meeting, Fon Bama I greatly supported the project and stated, 'If the water-related problems of our village are to be resolved, it is essential that deliberate steps be taken to provide pipe-borne water'.<sup>7</sup> The major outcome of the meeting was the validation of the project by the council. The meeting assigned Simon Ngha and Lucas Akwa Ning the task of discussing the project with SATA and the authorities of the DCD in Wum. The Weh community wanted to depend on the ingenuity of the sons of the chieftdom to use their government and international links to assist in executing the scheme.

The post-meeting era was dominated by Ngha<sup>8</sup> and Ning's efforts to sell the project to SATA and DCD. They addressed a letter of application to SATA and DCD. The two bodies welcomed the initiative and advised that another meeting be held. Their intention was to use the meeting as an opportunity to sensitise and educate the Weh people on what it takes to realise such a project. According to Ambe Njoh, one condition for DCD assisting self-help development projects such as water-supply schemes is that the beneficiary community agrees to contribute fifteen per cent of the total project cost.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, another meeting was held on 30 May 1974, which was attended by community development officers and engineers dispatched by SATA. On the advice of the two experts, the Weh Development Committee (WDC) was formed to handle all issues related to the water scheme. The WDC comprised members with government and international connections, quarter-heads and experts from SATA and DCD. The chair of the committee was Lucas Akwa Ning, while Andrew Cham and Rev. Gerhard Rhim (a German pastor serving the Presbyterian Church in Weh) were secretary and treasurer, respectively.<sup>10</sup> The task of the committee was to mobilise the Weh people to be actively involved in the project. Another responsibility of the committee was to seek external sources of funding. On 13 September 1974, the first phase of the project (planning and mobilisation of funds) was launched. Following this, the WDC – with DCD assistance – conducted surveys with the help of the SATA engineer, Kale Wehrle. The well-planned leadership courses and meetings of the WDC led to the education of the masses on this matter. Following these preliminary investigations, the project was initially projected to cost CFA 27,000,000 francs, but was realised at the cost of CFA 31,848,600 francs.<sup>11</sup> A decision was also taken not to pay for damages that might result from the execution of the scheme. At this stage, therefore, the Weh water scheme had been conceived and planned, and it was now time for the projected budget to be raised.

The WDC was given the responsibility of effectively managing locally available resources and enlisting the support of external donors interested in community development in developing countries. The Weh people were thus mobilised to offer voluntary labour and financial contributions to the project. As concerns labour, the masses were to assist in tracing, clearing and trenching the pipeline, and in constructing catchments, storage tanks, standpipes, washing basins and soak-away pits. For monetary contributions, the Weh population was expected to raise CFA 3,000,000 francs. In order to raise this sum, the WDC established a levying scheme as shown in Table 1.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 1: Levying Scheme for Weh Water Project**

Class of Resident	Levy (Frs CFA)
Men	1,000
Women	500
Youths	250
Civil Servants	4,000
Distinguished Elite	26,000

*Source: Compiled by author from reports relating to the project.*

In order to ease the collection of the money, the people were asked to pay directly to the treasurer of the



WDC or to their quarter heads. Those who refused to pay the money were suspended from social-drinking groups while some were dragged to the Traditional Council. Generally, every quarter had a collector and a register in which all contributions were entered. The collector took his register to Rev. Rhim every week for checking. The money collected was also handed to the treasurer of the WDC. By December 1975, the Weh people raised the required sum of money.<sup>13</sup> This attests the resourcefulness of ordinary Weh people, when they are offered the opportunity to participate in local development.

The WDC also streamed its efforts towards seeking external sources of funding for the project. Rev. Gerhard Rhim (treasurer of WDC) used the ecumenical connections of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon to seek funds from Bread for the World. The latter allotted the whopping sum of CFA 15,000,000 francs for the project. On her part, SATA donated CFA 6,000,000 francs and promised to provide skilled labour in the construction phase. Financial donations for the realisation of the scheme also came from state grants through FONADER, Genie Rural, DCD and Wum Rural Council.<sup>14</sup> Generally, the Weh people, together with the national and international donors, donated the sum of CFA 31,845,600 francs for the realisation of the project as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Sources of Funding for the Weh Water Project**

Donor	Amount (Frs CFA)
DCD	2,700,000
Genie Rurale	1,300,000
FONADER	900,000
Wum Rural Council	500,000
Village Contribution in Cash and Kind	6,800,000
Bread for the World	15,000,000
SATA Grant in Cash and Kind	6,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,200,000</b>

**Source:** Compiled by author from reports, letters and speeches relating to the project.

### Execution and Inauguration of the Project

Raising funds for the scheme was followed by the commencement of the execution phase on 6 January 1976. The execution was led by the SATA engineer, Kale Wehrle, and the community development assistant attached to the project by the DCD. In a self-help project such as this, the Weh people were expected to be heavily involved in its construction phase. As a result, Fon Bama I of Weh, using the powers bestowed upon him by his traditional position, mobilised the people to provide voluntary labour, so as to place the scheme on the path to completion. Apart from Sundays, the other days of the week were dedicated to the project. SATA, on her part, dispatched fifteen students from her Building Training Centre-Kumba to Weh. Their task was to provide the skilled labour needed for the construction of the catchments, storage tanks, shower houses and standpipes.<sup>15</sup>

The execution of the project began with the construction of two spring catchments and a fourteen kilometre pipeline from the catchments to the storage tank and through the whole village. The catchments were constructed with building materials (sand and stones) supplied by the Weh people. The fifteen builders from Kumba supported the local masons in constructing the catchments. In May, the source catchments were ready, alongside two collection chambers that were constructed beside the catchments. The builders made provisions for the sedimentation of any insoluble particles in the collection chambers. At the same time, Kale Wehrle was busy with other Weh people in the pecking and

trenching of the pipeline from the catchment to the tank, over a distance of four kilometres<sup>16</sup> When the trenches were completed in late 1976, the piping was started.

Initially, the experts had planned to use everite pipes, but the piping material was later changed to plastic. This was because results of a detailed laboratory examination in Switzerland proved that the strength of the available source water was above the permissible one for everite pipes.<sup>17</sup> Since the pipeline crossed three streams, the pipes at these points were reinforced with concrete beams. Also, some retaining-walls along the pipeline were constructed to avoid any calamity in the future. In April 1977, the piping was completed and efforts now became directed towards the construction of the two envisaged storage tanks. It is worth indicating that on 8 April 1976 SATA's director, Dr. Marx, and the representative of Bread for the World visited Weh and assessed the progress of the work. During the visit, Lucas Akwa Ning and Kale Wehrle surveyed the various sites of the scheme.<sup>18</sup>

As concerns the construction of the two envisaged storage tanks at Azoh and Mbaokusu quarters, a decision was later taken to construct only one tank with two chambers at Azoh. According to a report of 29 April 1977 relating to the project, the above decision was dictated by technical and economic reasons. As a matter of fact, it was noticed that if two tanks were constructed, the envisaged budget would be exceeded.<sup>19</sup> However, the construction of the two chamber tanks at Azoh had to be preceded by the digging of an access road to the site, together with two bridges. The road was dug by the community while the bridges were constructed by SATA engineers. The bridges were made of concrete rings and retaining walls in stone masonry. This was swiftly followed by the construction of the two chambers of the storage tank. Each chamber consisted of a round tank of 80 cubic metre each, and was expected to serve as a redistribution centre. This ushered in the distribution system.

The laying of the distribution system was started in June 1977 with the hope of completing it in September. The pipeline distribution system covered the whole village over a distance of ten kilometres. When it was completed in September, the construction of fifteen wash basins, twenty stand pipes, and two shower houses was identified as the next task. The fifteen SATA builders and local masons were mobilised and this last phase was started in September 1977. By January 1978, the above task was completed and the experts were now left with only a few finishing touches. But a decision was later taken to extend the distribution system by five kilometres, alongside the construction of an additional twenty-three stand pipes. In May 1978, the piping of the additional five kilometers and erection of twenty-three stand pipes were completed.<sup>20</sup> The extension of the project meant that CFA 33,200,000 francs were spent instead of the initial CFA 27,000,000 francs. Table 3 shows the various stages and costs of the project.



Catchments of the Weh Water Project Constructed in the 1970s

**Table 3: Major Tasks and Costs for Weh Water Project**

Task	Cost (Frs CFA)
2 source catchments	1,798,600
2 collection chambers	200,000
Hydraulic installations	19,000,000
Storage tank	4,000,000
15 wash basins	1,350,000
43 stand pipes	1,700,000
2 shower houses	1,000,000
Tools	300,000
Transportation	1,000,000
Contingencies	1,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,848,600</b>

*Source:* Constructed by author from Kale Wehrle's report No. 1 on the Weh Water Project dated 26 April 1977.

*Note:* The above sum excludes the estimated CFA 3,800,000 francs of labour and contributions in kind provided by the local community.

The successful completion of the Weh Water Scheme evidenced the community's commitment to the project. Generally, the goal of the scheme was to improve the health of the population of Weh by enhancing water quantity and quality. While the WDC was still contemplating on a workable mechanism for managing the project, preparations for its inauguration commenced. The entire village was involved in planning how they were to receive and entertain their guests during the inaugural ceremony. All service heads, politicians, missionaries, traditional rulers and chairs of development committees from neighbouring villages were invited to the great occasion. The water scheme was officially inaugurated on 31 July 1978, by the secretary general in the Northwest Governor's office, C.I. Ndelly.<sup>21</sup> The ceremony was graced by traditional dances, addresses and gun-firing. In his inaugural address, shortly after the symbolic turning-on of the standpipe at Presbyterian School, Ndelly pressed the need for the proper management and maintenance of the project so as to guarantee its sustainability.

### **Post-Project Management**

The urgent need for proper management raised by Ndelly did not allow SATA and WDC indifference. Consequently, a caretaker staff was rapidly trained, which comprised citizens responsible for operating and managing the water system. The intension here was to directly associate the local community in the day-to-day management of the water scheme. Generally, the caretaker team which was led by Stephen Kum was assigned the responsibility of punishing defaulters of defined rules and regulations, collecting a yearly due of CFA 500 francs for men and CFA 250 francs for women, and taking care of repairs and extension requests.<sup>22</sup>

The caretaker team worked in collaboration with the WDC. Initially, the three workers were remunerated by the Wum Rural Council. The stores attached to the shower houses were under the control of the team. It was in these stores that excess pipes, fitting materials and working tools were kept. The equipment was used in repairing damages on the system as well as for responding to new



water-installation demands. The workers had the responsibility of moving around the village for maintenance routines and for ensuring proper usage. They ensured that surroundings of standpipes and washing basins were kept clean. Whenever a standpipe was damaged, the people would contribute money for the replacement of the damaged equipment. In all, they ensured the functioning of the system and educated the people about proper hygiene practices.<sup>23</sup>

As a result of their sensitisation work, the population of Weh understood that the project was theirs to control and manage. In fact, a general feeling grew among the population that it would constitute an embarrassment were they to fail to properly manage and sustain the water scheme. This commitment was evidenced by the people's respect of contribution deadlines and the constant cleaning of the surroundings of standpipes and washing basins. This seems to justify Njoh's contention that self-help development demands that project beneficiary communities devise viable strategies aimed at ensuring the sustainability of such projects. For him, the failure of any such venture tends to undermine the principle of self-help and the reputation of the community.<sup>24</sup> By initiating, executing and managing a water scheme, the population of Weh wanted to be ranked as a case of successful self-help endeavour. This probably explains why the people never saw the annual levy of CFA 500 francs for men and CFA 250 francs for women as a rate. Rather, they considered the due as remuneration for the caretakers. They did not think the contributors to the execution of the scheme (SATA, Bread for the World and Government of Cameroon) to be owners of the project.<sup>25</sup> Since the inauguration of the project in 1978, the WDC, caretaker team and the population as a whole have sustained the water system. In its thirty two years of existence, the scheme has served as a source of development.

### Impact of the Water Scheme

The Weh Water project has been considered one of the most interesting, challenging and successful SATA development projects in Cameroon. Upon its completion in 1978, the scheme had the potential to improve the socio-economic well-being of the Weh people. Foremost among these benefits is the availability of clean drinking-water which the people have enjoyed since 1978. The completion of the scheme, it should be remarked, facilitated the checking of water-borne diseases like worms, diarrhea and cholera. Besides, the water project encouraged the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon to open a health centre in Weh in 1982. The water system was extended to the site of the health centre. In sum, the pipe-borne water and the health centre improved the people's general level of health.<sup>26</sup> It is surely because of this that the WDC made 'Water is Life' the prevailing theme in meetings related to the project.

Another important occupation arising from the Weh water project was the intensification of gardening. Indeed, the scheme enabled market gardens to flourish which provided tomatoes, vegetables, cabbages and green beans. The markets of the area were constantly flooded with the produce of market gardening and this explains the cheap or affordable prices of many agricultural products. The Weh people, therefore, enjoyed vegetable self-sufficiency throughout the year.<sup>27</sup> Generally, market gardening not only improved the nutrition value of people's meals, but also provided self-employment for some citizens.

The water scheme also helped in modernising the architecture of residences in the region. Prior to the project, the people lived in bamboo buildings. It was difficult for them to erect sundry block-buildings because the moulding of blocks required plenty of water. With the availability of water, the Weh people involved themselves in the construction of sundry block buildings. Consequently, many people saw the need to be trained as bricklayers and carpenters, since these services were in high demand. Thus, the availability of job opportunities for builders and carpenters as well as the modernisation of the peoples' living spaces can be partially attributed to the water scheme.

Finally, the Weh water project motivated neighbouring villages like Wum, Esu and Mmen to also initiate their water schemes. The traditional rulers and chairpersons of development committees of these villages attended the launching ceremony of the Weh water scheme. Motivated by the success-story of Weh, the Esu people decided to initiate their own water scheme in 1978. This was preceded by fruitless negotiations for the Weh water system to be piped to Esu and Wum. But the fons of both villages refused due to the fear that the Weh people would poison the water.<sup>28</sup> A similar project was also launched in Mmen in 1979. These villages presently enjoy clean pipe-borne water. The Aghem Development

Committee inspired by Weh, initiated a water scheme in Wum in 1980. Unfortunately, the DCD refused to support it by arguing that Wum was already a town. Consequently, the project failed as the people could not raise the required funds. The water-related problems of the town were only resolved by the defunct National Water Corporation, popularly known by its French acronym, SNEC (Société Nationale d'Eaux du Cameroun). But the inhabitants of the town considered SNEC's rates exorbitant and its service woeful. However, the urge of the above villages to initiate water projects was motivated by the success of the Weh water project.

### **Problems and Suggested Solutions**

The water project encountered some obstacles during the construction and management phases. Foremost, there were a few problems emanating from labour supply and financial contributions. In this regard, some individuals, in spite of WDC's sensitisation efforts, did not see the need to contribute money and supply free labour to the different sites of the project. But all was done to heighten the commitment of such unsatisfied persons toward the project. Blessed with a firm and pragmatic Fon and elite, a strong development committee and quarter-heads with a good persuasive tongue, the few persons who had expressed reluctance, were finally motivated to join the masses. In some cases, fines were imposed on those who remained inactive by the traditional council. In general, persons initially opposed to the venture were successfully convinced to rank collective concerns of the village above individual problems.

