

SLAVERY AND SLAVE TRADE IN KILBA (HUBA) KINGDOM OF NORTHERN NIGERIA, C.1500–1904AD

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Abstract

Slavery and slave trade were seen as an absolute control of human psychology against one's wish. In pre-colonial Kilba (Huba) kingdom, one of the powerful kingdoms in Northern Nigeria north of Fombina (Adamawa) Emirate, the reverse was the case as it was seen as a form of entrepreneurship that contributed immensely to its socio-political and economic activities for centuries long before the advent of the Trans-Saharan trade and Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, which robbed Africa's able-bodied people for centuries. To this end, this formed the central argument of the paper. However, through a historical methodology that cut across primary and secondary sources such as oral interviews, archival materials, dissertations/thesis, and textbooks, the paper argues that slavery and the slave trade in pre-colonial Kilba kingdom were seen as a source of labour for farm, handicraft industries, and domestic works. In fact, in Kilba markets these slaves served as precious commodities for purchase of horses and beautiful cotton strips gown. In terms of war, slaves were sources of foot soldiers and guards coupled with their role as blacksmiths, and equally form part of the social class of the Kilba society. This means that slaves were essential in the social and economic life of the kingdom. In conclusion, the paper noted that, the major setback to the slavery and slave trade were as a result of Fulani Jihadist attacks, seven years famine, Fad-el-Allah's troops attacks on the kingdom, heavy loss of manpower through the death of able-bodied people in process of slave raiding. More so, their high sense of restlessness and lawlessness caused slave raids and highway robbery which affected domestic and long-distance trades and impetus for slave markets in the kingdom. The last to draw the straw was the advent of British colonial rule in Kilba kingdom in 1904 which changed the phase of Kilba kingdom through its forceful policy of abolition of slavery and slave trade.

Keywords: Kilba Kingdom, Slavery, Slave Trade, Booty, Northern Nigeria

Introduction

Slavery and slave trade is an absolute control of human psychology against one's wish. It is a system which confines the control of life of a subject into the hands of a master. This is done through purchase or force during wars or conflicts.¹ Also, it is regarded as a social institution defined by law and customs as the most absolutely involuntary form of human servitude. The definite characters of slaves are as follows; their labour or services are obtained through force; their physical beings are regarded as the property of another person, their owner; and they are entirely subjected to their owner's whim and caprice. The lesser degree of system related to the peon or servitude; peonage was a usual practice among Latin America. Historically peonage evolved from 16th century *encomienda* system where the Spanish conquistadors were given proprietary right over the Native.² It was equally practiced among the Africans. For instance, it is known among the Yoruba in Nigeria as *Iwofa* (peonage), the system

¹ Rodney, W. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Abuja: Panaf Publishing-Nigeria, 1972. 29 and Deji, A.M. "Slavery and Colonialism in Africa: The Base for Underdevelopment in Nigeria." In Olorunfoba, S.O. (ed.). *Africa and its Diaspora. History, Identities and Economy*. Ibadan: Pan-African University Press, 2017. 119-130.

² Rodney, 29 and Deji, 119-130.

allowed wealthy people, kings and chiefs in the society to keep them for their personal use until the debt owed are fully paid.³

In the case of Northern Nigeria, the precise date of the beginnings of slavery in Northern Nigeria is unknown, but it is clear that by the 15th century trafficking in slaves across the Sahara was already an organized enterprise in the territory. According to Leo Africanus, Kanuri were by this date being purchased with horses (Taku) by Arabs from Mediterranean Africa.⁴ By the 17th century Borno aristocrats numbered European “infidels” among their slaves.⁵ By the 19th century Northern Nigeria had become a notorious nursery of slaves. As late as the middle of the 19th century Arab slave traders bought slaves in Ilorin, a Yoruba town in the south-western part of the Sokoto Caliphate, whilst about the same time the Fulani were pushing their slave-hunting frontier as far down as the Igbo country.⁶ In fact pre-colonial Northern Nigeria was a thoroughly slave-ridden society. Without slaves the economy would have collapsed. For it was stratified, particularly after the famous jihad, in such a way that a leisurely aristocratic class who had lands to till and capital to invest in industries considered it beneath their dignity to do manual work of any kind. Many members of this privileged class, mostly of the Fulani stock, had as many as 4,000 slaves. There arose farm villages, occupied almost entirely by slaves belonging to the landed aristocracy. Moreover, the textile and leather industries of Sokoto, Kano, and Bornu (Borno) demanded not only cheap labour, in the form of slaves, but skills that could be offered by slaves brought to the Hausa States from other communities in Northern Nigeria.⁷ It is pertinent to affirm that, sources of slaves in the Northern Nigeria territory were derived from three main sources, namely war captives, those purchased from the market, and the offspring of settled slaves.⁸ It would seem that the first source— people captured in war—provided a permanent means of replenishing the stock already settled. The third source of slaves was the offspring of slaves known as dijemai.⁹ Over a century, this class of slaves probably numbered more than the captured and purchased slaves. However, no statistics on this category of slaves exist.¹⁰

To this end, one could see that slavery and slave trade had been an ancient practice among Northern Nigerian communities of which Kilba (Huba) being a society in the axis. In fact, institution of slavery had its place in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria, that its existence did not mean that Northern Nigerians were more vicious or callous or less human than peoples whose social and economic systems had annihilated slavery, and that any human community in the context of the Africa they knew would have institutionalized slavery.¹¹ Hence, three forms of slavery were experienced in Northern Nigeria. These were Domestic Slavery, Trans-Saharan Slave Trade and Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Although the historian cannot perceive a common and immutable formula that would explain the existence of slavery in human society in the past five millennia, it seems clear that the economic factor has been a primum mobile of this all-important institution in all the cases so far known to history.¹² It is against this backdrop that, this paper tend document the pre-colonial and colonial experiences of Kilba kingdom slavery and slave trade in the period under review in order to its contribution to knowledge is in the sphere extension of the knowledge of slavery and slave trade in Africa by detailing the Kilba example.

