

Iware Cattle Market, Taraba State: An Assessment of its Peopling and Socio-Economic Activities, 1970-2010

Haruna Muhammad Suleimuri, PhD
Department of History and Diplomatic Studies
Taraba State University, Jalingo

Abdulsalami M. Deji, PhD
Department of Military History
Nigerian Army University, Biu, Borno State

And

Inalegwu Stephany Akipu, PhD
Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies
University of Jos, Jos Plateau State

Abstract

Iware cattle market is one of the most prominent cattle markets in Taraba state and Nigeria in general. Cattle trade as an economic activity has socio-economic implications in the Taraba State area. This is because the trade that a majority of its people engaged in is animal husbandry. The people of Taraba State area, especially the Fulbe are mainly engaged in trading, pastoralism, and the business of selling cattle to a vast majority of the peoples of Nigeria. This study deals with the number of towns and villages that bring their animals and other goods for sale in the Iware cattle market. The study discovered that the number of towns and villages that patronize the market is overwhelming. The economic significance of the Iware cattle market is, therefore, not in question looking at the number of people attracted every market day. The other aspect of the study, which informs the research is the expansion of cattle trading in terms of taking cattle to the people in remote parts of Nigeria. With this practice, they were able to ease the suffering of the people travelling to the Iware cattle market for the product.

Keywords: *Cattle market, Cattle trade, Iware, Taraba, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Animal husbandry as a branch of agriculture that started in the Neolithic period transition from hunting and gathering to sedentary life was and is still important in the history of mankind. The significance of animals to man in history has made him rear animals and use them for consumption. In the Nigerian context, the northern

part of the country, based on the enabling geographical environment, plays a very significant role in Animal husbandry, which is not unconnected to cattle production and marketing among others. Economic development is an important factor in establishing most industries. The Nigerian livestock industry is contributing immensely (up to 15%) to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the ₦5 billion projected for 1985, the livestock industry was estimated to have accounted for ₦2.5 billion.¹ It is important to note that 80% of the national herd is owned by the Fulani pastoralists² and they are the people that bring their cattle from various parts of Taraba State and the neighbouring states to the *Iware* cattle market for sale.

Economically, the importance of cattle cannot be overemphasized, cattle are economically important for the production of hide and skin, beef (meat), milk and other by-products. Also same as raw materials for manufacturing industries, the materials include bone, hooves, hide and skin.³ In some places they are used for work. Human being also derived much protein and energy for building of body tissues and production of energy respectively.⁴ Nigeria with increasing human population requires more food to ensure that people are not under-fed or do not suffer from mal-nutrition. The livestock industries provided a good source of animal protein, which is very much needed for balanced diet.⁵

Apart from their economic importance these animals also played vital roles in the religious and social costumes of many people in various geographical locations of the world. In Northern Nigeria for example, the number of cattle a person has symbolized how rich he is, place him in a particular social strata of the society.⁶

To a large extent, the importance of cattle and the role it played in the increase of the economic base, health standard of the people of a country, it is imperative to

¹ Egbunike, G. N. & Okubanjo, A. O., Effects of processing upon the quality of Nigerian meat products, *Livestock Production Science*, Volume 59, Issues 2–3, (1999): 155-163.

² Ardo, M. B. & Aliyara, Y. H., 'Economic Implication of Preventive Veterinary Services on Cattle Production Systems in Yola Area, Adamawa State, Nigeria', *International Journal of Tropical Medicine*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (2013): 68-70.

³ Amos Janet, 'The Economic Importance of Beef Cattle Production in Jalingo Local Government Area' (National Diploma Project, College of Agriculture, Jalingo, 1999), 1.

⁴ Amos Janet, *The Economic Importance of Beef Cattle ...* 1.

⁵ Adam O. J., *Cattle Husbandry*, (Hong Kong: Longman Group Ltd., 1964), 8.

⁶ Interview with Mallam Bello Manta "Sarkin Tike" aged 60, Head of the Cattle Market, Iware, 6th July, 2014.

say here that the marketing of cattle is equally important to the growth and development of a country. Thus, the establishment of the *Iware* cattle market and its contribution to development is worth nothing.