Another problem faced during the implementation phase of the project was the death of two influential persons, namely, Fon Bama I and the chair of the WDC, Lucas Akwa Ning. The former died in May 1976 and the traditional funeral celebrations caused community labour to be reduced for about five months. But the acting Fon, Hon. Simon Nji, filled the power vacuum and mobilised the people to stream their efforts toward the realisation of the scheme. It was in late 1977 that Lucas Akwa Ning died. His passing away slowed the last phase of the project. The problem was resolved when Peter Lang was elected as the new chair of the WDC in December 1978. The inauguration of the project in July 1978 testifies the resolution of problems encountered during the execution phase of the scheme.

As soon as the project was inaugurated, management problems surfaced. Managers lacked a vehicle or any other means of transportation by which to maintain the network. As a result, the caretakers had to trek from one part of the village to another to conduct repairs. The net outcome was the continuous flow of damaged standpipes for weeks before any repairs could be carried out. In addition, some individuals refused to pay the annual levy required for the upkeep of the scheme. This problem grew exceedingly acute and led to the dishing-out of fines to those concerned by the traditional council. Another problem that arose was population growth and the failure of the managers to extend the water system after its completion. As a matter of fact, the village steadily expanded, making the pre-project problems conspicuous in the new quarters. Worse still, some parts of the village, especially Mbaukusu, went for days without water. This explains why the managers had to ration the water supply in such areas.

### **Conclusion**

The Weh water scheme was the first large-scale attempt by the elite of Weh to check problems related to the lack of potable water. The planning and successful execution of the project at the cost of CFA 31,848,600 francs was due to the combined efforts of the local population, SATA, DCD and Bread for the World. The scheme offered Weh an opportunity to access quality water and had great potential for improving the social and economic well-being of the village as a whole. In general, the project has served several good purposes in the community since its inauguration in 1978. From this standpoint, my conclusion is that the completion and sustainability of the Weh water scheme, alongside its accomplishments in over thirty years, constitute a record of unusual achievement in self-help.

However, a lot still has to be done to properly manage the scheme by addressing problems originating from population growth and the expansion of the village. Thus, the ambition of the Weh elites should be to cautiously manage the scheme and extend its distribution system. One possibility is that once the stringent and cautious management of the project slackens, it may actually decline. Indeed,

the sustenance of this project in the future depends on the strength and commitment of the Weh people to contribute annually for its upkeep and expansion. The Weh people should therefore emulate the example of the Nso people by creating a body charged with the day-to-day management of the project. It should be noted that the Kumbo Water Authority was created in 1991 with the responsibility of operating and managing the town's water system. In fact, the Weh people must bear in mind that the collapse of the scheme would undermine the principle of self-help and the community's reputation for delivering similar projects.

The water catchments and the storage tank should be protected from those who might tamper with the quality of the water. Indeed, the fear is that a poisonous substance can be dropped into the ill-protected catchments and tank and this will affect the entire village. Since only one catchment is supplying the village with water, it is necessary for the standby catchment to be put into use. Besides, the construction of a new storage tank and standpipes in the recently emerged neighbourhoods like Ntsangha, Ibih and Kelang is a dire need. Further, the abandoned shower houses and stores should be revamped and put into effective use. Above all, the users of the scheme need to be sensitised, and the WDC and managers have to acquire a new awareness of the costs and benefits of what they do. These recommendations follow the working of the successful Kumbo Water Authority and should not, therefore, be ignored by the Weh elites.

1. M. K. Lang, 'A Study of Basel Missionary Activities and its Contributions in the Development of the Wum Region 1903-1957', Maitrise Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde I, 2005, p. 22.
2. For a discussion of the political organisation and institutions of Weh, see C. Geary, 'The Weh Chiefdom in Menchum Division', paper presented at CNRS's Symposium on the Contribution of Ethnographic Research to the History of Civilisations in Cameroon, Paris, 24-28 September 1973, pp. 2-8.
3. A more complete discussion of the development of the Cameroon federation and the birth of the unitary system is given by W. Johnson, *The Cameroon Federation*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970.
4. On the problems of water supply in Menchum Division in general, the best available source is P. Acham's report 'Problems of Water Supply in Wum Rural Council', dated 25 March 1966.
5. See K. Wehrle's report on SATA's 'Activities in Cameroon', dated June 1972.
6. J. K. Deh, 'Weh Water Supply', Professional Diploma Dissertation, Community Development School Kumba, 1983, p. 12.
7. Divisional Archives Wum, Fon Phillip Bama I's address, presented on the occasion of the visit of SATA's director to Weh on 8 April 1976.
8. It is worth mentioning that Simon Ngha was a parliamentarian in the National Assembly. The general expectation was that he could use his national and international connections to lobby funds for the water scheme. After Fon Bama I's death in May 1976, Ngha succeeded him as Fon Simon Ngha Nji II.
9. For a more elaborate discussion of the conditions under which the DCD assisted rural projects in Cameroon, see A. Njoh, 'Self-Help, a Viable Non-Conventional Urban Public Service Delivery Strategy: Lessons from Cameroon', <http://www.unhabitat.org/grhs/2009>
10. Deh, 'Weh Water Supply'. Other executive members of the WDC included Solomon Emboua, Joseph Che Mebeng and Akwo Tahheart.
11. See K. Wehrle's report dated June 1972.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid. Interview with Tahheart Akwo, Former Executive Member of WDC, Weh, 23 July 2009.
14. See K. Wehrle's report, dated June 1972.
15. Deh, 'Weh Water Supply'.
16. Interview with Schneider Ngha, Carpenter, Weh, 24 July 2009.
17. See K. Wehrle's report dated June 1972.
18. Divisional Archives Wum, Fon Phillip Bama I's address, 8 April 1976.

19. See K. Wehrle's report dated June 1972.
20. See Deh, 'Weh Water Supply'.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Data relating to the activities of the caretakers was gathered from the leader of the team, Stephen Kum. Generally, he recounted the nature of his job and the difficulties he encountered.
24. See A. Njoh, 'Self-Help, a Viable Non-Conventional Urban Public Service Delivery Strategy: Lessons from Cameroon', <http://www.unhabitat.org/grhs/2009>
25. A similar situation was witnessed in Kumbo-Nso where the people refused to consider donors as owners of their water supply scheme. Consequently, they staged a violent protest in 1991 when the Cameroon government took over the water scheme and placed it under the defunct National Water Corporation, more popularly known by its French acronym, SNEC (Société Nationale d'Eaux du Cameroun). They successfully took over the project from SNEC and established the Kumbo Water Authority to manage it. For a further discussion of this particular them, see A. Njoh, 'Determinants of Success in Community Self-help Projects: the Case of Kumbo Water Supply Scheme in Cameroon', *International Development Planning Review*, No. 28 (3), 2006, pp. 381-406, and O. Sendze, *History of the Kumbo Water Supply*, Bamenda, Gospel Press, 2002.
26. Interview with Bun Buh Cheghe, retired CDC Worker, Weh, 23 July 2009.
27. Deh, 'Weh Water Supply'.
28. Interview with Bun Buh Cheghe, 23 July 2009. It is worth noting that this period was marked by suspicion between Weh and her neighbours due to boundary disputes.



# Succession Crisis in Chieftaincy Institutions in the Northwest Region of Cameroon: The Case of Zhoa Chiefdom 1910-2008

The chieftaincy institution has been an important element in the history of Cameroon's traditional political system. Rules governing succession to this institution were highly respected in the pre-colonial period. It was considered a taboo to go against the established norms and no one could dare challenge the candidacy of the rightful heir, and much less the authority of those in power. With the coming of colonialism, things took a different turn with the position of the chief being challenged. The article examines the evolution of the chieftaincy-crisis in Zhoa between the Weachekea led by the Zuns and Weaneghe under the patronage of Che Meh. It also gives an insight into the impact of the crisis on the chiefdom and comes to the conclusion that these conflicts greatly retard development. It also contends that delay by the administration in taking decisions is a constant threat to the peace and stability of such communities.



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## Introduction

The chieftaincy institution has always been bedevilled by conflict in Africa. Where this institution is affected, the socio-political and socio-economic lives of the people are also greatly affected.<sup>1</sup> The authority of the chief is not left out as some setbacks on the customs and traditions of the people come in. Unity is difficult as those involved remain intransigent and find it difficult to budge from their demands and positions. In most cases there is no headway as the spirit of reconciliation is far-fetched. This has been recurrent in some chiefdoms of the Northwestern Region of Cameroon.<sup>2</sup>

These chieftaincy crises are not new as it has been intrinsic since colonial times.<sup>3</sup> In Zhoa, the Germans had the first taste of such a conflict<sup>4</sup> after the disappearance<sup>5</sup> of Beng Meh Sein in 1910 and the subsequent struggle for succession between Zun Meh Achokum and Anjei Sein. None of them were from the royal family. The British also had to suffer when they took over the administration of the territory in 1916. In 1921 the problem was solved and Meh Achokum's candidacy was upheld. His reign was not the best or most peaceful, as his position and actions were contested by a majority of his people, and in 1943 he was dethroned and Meh Beng took his place.

This succession row was carried over to the post-colonial period and the Zuns once more flexed muscles with Che Meh, son of Meh Beng, in 1994 and the struggle continued unabated till 2008 when the divisional administration refused to entertain any complaint on the matter and declared that Che Meh was the undisputable chief of Zhoa. However, on his 'moving on' the Zun's took over power and ruled for two consecutive terms just like their counterparts, a decision that was rejected by kingmakers, laying the foundation for future crises.

The struggle over succession had a serious impact on social cohesion and the development of the chiefdom. It is therefore necessary to carry out a study of this crisis and look back into the history of the chiefdom. This will serve as a departure point for the protagonists to examine whether their claims are justified. This will also serve as a guide to the administration and all actors involved in the management of such conflicts in Cameroon in general and the Northwest Region in particular.

Zhoa is the headquarter of the Fungom sub-division in the Menchum Division of Northwest Region of Cameroon. It is situated between latitude 6°N and 7°N and longitude 9°E and 10°E and her neighbours to the North and North East are the Esu and Mekaf respectively, and Kumfutu in the South.<sup>6</sup>

## Historical Background

The people living here are Tikars. They migrated from Bornu in Northeastern Nigeria together with a large Tikar population under Mbum to an area near present day Ngoundere of the Adamawa region of Cameroon. From here, they moved to the boundaries of Banyo and Bamum.<sup>7</sup> They further journeyed to the South and settled in the Ndop plain which they called Ndobbo. Their next destination was the Bamenda Hill, present-day Bamenda Hill Up Station. They were however dislodged by an earthquake and moved to an area inhabited by the Bafut. They objected subjugation by the latter and moved to Weh and occupied the present-day Azoh Quarter.<sup>8</sup> The attitude of Weh was such that they could not remain in the settlement and thus moved to Ndze Sai.

The Weh stabbed the Zhoa children to death using knives when the parents of the latter were off to their farms. At Ndze Sai, the Weh continued with such acts and this was unbearable as the Zhoa decided to move to their present site.<sup>9</sup>

They were led by Akah Nyieh into this new settlement. To put an end to the claims for leadership or succession of his descendants to the supreme authority of the chiefdom in future, his brothers killed all his male children. With only women survivors as his immediate family, he chose one of his daughters and instructed her to crown her first son as the Chief of Zhoa.<sup>10</sup> This was against the custom and tradition of the Zhoa and most societies in the Western Grasslands of Cameroon where succession was paternal. Upon his death, the daughter got married to the Weanenghe quarter and this union between the Weanyieh and the Weanenghe resulted in the birth of Dun who was immediately crowned the Chief of Zhoa. With this, authority moved from the Weanyieh to the Weanenghe family.<sup>11</sup>

Dun ruled Zhoa and upon his disappearance, his son Chezelle succeeded. Before succeeding the throne, he had moved to the Weachekea quarter where he created his own residence. When he came to

power, he remained there but alternated his residence between the two quarters. He made sure that all traditional rites were performed at Weanenghe in consonance with the customs and traditions of the people and no efforts were made in transferring the palace to his quarter. However, moving into compromise with the *Ndau Ntoit* (House of Notables), the *Kweifor*<sup>12</sup> was transferred from the Weanenghe to Weachekea quarter.

On his disappearance, Meh Sein, his brother, who was resident in Weanenghe took over. Oral evidence holds that his reign was not the best as he was accused of killing his nephew through witchcraft. Sasswood poison was administered to him to prove his innocence according to the customs of Zhoa. However, this proved him guilty and he died in the process.<sup>13</sup> Another school of thought believes that he was executed by the people because of the atrocities committed against them. Some even argue that he was burnt alive.<sup>14</sup> What is clear is that his reign ended prematurely because he never ruled well and left power unceremoniously, in line with the laws of the land.

The vacuum created by his 'passing on' was filled by Njueinde who was an influential figure in the reign of Meh Sein. Because of Meh Sein's advanced age he handed over the governing of the chiefdom to Njueinde but retained his authority over *Kweifor*. This was not long before he disappeared.<sup>15</sup> Popular opinion holds that Njueinde was autocratic and ruled with an iron hand. He never consulted his council of elders nor his people before taking any major decisions. As a result, the people rose against him and he was burnt alive.

Beng Meh Sein, the son of Meh Sein, took over and was looked upon with great expectation by his people, but his reign was short-lived. This was during the German colonial regime, and relations between the Zhoa and the Germans were not the best. The burning of Njueinde was not welcomed by the Germans. The destruction of crops on the Kung farms by Zhoa warriors returning from an expedition against the Munka inflamed the Germans. When a report was made by the Kung, a punitive expedition was launched against the Zhoa in 1910, where many were arrested, tortured and killed. Beng Meh Sein was imprisoned at the Bamenda prison and died in exile.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Disappearance of Beng Meh Sein and the Quest for Succession**

With the throne vacant, two claimants emerged, Zun Meh Achokum, son of Njueinde, and Anjei Sein, nephew of Beng Meh Sein. As mentioned earlier, they both claimed their right to succeed, but neither of them was welcomed by the people. None satisfied the conditions of inheritance in the chiefdom. Also none could prove that they were related to or came from the same patrilineal family of the 'disappeared' chief. Zun argued that since his father had once been chief he had a right to the throne. This justification was questioned because his father was not from the royal family and only took advantage of the advanced age and death of Beng Meh Sein in usurping power as elaborated above. Hence, the rota system was only a weapon to foster his quest for the supreme authority of Zhoa. Anjei on his part bickered that he was brought up in the palace by his uncle Beng Meh Sein and not only seen as a son but won his confidence and was designated heir apparent. Of the two, Anjei drew very little attention from the people who made it clear that inheritance in Zhoa was not maternal.<sup>17</sup>

As the dilemma raged on, some kingmakers favoured Zun but during deliberations, one of the notables, Meh Ndze, asked the question, 'were the mbambara groundnuts well boiled?'<sup>18</sup> This was because some of the people supported Zun, but Meh Ndze and other notables feared that Zun could move into the shoes of his father. With the wrangling going on, the Weh Native court<sup>19</sup> brought sanity, as claims of Anjei were quashed and that of Zun upheld by Chief Ndze Bie<sup>20</sup> of Weh who presided over the case.<sup>21</sup> Hence, the ensuing feud between Zun and Anjei could only be abated with the creation of the Weh Native Court by the British in 1921. With this, the Zhoa had no choice but to accept Zun on the premise that he would amend the wrongs of his father.

