

## British Colonial Policies in Kagarko District, 1902 – 1960

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### Abstract

*The British in their quest to carry out colonial interests in its colonies, enacted policies to enable them succeed in such quest. Among these colonial policies were those on land, labour, agriculture and taxation. Each of these policies enacted ensured the successful plunder and exploitation of the colonized territories of Britain. These policies were used to capture and repatriate the wealth of the plundered (colonized) back to Europe. So while the colonized became impoverished during and after the colonial periods respectively, the colonialists became more buoyant economically and politically. More so, these policies were deliberately designed to establish an imbalanced relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. The impact of British colonial policies affected the fabric of the society with particular reference to Kagarko District, 1902 – 1960. This paper examined the implications of these colonial policies on Kagarko District, which ascertained the fact that colonialism was a one armed bandit as posited by Walter Rodney in his book, How Europe underdeveloped Africa. It is also important to note that colonialism interrupted the lifestyle of the people of Kagarko District in order to serve British imperial interest.*

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### Introduction

The focus of this paper is on colonial policies that were made to ensure the successful exploitation and plunder of the colonized territories. The policies made by the British included policies on land, labour, tax, agriculture, courts and treasuries. Colonial policies were consciously designed to establish a relationship between Nigeria and the British colonial powers so that the surplus generated by the peasant farmers could be expropriated by Britain. This took the form of taxation and the commercialization of agriculture, the introduction of European trade goods and infrastructural development such as roads and railways.<sup>1</sup>

The impact of colonialism on Africa has become controversial more than ever. Many European and Eurocentric Historians such as I. H. Gunn, P. Duignan, Mergery Perham, P.C. Lloyd and more recently D.K. Fieldhouse have contended

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<sup>1</sup> Odey Mike, *The Development of Cash Crop Economy in Nigeria's Lower Benue Province 1910-1960*. (London: Aboki Publishers, 2009), 68.

that the impact of colonialism on Africa was both positive and negative, the positive outweighing the negative. Gunn and Duignan defended colonialism by saying that: ‘...the imperial system stands out as one of the most powerful engines of cultural diffusion in the history of Africa; its credit balance far outweighs its debit account’.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, historians mainly African, black and Marxist scholars, especially the development and underdevelopment theorists have maintained that colonialism made no positive impact on Africa.<sup>3</sup> More sharply on this position that negates the so-called positive impact of colonialism was the position of the Guyanese historian activist, Walter Rodney that “colonialism was a one-armed bandit”.<sup>4</sup> To a large extent, a critical examination of the colonial tax system in Nigeria the position of the later scholars is not farfetched from the fact. To further buttress this claim by black African historians is the contribution of Gwadabe on the implication of colonial taxation. He is of the view that ‘The burden of colonial taxation brought about a general instability and hardship in the society. People were forced to dispose of their valuables (crops, livestock) etc. at giveaway prices to settle taxes.’<sup>5</sup> This assertion made by Gwadabe, can be seen as a general outlook of the implication of colonial taxation on every aspect of the people’s life in Kagarko District.

### **Colonial Land Policies**

Colonial land policies were put in place between 1900 –1917.<sup>6</sup> These were the opening years of colonial rule in Nigeria. The land policies played a central role in the organization of agriculture. In fact, the principal expansion of export crops from 1900-1940 came about almost exclusively as a result of bringing more land into production.<sup>7</sup> In the Northern Region, British policy on land and its administration was one of the first issues addressed by the British after the colonial conquest of the Caliphate. The policies on land were the **Crown Land**

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<sup>2</sup> Boahen Adu, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (USA, 1989), 94.

<sup>3</sup> Boahen Adu, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*, 94-95.

<sup>4</sup> Boahen Adu, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*, 95

<sup>5</sup> Gwadabe Mustapha Muhammadu, *Kano Emirate under Colonial Rule. A Study of the Administration of Land, Labour and Taxation in Kumbotso (Dan Isa) District 1916-1953* (USA: 2010), 254.