In Nigeria most of the cattle markets were established by the effort of the common man. It was after they were established that the government usually comes in to collect revenue. The government also ignores any work in the cattle markets that would improve some aspects of the markets.⁷ The regulation and assistance given to the markets were most often minimal or non-existent. The *Iware* cattle market is no exception to this neglect. In my study of the Umuahia cattle market, it was established that the government since the colonial period only makes promises of improvement, but no implementation.⁸ It is against this background that this paper examines the growth and development of *Iware* cattle market and to some extent, its contribution to the development of Taraba State in particular and the nation in general.

Cattle trade as an economic activity has serious socio-economic implication in Taraba State. This is because the economic activity that majority of its peoples engaged in is animal husbandry, second only to crop production. The people of Taraba State, especially the Fulbe are mainly engaged in trading, pastoralism and the business of selling cattle to a vast majority of the peoples of Nigeria. Taraba State, support various types of economic activities and one of the most important and prominent is animal husbandry or cattle rearing. The history of cattle trading in *Iware* is important if economic activities in Ardo-Kola and Jalingo Local Government Areas are to be understood. The study deals with the number of towns and villages that bring their animals and other goods for sale in *Iware* cattle market.⁹ It recognizes the fact that the number of towns and villages are overwhelming. The economic significance of the *Iware* cattle market is therefore not in question. The other aspect of the study, which informs the research, is that of expansion of the cattle trading in terms of taking cattle to the people in remote parts of Nigeria. With

⁷ OW 2747 Vol. III UMDIV 3/1/341, Umuahia-Ibeku Town Planning: Cattle Kraal Scheme, 1947-1952.

⁸ See Haruna Muhammad Suleimuri, 'A Study of the Cattle Trading Community in Umuahia-Ibeku, c. 1914-2000' (M.A Thesis, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, 2012). See also 2747 Vol. 4 UMDIV 7/1/56, Umuahia-Ibeku Town Planning: Cattle Kraal Scheme, 1953-154.

⁹ Interview with Alhaji Umaru Rasha, Male, aged 61, Unguwan Mai Gishiri, Iware, 6th July, 2014.

this practice they were able to ease the suffering of the people in travelling to *Iware* cattle market for the product.¹⁰

Cattle trade goes hand in hand with animal husbandry, which brings about clashes or conflicts between farmers and cattle herders.¹¹ The demand for meat supply from various parts of Nigeria, particularly South-East, South-West and South-South, help towards increasing the number of cattle being transported for sale into *Iware* cattle market. More than 70% of the animals sold in a given market day at *Iware* are for consumption - beef.¹²

Geographical Description and Location of Taraba and Economic Significance of Ardo-Kola Local Government Area and *Iware*

Over time the *Iware* cattle market had experienced a lot of developments, starting from small scale cattle market centered within *Iware* district developing to a standard cattle market with the capacity of holding up to 1,000-1,500 animals ranging from large ruminants to small ruminants.¹³ This development led to the increase in the revenue generation of the local government, the development of other areas of economic activities such as the growth of the grain market (*Kasuwan buhu*), the development of mat making, calabashes etc., which ultimately brought *Iware* to the limelight.¹⁴ Notwithstanding, the scope and limitation, will cover the emergence, growth and development of *Iware* cattle market from 1970 to 2010.

Taraba State is located between latitudes 6⁰30' N and 9⁰36' N and longitudes 9⁰10' E and 11⁰50' E of the Greenwich meridian. It shares common boundaries with six (6) states and Republic of Cameroun.¹⁵ It shares boundary with Adamawa State (north-east), Bauchi and Gombe States (north), Plateau and Nassarawa States (northwest) and Benue and Republic of Cameroun (south-west). The most important thing about Taraba is the climatic condition of the area. The state has a

¹⁰ See Haruna Muhammad Suleimuri, 'A Study of the Cattle Trading Community in Umuahia-Ibeku', ...; 2747 Vol. 2 UMDIV 7/1/55, Umuahia Cattle Kraal (Town Planning), 1946-1947.

¹¹ Interview with Mallam Bello Manga Ardo Iware District, aged 65, Ardo-Kola Local Government Area, Taraba State, 12th June 2014.

¹² Alhaji Umar Sani, Male, aged 60, Buba Digare, Iware, 4th June, 2014.