However, it is alleged that his reign was marked by a spirit of discontent and frustration as he ruled with an iron hand. His detractors were fast to conclude that this was to avenge the killing of his father. Immediately after he took over power, *Ndau Ntoit* was moved from Weanenghe to Weachekea. It is believed that this act was not only in total violation of the customs and traditions of Zhoa, but abominable and caused much havoc to the well-being of the people. Libations carried out in the new shrine were not accepted by ancestors and the gods. As a result, infertility loomed among women.

Popular opinion holds that women became infertile and many died mysteriously, especially newborn males. In order to protect their male children from his wrath, parents hid the identity of their children. Boys were given female names and in that way, they were spared as he believed they were girls. A case in point was Bota Tem, who was given the name Ghai.<sup>22</sup> While this was going on, it was further alleged that his wives were very fertile and bore children.

Two schools of thought have developed regarding the cause of these strange happenings in Zhoa. One believed that this was caused by the transfer of the shrine. The other school held that witchcraft was responsible. If the transfer of the shrine was the cause, his wives would also have been affected. As a result many were fast to conclude that he bewitched other women to become infertile.<sup>23</sup> It is believed that 'like father like son' he wanted his descendants to dominate the chiefdom in future.

Antagonism ran high and his detractors waited for an opportunity to strike, since they knew too well that the heavy hand of the British colonial administration would fall on them. They seemed to have learnt from the treatment they received from the Germans after the execution of Njueinde in 1910. They needed enough justification for his dethronement and the time came when a tiger was ravaging and killing their goats at night. The Zhoa warriors succeeded in killing it and when Zun's son, Kenah Ndze, died simultaneously, more problems surfaced as many interpreted this to mean that it was he who had transformed himself into the tiger.<sup>24</sup>

In the scuffle with the tiger, two warriors were wounded. Attempting to relieve them of their pains, Njueinde administered medicine on their wounds but they died. It was believed that these substances were poisonous and through this, some of his subjects believed that he had succeeded in avenging the death of his son. Tensions flared up and this was further intensified by the sudden death of a young man who was returning from his raffia palm plantation.

This was interpreted as a handiwork of Zun. To settle their differences, efforts were made by the elders in organising a meeting with the chief at Weanenghe Palace but Zun never showed up. This repeated itself three times and he paid no heed to them. Fearing for his safety, a report was made to the court scribe in Zhoa and later to the D/O for Bamenda Division that his subjects were planning to eliminate him. He further held that his compound had been vandalised with the shutters and windows of his house destroyed. The D/O in turn sent policemen to protect him while planning for a visit to Zhoa. The presence of these policemen in Zhoa brought memories of the punitive expedition launched by the Germans in 1910. All these incidents took place in 1943 and every one who could be laid hands on by the police were arrested and taken to Zun's compound where they were flogged pending the arrival of the D/O.<sup>25</sup>

Before this episode, the people were informed by the court scribe for Zhoa that Zun would soon be arriving with policemen from Bamenda. Knowing so well what this entailed, they decided to send a team to Bamenda to plead their case before the D/O. They informed the D/O of all the misdeeds and atrocities committed by Zun. In order to put an end to the torture going on in Zhoa, the D/O dispatched a note instructing the police to take caution and stop taking orders from Zun. However, he had to be protected against any reprisal from his people until his arrival.<sup>26</sup>

With the arrival of the D/O, the discord between Zun and his subjects had widened to an irreparable situations. Investigations were carried out to establish the truth about the matter and he discovered that Zun's claims were false. He had neither been attacked nor was his compound vandalised. In order to ascertain the allegations of the people against Zun, he visited the site of *Ndau Ntoit* and saw that it lay in ruins.

Stories of torture and atrocities were recounted to him against Zun and immediately, judges of the Zhoa Native Court were called upon to adjudicate on the matter.<sup>27</sup> They found Zun guilty of perpetuating impious acts against his people and going against the customs and traditions which he as custodian was supposed to protect. He was asked to make amends by providing his people with goats, pigs, fowls and wine, and beg for forgiveness. In this way, the chiefs or judges thought that peace and calm would return while Zun continued as the chief of the Zhoa.<sup>28</sup>

It is strongly held that Zun was not ready for all these. Besides, the Zhoa people rejected any move that could restore his authority over them. Without the support of the people, judges and the D/O, he was dethroned and Meh Beng enthroned in his stead as mentioned earlier. This was in July, 1943.<sup>29</sup>



He was exiled to Esu by the administration and later proceeded to Wum and lived under the Chief of Zonghekwo until his death in 1955 and was buried in Zhoa.<sup>30</sup>

The departure of Zun and the coming of Meh Beng, the son of Beng Meh Sein from Weanenghe brought hope to the people. He was welcomed by all and his reign was that of prosperity as fertility among women increased, crop production soared and he did all he could to reconcile the aggrieved sectors of his chiefdom and correct the wrongs of the past. He stayed in power for fifty two years and 'moved on' on 27 September 1994.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Rejection of Che Meh Chrysantus by the Weachekea and Intensification of Crisis**

With the 'disappearance' of Meh Beng I, the kingmakers had to present the next Chief to the people and a stalemate arose in that process. The Weachekea quarter argued that the next leader should come from them and presented Zun James<sup>32</sup> as their choice while the Weanenghe presented Che Meh Chrysantus, the son of Meh Beng. The candidature of Zun was not welcomed by a cross-section of the population. According to Pa Bota Tem and Bin Francis, everyone expected Ngea (senior kingmaker and quarter head of Weachekea and also their eldest brother) to present their own candidate to the throne.<sup>33</sup> Zun James was presented against their wishes as they expected one of the descendants of Chezelle to be nominated. However, with the support of the offspring of Njueinde, Zun was presented as their candidate.<sup>34</sup> With this, the choice of the Weanenghe was privileged and supported by the *Ndau Ntoit*.

The quarters of Weafit, Weananghe and Weanyong also supported him strongly and accepted the new choice as they feared that the ascension of any of the descendants of Njueinde will bring back old-time memories and the spirit of revenge on the part of their leader or his son, as well as the people. Weachekea kingmakers were powerless before this popular demand. Pa Bota Tem could not understand why his brother insisted on the candidature of the Zuns and was of the opinion that a shady deal must have changed hands between his brother and the Zuns.

Zun James rejected this allegation and argued that Ngea understood the history of succession as this was rotatory between the Weanenghe and Weachekea and only did what he did because it was their turn to the throne. Without that, the *Ndau Ntoit* approved the choice of Che Meh and led him to a shrine to pass the night there.<sup>35</sup> Immediately after this, he was crowned and presented to the administration on 21 October 1994. He was welcomed by the D/O for Fungom Sub-Division, Ngwang Pepanza Joseph, who called on the Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) for Menchum to confirm him.<sup>36</sup>

Immediately after this, tempers flared up in Weachekea as those (kingmakers) that participated in the coronation rites from Weachekea were castigated. Bota Tem participated in the exercise and believed that, the Zhoa people had taken the decision and he could not be indifferent, though the throne had evaded or slipped off the hands of his quarter. John Zoh also participated in discussions and deliberations in relation to the coronation rites but surprisingly, in the ushering-in ceremony of Che Meh into *Ndau Ntoit*, he was nowhere to be found.<sup>37</sup> His quick retreat down to Weachekea paved the way for the victimisation of Bota. He was accused of being indifferent to the course of the entire quarter and was warned never to show up in subsequent events. After this intimidation, he and John Zoh never identified themselves with Weanenghe and the crowned chief. With this, they joined the other two kingmakers from Weachekea, Mukunda and Ngea Tem who opposed the candidature of Che Meh from the very onset and became strong opponents to his authority.<sup>38</sup>

The installation of the Che Meh by the sub-divisional administration was previewed for 6 December 1994.<sup>39</sup> This was unacceptable to the Weachekea. Unsuccessfully, they called on the SDO to caution the D/O not to go ahead with the installation.<sup>40</sup> This was not heeded to as he went ahead with the installation exercise as envisaged. This provoked a tense atmosphere in the Chiefdom. In Weachekea, people were warned and advised to keep away from the ceremonial grounds in Weanenghe. The supporters of the Zuns were ready for any showdown. Many feared and remained at home. The force of seclusion or what could be better described as an 'apartheid like situation' now surfaced and only the quarters of Weanyong, Weafit and Weanenghe showed up for the ceremony. The scenario became so tense that things were not to be the same again in Zhoa as the Zuns and their supporters refused to acknowledge the authority of Che Meh.

In a bid to force the Weachekea into accepting the authority of Che Meh, the quarters of

Weanenghe, Weafit and Weanyong decided to take the bull by its horn. Some of the Weachekea were rounded up, manhandled and taken to the palace of Che Meh. Prominent among them were Mukunda, Samuel Ketoum, Francis Fuh and Monday Meh among other influential persons in Weachekea who were believed to be too critical of the authority of Che Meh and were misleading the people. They remained under detention for the whole night and were asked to pay allegiance and promise respect and recognition of Che Meh before they could be released. They could only win their freedom when Mukunda tricked them that he needed to consult his people before succumbing to their demands.

This act by the supporters of Che Meh prompted the intervention of the State Counsel for the Wum Divisional High Court who warned that further illegal arrests and detentions would call for the heavy hand of the law on the perpetrators of such acts and this died a natural death without Mukunda and his people openly professing for Che Meh.<sup>41</sup>

The squabbles between the Weanenghe and the Weachekea quarters pressed on both sides and the Weachekea were ready to do whatever they could to dethrone Che Meh. Without success, they tried to enthrone Zun Jerome as a counter measure on 14 October 1995 but this was banned by the D/O.<sup>42</sup> With inflexibility from both camps, the situation deteriorated and it was feared that an open confrontation would erupt.

This almost happened when the chiefs of Menchum admitted Che Meh into their conference and presented by Chief Meh Buh of Esu, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Union of the fons of Menchum, to the governor as the rightful heir to the throne of Zhoa.<sup>43</sup> On his return to Zhoa, he claimed to have been given the green light by the governor and this was a triumph over his adversaries. He therefore planned for a victory celebration on 15 November 1995.<sup>44</sup> The Weachekea cried foul and saw this as a provocation and it was banned by the administration for it could have led to the breach of peace.<sup>45</sup>

After a long hesitation and foot-dragging on the matter, the SDO for Menchum decided to put an end to the suspense and on 25 October 1996, Che Meh Chrisanctus was confirmed as the chief of Zhoa.<sup>46</sup> This was again reiterated and enforced by a Prefectural Order on 15 May 1997.<sup>47</sup>

### **Che Meh Acknowledged by the Senior Divisional Officer and the Declaration of Autonomy by the Weachekea**

The recognition of Che Meh by the SDO brought another twist in the chieftaincy struggle as the Weachekea enthroned Zun Jerome as chief of Zhoa on 16 August 1997.<sup>48</sup> This was to rival the position of Che Meh as they were strongly convinced that the throne belonged to them and argued that this could never be relinquished to another person irrespective of the consequences. The throne had been stolen from them by the administration, they claimed.

With each side struggling to push forward their case and coupled with the failure of the Weachekea to win or impress on the administration not to recognise Che Meh, they decided to cut-off from Zhoa and establish an independent Chiefdom. They called on the administration to recognise Weachekea as a village but this was ignored.<sup>49</sup> Disagreement and division intensified as John Zoh, Bota Tem and Mukunda intensified their boycott of the council of notables until their death with the exception of Bota who later returned to the *Ndau Ntoit* and damned the consequences after paying a fine of one goat and four jugs of wine to the society. This boycott from any form of association with the Weanenghe also extended to the women. For instance, Sah Kam, the Queen Mother of Weachekea and wife of John Zoh, also boycotted the *Kefap* society.<sup>50</sup>

Things became more frustrating when the supporters of Weachekea started initiating members into the *Ukum* society in Weachekea. This was usually done in a unique shrine at the palace in Weanenghe. The declaration of autonomy or independence from the chiefdom now made it possible for them to carry out their initiation rites at the compound of Bin Francis. This was true in the case of Kum Buh Joseph, Meh Solomon and Ngang Emmanuel that were initiated here in 2000.<sup>51</sup> This was new in the history of Zhoa and for the first time, initiations were taking place out of the shrine in Weanenghe. The *Ndau Noit* saw this as sacrilege and petitioned the D/O who authorised them. This had no effect as the initiations continued unabated.

This struggle had a negative impact on the development of Zhoa as many Weachekea sons and

daughters refused participation in the development projects of the Zhoa Development and Cultural Association (ZDCA).<sup>52</sup> A good example was their refusal to participate in the construction of the Zhoa Community Hall and classrooms at the Government Secondary School. They argued that until their problem was looked into they would not partake in such projects and this became a source of conflict in the future.<sup>53</sup>

Those whose family members were resident in both quarters were caught in the web as their kin and kiths became suspicious of each other. Each feared any close association with their brothers and sisters from the other side of the fence. This was to avoid the wrath of their people and elders and not to be looked upon or suspected as spies. Hence, family members and friends could not meet freely and social cohesion became lacking.

Arrests and detentions followed for those who constantly flouted the D/O's orders and for the breach of peace. It is worthy of note that, some were arrested for defamation and personification and others for holding illegal meetings in contravention of the orders of the administration. Zun Jerome, Zun James and Ning Hycinth were victims and suffered many arrests and detentions. Some were constantly called in for questioning by the Gendarmes, like the case of Kum Senseboy, for hosting illegal meetings in relation to the chieftaincy crisis.<sup>54</sup> These and other examples abound. The simple truth is that people lived in perpetual fear for one never knew when he would be picked up by the security forces. People were personified in petitions. For instance, the son of Mukunda purported to be his father had warned the director of Orange Cameroon of the North West region to stop the construction of a transmission antenna in Weachekea and this delayed the project. In a disclaimer Mukunda frowned at this diabolic attitude and called on the company to go ahead with the construction exercise.<sup>55</sup>

With the matter at the Wum High Court and the administrative Bench of the Supreme Court, though without any convincing resolution of the crisis, the ZDCA in October 2007, called on all sides to put aside their differences and solve the matter amicably for the sake of peace and development.<sup>56</sup> A meeting to that effect was therefore organised on 24 November 2007.<sup>57</sup>

### **Failed Reconciliation Attempts and the Entrenchment of the Fracas**

With a call from the ZDCA, one would have thought that it was time for the sons and daughters of Zhoa to patch up their differences and live as one and work for the development of their chiefdom, but this was not the case. The meeting attended by kingmakers from the two quarters saw the presence of Mukunda Kumbu, Bota Tem, Zun James and Ngang Emmanuel from Weachekea and Abengong Tem, Marling Mvo, Ivo Bin Mvo and Jonathan Kpwe from Weanenghe. They were charged with the responsibility of bringing a lasting solution to the moribund problem plaguing Zhoa over the years. However, there was no headway as the two sides of the conflict gave varying views as to what aspired in the long-awaited reconciliation meeting.