³ Deji, 119-130.

⁴ Ayandele, E.A. *Nigerian Historical Studies*. USA: Frank Cass and Company Limited 1979. 43-51.

⁵ Ayandele, 43-51.

⁶ Ayandele, 43-51.

⁷ Ayandele, 43-51.

⁸ Ayandele, 43-51.

⁹ Ayandele, 43-51.

¹⁰ Ayandele, 43-51.

¹¹ Ayandele, E.A. *African Historical Studies*. USA: Frank Cass and Company Limited 1979. 30.

¹² Ayandele, E.A. *Nigerian Historical Studies*. USA: Frank Cass and Company Limited 1979. 43-51; Clarkson, T. *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*. 2 Volumes. London: Frank Cass, 1968; Frank, K. *The Anti-Slavery Movement in England: A Study of English, A Study of Humanitarianism*. London: New HaYen, 1926; Lloyd, C.C. *The Navy and the Slave Trade*. London: Longmans, 1949; Bandincl, J. *Some Account of the Trade in Slaves from Africa*. London: Frank Cass, 1969; Curtin, P.D. *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. Madison: Wis., University of Wisconsin Press, 1969 and Inikori, J.E. (ed.). *Forced Migration, The Impact of the Export Slave Trade on African Societies*. London: Hutchinson University Library, London, 1982 and Rodney, W. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. London: Bogle L'Ouverture, 1972.

The sources are very strong, credible primary (archival materials and oral interviews, which guarantee originality) and secondary sources, which fix the paper in existing scholarship.

Conceptual Clarification

In order to have a full grasp of the phenomenon under review, there is need to have a key concept which is “Kilba kingdom.”

Kilba Kingdom

Kilba (Huba) kingdom was one of the powerful kingdom and an ethnic group of the Bata-Margi subgroup of the Afro-Asiatic language group,¹³ that was never at one in time, controlled by the Fulani Jihadist of Fombina (Adamawa) Emirate (1809–1935) or the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria. In fact, since circa 1500, Kilba kingdom had emerged as powerful kingdom with strong ties with its neighbours such as Fali, Marghi, Higgi, Bura, Bata, Fulani, Borno (Kanuri and Shuwa Arabs) and Hausa,¹⁴ and then to 1904 when the British colonial administration took over the control of the kingdom and reduced it to a mere colonial district (Kilba District).¹⁵ Furthermore, with colonial re-organization between 1908 and 1909, and especially 1926 when Adamawa Emirate became to be known as Adamawa Province, Kilba District became the Emirate “Pagan” Division with headquarters in Pella (Kilba District) comprising Uba, Ga’anda, Margi and Kilba Districts up to 1960.¹⁶ In the contemporary, Kilba District is Hong Local Government Area (LGA) of Adamawa State in the North-East Geopolitical Zone of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), which was carved out from the defunct Gongola State (Adamawa and Taraba States) in 1991.¹⁷

Slavery and Slave Trade in Kilba (Huba) Kingdom

In terms of Kilba kingdom, the raids for slaves (Mava) and booty had been one of the predominant occupations of Kilba and her neighbours, especially, Fulani, Marghi, Borno (Kanuri Beriberi and Shuwa Arabs), and Fali. This made slavery and slave trade to intensify in Kilba kingdom for centuries. In fact, slaves constituted the political structure of Kilba people towards the middle of the 19th century and early 20th century when the kingdom was at the height of its power.¹⁸ Its population in the 19th century comprised the nobility class (*Kambu*), the *Dimu* (free men), and then the *Jir-Giwa Isa* (the commoners) and the *Mava* (slave).¹⁹ The diagram or chart below shows the political and social stratification of the Kilba kingdom in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus, in the last half of the 19th century, Kilba society is patrilineal and the basic unit of settlement was *Mgakku* (a house hold) which was also an

¹³ Ribadu, T.R., Ibrahim, G and Said, A.R. “The Transformation of Local Administration in Fombina (Adamawa) Emirate, 1809–1976.” *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*. Volume 9 Issue 5, 2021:75-88.

¹⁴ Chaskda, G.M. “The Establishment of a Government-General among the Kilba.” BA (History) Project, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria- Nigeria, 1972. 1-54 and Pongri, J.H. “A Survey of the Economic History of Kilbaland from C.1820–1934.” BA (History) Project, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria- Nigeria, 1976. 1-45.

¹⁵ Gandapa, E.N. “Economic and Traditional Uses of Highlands among the Kilba Tribe of Hong Local Government Area, Adamawa State in Nigeria.” *International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Sciences*. Volume 9, Number 1, 2016:278-279.

¹⁶ Yakubu, Y.A. *Chronicles of A Golden Era – A Biography of Aliyu Musdafa the 11th Lamido Adamawa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd, 1997. 176; Yakubu, A.M. *Emirs and Politicians: Reform, Reaction and Recrimination in Northern Nigeria*. Kaduna: Baraka, 2006. 94 and NAK/YOLAPROF – J. I. Yola Collected Histories, 1905–1931.