<sup>6</sup> Eicher Carl and Liedholm Carl (Ed), *The Growth and Development of Nigerian Economy* (Michigan State University Press, 1970), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Eicher Carl and Liedholm Carl (Ed), *The Growth and Development of Nigerian Economy*, 10.

**Proclamation (NO.16) and the Native Land Proclamation 1910.**<sup>8</sup>The 1910 Ordinance later became the Native Rights Ordinance of 1916. In theory, this policy placed all lands whether occupied or unoccupied under the control of the protectorate of Northern Nigeria which was to hold and administer the land for the common use of and benefit of the ‘natives’. But in practice, land remained under the management of the Emir and his representatives with the British administration at the top.<sup>9</sup> The British claimed ownership of land for the state, disregarding the rights of both private individuals and the communities. At the same time, European individuals and companies were denied freehold tenure of land. The public land proclamation empowered the High Commissioner to take control of all lands not in actual occupation of persons holding title under the laws of the protectorate or customs.<sup>10</sup> This meant the provision of abundant land and cheap labour to the colonial state.

In addition to the colonial land policy, mining interests in Nigeria were only entitled to lease hold rights in return for the payment of royalties, license and lease fees with the provision that when the occupants of a land leased for mining purposes are disturbed they would be entitled to full compensation.<sup>11</sup> The land policy also banned indigenous miners from mining and smelting tin and iron. Indigenous miners were only entitled to lease hold rights in return for the payment of royalties, license and lease fees. The provision was that when the occupants of a land leased for mining purposes were disturbed they would be entitled to full compensation.<sup>12</sup> With this mining policy in place and given the role of iron in the process of production, the banning of its smelting undermined the basis of autonomous development of indigenous tools industry thereby compelling Nigerian producers to depend on imported tools and metals. This was a way of deliberately killing the indigenous economy in order for the local miners to be rendered dependents on the colonial economy.

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<sup>8</sup> Abdulkadir Adamu, ‘The Food Economy in Colonial Nigeria: a Study of Food Production and Distribution in Zaria Metropolis c. 1902-1960’ (PhD Thesis, A.B.U. Zaria, 2001), 48.

<sup>9</sup> Abdulkadir Adamu, ‘The Food Economy in Colonial Nigeria: a Study of Food Production and Distribution in Zaria Metropolis c. 1902-1960’, 48.

<sup>10</sup> Eicher Carl and Liedholm Carl (Ed), *The Growth and Development of Nigerian Economy*, 94.

<sup>11</sup> Mamman Musa Adamu, ‘The Introduction of Mixed Farming Scheme in Katsina Emirate during the Colonial Period.’ *ZAHIR The Journal of Zaria Historical Research* 2, No. 1 (2002): 161.

<sup>12</sup> Mamman Musa Adamu, ‘The Introduction of Mixed Farming Scheme in Katsina Emirate during the Colonial Period’, 161.

Another aspect of land policy was on forestry laws. In forestry the efforts of the department have been increasing the communal forest areas in villages, as selected by the people.<sup>13</sup> There was a case of Kagarko people complaining to the Emir of Zaria about their being denied cultivating the kurmis near the town, which led to the migration of Kagarko people to Abuja in 1946.<sup>14</sup> Forestry rules were such that no one was allowed to cultivate the kurmis until after 2 years. Thus, before one was allowed to cultivate any kurmi, a permit must be obtained. Mr. Frazer of the minerals research syndicate at Kasaru demanded to cut the timber wood from the forest at Katugal but was refused until he obtained a permit to fell trees.<sup>15</sup>

I find that Makama has no forestry permit book and no authority to issue permits for tree-felling as Katugal and other District Heads have. As a result Mr. Frazer, who urgently needed wood for sluice-boxes at Kasaru, was having considerable difficulty and delay in getting a permit through vain application to Makama. I recommend that a forestry permit book should be issued to the Kagarko District office as early as possible, unless there are strong reasons against it, for there is plenty of timber to be worked in the District, and this will help not only Kasaru but the Nok mine in Jaba District next door.<sup>16</sup>