According to the Weachekea, the agenda of the meeting was the issue of the duration of Che Meh on the throne. They reported that the kingmakers of Weanenghe openly confessed to them that they had erred in bringing Che Meh to power. They further opined that kingmakers of Weachekea were joined by Jonathan Kpwe in calling for the dethronement of Che Meh and the recognition of Zun Jerome as the undisputed chief of Zhoa. To them, the deal could not be finalised because the Weanenghe did not come with palm wine that would be shared after and the meeting was postponed to 7 December 2007.<sup>58</sup>

The subject of the meeting as presented by the Weachekea had been rejected by the Weanenghe kingmakers. They argued that when the issue of the debate was introduced by the Weachekea, they immediately left the venue as this had to do with the dethronement of Che Meh and never did they agree to meet again or to discuss that subject matter. They argued that the next meeting was on the accord of the Weachekea and not generally accepted by the kingmakers of Weanenghe.<sup>59</sup>

The Weachekea held that they arrived on the same venue on 7 December but the Weanenghe with the exception of Jonathan Kpwe never showed up. This was at Bun Kechem's house and they waited for eight hours. Instead, Che Meh passed through the venue to Abengong's compound and stayed there while they waited for their counterparts in vain. This was outrageous to the Weachekea kingmakers. Emmanuel Ngang (one of the Weachekea kingmakers) was even dispatched to inform Abengong Tem that they were still waiting for him and his fellow kingmakers. This plea fell on deaf ears as Abengong

advised that the Weachekea kingmakers retire back to their homes and declared that they would never participate in such meetings again. With this, they labelled the Weanenghe as people who were not ready for peace, reconciliation and justice in Zhoa in a petition to the D/O.

This meeting and petition against the kingmakers of Weanenghe stirred up trouble once more as the *Ndau Ntoit* was so bitter about the Weachekea. In reaction, they castigated the kingmakers who turned up for the second meeting as people whose actions were constantly provocative; and aimed at plunging Zhoa into war. In a counter petition to the D/O they argued that talks concerning the institution of the chieftain and its candidature as well as its authority could only be discussed in the *Ndau Ntoit* and not in private or individual homes. Any discussion in relation to that outside the *Ndau Ntoit* was termed unlawful. They denounced all those involved as misguided fellows who had arrogated to themselves the position of kingmakers. This was in total violation of the customs and traditions of Zhoa, they insinuated.

They were so cross that they described their actions as ‘barbaric, satanic and diabolic’. They concluded that their mission was not peace but to dethrone Che Meh. They further made the D/O understand that Mukunda who was constantly signing such petitions was a stooge to some indigenes and was constantly manipulated in order to hinder the progress and development of the chiefdom. This also had a negative effect on the conciliatory spirit that was gradually winning ground in the chiefdom by constantly petitioning the administration against Che Meh. Mukunda was one hundred and ten years old and by the nature of his age was used like a toy by these fellows to achieve their aims, they argued.<sup>60</sup>

Accusations and counter accusations widened the gap between both sides and the whole idea of reconciliation collapsed like a house of cards. The hope of a peaceful and amicable solution to the crisis had fallen and the two protagonists now only looked unto a third party, the administration, to once more arbitrate. In a meeting held on 28 March 2008, the administration of Menchum Division made it clear to both parties that there was no turning back. Che Meh had to continue serving as the Chief and upon his ‘disappearance’, the Weachekea will also hold the throne for two consecutive terms as discussed earlier.<sup>61</sup> In this way, the SDO, thought peace would reign.

However, this was denounced by some kingmakers and notables. They argued that the decision of the SDO was not in line with the customs and traditions of the people. This was faulty as never in the history of Zhoa had it been pronounced beforehand the quarter or family from where the next leader should come from or who it will be. Such was dangerous as this could lead to witch-hunting and the subsequent elimination of chief Che Meh. Hence, this was to put the life of the reigning chief in jeopardy. They further held that only those families whose ancestors were buried in the royal tomb could have access to the throne. The pronouncement by the SDO was also at fault as they argued that the mention of Weachekea as a whole was unacceptable for not all its residents were from the royal family.<sup>62</sup> This never unravelled the crisis and the future of this institution remains bleak.

## Conclusion

This study reveals that the disappearance of Beng Meh Sein and the struggle for succession by Zun Meh Achokum and Anjei laid the foundations for the succession crisis that rocked Zhoa. Though the struggle between the two ended up in favour of Achokum, contest to his authority continued until 1943, when he was dethroned in favour of Meh Beng, whose reign witnessed relative calmness. However, his ‘passing on’ in 1994 reignited the succession predicament as the Zuns contested the choice of his son, Che Meh Chrysanctus, a move that lasted until 2008 when the administration took a firm decision on the matter. The resultant effect of the crisis over the years was division and instability that had a negative impact on the development of the Zhoa.

1. Gamel A.M. Aganah, “The Effects of Chieftaincy Conflicts on Local Development: The Case of the Bawku East Municipality”, *Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Peace and Conflict Transformation*, University of Tromso, 2008.
2. For details see H.K. Kam, “Leadership Fuss in Bu Chiefdom, North West Province, Cameroon 1942 – 2001”, *Epasa Moto*, A bilingual Journal of Arts, Letters and the Humanities, University of Buea,



- Volume 3 No. 2, December 2008; S. Ewi, “Chieftaincy Dispute in Bu, Laimbwe Clan 1942-2001”, *M.A. Dissertation in History*, University of Yaounde I, 2008. E.M. Shaibu, “Chieftaincy Succession in Ashong 1870-1999: A History of Turbulence”, *DIPES II in History*, ENS Yaounde, 2000. See also North West Regional Archives (NWRA) File No. W/HA 1976/1, Chieftaincy Matters 1976-1986; File No. NW/Hg, 1960/1, Bamessing (Ndop Area Chieftaincy Dispute, 1960-1963; File No. NW/4b, 1959, Chieftaincy Dispute, Bamessing, Mezam, 1959-1960; File No. W/Hb, 1964/1, Chieftaincy Dispute, Bambui, Bamenda Division, 1964; File No. NW/Hb, 1971/1, Chieftaincy Dispute, Santa-Akum, 1971. See also Wum Divisional Archives, WDM465 Vol. 1, Missong Village Headship, 1958.
3. Humanitarian news and Analysis, “Ghana: Why is the North Blighted by Chieftaincy Disputes”, *A Project of the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, Retrieved, 27 December 2009; Gamel, “The Effects”; Koffi Akasah – Sarpong, “Refining Chieftaincy for Progress”, in [www.GhanaDot.com](http://www.GhanaDot.com). Retrieved on 27 December 2007.
  4. National Archives (NAB), Ad(1927)15, No. SP4583, Wum District Reorganisation, 1927, p.2.
  5. In the tradition of the Western Grasslands of Cameroon, a Chief never dies but is believed to have ‘moved over’ to meet the ancestors. It is taboo to use the word dead as he is described as having ‘disappeared’, ‘missing’, ‘the sun has set’, ‘moved on’, ‘fire is out’ among others.
  6. B.G. Nsakabo, “Socio Economic Report of Menchum Division, Divisional Delegation of the Economy”, *Planning and Regional Development*, 2008, p. 3.
  7. The Zhoa call it Bangndze and it is believed to be between the confines of present day Bamum and Banyo.
  8. See P.M. Tem, “The Establishment of the Native Authority Administration and Developments in Fungom Area, 1928 – 1972”, *M.A. Dissertation in History*, University of Yaoundé I, 2005, pp.14 – 16.
  9. *Ibid.*, p.15; Nab, Ad (1923)14a, Notes of Late Mr. Gadman on the Administrative Problems of Wum District, Edited by C.J. Gregg, ADO, 1 July 1923, p. 8. All Zhoa elders interviewed are of this opinion and Sylvester Bong Akwa and Mbong Mbei (75 and 92 years respectively), elders in Weh, who were interviewed in 2002 and 2004 do not deny this. They even go further to argue that, the Weh treated them like conquered people and exacted tributes from them.
  10. It is believed that he had a lot trust and affection for this daughter and educated her on the various herbs that could be used in the coronation exercise of a chief. When a chief is being crowned, special herbs are mixed with water and used in cleaning him. This is to purify him as he is now looked upon not as any normal being but fill with special powers in communicating with the ancestors. Without that, he is not deemed fit to handle his portfolios and his authority is questionable.
  11. Interview with Che Meh II, Chief of Zhoa, 22 October 2009; Alexander Che, 51 years, Quarter head, Weanyieh, 22 October 2009; Che Alexander is an off springs of Aka Nyieh and Che Meh is direct descendant of Dun. This view is also supported by the Weachekea and all the elders discussed with. This move could not be challenged because it is the custom and tradition of the Zhoa that once the rightful procedure is used in crowning an individual whether from the royal family or not, he is deemed untouchable and the mouth piece of the ancestors.
  12. This is a regulatory society that enforces the orders of the Chief and serves as the police force of the Chieftaindom. This is found and common in most Chieftaindoms of the Grassland region of Cameroon.
  13. Interview with Marling Mvo, 86 years, kingmaker, Weanenghe, 18 November 2009; Ntang Fut Bie, 91 years, Weanyieh, Eldest man in Zhoa, 16 November 2009; Bota Tem, 76 years, Kingmaker, Weachekea, 7 January 2009; Bin Francis, 71 years, Elder, Weachekea, 8 November 2009.
  14. This view is led by Mukunda (quarter head of Wachekea) and the Zuns, through their numerous letters written to the administration justifying their claims to the stole.
  15. Interview with ; Ntang Fut Bie, 91 years, Weanyieh, Eldest man in Zhoa, 16 November 2009, Kenah Raymond, 70 years, Elder, Weanyong, Elder, 15 November 2009; Chuke Martha, 66 years, *Natum*, Weanyieh, 25 November 2009; Pepetua Ndum, 81 years, *Natum*, Weanyong, 25 November 2009; and Alexander Che, 51 years, Quarter head, Weanyieh, 22 October 2009; Abengong Tem, 96 years, Kingmaker, Weanenghe, 7 November 2009; Marling Mvo, , 86 years, kingmaker, Weanenghe, 18 November 2009; Bota Tem, 76 years, Kingmaker, Weachekea, 7 January 2009. He preferred

- relinquishing the throne than the *Kweifor* because this was associated with wealth. During harvest, much produce was handed to *kweifor*. The provision of fowls, goats, wine and pigs was so tempting and he preferred this to his chiefly powers.
16. Buea NAB, Ad10/EP6808, Fungom District Assessment Report, 1929, p.29; Tem, the Establishment of the Native Authority, p.27; Interview with Marling Mvo, 86 years, kingmaker, Weanenghe, 18 November 2009.
  17. Interview with Marling Mvo, 86 years, kingmaker, Weanenghe, 18 November 2009; ; Ntang Fut Bie, 91 years, Weanyieh, Eldest man in Zhoa, 16 November 2009; Bota Tem, 76 years, Kingmaker, Weachekea, 7 January 2009; Bin Francis, 71 years, Elder, Weachekea, 8 November 2009. Succession in some Chiefdoms in the area is maternal, that is, nephews inheriting their uncles. This is true in the case of Kuk and Kumfutu their neighbours. The Mme, Nyos, part of Kung and Fungom, all found in the Fungom sub division, Kom in Boyo division as well as the Aghem in Wum Central Sub division.
  18. Interview with Ntang Fut Bie, 91 years, Weanyieh, Eldest man in Zhoa, 16 November 2009, Kenah Raymond, 70 years, Elder, Weanyong, Elder, 15 November 2009; Chuke Martha, 66 years, *Natum*, Weanyieh, 25 November 2009; Pepetua Ndum, 81 years, *Natum*, Weanyong, 25 November 2009; and Alexander Che, 51 years, Quarter head, Weanyieh, 22 October 2009.
  19. This was instituted by the British and this took care of the Wum District in 1921 and Zhoa fell under the jurisdiction of this Court.
  20. He was a direct brother to Zun. The mother first got married to the chief of Weh, gave birth to Ndze before moving to Zhoa, married Njueinde and gave birth to Zun. His handling of the case was in relation to his position as one of the court's presidents.
  21. This is the view of all the elderly persons interviewed. The discord was such that an impasse could only come from the court.
  22. Marling Mvo, 86 years, kingmaker, Weanenghe, 18 November 2009; Ivo Bin Mvo, 51 years, Kingmaker, Weanenghe, 21 January 2010; Bota Tem, 76 years, Kingmaker, Weachekea, 7 January 2009.
  23. Interview with Ntang Fut Bie, 91 years, Weanyieh, Eldest man in Zhoa, 16 November 2009, Kenah Raymond, 70 years, Elder, Weanyong, Elder, 15 November 2009; Chuke Martha, 66 years, *Natum*, Weanyieh, 25 November 2009; Ma Pepetua Ndum, 81 years, *Natum*, Weanyong, 25 November 2009; and Che Alexander, 51 years, Quarter head, Weanyieh, 22 October 2009.
  24. Interview with Marling Mvo, 86 years, kingmaker, Weanenghe, 18 November 2009.
  25. Interview with Ntang Fut Bie, 91 years, Weanyieh, Eldest man in Zhoa, 16 November 2009, Pepetua Ndum, 81 years, *Natum*, Weanyong, 25 November 2005; and Marling Mvo, 86 years, kingmaker, Weanenghe, 18 November 2009.
  26. Interview with Marling Mvo, 86 years, kingmaker, Weanenghe, 18 November 2009
  27. The Weh Native Court was closed in 1928 and the Courts of Fungom, Wum and Bum created. Zhoa now fell under the jurisdiction of the Fungom Court and in 1936, the headquarters was moved to Zhoa.
  28. Interview with Abengong Tem, 96 years, Kingmaker, Weanenghe, 7 November 2009; Marling Mvo, 86 years, kingmaker, Weanenghe, 18 November 2009; Ivo Bin Mvo, 51 years, Kingmaker, Weanenghe, 21 January 2010; Bota Tem, 76 years, Kingmaker, Weachekea, 7 January 2009; Bin Francis, 71 years, Elder, Weachekea, 8 November 2009.
  29. Mark Sheets for Meh Beng I, 1966 and the Recognition Certificate of Meh Beng, 1966.
  30. Interview with Ntang Fut Bie. He was among those that carried him from Wum to Zhoa and was a nephew to Zun.
  31. Letter from the House of Notables (*Ndaw Ntoit*) to His Excellency, the Governor of the North West Province, Bamenda, 15th September, 1995.
  32. He is the son and grand son of Zun Meh Achokum and Njueinde respectively.
  33. According to the Zhoa tradition, candidates are presented to the *Ntoit* by the kingmakers from Weachekea and Weanenghe. It is the right of the *Ntoit* to accept or reject these choices.
  34. Interview with Bin Francis, 71 years, Elder, Weachekea, 8 November 2009; and Bota Tem, 76 years,