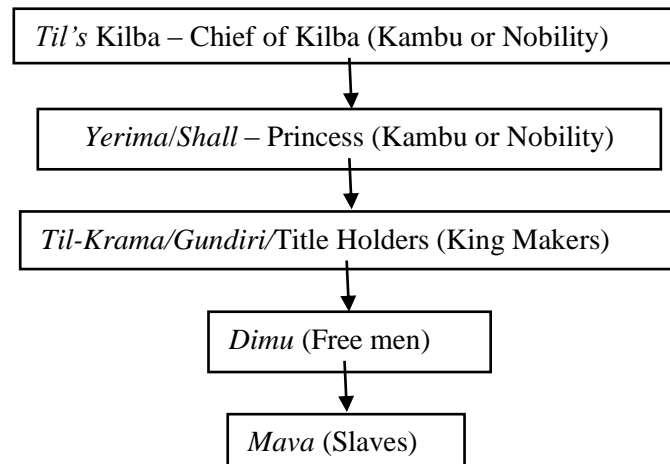
¹⁷ Wycliff, S. “The Colonial Economy and Society of Kilba District in Adamawa Province of Northern Nigeria, 1904–1960.” PhD (History) Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria, 2021. 107-108 and Tukur, A.L and Barde, M.M. “The Geography of Politics: A Case for the Political Redistricting of Adamawa State, Nigeria.” *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Volume 19, Issue 1, Ver. II, January, 2014:12-24.

¹⁸ Wycliff, S. “The Colonial Economy and Society of Kilba District in Adamawa Province of Northern Nigeria, 1904–1960.” PhD (History) Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria, 2021. 57-58.

¹⁹ Maspalma, N. Age 88. A Farmer. Interviewed at Tilbang – Pella District, Hong LGA, Adamawa State,-Nigeria. September 16, 2019; Bassa. Malam B.I. Age 76. A Farmer. Interviewed at Tilbang – Pella District, Hong LGA. September 16, 2019 and Bukata, Bishop A.E. G. Age 51. Bishop of the Arewa Dioceses, Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. Interviewed at Kala’a Mission – Kulinyi District, Hong LGA. September 18, 2019.

economic unit headed by the eldest man in the family. Each Ngakku was made up of kinsmen, their slaves, wives and children.²⁰

Chart 1: The Political and Social Stratification of the Kilba Kingdom in the last half of the 19th and early 20th centuries



Source: Gudumbul, B.Y. “A Study of the Emergence, Growth and Fall of the Huba Kingdom from C.1500AD to 1906AD.” Ph.D. (History) Thesis, University of Maiduguri, Borno-Nigeria, 2006. 178-179.

More so, Kilba king (*Til*) usually had a small standing army around him under the command of his generals (*Katsala* or *Midala*) who were also in charges of mobilizing the rest of the adult male members of the society in the face of any threat of war. All able-bodied men were soldiers. Some of these soldiers were assigned to take control of the slaves. Ranchmen and noblemen had clients under them who took care of their slaves.²¹ Thus, slaves owned by noble and rich men worked on large farm estates before colonial rule.

Furthermore, slaves also played vital roles in the pre-colonial Kilba Judicial System. For example, in cases of disturbance caused by fighting in a public place the Shall (Provincial Governor) might be called upon to adjudicate and he might order the aggressor to be publicly beaten. Other cases like Muteyakur (witch craft), *Ngavi* (poisoning) and *Tsankai* (projecting needles into the body of an enemy) were referred to *Til* Kilba (Kilba king) at Hong, who have found the accused guilty, had him publicly executed in the market place by his slaves. The method of execution was by using a heavy stick (club) with one end thicker than the other, used as a weapon to kill a convicted criminal.²²

In terms of economic organization, slaves were part of Kilba communal mode of production. This was because in each family or household constituted an autonomous centre of production. They lived and worked together towards a common economic target under their own system of labour. It supplied its own food and other necessities. Among them, were a few specialists in artisans e.g. blacksmith, potters etc. Normally, heads of households directed the productions and consumptions. There were no much disagreements between the elders who headed the production and the producers. Thus, there was class antagonism as it is normally found in the feudal and slave mode of productions as believed by the Marxists. Though slaves were owned by some people in the pre-colonial period, their labour was not extremely exploited because they were treated as members of the household. On the whole slaves were

²⁰ Wycliff, 63-64.

²¹ Pongri, J.H. *Aspects of the Economic History of Kilbaland, 1820 to 1934*. Markurdi: Aboki Publisher, 2015. 12-13 & Wycliff, 73-74.

²² Gudumbul, A Study of the Emergence, Growth and Fall of the Huba Kingdom from C.1500AD to 1906AD.” 126-131.

well treated in pre-colonial Kilba kingdom. Except for a few, very rare, cases no Kilba kingdom was ever harsh to his slaves and in many places, masters did not find it disgraceful to eat with their slaves.²³ Besides, the slaves were generally well treated, is not overworked, and is very often considered as a member of the family. To this end, slaves were acquired in Kilba community due to the fact that, some parents exchanged some of their children for food in times of famine.²⁴ Thus, these children were incorporated into the purchaser's household and given similar rights as biological children.²⁵ In other words, in the pre-colonial Kilba kingdom, with particular reference to the period of famines, some parents were forced or compelled to sell some of their children as slaves in order to get food for the rest of the family. It should be noted here that such slaves were treated moderately as compared to the plantation slaves. They were given food, shelter and even medical care. It should be noted also that such slaves could gain their freedom once their people raised enough money to pay, refund, or settle the dues paid on them.²⁶

In pre-colonial Kilba society, there were two main sources of labour used in pre-colonial Kilba, namely slaves and communal labour. Very few people had the money to buy slaves and those that could afford to do so kept very few numbers of slaves in far way places. They did so for fear of mutiny by the slaves or the relatives of the slaves could force the owner to free them.²⁷ Only chiefs and noblemen could keep a large number of slaves because they had the means of controlling them.

However, the market for slaves, like any other market, depended on supply and demand. Thus, the major markets for slaves and other commodities in pre-colonial Kilba kingdom are noted in the Table 1 below. Even though there were no available statistics of the slaves captured and or sold.