This meant that a permit book was kept to ensure that the people abided by the forestry laws. Under the forestry policy, a farm could not be farmed two years running. The farmers had to go out to the bush to clear another farm and this brought the people into trouble with the forestry laws.<sup>17</sup> To ensure that this rule was adhered to, a Galadiman Daji and a Makaman Daji were appointed; the Galadima was answerable to the Makama. In August 1943, the Galadiman Daji reported a list of over 30 names of people in Kagarko town for the ‘damage’ they did in some of the kurmis in the area to the Makaman Daji in the person of Mohammed Sani.<sup>18</sup> However, they both were accused by the colonial authorities of not being able to stop the people from bush burning and the felling of trees in order to carry out farming activities. On the hand, the people accused also claimed

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<sup>13</sup> NAK: ZAR PROF ANNUAL REPORT 1946,p.5.

<sup>14</sup> NAK: ZAR PROF FILE 452.

<sup>15</sup> NAK: ZAR PROF FILE 452, p 33.

<sup>16</sup> NAK: ZARPROF FILE 452, p 33.

<sup>17</sup> NAK: ZAR PROF FILE 452, p 38.

<sup>18</sup> NAK: ZAR PROF FILE 452, p 48.

to have obtained permission before clearing the kurmi or Daji for their farm work. In fact, forestry laws were aimed at increasing forest areas in the villages to serve the needs of the colonial rulers.

In Forestry, the efforts of the department have been concentrated upon increasing the communal Forest areas in villages as selected by the people. Constituted Forest Reserves have however been increased by an area of 42 square miles, with an additional 150 square miles planned. A scheme has been approved for the operation of a portable saw beach in a Forest Reserve between Kaduna and Zaria, so that cheap furniture for use by Africans may be available from its savannah forest timber found in this region.<sup>19</sup>

The explanation for the above statement is that Forest Reserves and Forest permits were very important to the colonialists. Of course, furniture was needed for the colonial offices and residential areas and not for the use of Africans only. So the forest was strictly conserved to serve the needs of the British colonialists. It can be concluded that African land was confiscated by the British through the land policies enacted.

### **Colonial Agricultural Policies**

British Colonial agricultural policies were mainly influenced by the needs of imperial Britain. This was principally the production of raw materials for the industries in Britain and for the generation of revenue for the colonialists. Thus, Colonial agricultural policies were based on either peasant or plantation production of cash crops for export or both depending on economic, political, cultural and other environmental and socio-political factors. But, the economic factor was the primary factor taken into consideration in choosing between peasant and plantation economy.<sup>20</sup> The British colonial policies on agriculture were to ensure that land was effectively reserved for agricultural production for Nigerians. The general agricultural policy of the colonial government was based on the reckless exploitation of land, natural and human resources of the colonies devoid of planned economic development in the interest of the native population.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> NAK/ 4708 ZARIA PROVINCE ANNUAL REPORT, 1946.

<sup>20</sup> Alahira Hannatu, 'The Role of Women in the Colonial Economy of Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of the Berom of Jos Plateau, 1900-1960' (PhD, Thesis, ABU Zaria, 2001), 207.

<sup>21</sup> Alahira Hannatu, 'The Role of Women in the Colonial Economy of Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of the Berom of Jos Plateau, 1900-1960', 208.