¹³ Interview with Alhaji Umar Sani, Male, aged 60, Buba Digare, Iware, 4th June, 2014.

¹⁴ Interview with Mallam Bello Manta "Sarkin Tike" aged 60, Head of the Cattle Market, Iware, 6th July, 2014.

¹⁵ Agboola, S. A., *An agricultural atlas of Nigeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 26.

tropical climate marked by dry (November–March) and rainy (April–October) seasons.¹⁶ It has an average annual rainfall range between 800 mm to 1950mm and the temperature varies from place to place and ranges between 15⁰C to 38⁰C. Taraba State has a total land area of about 60,000 sq. km¹⁷ and a population of 2,300,736 million persons comprising 1,199,849 million males and 1,100,887 million females.¹⁸ The state is blessed with natural resources and geographical features which has made it to be referred to as ‘Nature’s Gift to the Nation’.

Taraba state was created on 27th August, 1991 by the military administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. It was carved out of the defunct Gongola State in fulfillment of the long nurtured aspiration of the different ethnic groups that inhabited the area. Taraba State consists of undulating landscape dotted with a few mountainous features such as the scenic and prominent Mambilla Plateau.¹⁹ The state lies largely within the tropical zone and has a vegetation of low forest in the southern part and grassland in the northern part. The Mambilla Plateau with an altitude of 1,800 meters (6000 ft) above sea level has a temperate climate all year round.

After the creation of Taraba State, it was made up of nine (9) local government areas namely: Bali, Gashaka, Jalingo (being the headquarters (State Capital)), Karim Lamido, Lau Sardauna, Takum, Wukari and Zing.²⁰ This number was increased to twelve in September 1991, when three (3) additional local governments were created. Following another local government creation exercise by the late General Sani Abacha’s administration in 1996, the number of local government was increased to sixteen (16) with the newly created one’s as Ardo-Kola, Gassol, Kurmi and Ussa local government areas.

Taraba has a tropical climate marked by dry and rainy seasons. The rainy season commences in early April and ends in October, while the dry season starts from

¹⁶ Taraba State of Nigeria. Diary. Designed and Produced by Government House Press Jalingo, 2002.

¹⁷ Taraba State Agricultural Development Project, Rainfall data for Gashaka, Gassol, Gembu, Ibbi, Wukari and Zing from 1991, 2017, 2018.

¹⁸ National Population Commission, ‘Population Census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria’ (Preliminary Report, 2006).

¹⁹ Taraba State Agricultural Development Project, Rainfall data for Gashaka, Gassol, Gembu, Ibbi, Wukari and Zing from 1991, 2017, 2018.

²⁰ Taraba State Agricultural Development Project, Rainfall data for Gashaka, Gassol, Gembu, Ibbi, Wukari and Zing from 1991, 2017, 2018.

November to March. The average rainfall is 1.350mm recorded in the southern part of the state.²¹ The climate, soil, forest and hydrology of the state allows the cultivation of most staple food like maize, yam, Guinea corn, and grazing land for animals, as well as fresh water for fishing. During the dry season, harmattan occurs when the dust laden north-east. Trade winds from the Sahara have a marked effect on the climate of the state. The period is cold and dry. The driest months are January and February when the relative humidity is 13%.²² The vegetation of the area consists mainly of forest and tall grasses intersperse by short trees. The Mambilla Plateau has a type of vegetation found in the temperature regions with scattered short trees.

Taraba State comprises three types of vegetation zones namely; the guinea savannah, which is marking by mainly forest and tall grass are found in the Southern part of the State, like Wukari, Takum and Donga. The Sub-Sudan type characterized by short grasses interspersed with short trees are found in Jalingo, Lau, Ardo-Kola, while the semi-temperate zone are marked by luxuriant pasture and short trees are found on the Mambilla Plateau. These vegetation zones are generally suitable for the production of almost all species of livestock.²³

Livestock also plays a vital role in the lives of the people. The State has about 18 million animals and has the highest concentration of livestock in Nigeria. Taraba State has 5 million cattle, 3 million goats, 2.5 million sheep and 0.4 million rabbits. With these great agricultural potentials, Taraba State can contribute greatly in achieving Nigeria's 60% growth rate in agricultural production.²⁴

The crops cultivated in the area include millet (*Pennisetum typhoides*), groundnut (*Arachis hypogea*), cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*), sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*), rice (*Oryza sativa*), vegetable, cassava (*Manihot esculenta*), potato (*Ipomea batatas*), maize (*Zea mays*) and wheat (*Triticum aestivum*). Breeds of cattle commonly found

²¹ Taraba State of Nigeria. Diary, Designed and Produced by Government House Press Jalingo, 2002.