- Kingmaker, Weachekea, 7 January 2009.
35. This is shrine that is open only to members of the *Ntoit*. The nominee to the stool by tradition must sleep here for a night and if he succeeds in sleeping there till the next morning, it implies that he has been accepted by the ancestors and the gods. Oral evidence holds that, Tem Kai who claimed the right of succession at one time could not sleep there as he was driven out by the ancestors.
  36. Correspondence from the Divisional Officer, Fungom, to the Senior Divisional Officer, Menchum Division, 21st October 1994.
  37. All the members of *Ntoit* and kingmakers interviewed adhere to this.
  38. Interview with Bin Francis, 71 years, Elder, Weachekea, 8 November 2009; and Bota Tem, 76 years, Kingmaker, Weachekea, 7 January 2009; Abengong Tem, 96 years, Kingmaker, Weanenghe, 7 November 2009
  39. Letter from Chief Che Meh Chrisanctus II, to His Excellency, the Governor of the North West Province, Bamenda, 4 November, 1995.
  40. Correspondence from the Senior Divisional Officer for Menchum to the Sub Divisional Officer for Fungom, Ref. No. E.28/C.106/75, 3 December, 1994.
  41. Interview with Bota Tem, 76 years, Kingmaker, Weachekea, 7 January 2009; Bin Francis, 71 years, Elder, Weachekea, 8 November 2009. This is generally accepted by all those interviewed in Weanenghe.
  42. Sub prefectorial Order No. 9/95 Banning the Supposed Installation of a Chief in Weachekea Quarter of Zhoa Village in Fungom Sub Division, 06 October, 1995.
  43. It was strongly believed that the Weachekea were taking advantage of the vacuum providing by the non recognition and appointment of Che Meh as Chief of Zhoa. According to the laws governing the appointment and recognition of chiefs in Cameroon, it is the SDO or a prefectorial order that appoints a third class chief. Zhoa is a third class chiefdom. There was a strong conviction that the SDO had a hidden interest in the palaver and was playing delaying tactics to pass judgment on the contested stool.
  44. Letter from Mukunda Kumbu to the Senior Divisional Officer, Menchum Division, 12 November, 1995.
  45. Correspondence from Interim Secretary General at the North West Governor's Office, No. 2054/1/e/GNW.55/S.3/SG.-, 12 September, 1995.
  46. Minutes of a Consultative Meeting Held today the 25 October 1996 by the Prefect for Menchum Division in the Sub Divisional Office Zhoa – Fungom Sub Division Relating to the Chieftaincy Problem in Zhoa Village.
  47. Prefectorial Order No. 057/97 Bearing on the Homologation of Mr. Chrisanctus Che Meh as the Third Class Chief for Zhoa Village - Fungom Sun Division, 15 May, 1997.
  48. Letter from Mukunda Kumbu, Quarter Head of Weachekea to the Sub Divisional Officer, Fungom Sub Division, Menchum Division, 17 August 1997.
  49. Letter from Mukunda Chekain to the Senior Divisional Officer, Menchum Division through the Divisional Officer, Fungom Sub Division, 9 May 1997.
  50. Interview with ; Ntang Fut Bie, 91 years, Weanyieh, Eldest man in Zhoa, 16 November 200, Kenah Raymond, 70 years, Elder, Weanyong, Elder, 15 November 2009; Chuke Martha, 66 years, *Natum*, Weanyieh, 25 November 2009; Pepetua Ndum, 81 years, *Natum*, Weanyong, 25 November 2009; and Alexander Che, 51 years, Quarter head, Weanyieh, 22 October 2009; Abengong Tem, 96 years, Kingmaker, Weanenghe, 7 November 2009; Marling Mvo, , 86 years, kingmaker, Weanenghe, 18 November 2009; ; Bota Tem, 76 years, Kingmaker, Weachekea, 7 January 2009 This is a society of Queen mothers and the highest women society in the Chiefdom.
  51. Memorandum from the House of Notables (*Ndaw Ntoit*), through the Divisional Officer, Fungom Sub Division, to the Senior Divisional Officer, Menchum Division, 29 December 2000.
  52. Letter from Mukunda Kumbu to The Senior Divisional Officer, Menchum, through the Sub Prefect, Fungom Sub Division, 7 December, 2007.
  53. Hycinth Ning who was a vocal opponent to the Weanenghe, was deprived of using the in 2007 and a scuffle erupted between some Weachekea and Weanenghe youths. His crime was he refused

- alongside the Weachekea from taking part in the project when it was under construction. Again Oliver Zun (vice President of ZDCA), the son of Zun James, had tried in vane to renovate the hall with his personal money but was sent away by the Chief and some of his supporters.
54. See Report on the Recording of Statement from a Witness/Victim, P.V. 54 et 55/2008, File No. 2., Compagnie de Brigade Wum, Compagnie de Brigade Zhoa, 21 Mai 2008, for most of the arrests and statements taken; See also letter of Complain from Fon of Zhoa to the Brigade Commandant, National Gendarme Marie, Against Zun James Kebei for Defamation and impersonification; See also letter from Ning Hycinth to Chief Zun Jerome, 12 May, 2008.
  55. Letter from Mukunda Kumbu through the Divisional Officer, Fungom to the Director, Orange Cameroon, Bamenda, North West Province 16 October 2007; Correspondence from the Divisional Officer, Zhoa, to the Managing Director, Orange Cameroon, Bamenda, 16 October 2007.
  56. Letter from Mukunda Kumbu to The Senior Divisional Officer, Menchum, through the Sub Prefect, Fungom Sub Division, 7 December 2007; Letter from Mukunda Kumbu to The Senior Divisional Officer, Menchum, 4 April 2006; Letter from Mukunda Chekain to Divisional Officer, Fungom Sub Division, 26/02/2007; See Also WHC
  57. Letter from Mukunda Kumbu to The Senior Divisional Officer, Menchum, through the Sub Prefect, Fungom Sub Division, 7 December 2007.
  58. Ibid; Some new kingmakers had been appointed to replace John Zoh, Sunday Ngea, Menze De – ah and Thomas Kaw that participated in the coronation and the election exercise of Che Meh in 1994 and 1997 respectively. They had been replaced by Zun James, Ngang Emmanuel and Ivo Bin Mvo and Jonathan Kpwe who attended the meeting.
  59. This is the view of Ivo Bin, Marling Mvo and Abengong Tem, Kingmakers from Weanenghe.
  60. Letter from the House of Notables (*Ntoit*), Through the Divisional Officer, Fungom Sub Division, to the Senior Divisional Officer, Menchum Division, 20 December 2007.
  61. Minutes of Meeting Concerning the Chieftaincy of Zhoa Village on the 28/03/2008.
  62. Letter from Kingmakers/Notables, Zhoa Village, through the Divisional Officer, Fungom Sub Division, to the Senior Divisional Officer, Menchum, 28 April 2008.



# The Challenges of Development of Rural Infrastructure: Igbomina Experience in the Colonial and Postcolonial Era (1930-2000)

Prior to the imposition of European rule in Nigeria, means of communication were very poor, relying, as it did, mainly on head portorage and canoe transport in the forest zone, and on pack animals in the savannah belt. With the advent of British rule, the railway system was introduced to open the interior to European commerce. However, the development of infrastructure in the colonial era was limited to areas that were centres of commerce and governance. Igbominaland falling outside the focus of imperial commercial interest did not enjoy government patronage in developing its infrastructure. Consequently the development of Igbomina infrastructure was entirely left to community and private initiatives. The spirit of self development this engendered, propelled the people to lift their community from an obscure rural enclave to a place of considerable urban outlook, in terms of infrastructure. Therefore, the element of modernity found in Igbominaland today are traceable to community efforts. This paper focuses on the efforts of a rural community in developing its infrastructure and how this has brought an urban lifestyle to an otherwise rural enclave.



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## Introduction

The effective exploitation of African human and material resources to the advantage of Europe was the most important factor accounting for British presence in the continent. The method of consolidation was designed to lead to the successful achievement of this goal through ensuring maintenance of law and order on a scale acceptable to the powers and conducive to their interests. In another sense, however, the imposition of a new economic regime was by itself a method of extending and consolidating European rule. For instance, fundamental to this new economic order was improved communication by water, road, rail, telegraph and telephone.<sup>1</sup>

There were two sides to the creation of the new economic regime. The first dealt with the setting-up of infrastructure, i.e., modern means of communication and transport, the second with the direct promotion of production of the desired economic or cash crops. Before the imposition of European rule, means of communication in Nigeria were very poor, relying, as it did, mainly on head portage and canoe transport in the forest zone and on pack animals in the savannah belt.<sup>2</sup> These traditional means might be useful and effective for short distances and limited quantities of merchandise, but for trade and communication on the scale sought by Europe, they were inadequate. Not surprisingly, therefore, from the 1880s, mercantile interest in France and Britain clamoured for energetic and imaginative railway policies in West Africa as a solution to the development of easy and dependable access to the West African interior.

The British launched their own railway policy in the 1890s. In 1896, Lagos administration began what later became part of the western line of the Nigerian Railway. The eastern line from Port Harcourt was not begun until 1913.<sup>3</sup> The British realised that the railways would be uneconomic without good roads to act as feeders. Consequently, road-building was undertaken as an important aspect of the bid to provide proper infrastructure for the new economic regime. In British territory, an important part of the duties of the chiefs was the recruitment of forced labour for the roads, as well as the supervision of road-making and maintenance. The 'Southern Nigeria' Protectorate in 1903 issued a Roads and Rivers Proclamation (later ordinance) under which a warrant chief, on the instruction from the district or provincial commissioner was required to recruit labour for meeting these needs.<sup>4</sup> Each adult was expected to work for six days in a quarter. The construction of roads and rail-lines stimulated economic activity. The wage-payment of workers on the rail-line boosted the circulation of cash currency. New towns sprang on railway lines, while old centres of commerce and civilisation which were unlucky to be side-tracked by the lines, declined.

In Southern Nigeria all able-bodied males between fifteen and fifty and females between fifteen and forty were liable to labour for road-making and similar works up to six days a quarter. Forced labour was an important factor in the development of West Africa.<sup>5</sup> In 1925, 38 per cent of the 12,500 labourers on railway construction in Northern Nigeria were 'political' labour recruited forcibly by chiefs. This political labour, though paid, did not receive the going market rate for labour. Forced labour was administered by Native Authorities, since it was they who were responsible for the maintenance of roads and most other public works.<sup>6</sup>

However, for areas with little or no economic or administrative value to the colonial authority, nothing was done in terms of development of its infrastructure, and such ventures were left to community efforts and local initiatives. Igbominaland falling outside the area of interest to colonial authority, therefore, suffered neglect in terms of provision of infrastructure. Even during independence the situation was not any better as the succeeding authority followed the general pattern laid down by their colonial rulers. Consequently, the development of infrastructure in Igbominaland has always been the responsibility of the community. In most cases, Igbomina indigenes spread all over the south western area of the country, especially Lagos and Ife areas, often take initiative in bringing the modern idea of development back to their homeland. It is the effort of these people and what result it has yielded that this paper sets out to consider.

## Migrants as Catalysts for Rural Development

The situation prevailing in Igbomina up to 1960, the year of Nigerian independence, was that the area suffered immense neglect in terms of social infrastructure. Development was left in the hands of the

rural community. This was evident in the fact that up to the time of Nigeria's independence only one road constructed and maintained by the government transversed Igbomina from Ilorin through Ajasse-Ipo to Omu-Aran, and this remained un-tarred from Ajasse-Ipo through Omu-Aran to Kabba, till the 1970s.<sup>7</sup> Other roads were the exclusive responsibility of each community for construction and maintenance, and in fact, many communities remained inaccessible by road transport until the 1950s. For instance, the entire Isin District (now Isin Local Government) was not linked by road until the 1940s, and even then, this was achieved through communal effort.<sup>8</sup> Esie, Ijan, Arandun, Agbonda, Omido were only accessible through motor transport in 1947, when Esie was linked with Oro by the construction of a bridge over Osin river.<sup>9</sup> Agbamu also had no road link at all until 1955, when one was constructed through communal effort.<sup>10</sup>

However, the participation of the people in communal activities has been a feature of the social organisation of the Igbomina. The palaces, markets and other public places were usually built and maintained through community efforts even in traditional society. In the villages, households relied on one another for the performance of tasks such as house construction, marriages, burial ceremonies, births, communal hunting and farming. The idea of serving the community was thus already ingrained in traditional Igbomina culture.<sup>11</sup> People's participation in communal activities was, therefore, very much part of the culture.

The new idea of modern improvement migrants could not put into practice through involvement in government projects. The young urban elite therefore took initiative to

design their own ways of improving the lot of their people, through self-help development projects.<sup>12</sup> This became more important through the colonial and postcolonial period when native administration's revenue was not enough to meet their obligations. Conscious of the neglect this entailed, those from the rural areas realised the prestige and advantage which physical development could confer on their rural areas. Therefore, the few educated elite and wealthy traders excluded from native administration by the colonial policy, organised themselves into town unions as pressure groups to solicit for government allocation of development projects to their areas, and as an instrument for undertaking development in their home region.<sup>13</sup>

The urban branches of the associations, especially those in Lagos, Ibadan and Oshogbo, acted as instruments for resource mobilisation. Therefore, the bulk of the financial support came from Igbomina migrants living and working in these cities. The Christmas season was often chosen as the most appropriate time for gathering resources realised in all the branches of the association. It was also the time decisions were collectively taken as to what area of development the money realised should be expended on.