Table 1: Market Days in Kilba Land in the Last Half of the 19th Century

S/No.	Town	Current District Location	Market Days in Week	Remarks
1	Kubaktina (Hong)	Hong	Monday	Among the oldest
2	Barkari	Pella	Tuesday	
3	Bangshika	Kulinyi	Tuesday	
4	Pella	Pella	Wednesday	Among the oldest
5	Shashau	Gaya	Wednesday	
6	Jadinyi	Pella	Thursday	
7	Garaha	Garaha	Friday	
8	Hema	Pella	Saturday	
9	Gaya	Gaya	Saturday	Among the oldest
10	Magwahi (Mijili)	Gaya	Sunday	Among the oldest
11	Dilwachira	Kulinyi	Sunday	Among the oldest

Source: Wycliff, S. "The Colonial Economy and Society of Kilba District in Adamawa Province of Northern Nigeria, 1904–1960." 107-108.

In pre-colonial Kilba kingdom, wealth (*Ngana*) traditionally comprised of woven cloth, horses and slaves. This made slaves a precious commodity. In fact, the concept of wealth was limited to having or possessing *Taku* (horse), *Kwah* (goat) and *Khutung* (sheep). In addition, having many wives, children and slaves symbolized richness and wealth.²⁸ Thus, slaves were not only one of the major source of revenue but also served as a medium of exchange and item of trade Kilba kingdom. As an item of trade,

²³ Pongri, 14-15.

²⁴ Wajiga, A. "Socio-Economic and Political History of the Kilba People in the Pre-Colonial Period." MA (History) Dissertation, University of Maiduguri, Borno-Nigeria, 2002. 86-87.

²⁵ Wajiga, 86-87.

²⁶ Wajiga, 98-99.

²⁷ Wycliff, 63-64 & Wajiga, 86-87

²⁸ Wajiga, 83-84 and Gudumbul, 72-73 and Pongri, 6 and 10-11.

it was highly valued along with salt, gold, kolanuts and expensive textiles.²⁹ Lots of slaves were sold during Kilba trading relations with Brono and Fulani (Yola). For example, Kilba participated in trade items like cotton (*Pa-uwa*) and slaves (Mava) with Borno and Groundnuts with Yola.

It should be noted that, slave trade was one of the major commodity and source of revenue that advanced or influenced trade and equally inter-group relations in Kilba kingdom. In fact, as a result of trade in such a commodity, the colonial administrators came to describe the Kilba kingdom in a derogatory phrase as “one of the most lawless tribes in Nigeria.”³⁰ The reasons for saying that was possibly due to the high rate of robbery and raids for slaves and booty which they met. Besides, before colonial rule, at least one person was killed every day in the Kilba country. Hence, the only proof of manliness by which a man was judged was the number of slaves he had caught or items of booty such a person had acquired by robbing others.³¹ Slavery and robbery were taken as a joint favored past-time and often times, some people raided and robbed others for sheer love of brutality and not for any material benefits. It was not safe for anybody to travel a distance of more than one mile without arming himself at this time because any armed person could easily overpower him and take him away as a slave.³²

Consequently, debtors, thieves and criminals were usually the ones caught and sold away as slaves. In cases of murder those involved were usually caught and sold away as slaves. In such instances, the murderer, had to give his sister or daughter to the brother of the deceased who usually took her as a wife and would stay with her until such a time when she gave birth to a male child (in ransom of the deceased) before she became free to return to her relatives.

Moreover, external raids were also carried into the Fali, Cameroon (e.g. town of Marau) and the Fulani territories for slaves. Those slaves caught in Kilba land were carried to faraway places like Borno or Yola where they were sold.³³ Similarly, slaves caught in Borno, Yola, Mubi and Marua were brought and sold to chiefs, noblemen and rich men in Kilba kingdom to work on their farm estates. This was so because if a slave was sold in his area of origin, he could easily escape to his relatives and that could force the owner to release him. Most importantly, slaves that were kept at home (Kilba kingdom) were treated with some herbs meant to confuse their minds so that, they could not trace their ways back to their relatives.³⁴

Apart from agricultural work on the farms, the slaves herded animals or practiced some other industry, like weaving, carving, dyeing etc. for their masters. Some Kilba men were also caught as slaves by Fali and Fulani raiders. In some cases where a slave had a relative close by, the relative could pay for his ransom or also catch any relative of the slave owner in compensation.³⁵ If such cases occurred, arrangements were made to exchange the slaves. There was no fixed price for ransom as terms were usually bargained by those involved.³⁶

In terms of road networking and transportation, narrow bush paths linked the villages. Transport was by foot or on animals, usually horses and donkeys mainly.³⁷ In other words, and in most cases, people carried their goods on heads while others used donkeys which carried more loads for transportation to

²⁹ Wycliff, 100.

³⁰ NAK/YOLAPROF/173/J.16 – The Kilba by C.K. Meek 1929.

³¹ Pongri, *Aspect of the Economic History of Kilbaland, 1820 To 1934*. 30-31.

³² Pongri, 30-31.

³³ Slaves that were kept at home were treated with some medicinal herbs meant to confuse their minds so that they could not trace their ways back to their relatives.

³⁴ Pongri, 32-33.

³⁵ Pongri, 32-33.

³⁶ Pongri, 32-33.

³⁷ Pongri, *Aspect of the Economic History of Kilbaland, 1820 To 1934*. 22.

long distances though they were not many.³⁸ Although it should be added that people travelled in groups for fear of being ambushed and captured into slavery.³⁹

So, slavery and slave trade were extensive in pre-colonial Kilba kingdom. In fact, slaves were acquired from raids or debtors who failed to settle their debts and criminal who were caught and usually sold away as slave. Slaves were used as a source of labour on the farms or in the local industries. Many however, were sold away for the expensive Borno gowns like Kore (black shiny cloth called *Kwariya* in Kilba) or for prestigious animals like cows and horses. The economic importance of slaving and robbing was that the participants profited from the items they got by robbing other people and so was the slave labour or the money got from the sale of slaves. For, it was cheaper or catch a slave and sell him in -returns for say a horse, which might cost a person about 70 *Takulaku* (cotton strips) in terms of cotton currency. Robbery in Kilba kingdom appeared to be a system of wealth redistribution i.e. taking part in something from somebody who had an excess to enrich those who do not have as much. After all, robbers did not normally rob poor people but the rich, and more so during the period under review, robbery was not seen as bad but only as proof of male machismo.⁴⁰