²² Taraba State of Nigeria. Diary, Designed and Produced by Government House Press Jalingo, 2002.

²³ Taraba State Agricultural Development Project, Rainfall data for Gashaka, Gassol, Gembu, Ibbi, Wukari and Zing from 1991, 2017, 2018.

²⁴ Mahmood Hamid Umar, Jerome Nyameh & Jane Jauro, 'Agricultural Management Strategy on Food Security in Taraba State, Journal of Biology, Agriculture and Healthcare', *IISTE*, Vol.4, No.8, (2014), www.iiste.org.

in the area are White Fulani (*Bunaji*), Sokoto Gudali (*Bokoloji*), Red Bororo (*Rahaji*), Adamawa Gudali and Kuri. This makes the feed available thereby reducing the cost of production in the zone.²⁵

Ardo-Kola Local Government area was created on the 1 October 1996 during the General Sani Abacha's regime. The local government was created out of Jalingo local government area; it was divided into ten (10) developmental areas or wards namely: *Ardo-Kola, Lamido Borno, Bakin-Dutse, Mayo Renewo, Tau, Alingora, Iware, Zangon Konbi, Jauro Yinu and Sunkani* with its headquarters at *Sunkani*.

The Local Government is characterised by mountains and streams with river Benue around the northern border. It is located at longitude 400 and latitude 600 west of Jalingo the Taraba State capital; it is about twenty (20) km from the heart of Jalingo to *Sunkani* being the headquarters. And it is bound to the east by Jalingo and *Gassol* Local Government area in the west, *Karim Lamido* in the north and Bali in the south.

The *Iware* cattle market is so far the biggest cattle market in Taraba State and the sole source of income to *Ardo-Kola* local government of Taraba State.²⁶ The market is also one of the major sources of animal protein to the local government. The market generate up to 50-100 thousand naira weekly.²⁷ The revenue that were collected from the market were used in the day-to-day activities of the local government and in solving of some of the markets problems.²⁸

Migration and Settlement: Peopling of the Area

Taraba State as we said earlier is blessed with material and human resources. The human resource is based on the diverse ethnic groupings. The State is heterogeneous in ethnic composition with rich diverse, historical and cultural

²⁵ Blench, Roger, 'Traditional Livestock Breeds: Geographical Distribution and Dynamics in Relation to the Ecology of West Africa' (Overseas Development Institute, London, 1999), <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/2766.pdf>.

²⁶ Interview with Muhammed Musa aged 62, "Sarkin Kasuwan Buhu Iware", head of the grain market. Iware, 20th June 2014.

²⁷ We are not able to lay our hands on the estimate money that was being generating from the cattle market every week. That was just an estimate going by some of the money that were collected per cattle.

²⁸ Interview with Yusuf Shehu Iware, *Ardo-Kola* Local Government, aged 43, 7th June, 2015 and 22nd November, 2022.

heritage. Although the various ethnic groups have their languages, Hausa and Fulfulde are widely spoken throughout the State. Other ethnic groups from other parts of the country namely Igbo, Yoruba and numerous others have also settled in the State.

The main ethnic groups in Taraba State are; Mumuye, Fulani, Mambila, Kuteb, Jukun, Yangdang, Karimjo, Chamba, Ichen, Munga, Jenjo, Kambu, Kunini and so on. These ethnic groups have minor sub-groups with their different languages spoken, distinct culture and festivals. It should be noted that about three quarter of the population of the state are farmers, while only an estimated 30% are into various white collar jobs, crafts and fishing.

Iware district had many inhabitants prominent among them are Fulani, Mumuye Wurkun, Hausa, Jenjo etc. and to some extent Kanuri who are the ruling class in the *Iware* district.²⁹ When it comes to discussing the migration and settlement of people in the *Iware* district, it is pertinent to discuss the historical background of some of the major ethnic groups found in the district. Focus will be on the Fulani and the Mumuye who has the largest population in the district.