Although the idea of a viable development organisation was born outside the village context, the elite were fully aware that their efforts would be futile if the participation of local people was not guaranteed at all levels. Measures were often taken to educate the villagers on the new development



Local People from Igbomina

strategy and philosophy underlying it. The elite were, however, responsible for the mobilisation of resources required to achieve the task. To achieve maximum success, every member of the village community was made to feel that the project belonged to him; the concept of ownership of the process of development was imbued in the people. This was expressed in active participation in the project. The role of modern elite, many of who were based in Lagos, the cocoa belt of the south west and other urban centres, was in the stimulation and management of local support for rural infrastructural development.<sup>14</sup>

There is no doubt that community development has succeeded in several areas where local, state and federal governments have failed to introduce development projects. The associations have commanded respect from everybody. They have given the people a sense of pride in their capacity to achieve. Their leadership commanded more respect and popularity than any other political leader in Igbomina because the development associations gave the people a sense of ownership of their projects. Such leadership manifested itself in various ways and at various times in each village community in Igbomina. Examples of these are, Matthew Toye and Joseph Oyinloye at Iludun Oro, Noah Oyinloye Bakole and Alhaji Owolewa at Omu-Aran, Oladimeji at Otun-Oro, Chief Owodele at Ijomu-Oro, J.O. Fakeye at Esie and a host of others. It is no great surprise then that some people used the organisation as a stepping-stone to launch themselves into political limelight.<sup>15</sup>

Migrants from Lagos and from other large cities, mostly in the south-west and the cocoa producing area, often spearheaded the campaign to lobby the government for basic facilities like electricity, pipe-borne water and telephone services, and also to locate industry and educational institutions in their natal homes. Although the provision of electricity, roads and pipe-borne water in most Igbomina towns and villages were the handiwork of local communities, the lobbying of the elite often succeeded in enlisting government assistance in the completion of some projects. The availability of telephone exchange facility and the establishing of Kwara State College of Education in Oro in the 1980s were products of successful lobbying to provide communities with government projects.

In situations where the government was slow to respond, rich Igbomina citizens are known to have provided funds. Examples of such projects abound all over Igbomina. For instance, through communal efforts, the electrification and the tarring of township roads of Otun-Oro were undertaken. The construction of a standard hospital at Agbamu and tarring of the 18 km road linking the town with Oro through Iludun were undertaken by the community with a major contribution by one of its illustrious sons, Chief Samuel Adedoyin (Chairman Doyin Investment), based in Lagos. The making of a Federal Government Girls College at Omu-Aran was the outcome of successful lobbying by indigenes of the community.<sup>16</sup>

Successful migrants often make substantial contribution in cash and kind towards specific projects back home. Projects such as construction of hospitals, rural electrification, pipe-borne water and construction of blocks of classroom for educational institutions are a few examples of these. For a comprehensive list of such projects in various Igbomina towns and villages please refer to the appendix at the end of this paper. The few examples provided in the appendix illustrate the pattern of community development undertaken in Igbomina, which has, to a great extent, elevated most of these rural communities to urban status. This pattern is replicated in most Igbomina towns and villages. Since most Igbomina migrants in Lagos lived in close contact with one another, ideas and strategies for natal home development was often the subject of discussion. Indeed, there was a healthy competitive spirit to outdo one another. Until recently, when educated elites were succeeding in pressurising government to allocate development projects in the area, it would not have been an overstatement to claim that most of the modernising infrastructure that give Igbomina its present semi-urban look was the exclusive handiwork of local communities. No single community could be said to have been left out in the general developmental pattern, which had become the vogue in Igbomina socio-cultural life. A community as small as Buhari near Igbaja, can boast of a long list of completed projects undertaken by Lagos migrants. These include construction of a modern market and the establishment of a wrist-watch assembly plant.<sup>17</sup> Ilala, also very close to Buhari, has its own set of completed development projects in spite of its size. The tarring of its township roads and the access road linking Ilala with Buhari were major undertakings.<sup>18</sup>



A general survey of Igbomina development projects shows that great priority was given to educational projects from the earliest time. No matter how small the community may have been, they always endeavoured to establish at least a primary school. The great obsession for western education was probably derived from their acceptance of orthodox theories of social change, which assumes that through investment in human capital, economically backward societies will modernise and grow. These account for the high level of education in the area, which has given Igbomina people an edge over most other groups in Kwara State. Another important area of priority was road construction. It is important to note that except for villages lying along Ilorin-OmuAran all other towns were responsible for constructing roads linking their communities to the rest of the world. Another Igbomina priority project was the provision of health facility. Most communities had at least a maternity ward/dispensary where modern healthcare could be provided. Electrification was another pet project given special priority by all, probably because of its modernising effect. All of the village communities surveyed were already provided with electricity. The ripple effect of this on the development of local industry is evident in the growth of the industrial sector in Igbomina from the 1970s.

### **Organisational Structure of Community Development Associations**

Development associations rendered valuable services to their communities by serving as a medium for bringing modern notions of politics and development to the rural areas. It also helped to maintain lineage attachment and a sense of belonging and kinship. By doing so, they built for migrants a cultural bridge which transported them from one kind of social universe to another. The associations owed their achievements and successes to the way they were organised. They adopted an organisational structure that permitted popular participation in fund-raising, project formulation and implementation. Villages and urban centres were organised into chapters and branches. Every year an annual congress was held, bringing together representatives of chapters and branches for fund-raising, evaluation and financing of the town's development projects. Congress often elected their executive committee every two or three years, subject to local variation. The executive committee supervised the work of the various technical committees. The Oba and Baale and other community leaders often attended the annual congress of the association. Their primary purpose was to chart out the programme for the year, raise funds and allocate them to the different projects.

The executive committee ensured the internal cohesion of all functional units. Its members represented all the different interest groups (women, youth, traditional leaders, farmers and urban elite). Its major actors, the president and treasurer, have always been chosen from among the urban elite, especially Lagos migrants, on whom the association relied for the mobilisation of funds.

Most of the communal structural development projects in these communities were initiated and executed through Lagos-based migrant development associations, in conjunction with other migrants from the Southwest and home inhabitants. At Otun-Oro, Iludun, Ajasse-Ipo, Esie, Ijomu-Oro, Oke-Ola, Agbamu, Sanmora etc, Lagos-based migrants were almost exclusively responsible for all infrastructural development projects, such as electrification, road construction and tarring, establishment of schools and health centres. They accounted for over ninety per cent of the project cost in the listed villages.

In Igbomina, most Lagos dwellers belonged to these 'improvement unions' set up to promote self-help schemes and thus serve as a development agency for the home region. Therefore, apart from individual remittance, urban migrants also contribute substantially to development associations of their natal home. Consequently, the feeling of 'village patriotism' is strong among most migrants. This attachment to one's hometown was shown in the mass 'census migration' during the 1962/63 and the 1973 population census exercise in the country. Migrants at different locations in the country, especially those at Lagos, moved back to their natal home to be counted there, in order to enhance development.

It is important to note that migration to Lagos, at the early stage of the phenomenon, was not uniformly spread all over the Igbomina country. While the southern-most part of the area started early and made Lagos the primary focus of migration, the north (Igbaja, Oke-Ode) was a latecomer to Lagos as its initial focus was the south-western cocoa belt. Areas such as Ekumesan Oro, Esie, Ajasse, Idofian, Sanmora and Agbamu were in the vanguard of migration to Lagos. Their pre-eminence and dominance among Igbomina migrant communities in Lagos continued well into the 1970s. The Igbaja and Omu-

Aran followed much later and this did not assume a noticeable proportion until the 1940s, especially after the Second World War.<sup>19</sup> This is not to say that a few migrants from these communities were not in Lagos much earlier. Other Igbomina groups such as the Isin, Ilere, Oke-Ode, Ora, Oro-Ago and Oko/Olla migrated mostly to the cocoa belt and their movement to Lagos is a recent event, dating back not farther than the oil-boom era of the 1970s.<sup>20</sup> This is not, however, to say that a considerable number of migrants from these communities cannot be found in Lagos as early as the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Consequently, the data provided in the appendix has deliberately excluded those areas where migration was mostly to the cocoa belt, especially since migrants to these areas were the major contributors to home development. Emphasis has been put on the area where Lagos migrants were major players in the development of their home community, since they are the specific focus of this paper. This is not, however, to say that Lagos migrants did not contribute to development in those areas not listed here, but that their contribution was relatively less. The proportion of their contribution to developments in communities listed was a function of their economic and numerical strength, relative to migrants to other areas such as the cocoa belt and other large cities (mostly Osogbo, Ibadan and Ife). Therefore, in areas of intense migration to Lagos such as the Ekunmesan Oro, Ajasse, Agbamu, Esie and Idofian, Lagos migrants were said to be responsible for over eighty per cent of the cost of community development. In communities such as Omu-Aran, Aran-Orin, Arandun where migration was equally shared between Lagos and Ife, responsibility was evenly borne by both. However, in other areas of migration to the cocoa belt, Lagos migrants' contribution was much less and could constitute as low as twenty per cent of total project costs.<sup>21</sup> Except for Isanlu-Isin, other communities listed were dominated by Lagos migrants.

Thus migrants attached to their places of birth have contributed immensely to the socio-cultural and economic upliftment of their natal home, thereby serving as a veritable tool for raising the standard of living there.

## Lagos Migrants and Economic Transformation of the Home Region

### Philosophical Underpinning

Poverty seems to be a pervasive phenomenon in the 'third world'. However, a common feature of third-world poverty is its concentration in the rural areas.<sup>22</sup> Todaro aptly summarised this phenomenon when he said 'perhaps the most valid generalisation about the poor is that they are disproportionately located in the rural areas...'.<sup>23</sup> This sweeping generalisation applies most appropriately to Igbomina of the pre-migration era and, in fact, it is important to note that part of what motivated early migration was individual attempt to escape from poverty by getting cash to pay tax and dowry. However, migrations have changed the pattern so radically that Igbomina can no longer be rightly grouped among rural areas where poverty predominates. The area presently enjoys semi-urban social infrastructure in an otherwise rural environment.

A good number of scholars believe that the benefits of migration on the source region, if any, are short-lived. It is believed that in the long run, migration is a retarding factor in economic growth.<sup>24</sup> Amin seems to be one of the most vocal scholars on the economic irrationality of migration, which he says leads to economic stagnation of the source region. He claims that amounts remitted home by migrants are often so small that they are laughable and, for the most part, serve only to pay taxes.<sup>25</sup>

Amin's assertion may not be relevant to the Igbomina situation. Although money remitted home in the early years of migration was often utilised for tax payment, as noted by Hoskins in 1935,<sup>26</sup> such tax money constituted an insignificant proportion of migrants' remittance. A more important point raised by Amin is that migration led to a condemnation of the source region to stagnation by severely limiting any potential growth.<sup>27</sup> Our evidence, however, shows that this was not the case in Igbomina, since, from the 1940s, the impact of migrants' contributions to the economic growth of the homeland was clearly evident. A case in point was the total lack of motorable roads in Igbomina up to 1930. It was through the initiatives and efforts of Lagos migrants that the 'unauthorised motor roads' built by many villages in the mid-thirties came into being.<sup>28</sup> Examples of such roads are Oro-Esie –Ijan road, Agbamu-Iludun Oro

road, Oke-Ola – Ijomu-Oro road and Sanmora Ajasse-Ipo road. The 1950 Annual Report stated that 'Progressive Unions' have helped to build the remarkable network of feeder roads which exist in Igbomina area today.<sup>29</sup>

We will endeavour to establish the degree of prosperity brought into Igbomina society by the efforts of Lagos migrants. However, the problem of economic prosperity and growth is a difficult issue to assess objectively as there is no established yardstick for measuring this. The World Bank Mission, which visited Nigeria in 1953 and whose reports greatly influenced the 1955 plan, provides a philosophical underpinning. According to the report, development was conceived as 'a rise in living standard' to be secured by 'growing outputs of goods and services'.<sup>30</sup> Here however, prosperity and development will be judged in terms of the improvement in the living standards of the people. This is more than increases in per capita income and investment per head; it involves the problems of access to economic opportunities and recognition of local social institutions as assets or constraints, improved educational, food, housing and health facilities, as well as material improvements of the individual household. Economic growth and prosperity will be judged therefore in terms of the general wealth of the people as opposed to the wealth of just a small proportion of the population.

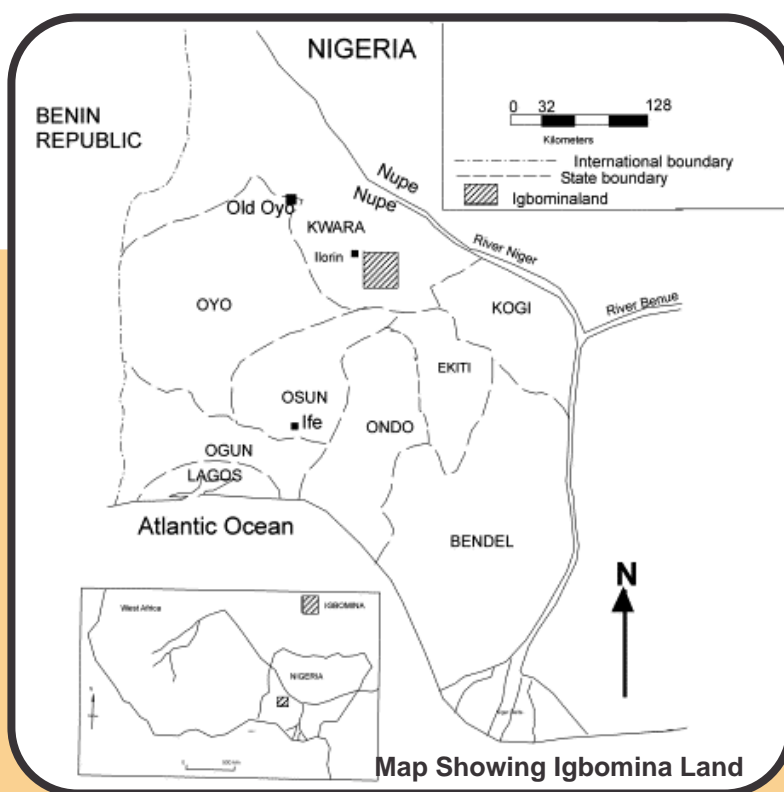
Development is both a stage and a process, referring to increasing structural differentiation and improved standard of living. An important consequence of this differentiation is the evolving social and spatial complexity.