Slavery and Slave Trade between Kilba and her Neighbours

The relationship between Kilba and her neighbours especially Borno, Fulani and Hausa further intensified slavery and the slave trade in the period under review. However, it is hard to fix a point in time when Kilba and Borno relations started, especially on the Yola – Borno caravan route, but it is however certain that the trade was in full swing by the mid-19th century.⁴¹ In terms of Kilba – Fulani relations, this possibly began just about the same time as the trade with most ethnic nationalities in Borno. This was because the Fulani had been in Kilba kingdom since before 1800AD but their relationship intensified from mid-19th century.⁴² With regards to Kilba traded with the Hausa (Hausawa), this had also existed long before 19th century. In fact, Hausa traders came to Kilba kingdom to trade only, they never settled until 1907, when some Hausa labourer came with British colonialists to establish formal colonial rule in what became later Kilba District from Kilba kingdom followed by the establishment of strangers' quarters at Pella in 1913 one of the ancient pre-colonial Kilba town and centre of trade and traditional practices.⁴³

Interestingly to note that on several times, the Kilba burnt Fulani and Fali towns for booty and slaves. Also, Kilba men often invited the Shuwa Arabs people from Borno and jointly went to raid Fulani cattle (*Thla*) camps. The reason was because both of them (Kilba and Shuwa Arabs) hated the Fulani and they were also united in the love of adventurous raids for booty (treasury, cattle and slaves).⁴⁴ Thus, when Kilba men saw a rich Fulani cattle camp, they would invite the Shuwa Arabs who were expert horsemen and the Fulani is feared chasing them to get back their cows because the Shuwa could easily turn back and kill them.⁴⁵ The Fulani on the other hand would arrange with the Kilba people living in the frontier towns of Kilba land to allow them raid the interior of the country for slave booties and to recollect their cattle. In return for the free transit, the Fulani would give these people a portion of whatever they got from raiding the interior.⁴⁶ Perhaps due to the hostilities that existed between the Fulani and the Kilba during the period under review, their presence in large numbers at any time in Kilba kingdom was never recognized or tolerate compared to Kanuri and Beriberi.⁴⁷ More so, Hausa and Beriberi (Kanuri) ivory

³⁸ Pongri, 22-24.

³⁹ Pongri, 22-24.

⁴⁰ Wycliff, 110.

⁴¹ Gudumbul, "A Study of the Emergence, Growth and Fall of the Huba Kingdom from C.1500AD to 1906AD." 100-105.

⁴² Pongri, *Aspect of the Economic History of Kilbaland, 1820 To 1934.* 29-30

⁴³ Pongri, 38.

⁴⁴ Pongri, 32-33.

⁴⁵ Pongri, 32-33.

⁴⁶ Pongri, 33-35.

⁴⁷ Wycliff, 120.

traders were also said to have been passing through Kilba kingdom to hunt for elephants in places like Hong, Ngandere, Tibati and Marua and equally to trade.⁴⁸ They also participated in the slaves' trade.⁴⁹ It is important to put on record that, Fulani Jihadist in Adamawa (Fombina) Emirate who waged Jihad against Kilba kingdom between 1815 and 1839, having failed to capture and incorporate it into Adamawa Emirate and to the Sokoto Caliphate, they resorted to guerilla fighting attacking Kilba unexpectedly on their farms for slaves and booty throughout the growing season. Hence with the news of the Fulani in Adamawa attempting a Jihad in Kilba kingdom, Kilba people went back to their various hill-tops for fear of being captured as slaves. From their hills and mountains, they launched attacks and defeated the Fulani Jihadist.⁵⁰ Consequently, the Kilba in turn attacked Fulani camps in revenge for cattle, booty and slaves during the dry season when farm work was over.⁵¹ These attacks and counterattacks characterized the history of Kilba – Fulani relations throughout the 19th century until the establishment of colonial rule in Kilba kingdom (C.1904–1960AD).

Hence, raiding for slaves and booties was the quickest way of acquiring wealth and it was accepted by the Kilba society. Slaves supplied a cheap source of labour on farms, in local industries, and at home. They could also be sold for cash and goods acquired by robbing traders were either sold or consumed.⁵²

It is worthy of note that, some occupations in the Kilba kingdom spread owing to slavery and the slave trade. A good example was the dying industry. Thus, some Kilba however learnt the art of dyeing during their sojourn in Borno either as slaves or free traders who later came back and practiced the industry.⁵³ It is not certain, however, when dying was introduced in Kilba kingdom just as it is not clear when the trade with Borno began.⁵⁴

It is important to put on record that, there were two basic activities that were very prevalent among the Kilba. There were Lda'a (raid – organized raid by Kilba community, town or village with aim of looting and catching of slaves) and Fa'avi (robbery – organized highway robbery, usually with arms).⁵⁵ Raiding and robbery were considered as sources of wealth (Ngana) which include material wealth and slaves. Therefore, the Huba people, especially the Kambu (royal family) organized Lda'a against their neighbouring communities who were actually the Marghi, Ndanyi Fali, Holma, Zumo, Boi, Bura and Fulani.⁵⁶ The Kambu also considered wealth (especially slaves) as source and symbol of power and prestige. In fact, the Kambu considered themselves as a noble and wealthy class among the other Kilba clans. The wealth they acquired from raiding and robbery were used to buy position i.e. the *Til Kur*, titles such as Yerima and Shall from the hill-top communities, *Jir-Giwa Iza* (commoners). However, the business of Lda'a was a general practice among Kilba, but first it was organized and led by the Kambu (royal family).⁵⁷

However, B.Y. Gudumbul, narrated how the Lda'a was organized and operated. In the first place a team of spies would be sent to a neighbouring community to spy whether the community or village is economically potential. The spies would then come and give report to the organizers and planners of

⁴⁸ Pongri, 30-31.