The Fulbe (Fulani)

The earlier centre of the Fulbe in the Western Sudan was the region of the Senegal basin. But today they are found as far east as the Sudan and Ethiopia. According to Fulbe tradition of origin, they claim descent from the famous Arab, Uqba b. Amr. b Nafi.³⁰ Briefly, the tradition is that Uqba left Arabia at the time of the Prophet because it was predicted that he was going to have a non-Arab son. Coming to the Western Sudan, he married a black wife *Bajumango*.³¹ Their children were the ancestors of all Fulbe among whom are the Mbororo'en. Dieta; ancestor of the Songhai Fulbe Woya of Fulbe Woya; Roroba of the Wolaba'en and Nasi of Baowina and the Wodabe.³²

The Fulani migrated from Senegal valley following the political and social development in the region ranging from the Al-Moravid invasion of the region and

²⁹ Interview with Mallam Bello Manta 'Sarkin Tike' aged 60, Head of the Cattle Market, Iware, 6th July, 2014.

³⁰ Sa'ad, Abubakar, *The Lamibe of Fombina: A political history of Adamawa, 1809-1901* (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1977), 27.

³¹ Sa'ad, Abubakar, *The Lamibe of Fombina: A political history of Adamawa, 1809-1901*, 1977, 27.

³² Sa'ad, Abubakar, *The Lamibe of Fombina: A political history of Adamawa, 1809-1901*, 1977, 27.

the rise and fall of states, Tekrur, Ghana, Mali and Songhai, these development threatened the peace and security of the Fulbe, which forced them to migrate east ward to Hausaland as early as the fourteenth century AD to Borno empire in the sixteenth century.³³ Same fate befall the Fulani again when by the seventeenth century conflict developed between the Fulbe and their Kanuri host, they were forced again to immigrate eastward to the Benue valley, here they scattered all over establishing a number of settlements or staying amongst the inhabitants of the area. Their range of expansion in the Benue valley was limited by the Gongola valley and the Mumuye Plateau to the west and to the south by the Verre hills and eastward by the Bata principalities.³⁴

There were about (4) four branches of the Fulbe that were said to have migrated into the Benue valley. These comprises of the Ba'en, Wodaabe'en Yillaga'en and the Kiri'en'. The Fulbe again were divided into two distinct groups the Bororo'en who were nomadic cattle owners and the Fulbe shi'e who were the settled Fulani that usually reside in town and village in the midst of other people. It is however believe that most of the Fulani that migrated into the Benue valley were the Mbororo'en, but with time many of them lost their cattle as a result of conflict and constant raids on their cattle by the non-Fulbe, as time went on many of them lost their cattle during the jihad after which many of the Fulbe had to look for an alternative means of survival and a lot of them settled in towns and villages as farmers and some of them acted as herdsmen to pagan chief, while some took to Qur'anic reading and preaching, this practise transformed the *Mbororo'en* into Fulbe *shi'e*.³⁵

The Fulani indisputably represent a significant component of the Nigerian economy. They constitute the major breeders of cattle, the main source of meat, the most available and cheap source of animal proteins consumed by Nigerians. The Fulani own over 90% of the nation's livestock population, which accounts for one-third of agricultural GDP and 3.2% of the nation's GDP.³⁶ Furthermore, the contribution of the Fulani to the local food chain and national food security cannot be overstressed. The Fulani, with their dominance in the Sahel region, are the best

³³ St. Croix, F.W.D.E., *The Fulani of Northern Nigeria* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1944).

³⁴ Sa'ad, Abubakar, *The Lamibe of Fombina: A political history of Adamawa, 1809-1901*, 27.

³⁵ Sa'ad, Abubakar, *The Lamibe of Fombina: A political history of Adamawa, 1809-1901*, 27.

³⁶ Abbass, Isah Mohammed, 'No retreat, no surrender conflict for survival between Fulani pastoralists and farmers in Northern Nigeria', *European Scientific Journal* 8 (2014), 1.

known and most numerous of all the pastoral groups in Nigeria. The traditional and unique Fulani encampment (*ruga*) consisting of temporary structures made of stalks, closely knit family members and livestock is the natural habitat of the orthodox Fulbe settlement.