It is important to note that in every region in the Nigeria area, colonial agricultural policies were based on the crop or mineral resources available there. For example, in Northern Nigeria area agricultural policies were on cotton (B.C.G.A), groundnuts, tobacco, Jos plateau area it was based on tin. This shows that colonial policy on agricultural production was mainly influenced by the needs of imperial Britain as earlier mentioned. These were principally the production of raw materials for British industries; generation of revenue for the administration of the colony and the production of enough food to feed the populace.<sup>22</sup> It is also instructive to note that agricultural policies were also fuelled by the World War. During the Second World War, as from 1939 the colonial regime embarked on large scale propaganda and other measures to induce farmers to grow cash crops especially groundnuts to generate enough resources to finance the war. Hence, the groundnut slogan of 1944; “*Plant a groundnut a day and keep Hitler at bay*”.<sup>23</sup>

To ensure the success of the groundnut propaganda, the British imperialist introduced measures to make sure that the Nigerian peasant produced groundnut even in cotton producing areas. This was a new departure from former colonial policy of discouraging groundnut propaganda in cotton areas like Zaria. Some of the directives or policies taken included: (1) to prohibit railing or transport of groundnut except by permit for seed or transport to the United Kingdom (2) all agricultural stations, prisons and school farms to concentrate on groundnut productions as example to farmers (3) all agricultural officers assist in propaganda for seed distribution (4) Bonus to village heads in proportion to their output of groundnut (5) Release control on movement on corn (6) Cease requisition in groundnut producing areas (7) Prohibit the sale of decorticated groundnut in all markets to stop use as oil (8) Quotas of production to be allocated to village areas as being done in Borno and Adamawa Provinces.<sup>24</sup> All these implied that the need in Britain had a direct bearing on what was produced in Africa. For instance, as British began taking washing seriously, the demand for soap rose considerably because palm oil was a chief constituent ingredient in the manufacture of soap, so West African palm oil was established to satisfy these needs.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the cultivation of oil palms was encouraged to meet up with this particular need.

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<sup>22</sup> Abdulkadir Adamu, ‘The Food Economy in Colonial Nigeria: A Study of Food Production and Distribution in Zaria Metropolis c. 1902-1960’, 49.

<sup>23</sup> Abdulkadir Adamu, ‘The Food Economy in Colonial Nigeria: A Study of Food Production and Distribution in Zaria Metropolis c. 1902-1960’, 81.

<sup>24</sup> Abdulkadir Adamu, ‘The Food Economy in Colonial Nigeria: a Study of Food Production and Distribution in Zaria Metropolis c. 1902-1960’, 82.

<sup>25</sup> Helleiner Gerald, *Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria*, 96.

To further ensure the success of these needs, departments of agriculture, research centres, farm centres and demonstration farms were established. They were expected to carry out research experiments for investigations into improved methods of agriculture within the vegetational zones they were located. These establishments came into being as a result of the policy of a powerful director of agriculture in Nigeria, O.J. Faulkner.<sup>26</sup> All these policies changed the socio-economic organization of the people of Nigeria to serving the needs of British imperial and capitalist interest.

There was also the Mixed Farming Policy of the 1930s. This scheme was first introduced on a small scale in 1928 after it had been experimented for many years by the department of agriculture Samaru, Zaria. The aim of the mixed farming policy was to ensure soil fertility, so that cotton and groundnut could be grown for exports. In this scheme, the peasant farmers were made to keep cattle and small livestock so that they could use the manure for keeping the soil fertile.<sup>27</sup> In addition to all these was the biological research policy for export crops (1940s) developing local agricultural technology which paid handsome rewards in the 1950s and 1960s in the form of hybrid oil palm varieties, hybrid cocoa trees, insecticides and fungicides.<sup>28</sup> In a nutshell, all colonial policies on agriculture were for the cultivation of crops needed in Britain.

### **Marketing Boards**

The Marketing Boards are statutory monopsonies (single customer market) which established the prices to be paid to domestic peasant producers.<sup>29</sup> They replaced private trading firms with government marketing boards in the 1930s.<sup>30</sup> Marketing boards were an effective form of subordination and expropriation of the peasant producer in the sphere of exchange. The statutes establishing the marketing boards stipulated the following: (1) To organize an orderly marketing arrangement for all export crops, either by fixing prices for the purpose of trade stabilization or pay off price differentials between the world market and real

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<sup>26</sup> Gbasha Pius Terna, 'Agriculture and Rural Society in Nigeria. A Study of Colonial Agriculture among the Southern TIV 1914-1960' (M.A. Thesis August, 1989), 254.