⁴⁹ Pongri, 31.

⁵⁰ Wycliff, S. "The Roles of Mountains and Hills in the Political and Socio-Economic Security of Kilba Community in Hong Local Government Area in Adamawa State of Nigeria, C.1500AD–2016AD." *Kaduna Journal of Historical Studies (KJHS)*. Volume 10 Number 3, 2019:323-341.

⁵¹ Wycliff, S. "The Colonial Economy and Society of Kilba District in Adamawa Province of Northern Nigeria, 1904–1960." 105-106.

⁵² Wycliff, 106.

⁵³ Pongri, 28.

⁵⁴ Wycliff, 117 and Pongri, 28.

⁵⁵ Gudumbul, B.Y. "A Study of the Emergence, Growth and Fall of the Huba Kingdom from C.1500AD to 1906AD." PhD (History) Thesis, University of Maiduguri, Borno-Nigeria, 2006. 119-120.

⁵⁶ Chaskda, G.M. Age 76. Retired Director of Administration and Supply, National Commission for Museum and Monuments, Nigeria. Interviewed at Fadama Rake, Hong LGA. December 31, 2018 and January 3, 2019.

⁵⁷ Gudumbul, 119-120.

the raid. Having set the date, the planners would then inform their group and those who are interested to prepare for the operation.⁵⁸ On, the day of the operation, the operators would come at night with their horses, armed with bow and arrow, knives, spears and other weapons. The group would then divide themselves into two sections. One group would round up the village with fire, while the other group would be in sentry. As the people would try to escape, the other group with horses and spears would strike to capture the people (men, women and children), loot the village and carry them away. The Kilba raiders would then use dried food to block the mouth of the children and women caught as slaves so that they would not be able to cry.⁵⁹

Furthermore, slaves were in great demand and the Kilba being slave dealers, supplied the Kanuri and Fulani slave market at Girei. Because the Lda'a and Fa'avi was well organized and beneficiary, the *Til* Kilba supported it. In fact, the booties found during the raids and robbery were shared among the raiders and the *Til*. To sought for the *Til's* approval and support, the *Til* must be given certain percentage of the booty. Therefore, the raiding and robbery were not only carried out by the consent of the *Til* but he also aided and aboded the planners to do so. These slave raids no doubt had effects on the neighbouring communities of Kilba. Today, there are some families who owned slaves that were captured from these neighbouring communities.⁶⁰

Set Back to Slavery and Slave Trade

This slave trade however, suffered a great set-back beginning from 1815–1830 owing to Fulani Jihadist of Adamawa attacks on Kilba kingdom which forced Kilba people to hide in their hills and mountains from there they attacked and defeated the Fulani Jihadist Calvary forces. Thus, moment suppressed the intensity of the slave trade demand and supply.⁶¹

The second set back was the seven years (1889–1896) famine (Jiga-Jiga) experienced in Kilba kingdom caused by cloud of locust invasion that cover all over the ground, bushes, trees and rocks. The locust laid their eggs and buried them in the ground which hatched out after seven days and started destroying crops. During this period. Roots of trees were cooked or eaten raw for food. Many people died from hunger and starvation and eaten of unripe food and passionate roots.⁶² The consequences of the famine to slave trade was that, a handful of groundnut could buy a person and anyone who steals automatically he is enslaved and sold to anybody in return for food. In that period, children were sold for handful of grain while women offered themselves freely in marriage just to find somebody who could give them food but very few married them.⁶³ This situation led quite a number of Kilba people into forced migration into their neighbours like Ihi, Margi, Bura, Njanyi, Chiback, Fali, Borno (Kanuri, and Shuwa Arabs) in search of food.⁶⁴

It should be noted however, that the famine did not hit the neighbouring communities with the same intensity as it had hit the Kilba kingdom. As a result, some people went to these areas to buy grains and some decided to stay there permanently. Therefore, this reduced greatly Kilba people population followed by death due to hunger and starvation, eating of unripe fruits and poisonous roots. In fact, the kingdom was characterized with a general state of lawlessness and restlessness ensued as the result of the famine.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ Gudumbul, 119-120.

⁵⁹ Gudumbul, 119-120.

⁶⁰ Gudumbul, 119-120.

⁶¹ Chaskda, G.M. "The Establishment of a Government-General among the Kilba." BA (History) Project, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria 1972. 50-51

⁶² NAK/YOLAPROF/114/G2A – Kilba District Miscellaneous Papers, 1929 and Kirk-Greene, A.H.M. *Adamawa Past and Present. An Historical Approach of the Development of A Northern Cameroun Province*. London: Dawson of Pall Mall, 1969. 36.

⁶³ Pongri, J.H. "A Survey of the Economic History of Kilbaland, 1820–1934." BA (History) Project, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria, 1976. 45-46.

⁶⁴ Pongri, 45-46.

⁶⁵ Wajiga, "Socio-Economic and Political History of the Kilba People in the Pre-Colonial Period." 98-99.