The expansion of Fulbe pastoralism into Nigeria is unknown. It is suggested that Fulbe began to settle on the plains of Bauchi Emirate transcending onto the grassland of the Jos Plateau.³⁷ Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers have existed since the beginnings of agriculture and increased or decreased in intensity and frequency depending on economic, environmental and other factors. For example, increases in the herd sizes, due to improved conditions of the cattle, compelled the pastoralists to seek for more pastures beyond their limited range. Climate change has constituted a great threat by putting great pressures on the land and thus provoking conflicts between them. However, improvement in human health and population has enhanced a much greater pressure on land. Since the 1980s therefore, there has been a marked expansion of cultivation of the *fadama* (riverine and valley-bottom) areas. This means that both the farmers and pastoralists have engaged in fierce struggles for access to such valuable lands which, more often than not, result in increased conflicts and violence.

Approximately eleven and a half of the nation's fourteen million cattle are managed by pastoralists³⁸ and with an estimated value of 60 billion naira³⁹ pastoralist-managed cattle represent a significant proportion of Nigeria's renewable natural resource. British colonial policy led to rapid expansion and monetisation of cattle and grain markets⁴⁰ and today there is a complex marketing network which, in simplified terms, moves cattle southwards to the large urban centres and grain northwards from the main cultivation areas.⁴¹ Although this network, with its numerous agents, brokers and traders, has been criticised for lowering the producer price of cattle and pushing up grain prices relative to cattle prices,⁴² it provides a

³⁷ Blench, Roger, 'Conflict Between Pastoralists and Cultivators in Nigeria' (Kay Williamson Educational Foundation Cambridge, 2010. <http://www.rogerblench.infor/RBOP.htm>)

³⁸ FDLPCS, 'Federal Department of Livestock and Pest Control Services', Vol 1. (Jersey: National Synthesis Resource Inventory and Management Ltd, 1992).

³⁹ FDLPCS, 'Federal Department of Livestock and Pest Control Services'.

⁴⁰ Kerven, Carol, Customary commerce: a historical reassessment of pastoral livestock marketing in Africa (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1992).

⁴¹ FDLPCS, 'Federal Department of Livestock and Pest Control Services'.

⁴² Mohamed Salih, 'Environmental and social insecurity in the drylands of the Sudan' (Uppsala University, Sweden, 1992).

low capital, extensive system linking remote rural areas with urban markets,⁴³ a situation quite different from that of the Borana and most East African pastoralists.

Cultivation has increased during times of drought, grain shortages and animal disease⁴⁴ and as a response to the loss of grazing land due to expansion of settled cultivators⁴⁵ and irrigation projects.⁴⁶ Cultivation is also a means of securing land and taking advantage of cultivator-biased government policies.⁴⁷ However interaction with the market and cultivation by the Fulbe is generally described in negative terms. Mohamed Salih states that the Fulbe used to be unwilling to part with cattle, but this is changing as they become more dependent on the market for food, manufactured goods and services.⁴⁸ Cattle are no longer reserve capital, and milk products have been commercialised. He argues that market dependence has forced some nomads out of the pastoral economy because the price of grain and services has risen relative to the price of livestock and milk.

The Mumuye

According to the tradition of origin of the Mumuye they believe that they came to Nigeria from the east through the Central African Republic and Cameroon to Yorro.⁴⁹ There is also a theory that the Mumuye have originated from the Cross River area and they are probably one of the original ethnic groups of Adamawa and Taraba States. The Mumuye are the largest ethnic group in Taraba state. The 1963 population census returns a figure of 292,865 for them. They live in Jalingo, *Ardo-Kola*, *Yorro*, *Lau*, Bali and Zing local government areas.

According to Meek C.K., the term Mumuye means “the people” and is made up of seven units: Pugu, Yorro, Rang, Zing ya and Gola (or Gongla): the seventh unit comprises Jega Mounde, Sori, Jole, Apawa, Jimlari and Usa. They are matrilineal and speak different dialect with close linguistic connection. In the pre-colonial period, the Mumuye had no centralised administration, but they recognised a single

⁴³ FDLPCS, ‘Federal Department of Livestock and Pest Control Services’.