<sup>27</sup> Mamman Musa Adamu, 'The Introduction of Mixed Farming Scheme in Katsina Emirate during the Colonial Period', 95.

<sup>28</sup> Eicher Carl and Liedholm Carl (Ed). *The Growth and Development of Nigerian Economy* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1970), 3.

<sup>29</sup> Helleiner Gerald, *Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria* (U.S.A: Yale University Press, 1966), 152.

<sup>30</sup> Eicher Carl and Liedholm Carl (Ed). *The Growth and Development of Nigerian Economy*, 3.

producer prices (2) To protect the British interest in the supply of raw materials. E.g. bulk purchases of oil seeds at low prices even when demand was high (3) To provide funds for the economic development of producing areas for the industries and agricultural research.<sup>31</sup> Marketing boards were profitable colonial apparatus for the control of cash crops arising from experiences of the Second World War. Since Britain came out of the war impoverished, it needed to boost her economy thus, that necessitated the marketing policy. They were monopoly marketers of the colonies' commodities. These marketing boards were instruments of robbery since they were used to force African producers to accept prices well below world commodity prices.<sup>32</sup> Some of the marketing boards established included the following: The Cocoa Marketing Board of 1947, The Nigerian Palm Produce Marketing Board 1949,<sup>33</sup>The Northern Regional Groundnut Marketing Board Ordinance (NO.11) April 1949. It was charged with the responsibility of buying groundnuts produced in Kano area as well as the Niger-Benue Rivers Area.<sup>34</sup> In addition to these was the Nigerian cotton marketing board 1949,<sup>35</sup> and the NO. 24 inspection Ordinance of 1950 which was to inspect the lint that carried cotton.<sup>36</sup>

These marketing boards were aimed at ensuring the dominance of Britain over what was produced in the colony. Furthermore, the marketing boards also aimed at protecting the African producer from world crops price fluctuations, giving the farmer a settled climate in which to produce the cash crops needed for the purchase of foreign exchange. Marketing boards were meant to boost agricultural production in order to break the competition of local traders. For example, through its agent, the West African Produce Control Board, which handled all Nigerian cocoa prices at the same time, held Nigerian cocoa prices steady at a low level.<sup>37</sup> So the marketing boards were a deliberate machinery to determine the prices of market produce in Nigeria to suit the colonial economy. This also explains the fact that Nigerian farmers and producers sold at a loss since the prices of every crop they were made to produce was fixed by the marketing boards.

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<sup>31</sup> Odey Mike, *The Development of Cash Crop Economy in Nigeria's Lower Benue Province 1910-1960*, 128.

<sup>32</sup> Ake Claude, *A Political Economy of Africa* (London: Longman, 2002), 70.

<sup>33</sup> Ake Claude, *A Political Economy of Africa*, 64.

<sup>34</sup> Odey Mike, *The Development of Cash Crop Economy in Nigeria's Lower Benue Province 1910-1960*, 123.

<sup>35</sup> Ake Claude *A Political Economy of Africa*, 64.

<sup>36</sup> Ake Claude *A Political Economy of Africa*, 75.

<sup>37</sup> Helleiner Gerald, *Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria*, 85.