The third was Fad-el-Allah raids of the Kingdom in 1900, which also put Kilba kingdom in a great social distress. As a result, high way robbery intensified thereby making the trade routes generally insecure for trader. Commenting on this, W. O. P. Rosedale, the then Assistant Divisional Officer in Yola stated that:

Fad-el-Allah the son of Rabe in 1900. He accomplished nothing but the looting of some slaves and was probably in flight from the French. He reached as far south as the Kilba range of hills, And apparently had retired from there owing to the lack of supplies. This raid marks an epoch in people's minds in the three Yola Districts which Fad-el-Allah touched. I found a specimen of "Rabeh's mark" made by Fad-el-Allah on a Kilba pagan consisted of three oblique cuts on both sides of the face joined by a cut at the bottom as in the following shape.⁶⁶

However, even though Fad-el-Allah was not successful in his attacks on the Kilba people, yet he stationed his headquarter at Gashala from where he raided the Kilba people from village to village for slaves and booty.⁶⁷ More so, he posed a great threat to the Kilba Kingdom, particularly the language mark he put on the captured slaves (Kilba people which he added to his soldiers) which was a significant land mark not only in the memory of the Kilba people but even on their physical appearance.⁶⁸ Thus, Fad-el-Allah's attacks on Kilba kingdom came to an end in 1901 because he lacked the supply of arms and food to sustain his soldiers. Above and beyond, Chaskda, noted that by October 2, 1900 before Fad-el-Allah withdrew from the Kilba kingdom he had 15,000 fighting men and 3,000 fire arms.⁶⁹

Thus, his main attacks on Kilba kingdom was to booty and slaves. Therefore, one important explanation for his choice of Kilba kingdom was raise soldiers through slaves so as to have a large army in order to go back and attack the French forces who killed his father (Rabih Zuberu Pasha).⁷⁰ In fact, his army were allowed or even encouraged by their commanders to live by looting and plunder. Besides, when he returned to Borno for a revenge attack on the French, he was killed at Gujba in 1901.⁷¹ To this end, Some of Fad-el-Allah's men were caught on farms or in houses while searching for food and they were either killed or sold away as slaves. A few of them were ransomed in distant communities and never returned.⁷²

To this end, Fad-el-Allah and his troops intensified poverty and food shortage for some years after 1900. Agriculture suffered a great setback through sheer neglect and insecurity because warfare was the order of the day during Fad-el-Allah's sojourn in Kilba kingdom.⁷³ There was also a great loss of manpower as regards the number of people killed, enslaved or recruited into Fad-el-Allah's fighting force. Most of whom notably, were young, and energetic, whose talents and potentials could have been of much value in the disrupted economy of the kingdom. In fact, prior to that, external trade, especially with Borno was reduced to the barest minimum as a result of the closure of the Yola-Borno caravan route in 1897. In addition, the Borno-Tripoli route in 1899, placed Borno in economic isolation such that trade items like frying pans, necklaces and ornaments which came from North Africa were no longer coming

⁶⁶ NAK/YOLAPROF/No. 285 – W.O.P. Rosedale A.D.O. Assessment Report on Margi District and Arewa House Archival Materials (AHAM) – Notes on the Margi Tribe by W.O.P. Rosedale, Mr. 1937 H.S. Kulp, W.F.H. MacBride A. D. O.

⁶⁷ Adeleye, R.A. "Fadallah and the Diplomacy of European Imperial Invasion in the Central Sudan." *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*. Volume 5 Number 3, 1969:223-224.

⁶⁸ Gudumbul, "A Study of the Emergence, Growth and Fall of the Huba Kingdom from C.1500AD to 1906 AD." 158-159.

⁶⁹ Adeleye, "Fadallah and the Diplomacy of European Imperial Invasion in the Central Sudan." 415 and Chaskda, 50-51.

⁷⁰ Adeleye, R.A. "Rabih B. Fadallah and the Diplomacy of European imperial Invasion in the Central Sudan." *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*. Volume 5, Number 3, 1969:223-242 and Gudumbul, 158-159.

⁷¹ Adeleye, 158-159.

⁷² Adeleye, 158-159.

⁷³ Bulundi, Yerima G. Age 80. Retired Chief Agric. Field Officer. Interviewed at Kala'a Mission – Kulinyi District, Hong LGA. September 18, 2019;

to Kilba markets because Borno traders could not get them.⁷⁴ Highway robbers and the recklessness of Fad-el-Allah's army discouraged both long and short-distance traders during this period. In short, the economy of Kilba kingdom between the periods 1889 to 1906 was in jeopardy and social life everywhere was hard, painful and insecure.⁷⁵

Consequently, the acquisition of slaves for wealth and to generate revenue to boost their business. This was the situation in Kilba in the last half of the 19th century until the advent of the European colonialists in the 20th century (C.1904–1960AD).⁷⁶

The fourth setback was the invasion of Kilba kingdom in 1904 by British colonial forces.⁷⁷ Following the government in Kilba society all forms of pre-colonial slavery were abolished with full force because prior to the conquest of the kingdom, British had in 1901 made declaration which destroyed the legal status of slavery and made it difficult to acquire or dispose slaves in other parts of Northern Nigeria.⁷⁸ However in their effort of stopping slavery and slave trade in Kilba kingdom (later renamed as Kilba District in 1926), colonial government liberated 11 slaves in 1931 against civil cases, against 26 matrimonial cases, 107 debts, 2 administration of estates, and 16 other cases, which gave us a total of 151 civil cases⁷⁹ against 1231 matrimonial cases, 2430 debts, 69 other contracts, 1 trespass, 11 liberation of slaves, 5 land cases, 475 administration of estates, 5 claim for lost property, 506 other cases, which gave a total 4733 total civil cases in the whole of Colonial Adamawa Province.⁸⁰ To this end, the abolition of the slavery and slave trade in Kilba kingdom made it possible for social life to become more peaceful compared to what was obtainable in the pre-colonial Kilba kingdom. Even though to the Kilba slave raiders, entrepreneurs and nobles, the abolition led loss of their sources of wealth and labour force.⁸¹

Consequences of Slavery and Slave Trade

To this end, despite the role of slavery and slave trade in the pre-colonial Kilba kingdom, it had socio-political and economic negative impacts on the people.