⁴⁴ Mohamed Salih, *Environmental and social insecurity in the drylands of the Sudan*, Uppsala (Sweden): Uppsala University, 1992.

⁴⁵ FDLPCS, ‘Federal Department of Livestock and Pest Control Services’.

⁴⁶ Mohamed Salih, ‘Environmental and social insecurity in the drylands of the Sudan’.

⁴⁷ Mohamed Salih, ‘Environmental and social insecurity in the drylands of the Sudan’.

⁴⁸ Mohamed Salih, ‘Environmental and social insecurity in the drylands of the Sudan’.

⁴⁹ Patient Ahmed, *The Cross and the gods: A look at Adamawa and Taraba States, Nigeria* (Kaduna: Baraka Press, 1992), 303.

spiritual head, me priest or Yorro as the chief rain maker. The Mumuye are still migrating in search of more fertile farmland. However, Yorro remains the cultural centre because of the presence of the Chief Rain Maker (*Panti Giriri*).

The place that is now known as *Iware* was first occupied by a Fulani man by the name Mallam Boyi in 1945.⁵⁰ This man stayed in that area for a time being, when he was later joined by Mallam Manta a Kanuri man, who came from Kirbe.⁵¹ This union became very fruitful, to some extent that Mallam Manta, start to farm for both of them, on their farmland, knowing the Fulani, whom are very shy and adhere to *pulaku*” - Fulani law. Mallam Boyi seeing what Mallam Manta is doing for them decided that it is too generous for him. Then he migrated from *Iware* and founded another town, south of *Iware* known as Mallam Boyi after his name.⁵²

Iware is strategically located on the road from Jalingo–Mutum-Biyu which was used by traders coming to Jalingo from Mutum-Biyu. The road that link Jalingo and Mutum-Biyu is a known road that is used by traders in the pre-colonial Muri Emirate. It is a highway that links the capital with different section of the province. With time, villages started to spring up on the route because people frequent the area to trade.

These villages serve as a resting point for the traders. On this route there are two notable villages that the traders use to stay, these are *Sibre* and *Zangon Kombi*, but these villages did not serve the interest of the traders because of their being in a way distant from each other.⁵³ With the establishment of *Iware* in between the two villages make it very strategic and easier for the traders coming from Jalingo or Mutum-Biyu. So they made it their permanent resting point and as a result the villages around brought food and other needed things for sale.⁵⁴

Inter-Group Relations in the *Iware* Area

In this section, we examined inter-group relation as a factor which promoted interaction among the various ethnic groups that were found in *Iware* district and even those that were not part of it. Inter-group relations among the people that lived

⁵⁰ Interview with Mallam Bello Manga Ardo, Ardokola Local Government Area, 8th June, 2014.

⁵¹ Interview with Martin Lauje, J.P., aged 58, Unguwan Kassa Iware, 15th June, 2015.

⁵² Interview with Alhaji Umaru Rasha, aged 61, Unguwan Mai Gishiri, Iware, 6th July, 2014.

⁵³ Interview with Mallam Manu Maigoro, aged 61, Sunkami 6th July, 2014.

⁵⁴ Interview with Mallam Bello Manta, aged 60, Iware, 6th July, 2014.

in the Benue valley region was something that is taking place for a long time. Because of the demographic and ethnic distribution of the region, it is obvious that inter-group relation becomes inevitable. An ethnic group may not live in isolation; it had to interact with other ethnic groups to achieve its aims.

In the pre-colonial societies, relations were promoted through different ways. Relations were promoted through trade and traders' relations were also promoted through religion, socio-cultural institutions and even through warfare. In the modern societies some of these trends of inter-group relations continued.

Trade was perhaps the most important factor that linked many groups together. No community was self-sufficient in the production of agricultural and manufactured goods which it required either for its necessities or luxuries. Differences in physical environment and geographical factors tended to promote trade contact and hence, intergroup relation. For instance, a particular community may have an abundant product or may be specialised in something which other groups do not have, while lacking in other things, which other groups have and thus, the strong need for collaborations and inter-group relation.