Education was particularly an aspect of development on which Igbomina people made early advance ahead of most of their immediate neighbours. Migrants, especially those who converted to Christianity, invested heavily in the education of their people. By the 1940s, primary schools were becoming very common all over Igbominaland. Lagos migrants not only contributed heavily in building these schools but also with great difficulty persuaded their non-literate compatriots at home to release their children to go to school.<sup>31</sup> The earliest of such schools were mostly by SIM/ECWA and CMS.<sup>32</sup>

The general characteristic of most of these mission schools was that they were all financed and maintained by local communities. For example, none of these missions ever had a central purse from where money was spent for the construction of the schools attached to them. It was the responsibility of each community to contribute money for the establishment of schools. They used the principle of community participation in building schools.<sup>33</sup>

By the middle of the 1950s, there was hardly any village of considerable size without a mission-based primary school in Igbomina. At this period the colonial administration opened a school at Omu-Aran and Oke-Ode. These were the only educational institutions provided by government through the Native Authority prior to independence.<sup>34</sup> By the late fifties, Lagos migrants started planning to build Grammar Schools at home to cater for products of the primary schools. Before independence there were however, only three such secondary schools in Igbomina. These were at Igbaja, Omu-Aran and Oro. Others later followed from the 1960s.<sup>35</sup>

Following the pioneering efforts of communities where these schools were based, other communities also followed the example, and many secondary schools came into existence in the late



1960s and early 1970s. In the early seventies, it became a common saying that education was the cocoa (industry) of Igbomina.<sup>36</sup> By the opening years of the 1980s, it was rare to find any considerably large community in Igbomina without at least a secondary school. Some could even boast of as many as six secondary schools,<sup>37</sup> all undertaken through communal efforts of migrants. The relative advantage, in terms of educational institutions, Igbomina people possessed over other groups in Kwara State was a product of the efforts of migrants mostly resident in Lagos and other southwestern regions.<sup>38</sup>

### Modality for Fund Raising and Project Formulation

There was more or less a uniform pattern in raising funds to build most of these schools. The elite were responsible for the mobilisation of resources required for the construction of schools. The bulk of the financial support came from indigenes of the community, living and working in Lagos and other southwestern cities. Lagos and other branches of the community development associations acted as mechanism for revenue mobilisation. Every year, an annual congress was held, bringing together the representatives of chapters and branches of the town association, for fund-raising, evaluation and financing of the projects. The Christmas season was chosen as the appropriate time for such fund-raising and for remittance of money collected from branches and chapters of the associations. Missions often served as facilitator in the technical aspects of establishment of schools. They assisted in processing applications to give such schools the legal backing it required.<sup>39</sup>

Examples of this were the leadership and representation provided by J.O. Fakeye at Esie and Oladimeji at Otun-Oro. They both stood in as middlemen between the home people and the Lagos migrants. All contributions towards the development of the home were channeled through them for the execution of on-going projects. Every Igbomina village had men that played such crucial roles in the community, which to a great extent determined the degree of unity and success in executing development projects. At Iludun-Oro for example, 26 December was set aside for the town's meeting and prayers. No Iludun indigene was expected to travel out of town after Christmas before these meetings were held. It was at such meetings that decisions were taken on projects to be executed, amount to be contributed, and officers to handle the affairs of the project and the town was elected.

Lagos migrants did not confine their activities to the education industry. By the 1950s, many community-based progressive and development associations formed in Lagos opened shops in their hometowns and villages where essential commodities which used to be an exclusive preserve of town dwellers, could be bought with ease.<sup>40</sup> At Ijomu-Oro, for example, in 1955, the Atunluse Progressive Union opened a shop with a capital outlay of about N6000 (six thousand Naira), a huge sum for the period when the earning of those who were considered rich was in the region of hundreds not thousands of pounds. The Oyelagbawo Hotel at Oro was provided with electricity and shopping centres in the early 1960s. The hustle and bustle associated with this hotel created an urban milieu within its rural setting. A town hall was also built at Ijomu-Oro at a staggering cost of £6,000 (N1,560,000).<sup>41</sup> The colonial authority was by no means ignorant of the development in Igbominaland. The 1950 annual report remarked, 'Progressive Unions have helped to build, at much expense, the remarkable network of feeder roads which exist in Igbomina area'.<sup>42</sup> The 1952 annual report also notes that a feature of Igbomina area is the 'Unions which aim at the moral and physical betterment of their towns', a direct reference to effort of Lagos and other southwest migrants.

In every town and village, the migrants were the vanguards of developmental projects. There were instances of individuals committing themselves to certain development projects by single-handedly undertaking the execution. Such projects include the construction and tarring of roads linking the community with the outside world, provision of hospital and building of library and postal agency; a full list is to be found in the Appendix.<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that except those located in local government headquarters and probably a few other fortunate villages, most of the schools, roads, police posts, area courts, electrifications, pipe-borne water, buildings, hospitals and libraries found in Igbomina were built through the communal efforts of the people in which migrants were known to have shown clear leadership.

The location of industries in the homeland by Igbomina entrepreneurs based in Lagos was another way by which migrants were contributing to the economic prosperity of Igbomina. With a



bicycle industry at Oro, iron industries at Ajasse-Ipo, Oro and Omu-Aran, sawmills at Oro, Esie and Omu-Aran, candle and garment industries at Ido-Oro, tyre industry at Igbaja, wall-clock at Ijomu-Oro and watch industry at Buhari, Igbomina was given the semblance of a typical urban environment.

### Conclusion

There is no doubt that without the contributions of communal efforts, the level of socio-economic development and transformation in Igbomina could not have possibly been attained, at least not in the time and magnitude it was being enjoyed. Economic growth has meant a tremendous improvement in the standard of living of the people.<sup>44</sup>

Furnished with modern buildings built by migrants at home and with the provision of infrastructures that are found mostly in urban centres, Igbomina was the envy of its neighbours. Government which had direct responsibility for provision of these infrastructure was at best indifferent to the plight of most communities, especially in the rural areas. The impact of this on the socio-economic life of the rural community cannot be over emphasised. Provision of access roads and educational institutions was a mark of modernity enticing other human endeavours like industrial undertakings. The relative prosperity of Igbominaland owes much to the development of its infrastructure, and the nation at large has a lot to learn from this

### APPENDIX

#### DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY IGBOMINA MIGRANTS AT THE HOME REGION

##### 1. Agbamu Community Development Projects.

**Source:** Interview at Lagos of Chief Obapetu of Agbamu Jonathan Ogunlowo Olaosebikan.

- a. Anglican Primary School – 1938
- b. Construction of roads linking Agbamu with Iludun-Oro – 1955
- c. Maternity Dispensary – 1967
- d. Electrification of the town – 1970
- e. General Hospital – 1986
- f. Annual Christmas Party (Sponsored by Samuel Adedoyin) – Started 1986
- g. Tarring of roads – 1992-93

##### 2. Ajasse-Ipo Community Development Projects.

**Source:** Alhaji Suleiman Alarape & Alhaji Ojomu of Ajasse-Ipo.

- a. Primary school (Methodist) – 1940
- b. Ajasse-Ipo High School
- c. Area Court
- d. Post Office
- e. Hospital
- f. Police Station

##### 3. Esie Community Development Projects.

**Source:** Pa. Fakeye and Professor Afolayan interviewed at Esie, also Chief Julius Adebayo (Alaga Omo Ibile Esie-Lagos branch).

- a. Oteniara Transport Company provided Lagos band travellers with easy transportation at a time when transport was a rarity.
- b. St. Michael Primary School – 1935
- c. Alkali Court – 1947
- d. Construction of road and bridge on Oshin River-1947
- e. Construction of St. Michael Cathedral Church
- f. Esie/Iludun Grammar School – 1960 (Joint Project)
- g. Construction of Oba's Palace
- h. Provision of borehole for the town
- i. Township Electrification 1968
- j. Muslim Community Primary School – 1968

- k. . Construction of a magnificent Mosque-1968
- l. . Building of Town-hall –1976
- m. . Establishment of Nursery/Primary School-1978
- n. . Tarring of township Road-1980
- o. . Esie Community High School-1980

**4. Ijomu-Oro Community Development Projects.**

**Source:** Alhaji Odeola Yusuf Oyinloye of Ijomu-Oro.

- a. Primary School – 1944
- b. Road linking the town – 1950
- c. Bridge on Ilemo River – 1950
- d. Electrification - 1970
- e. Secondary School (Ansarudeen) – 1972
- f. Comprehensive College – 1983
- g. Tarring of township road – 1993
- h. Hospital
- i. Borehole

**5. Iludun-Oro Community Development Projects.**

**Source:** Interview of Chief Joseph Oyinloye (aged 80) and Joseph Aransiola (aged 75) interviewed at Iludun-Oro in august 2000.

- a. Construction of road linking Iludun with Oke-Olla – 1942 (reconstructed 1951)
- b. Establishment of Primary School – 1943
- c. Esie /Iludun Grammar School – 1960 (Joint Project)
- d. Township electrification – 1968
- e. Library Complex (built by Afolayan family) – 1974
- f. General Hospital Commissioned 1976
- g. Provision of pipe borne-water – 1976
- h. Establishment of AICO's Secondary School – 1979
- i. Police Post – 1986
- j. Tarring of township roads – 1990
- k. Anglican Girls College – 1992
- l. Post Office (built by Teju Ajiboye)

**6. Isanlu – Isin Community Development Projects.**

**Source:** Interview at Isanlu-Isin of Chief S.O. Adedayo. (aged 70) a community leader and retired civil servant interviewed at Isanlu-Isin in august 2000.

- a. Construction of roads linking Isanlu-Isin with Omu-Aran and Oke-Onigbin (undated)
- b. Baptist Primary School – 1940's
- c. Postal Agency – 1955
- d. Maternity Dispensary – 1959
- e. C.A.C. Primary School – 1962
- f. Igbomina Baptist Grammar School (IBGS) – 1963
- g. Water Project – 1970
- h. Electrification of the town - 1978
- i. General Hospital – 1979
- j. Isanlu-Isin Comprehensive College (IICC) – 1980
- k. Community Bank 1992
- l. Four gigantic church building for Christian worship

**7. Okerimi Oro Community Development Projects.**

**Source:** Chief Anthony Oyebanji, Baba Egbe Ijo Catholic, and Oro. (aged 60) was interviewed in Lagos Sept. 2000.

- a. Primary School – 1944
- b. Electrification – 1970

- c. Ayaki Grammar School – 1980
- d. Tarring of township road – 1993

#### **8. Okeya-Ipo Community Development Projects.**

**Source:** Moses Ajisafe of Okeya-Ipo. (aged 52) a businessman in Lagos was interviewed in Lagos in Sept. 2000.

- a. Primary School (ECWA) –1948
- b. Okeya High School – 1970
- c. Health Centre – 1985
- d. Electrification
- e. Borehole

#### **9. Otun-Oro Development Projects.**

**Source:** Chief Bale Oyeyemi of Oro interviewed at Oro & Mr Oladimeji Joseph (town Secretary).

- a. Maternity Centre - 1946
- b. Oro Grammar School – 1957
- c. Notre-Dame Girls College -1960
- d. Electrification of the town-1968
- f. Provision of pipe-borne water-1968
- e. General Hospital-1970
- g. Tarring of township roads-1970
- h. Telephone Exchange-1976
- h. A branch of Union Bank located at Oro
- i. Construction of Magnificent Roman Catholic Church.

#### **10. Sanmora Community Development Projects.**

**Source:** Alhaji Owosorotujo of Sanmora

- a. Primary School
- b. Post Office
- c. Secondary School
- d. Electrification
- e. Tarring of road to Oro junction
- f. Health Centre

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1. A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa Vol.I*, Longman, London, 1975, p. 465.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid p. 468.
  4. Ibid.
  5. M. Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, Hutchinson, London, 1973, p. 208.
  6. Ibid.
  7. NISER (Ibadan), 'Nigerian Migration and Urbanization Survey 1993', p. 19.
  8. Afolayan interview.
  9. Chief Adedayo (aged 70) a community leader from Isanlu-Isin interviewed on 5 December 2000 at Ilorin.
  10. J.O. Fakeye, *Reminiscences of Chief Joseph Olawale Fakeye: A Biography*, Decency Printer Ltd., Ilorin, 1984, p. 34.
  11. Jonathan Ogunlowo Olaosebikan Obapetu of Agbamu was interviewed in Lagos on 16 September 2000.
  12. P.N. Nkwi, p. 74.
  13. O. Omoni, 'Formation of Town Association Among the Yoruba: A response to the colonial situation' *ODU* No. 38, Jan./July 1991, p. 128.
  14. Nkwi p. 77.
  15. Ibid.

16. Alhaji Owolewa of OmuAran., interviewed on 15 August 2000.
17. NISER p. 19.
18. Chairman Buhari Development Association; Lagos (year 2000).
19. Pa. Fakeye interviewed at Esie & Alhaji Owolewa interviewed at Omu-Aran on 21st & 15th August 2000, and Pa. Noah Oyinloye Bankole interviewed in Lagos 17th Sept., 2000.
20. Ibid.
21. Chief Adedayo community leader and retired civil servant interviewed at Isanlu-Isin 5 October 2000.
22. M.P. Todaro, 'Income expectation, Rural-Urban Migration and Unemployment in Africa', *International Labour Review* Vol. 104, p. 131.
23. Ibid.
24. S. Amin, 'The effects of migration, criticism of cost-benefit analysis' in S. Amin (ed.), *Modern Migration in West Africa*, 1974, p. 100.
25. Ibid.
26. NAK, ILOR PROF 5\1, 6288. Tax Complaints...
27. NAK, ILOR PROF3925\1934, 'Intelligent Report on the Oro question'
28. Unauthorised implies that the roads were constructed without Government approval, see NAK, ILOR PROF ACC\19, 'Touring Diary 1935', R.L Payne and NAK, ILOR PROF 5\1, 2131 'Divisional and District Note Book 1933-43'.
29. NAK ILOR. PROF 5/4, 722/1950. "Ilorin Province Annual Report 1950"
30. *World Bank Publication-Economic Development of Nigeria*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 1955 p. 20.
31. It is to be noted however, that in some Igbomina villages, it was the home based missions, rather than migrants, that were responsible for building schools. Examples of these are Oko, Oro-Ago etc. Even in these areas migrants still participated actively in educational programmes.
32. J.T. Dosunmu, 'Historical Development of Western Education among the Igbomina people of Kwara State', *Ilorin Journal of Education* Vol.4 June 1984 P.8. Chief S.A Adedayo, community leader in Isanlu-Isin.

1.	Agunjin S.I.M (ECWA)	-1918
2.	Esie CMS	-1931
3.	Oro Ago S.I.M (Girls School)	-1932
4.	Iludun (Oro) CMS	-1933
5.	Oro Ago S.I.M School	-1937
6.	Odo-Eku S.I.M School	-1937
7.	Igbaja S.I.M School	-1937
8.	Oke-Ode S.I.M School	-1937
9.	Agbonda CMS School	-1938
10.	Ajasse-Ipo Methodist School	-1940
11.	Ayekale ECWA School	-1941
12.	Omupo CMS	-1943
13.	Omu-Aran CMS	-1943
14.	Isanlu-Isin {Baptist}	-1947
15.	Omu-Aran S.I.M	-1948
16.	Idofin S.I.M (ECWA) School	-1949

It is important to note that most primary schools in Igbominaland established before independence were all mission-based except for the two located at Omu-Aran and Oke-Ode.

33. P.N. Nkwi, 1997.
34. J.T., Dosunmu, p.6
35. Ibid p.9. The earliest were:
  1. Igbaja Teachers College, (S.I.M) 1944
  2. Women Teachers College Omu-Aran (S.I.M) 1948
  3. Oro Grammar School 1957
  4. Esie\Iludun Grammar School 1960



5. Notre Dame Girls College (Catholic) Oro 1960
6. Play Fair Memorial College (S.I.M.) Oro-Ago 1964
7. Igbomina Baptist Grammar School, Isanlu-Isin 1964
8. Victory College of Commerce, Edidi 1967

36. bid.

37. Prof. Afolayan interviewed at Esie and Samson Oyun Ogunbiyi interviewed on 30th & 14th August 2000 at Ilorin, respectively.

38. The advantage over other groups in Kwara state might exclude groups like the Ibolo and the Ekiti who equally had an early start in education.