## **Colonial Labour Policies**

The labour policy was aimed at creating abundant, free and cheap labour for the capitalist firms. In 1933 the forced labour ordinance was promulgated to ensure compulsory labour for public works by peasants who were recruited by feudal lords for public works, mining and plantation agriculture.<sup>38</sup> In Kagarko District, Kasaru Tin Mines or Mining Camp was famous for the implementation of the labour policies. At Kasaru, taxes were deducted from the labourers' menial pay of 3d to 4d monthly by the mine manager who also turns hands over the lump sum deducted from the workers' pay every month to the village head, who also issued a temporary receipt. While the District Head then issues a treasury receipts.<sup>39</sup> As at 1943, Kasaru tin mines had 500 labourers thus; 100 Hausa, 250 Koro, 150 Gbagyi.<sup>40</sup> It is also quite important to note that Kasaru tin mines had women who worked there with their head pans. Since tax was removed lump sum at the end of every month from the labourers' menial pay, it therefore meant that women too paid tax as against the claim that they were exempted. At Kasaru tin mines they also had cases of child labour. It was documented that on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1943 there were 145 Koro – 23 adult males, the rest were women and children.<sup>41</sup> Hence, both women and children generated revenue for the colonial government. The work at Kasaru tin mines was by force as every group in Kagarko had a specified number of labourers to send to the mines. The District Officer Mr. R.H. Maddox who visited the mines testified that ..... 'We eventually got out the village heads to Kasaru and told them we will keep them there until they had got their quota of mines labourers complete...'<sup>42</sup>

So, Kasaru was a clear case of forced labour. Other accounts have it that the labourers who were conscripted to work in the mines, worked under very harsh conditions such as inadequate accommodation. The workers had to feed themselves and take care of their other needs. As a result of all these, the Koro people were said to have refused to sleep in the insufficient huts at the Kasaru camps but would rather trek to nearby Koro villages to pass the night after work and then return every day to continue the work. Colonial labour policy was centred on cheap labour and the only way to get this cheap labour was through

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<sup>38</sup> Bade Onimode, *Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Macmillan Press, 1983), 84.

<sup>39</sup> NAK: ZARPOF FILE 452.

<sup>40</sup> NAK: ZARPOF FILE 452.

<sup>41</sup> NAK: ZARPOF FILE 452.

<sup>42</sup> NAK: ZARPOF FILE 452.

conscripted or forced labour, so the Village Heads became the instruments for the provision of this kind of labour. Forced labour was used for the mining camps, construction of roads and railways, bridges, lock-ups and rest houses and also for the building of elementary schools.

### **Colonial Transport and Communication Policies**

This policy was based on the desire to open up Nigeria, especially the Northern Region to boost the production of cotton for the Lancashire Mills in Britain. So, the railways from Lagos to Kano transported cotton to Lancashire between 1901 - 1902 due to the crisis caused by the boll weevil invasion.<sup>43</sup> The colonial policy of placing high priority on developing a transport and communication system greatly facilitated the tapping of the surplus productive capacity of indigenous farmers.<sup>44</sup> The railway was designed in such a way so as to export cotton and tin into the British industrial system and to expand the import of manufactures from abroad.<sup>45</sup> The colonial transport policy operated in conjunction with the land policy to focus the attention of the peasantry on primary export production. So the railways were designed to evacuate cash crops to Britain. The construction of the Northern railway which reached Kano in 1911/12 was principally motivated by the prospects realized by the British Cotton Growers' Association (B.C.G.A) of large scale cotton production in the Zaria/ Kano zone to meet the requirement of Lancashire textile industries whose previous source of supply, the southern States of U.S.A was becoming precarious.<sup>46</sup>

The motorable roads that were later constructed were meant to be as adjuncts of the railways and therefore conceived as feeder roads which contributed to the development of cash crops. It is important to note that the expatriation of these cash crops produced (cotton, cocoa, palm oil) were the main reasons for the opening up of the railways and roads. This in turn opened up new markets in the interior to European business men. It was discovered that groundnuts became the major export after the completion of the rail link from Kano to the South (Lagos) in 1912. But previously, supplies from the groundnut-growing areas of the Northern Region could only be evacuated via head portage to the Niger and

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<sup>43</sup> Abdulkadir Adamu, 'The Food Economy in Colonial Nigeria: A Study of Food Production and Distribution in Zaria Metropolis c. 1902-1960', 54.

<sup>44</sup> Helleiner, Gerald, *Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria*, 10.

<sup>45</sup> Isichei Elizabeth, *A History of Nigeria* (Lagos: Longman, 1983), 330.