Firstly, it led to heavy loss of manpower as result of death of able-bodied men and women in process of slave raiding across different Kilba villages and towns as well as it borders towns with her neighbours. This effect followed by the psychological trauma the slaves passed through considering how they were separated from their husbands, wives, children, relations and love ones. The worst of it all was selling of the slaves outside their communities to far places like Borno and Cameroon and exposed to hunger and starvation. The slave raids were also accompanied with destruction of agricultural farm produce as experienced during the seven years famine (1889–1896) caused by locust invasion in Kilba kingdom which caused food insecurity and forced migration. This was further accompanied with Fad-el-Allah (1900–1901) attacked on the Kilba kingdom for slaves and booty forcing Kilba people to abandoning

⁷⁴ Pongri, *Aspect of the Economic History of Kilbaland, 1820 To 1934*. 43-44.

⁷⁵ Pongri, 43-44.

⁷⁶ Wycliff, 105-106.

⁷⁷ NAK/YOLAPROF/114/G2A – Kilba District Miscellaneous Papers, 1929 and Kirk-Greene, A.H.M. *Adamawa Past and Present. An Historical Approach of the Development of A Northern Cameroun Province*. London: Dawson of Pall Mall, 1969. 36, 181-182.

⁷⁸ Mamman, M.A. "The Role of Native Authority in the Agrarian and Pastoral Economy of Katsina Emirate, 1903–1960." PhD (History) Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria, 2002. 129; Mamuru, H.A. "An Economic History of Kim District in Numan Division of Adamawa Province from, C.1900–1960." MA (History) Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria, 2011. 132-133; Adamu, A. "The Food Economy in Colonial Nigeria: A Study of Food Production and Distribution in Zaria Metropolis C.1902–1960." PhD (History) Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria, 2000. 200-20 and Lennihen, L.D. "Rights in men and Rights in Land; Labour in Small Holder Agriculture in Northern Nigeria." In *Slavery Abolition*. Volume 3 Number 2. London: Frank Cass, 1982. 122.

⁷⁹ NAK/SNP17/YOLAPROF/16694 Vol. 1 – Adamawa Province Annual Report, 1931.

⁸⁰ NAK/SNP17/YOLAPROF/16694 Vol. 1.

⁸¹ Meek, C.K. *Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria Volumes 1*. London: Frank Cass Co. Ltd., 1935. 181-182; Henssler, R. *The British in Northern Nigeria*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968. 25-45 and Nicolson, I.F. *Administration of Nigeria, 1900–1960*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969. 1-50.

their farm produced in the field and run to their hills and mountains for defense until they had victory over Fad-el-Allah.⁸²

Secondly, domestic and long-distance trades were affected vehemently because of high sense of restlessness and lawlessness caused slave raids and highway robbery on the Yola – Borno caravan routes which passed through Kilba kingdom. Pongri affirmed that, this caravan route was a projection of the Borno – Tripoli Trans-Saharan trade route. From Kukawa (Borno) the route passed through Chengiwa, then onto Chibbak, Mai maina (Askira), Gaya (the first Kilba town which the route passed through to the north). Biri, Mijili, Dabna, Kwabaktina (Hong) and Pella (the last big Kilba town to the South). From Pella, the route continued to the Fulani towns of Mbila, Holma, Sarau, Girei, Yola, Mayo Belwa and Mayo-Dago where the route stopped at the foothills of Horsheri Genderu (Chebbe) in the Mambilla Plateau and it was where the potash traders stopped. At Askira 2 auxiliary routes branched off: one passing through Uba to Mubi and Pakka (where another route branched to the Cameroons) joining the main route at Sarau; the other branch from Askira passing through the northern Kilba village of Za, Kopri and kingking to the Hona Bura, and Ga'anda Districts. Bornuan influence was felt greatest in these northern Kilba villages because some Bornu men later settled in these villages opened up dying pits and traded at the same time.⁸³ Merchants felt insecure to leave their destination to markets because of the social atmosphere was rife and more insecure than before. This consequently domestic and long-distance trade paralyzed owing to shortage in demand and supply of trading commodities. This was because, merchant feared carrying commodities to markets because of slave raids and robbery and also to be captured and enslaved and sold away without ransomed.⁸⁴

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that slavery, slave trade and slave raids and even robbery for booty were extensive entrepreneurship activities that took place in pre-colonial Kilba kingdom. These aspects of entrepreneurship were the quickest ways of acquiring wealth and was accepted by the Kilba society and means of acquiring manpower for domestic labourers at home, farms and local industries and even soldiers for defense. Besides the slaves were sold for luxury items like gown, cattle and horses. This aspect of economic activities further enhanced Kilba relations with her neighbours especially, Borno, Fali, Margi, Fulani and Cameroon. Although these forms of slavery and slave trade which were predominantly domestic and trans-Saharan slave trades were not as devastated as compared to Trans-Atlantic slave trade. This is because the institution of slavery which existed in West Africa before the Atlantic slave trade was insignificant, and the few slaves that existed supplemented family labour on the farm, performing some domestic services. An at that time, in many ways slavery contributed to the progress, the stability, and the military strength of those States in many phases of their existence.⁸⁵ But the Atlantic slave trade, therefore, brought a large number of free men into slavery. Inevitably, the slave trade reduced agricultural production, and thus the real income of the people. 'The proposition that slavery was an essential condition of [African] economic development was untenable.' It is also difficult to accept that the slave trade contributed positively to socio-political development, because it brought a series of inter-tribal wars which led to the disintegration of a number of indigenous kingdoms, depopulation, robbing of abled-bodied men and women, mutiny, and state of insecurity.⁸⁶

⁸² Nissen, M. *An African Church is Born: The Story of the Adamawa and Central Saradauna Provinces in Nigeria*. Denmark: Purups Grafiske, 1968. 50-51.

⁸³ Pongri, *Aspect of the Economic History of Kilbaland, 1820 To 1934*. 26-26.

⁸⁴ Nissen, 50-51.

⁸⁵ Barth, H. *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*. Volume I. London: Frank-Cass and Co. Ltd, 1855. 380-381.

⁸⁶ Ekundare, R.O. *An Economic History of Nigeria 1860–1960*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1973. 36 and Rodney, 260-270.