39. Pa. Fakeye, J.O. interview 21st August 2000 and Alhaji Yusuf Oyinloye a business man from Ijomu-Oro interviewed in Lagos 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2000.

40. Examples of such shops existed at Otun-Oro called Oyelagbawo.

41. Ibid.

42. NAK, ILOPROF 5/4, 722/1950. "Ilorin Province Annual Report 1950".

43. Chief Samuel Adedoyin, Chairman Doyin Investment undertook the tarring of the road linking Agbamu with Oke-Ode Oro and built a hospital for the community. Alhaji Buhari constructed a marketing complex for the Buhari village near Igbaja. Afolayan family built a library for Iludun –Oro community, while Teju Ajiboye built a Postal Agency for the same community.

44. Professor Ogunsola Albert, 'Igbomina: Back from Oblivion'. The story of the Igbomina and how they have 'taken over commerce and industry', *The Guardian*, Saturday June 17, 2000.

**NOTE:** Dating some of the projects has been very difficult, as some communities do not keep proper records of them. Where informants provided conflicting dates; efforts have been made to reconcile them. Some are, however, not dated at all for lack of credible data.

## Sport and the Global South II: Legacies, Possibilities and Transformations

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Sarah Zipp

The second annual 'Sport in the Global South' conference was convened from 12-14 November 2012 at the George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. The event was hosted by the Academy of International Sport (AIS) in the School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism. Academics and sport development practitioners from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered to discuss their interdisciplinary research and experiences related to sport in the Global South. The conference theme, 'Legacies, Possibilities, Transformations', reflected the broad range of topics presented. In particular, issues of race, ethnicity, gender, poverty, violence, health, war, peace, nationalism, identity, religion, politics, economics, media, education, research, social justice and colonialism were discussed in the context of sport history, culture, and development. Conference presentations examined eleven African countries, ten countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, five Middle Eastern countries, and three Asian countries.

Keynote speeches from academics, practitioners and government officials highlighted the conference. Paul Darby of the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland discussed the exporting of Ghanaian labour through football academies in the first keynote address. Alan Klein of Northeastern University later delivered a feature presentation on baseball in the Dominican Republic, where American major league clubs have established baseball academies to recruit and train Dominican boys. These clubs have been highly criticised for exploiting vulnerable Caribbean youth.

Thierry Terret of the University of Claude Bernard Lyon I in France delivered an address titled 'Sport and the Francophone Global South', which focussed on the development of football in French-speaking Africa and the Caribbean. The final keynote session came from Ed Foster-Simeon, the president and CEO of the U.S. Soccer Foundation. Foster-Simeon presented on the work of his organisation, which provides free camps and after-school activities for thousands of urban youth across the U.S. and aims to educate kids and parents about health issues such as obesity. He stressed the importance of measuring and evaluating sport development programs as the field has expanded and funding has become highly competitive.

A panel discussion on sport in South Africa after twenty years of 'unity' brought together American and South African perspectives on the 1995 Rugby World Cup and 2010 FIFA World Cup hosted by South Africa. Another panel discussion reflected on the 2012 Olympics and the Global South. The multi-national panel explored the cultural impact of Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt and Trinidad and Tobago's first Olympic gold medalist, nineteen year-old, Keshorn Walcott (javelin). The panel also examined the controversy over the female Saudi Arabian judo athlete who wore a hijab during the competition.

A featured book session was co-sponsored by the Latin American Studies program at George Mason. Brenda Elsey of Hofstra University in New York discussed her book, *Citizens and Sportsmen in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chile*. Elsey spoke about how football clubs in Chile integrated working-class men into urban politics and facilitated dialogue about class, ethnicity, gender and democracy. Football also helped working-class Chileans develop unique rituals, narratives and symbols.

The diverse participants represented universities and organisations from South Africa, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Singapore, Barbados, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Australia, France, Northern Ireland, Denmark, Canada and the U.S. Research covered a wide spectrum of issues on the politics, culture, and economics of sport in the Global South. The presentations examined a variety of sports, including baseball, basketball, football, golf, cricket, running, boxing, rugby, and stick-fighting. A session on gender, explored football among impoverished girls in South Africa, gender expectations for female runners in Ethiopia, sport among migrant women, and sport development programs in Egypt and Kenya. Two sessions were held on sport and post-colonialism. The presenters spoke about post-colonialism and sport in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Barbados, Malaysia, Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pacific islands. Two sessions were also held on sport for development and peace. These presentations focused on the role of sport in peace-building, peaceful play and peace discourse. These sessions also examined sport development and the United Nations's Millennium Development Goals, assessment of sport for peace programs, and new technologies in sport for development in the Global South. Another theme throughout the conference was the Olympic movement and developing countries. Several presenters spoke about interaction between the International Olympic Committee, FIFA, and other governing bodies with governments and sport organisations in the Global South. Another session on the legacy of sporting events examined the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa and the 2007 Cricket World Cup in the West Indies.

To close the conference Gerard Akindes of Ohio University and John Nauright of George Mason University announced the launch of *Impumulelo: Journal of Sport and the Global South*. *Impumulelo* is transitioning from the *Journal of African Sports* to this broader scope. Akindes is an Associate Editor of the journal and Nauright serves on the Advisory Board. *Impumulelo* is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal.

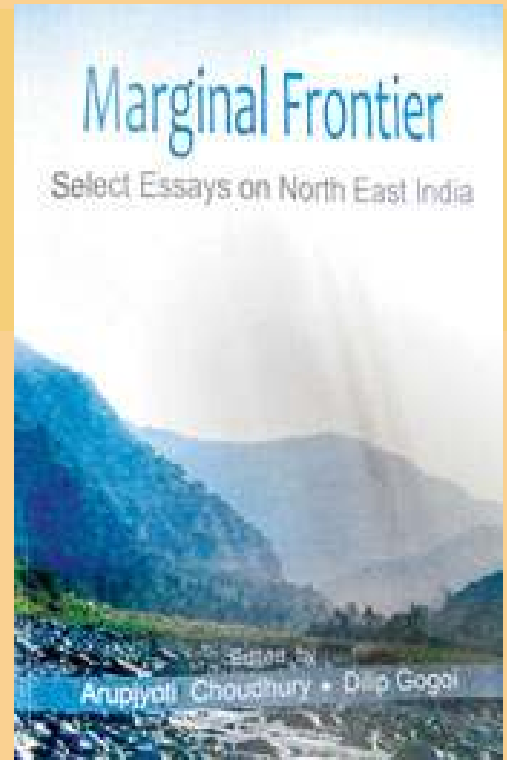
# Narrating the North-East

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• Review



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*Marginal Frontier: Select Essays on North East India* edited by Arupjyoti Choudhury and Dilip Gogoi, Bhabani Offset Pvt. Ltd., Guwahati, 2012, pp. 247, Rs. 250.

Most writings on North-East India often tend to position themselves on the contested nature of the conflicts and numerous armed struggles/insurgencies that infest the region. While inclining towards local aspirations, such writings present the apathy of mainland India towards its 'North East'. Interestingly such ventures tend to undermine the fact that the region and the categorisation do not, and cannot, stand the weight of being clubbed into a monolithic terminology. 'North East' is a very complex categorisation, which exhibits positional, situational, and locational ambivalences; needless to say, the region bracketed as 'North East' is internally differentiated.

The collection of essays edited by Arupjyoti Choudhury and Dilip Gogoi and compiled as *Marginal Frontier: Select Essays on North East India*, sets out to examine and present the multilayered marginality of the region. Traversing theoretical moorings and experiential underpinnings, the contributions accentuate the historical, administrative, and policy-related marginality of the region, in general, and Assam, in particular. The essays contest and contrast the theoretical constructions and administrative spectre of the North East and look into the nuances associated with the naming of the territory/region.



Chapter one, 'Marginal Frontier: A Prologue' by Arupjyoti Choudhury and Dilip Gogoi functions as an introduction, and chapter two, 'India's North East: An Imperial Look' by Harekrishna Deka accentuates the hyphenated categorisation of the region and the complexities that entail the same. Chapter three, 'Administrative History of Colonial North East India (1826-1947)' by Jishnu Barua, unravels the historical marginality of the region. This is followed, in chapter four – 'Sub-Federal Political Reorganization of Assam' by Harendra Nath Das – by an effort to bring to the fore the complexities in terms of contestations and juxtapositions in the federal ordering of things in a postcolonial framework. Chapter five, 'Ethnic Structures of Power and Representative Democracy: The North East Experience' by Udayon Misra, chapter six, 'Local Self Government in North-East India' by Niru Hazarika, chapter seven, 'Some Reflections on Governance Deficit in India's North East: Between Past and the Future' by Debo Prasad Barooah, chapter eight, 'Reforms for Good Governance: A Perspective from Assam' by Jatin Hazarika, chapter nine, 'Electoral Politics and its Dynamics in North-East India' by Sandhya Goswami, and chapter ten, 'Tribal Loyalties and Competitive Politics in Federal India: An Analysis of the Electoral Politics in Meghalaya' by Apurba K. Baruah, provide very unique perspectives on the experiences of marginality and locational exasperations of the region, in terms of representative-participatory democracy, amidst ethnic fault-lines and manoeuvring. Chapter eleven, 'State in India's North East: Where is the State?' by Arupjyoti Choudhury brings a closure to the collection by locating the 'state' in the severely contested geo-political space of North-East India. As a closing chapter it systematically analyses the colonial encounter and recapitulates the postcolonial experience of internal colonisation in the region, thereby providing a matrix within which to understand state politics and the making of locality in the region. The eleven chapters provide fascinating narratives of nationhood, nation-building, and the politics of marginality in post-independence India. The eleven articles undoubtedly thread together very complex and intriguing aspects of marginality of a geo-political space.

The arguments presented in the compilation could have been stronger and more coherent had the book incorporated papers from all of the seven sisters and the young sibling state of Sikkim. The predominance of contributions from Assam, which may seem to eclipse the title of the book, can, however, be justified on the ground that the state of Assam was the core from which most of the states in the region were sliced out. The collection of articles should interest serious scholars, and is a must-read for budding researchers, policy-makers and implementers. The wide range of concerns and ideas presented in this compilation fills some major gaps and fissures in the existing scholarship on the Northeast.

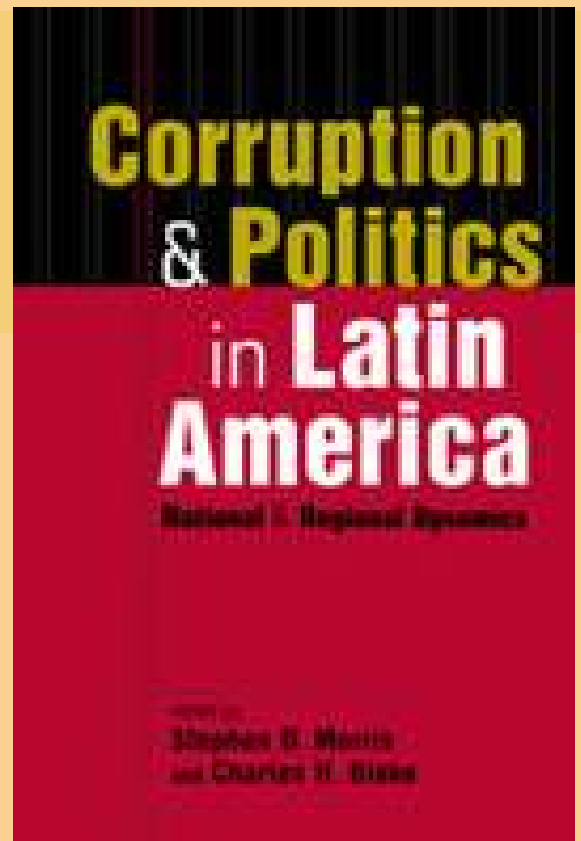
# Curing Corruption

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• Review



Percyslage  
Chigora



Efforts in achieving development have suffered major set-backs in transforming societies in developing countries. A number of factors have been identified to try and explain the impediments to development, and at the same time find ways of addressing it. One such factor that has stood the test of time has been corruption. It is a fact that corruption in developing countries has a negative impact on all spheres of life, i.e. economic, political, socio-cultural. Despite the process of democratisation in most developing countries, political corruption is noticeable on a great scale. *Corruption and Politics in Latin America* is a well-intentioned text that seeks to expose issues of political corruption in selected developing countries in Latin America. It deals with a subject matter that is difficult to research on given the secrecy that goes with corruption practices.

The first chapter by the editors marks the introduction to the text by providing a general overview of corruption, grappling with issues of conceptualising political corruption, taking note of various types of corruption and highlighting the patterns which corruption take. The authors also provide an overview of the historical evolution, origins, nature and impact of corruption in Latin American societies. The authors note that '...ample evidence suggests that corruption has deep and firm roots within the region'. (p. 10).

Chapter two to seven are case studies on Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba,

Venezuela and Mexico. The contributors to these case studies manage to analyse the nature of political corruption in contemporary society. Providing historical background to corruption and the motivation for it, the author on Cuba notes, 'corruption is rooted in Spanish colonial rule and is similar in many respects to that of the rest of Latin America'. (p. 113). The contributors expose the key actors involved and patterns which corruption take. In the piece on Brazil, the author notes that the widespread nature of corruption 'ranges across several possible modalities, from the public to private sector, from grand corruption, and from embezzlement and extortion to nepotism' (p. 90). An examination of the impact of corruption in the country is provided. Some authors analyse efforts to curb corruption noting the key challenges and successes, while others offer a way of addressing the problem. In the case-study on Argentina the authors highlight, 'without consistently contestable elections, without viable political parties willing and able to check other's actions over time, and without meaningful agencies of horizontal accountability, it is difficult to see how the reinvigorated organs of societal accountability in Argentina will gain partners in the fight against corruption' (p. 51). For Cuba it is noted that, 'political will is essential for anti corruption initiatives to succeed. In its absence, reform efforts-no matter how radical they may seem- are condemned to failure' (p. 131). Examining whether democratisation processes can lead to a lessening of corruption in developing countries, the author on Mexico cautions '...while democracy strives on one hand to create conditions to curb corruption, the existence...of deep seated corruption, threatens on the other hand to derail democracy and prevent its further deepening and consolidation' (p. 159).

In chapter eight the authors examine national and international efforts to deal with corruption in Latin America noting various international legislative frameworks to deal with corruption, institutions that have been central in addressing corruption, particularly the international financial institutions and their various impacts, and claim that 'there is growing consensus that there is no magic fix for corruption' (p. 212).

Chapter nine, which marks the conclusion of the volume, highlights issues of consistency and change in political corruption in Latin America. The authors note the key challenges that have remained in the efforts to remove corruption, arguing that, 'moving from the detection of corruption towards its punishment is perhaps the central challenge of anti corruption efforts in Latin America in the 2010s'. (p. 231).

For policymakers and academics this book is a must-read. For anyone seeking to understand political corruption in Latin America this book makes worthwhile reading with case studies that are rich in examples and easy for anyone to comprehend the subject matter.



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