<sup>46</sup> Mamman Musa Adamu, 'The Introduction of Mixed Farming Scheme in Katsina Emirate during the Colonial Period', 160.

thence boat to the coast.<sup>47</sup> The railway which was built between 1910 and 1914 had in 1910 exported 1,179 tons of groundnuts and by 1914 the export had risen to 19,288 tons.<sup>48</sup> The aims of the colonial railway lines were to: (1) pump raw materials out of the colonies; (2) for crushing anti-imperialist rebellions and (3) Transportation of black troops to European theatres of war.<sup>49</sup> So, the railway far from being an instrument of development to the colonies became a means for their enslavement and for the exploitation of their wealth.

### Colonial Tax Policy

The colonial tax policy was aimed at generating revenue to finance colonial enterprise in Nigeria. This was necessary since the British did not want to have any financial obligation in the administration of her colonies. Colonial taxation basically represented a significant tool for the operation, regulation and development of capitalism. Accordingly, colonial policies for taxation were designed to play some significant roles. Firstly, taxation was designed to provide sufficient funds for the maintenance of colonial administration and the institutionalized native authorities; for the supply of cheap labour for colonial infrastructure. Secondly, taxation was imposed and made payable in the official currency only. The implication was that people were forced to enter the money economy and to engage in wage labour, making agricultural work for the production of cash crop on land necessary.

There was also the introduction of the Native Revenue Ordinance which was an attempt to carry out a detailed assessment of the peoples' wealth and a decision to collect tax through the Chiefs.<sup>50</sup> In the Native Revenue Proclamation of 1906, Districts were assessed for the *Kuridin Kasa* (Land Tax) which amounted to a standard and regressive poll tax. There was also the *taki* system which attempted to replace the *Kuridin Kasa* in many of the Northern Provinces. This system was a fixed annual rent of six pence per acre, each peasant holding being measured by an appointed official, known as the *taki* Mallam. In the same vein, there was the Direct tax ordinance of 1944. This ordinance had to do with the percentage of tax that a native administration was to retain before giving the rest to the colonial government. So, it was agreed upon that....

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<sup>47</sup> Helleiner, Gerald, *Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria*, 8.

<sup>48</sup> Cohen Robin (Ed), *Forced Labour in the Nigerian Tin Mines* (London: Zed Press: 1979), 33.

<sup>49</sup> Cohen Robin (Ed). *Forced Labour in the Nigerian Tin Mines*, 33.

<sup>50</sup> Ikime Obaro, *Ground Work of Nigerian History* (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Press, 1999), 420.

....in the matter of the division of the general tax and Jangali between the government and Native Authorities was that the Native Authorities shall pay over to the Government annually the same amounts as they paid over in respect of the 1943-44 collections and retain the balance for their own use. It was arranged however that it will be possible for chief Commissioners to recommend and for the Governor to agree that, for a good and sufficient reason, a particular Native Authority shall be allowed to retain a larger portion of the tax. It was agreed in principle that the Government will be prepared to afford such relief as would enable Native Authorities to: (a) Balance their 1943-44 budgets by a reasonable margin (b) Maintain all existing social services and (c) Provide for a modest programme of works extraordinary.<sup>51</sup>

The tax policy was such that everyone directly or indirectly was involved in the payment of colonial taxes.

### **The Indirect Rule System**

The main aim of British rule in Africa was for economic interest. This interest was to exploit to the maximum the resources of the colonized. For this to be attained, the indirect rule system was put in place. However the, main reason for the introduction of the indirect rule policy was that the British lacked sufficient men and materials with which to govern a vast territory. Their initial personnel comprised the officers' corps of the invading army and the skeletal staff inherited from the Royal Niger Company. Thus, it was impossible for the British to establish an effective direct government with the men and resources at their disposal.<sup>52</sup> So this problem forced the British to accept the pre-existing traditional forms of government and used them to carry out colonial interests such as tax collection. In some other places where the traditional authority was not centralized, the British appointed traditional rulers to oversee the affairs of the colonialist in such areas. This was common practice in Southern parts of Nigeria area and some villages which practiced a decentralized form of government in Kagarko District.

In fact, by 1900 as soon as the British conquered Nigeria area, it introduced the policy of using African chiefs to rule on their behalf. Lord Lugard was the

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<sup>51</sup> NAK: ZARPROF File 3826 General Tax 1944-45

<sup>52</sup> Ikime Obaro (Ed), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 450.

advocate and designer of the indirect rule system in Africa. Prior to the introduction of the indirect rule system in Nigeria, the system had been used under the company rule. The companies had made use of indigenous traditional rulers in their administration. For example, in Northern Nigeria area, the Royal Niger Company recognized the authority of the Emirs and left them intact. While in the South, Native Councils were formed and given powers to make laws. So, when the British took over the administration of the colonies from the companies, the indirect rule was put in place.

Under the indirect rule system, a colony or protectorate was divided into provinces and each province was divided into districts. Each district was made up of towns and villages. A district had a village head or chiefs under it. The indirect rule system had a British Governor as the head of the protectorate. Under the Governor, there were the Residents who were in charge of the provinces. There were British District officers (D.O) appointed to supervise the districts and they reported to the Residents. In every district, Africans were appointed as District Heads and they were under the authority of the District Officers. In this hierarchy, the Governor sends orders to the Residents as the head of the Province, who then passed such orders to the District Officer; the District Officer sends the order to the District Head who in turn passed the instruction to the Village Heads. Such orders included the recruitment of labourers for the construction of roads and railways, the building of public places like government quarters, courts, rest houses and post offices. Other important orders were the collection of taxes which also passed through the same channels of authority to the colonial imperialists.

The indirect rule system also established a Native Authority in each province which was chaired by the paramount ruler. There was also the Native Treasury into which taxes collected, fines and fees were paid. All these channels of authority were put in place because Britain was not willing to spend money in the administration of her colonies but rather to repatriate the profit made in Africa back to London. It therefore meant that the profit made in Africa was not to be spent in the administration of African colonies.

However, the indirect rule system had some problems in the course of its administration in Nigeria. The British claimed that their aim was not to disrupt the pre-existing system of government, but to make it more humane and democratic.<sup>53</sup> But the system was imposed on Nigeria without regards for the

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<sup>53</sup> Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, p.450.

already existing political systems of the different peoples of Nigeria area. Thus, there were oppositions to the system, especially in relations to taxation which was an alien practice to some communities in Nigeria except for some of the societies in parts of Northern Nigeria who were already used to the payment of taxes. Despite these differences in political systems amongst the various people in Nigeria, the British imperialist forced this system into place because it was very instrumental for the success of tax assessment and collection in the colony.

As earlier noted, the pre-existing traditional rulers became agents of the colonialists- the Emirs, *Hakimai*, *Dakatai*, *Mai-Uguwanni*, *Gorori* etc. were rendered agents of the British in the collection of taxes in Kagarko District. It was also revealed that in areas where there was no central authority like most communities in the Southern parts of Nigeria, Kagarko District inclusive, the British appointed rulers to head such independent communities in order to collect taxes. At some point, the British flattered the Fulani by declaring them as ‘born rulers’; this was said to boost the morale of the appointees. It was this kind of imposed leadership that caused a lot of discontent in Southern Districts of Zaria Province. However, it is important to note that the British empowered these imposed rulers with military escorts to make sure the people were forced to adhere to the dictates of the British imperialists.

### **Conclusion**

British colonial policies were enacted to help in the administration of British colonies to entrench the colonial economy. The introduction and implementation of these policies changed the socio-economic and political organization of Kagarko District, transforming it into serving the needs of British colonial interest. The implication was the disruption of the organization of production, distribution and consumption; the monetization and commercialization of the economy; the deepening of exploitation and inequality amongst various strata of the population.<sup>54</sup> It is therefore important to note that, the effective exploitation and plunder of the colonized people was aided by these colonial policies enacted on land, labour, agriculture, tax, transportation and communication.

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