Cattle trade as a factor that linked the people in the Taraba area could be seen in the case of *Iware* town in the northern part of Nigeria, which had abundant cattle; these cattle during the market day were exchanged for palm oil, which was brought by the Igbo from the southern part of the country.⁵⁵ This transaction and interaction between them promoted inter-group relations.

Social and cultural ideas spread from one area to another, a fact, which also points to the nature and dynamics of inter-group relations. This social and cultural borrowing in the course of interaction could be seen in the case of the ruling class in *Iware* who were Kanuri but are now being assimilated by the Fulani.⁵⁶ The fact that the present ruler cannot even speak the Kanuri language, as well as the adoption of Fulani names and systems of governance further prove the domineering nature of one culture over another as a result of inter-group relations. The adoption of Hausa and Fulfulde as the two lingua franca also point to the relations among

⁵⁵ Interview with Alhaji Ahmadu Mai Manja, aged 50, Unguwan Mai Gishiri, Iware, 10th August, 2014.

⁵⁶ Interview with Yusuf Shehu Iware, Ardo-Kola Local Government, aged 43, 7th June, 2015 and 22nd November, 2022.

different groups in *Iware*, and this contact promoted bi-lingualism among people of different groups. There were Mumuye who could speak Fulfulde and vice versa.

Marriages also played an important role in inter-group relations. The idea behind intergroup marriages was to have relatives in as much group as possible in order to promote peaceful co-existence; marriage connection does strengthen relations among different families and communities. The heterogeneity of the *Iware* district therefore, also permits interaction among groups so that there will be a harmonious and peaceful coexistence within the various communities that are found in the study area.

Socio-Economic Activities in *Iware*

This area like any other area in the state had many different ethnic groups. In life, every society had its own way of life, social interaction etc. Since there are many ethnic groups and cultures in the area, it is difficult to give a water-tight cultural description that may perfectly fit it, but we are to cite some that fall under the general description of the area.

Nearly every ethnic group in this area still practices traditional religion, though the strength of it varies from one ethnic group to another. Large numbers of those who claim to have accepted Islam or Christianity still go back to ancestral spiritual practices, especially during turbulent periods and festivals.⁵⁷

Marriages were conducted according to their various religious beliefs of the different people. Before marriages were contracted, parents on both sides have to agree on the dowry to be paid. For others, the boy had to work on the farmland of the bride's family, while some normally pay in cash.

Naming ceremonies usually take place when the umbilical cord had fallen off. There are religious and social activities ranging from *Sallah*, Christmas celebration to cultural plays, which were performed by different groups occasionally. The Fulani used to have what is known as '*sharo*' or '*soro*', which is a cultural play that is being performed by both men and women. The Mumuye also had many festivals such as the yam festival, as well as *matau*-which is a hunting feast observed in June. In this festival, men who had killed wild and dangerous animals

⁵⁷ Interview with Mallam Bello Manga Ardo, Ardo-Ko1a Local Government Area, Taraba State, 8th June, 2014.

such as leopards, or lions are praise for their bravery to spur others to imitate their feats.

There are three basic essentials for human beings; these things are food, clothing and shelter. In order to get these three basic essentials for survival, human beings must therefore, engage in production and for it to take off, they have to harness the nature for their own utilisation.

For the majority of the people of *Iware*, farming was the most important occupation, especially subsistence farming and explain the importance of the season in the lives of the various communities. They usually cultivate food crops though there are also cash crops, which they cultivate for both subsistence and commercial purposes.⁵⁸

The cultivation of such crops and having a very good harvest, lead to the growth and development of the grain market called “*Kasuwan Buhu*” located at *Iware*. This market is the biggest grain market found in Taraba State.⁵⁹ It is visited nationwide. In the dry season, farming was not possible and so, a number of people pursued other activities, the most common, was hunting. Some people venture into various traditional crafts and industrial works such as blacksmithing, dyeing, leather works, mat-making, etc. From this industries goods, were produced for their domestic use and local markets. Dyeing for instance was one of the important local industries that flourish in *Iware* unlike in the southern part of Nigeria where it was done by women, in *Iware*, dyeing was predominantly the work of men.⁶⁰

Mat-making was another industry found among the people of *Iware*. Many people weave long grasses into mat “*Zana*”, which is used either as a fence or, or as a mat, granaries for storage, or baskets for carrying farm produce. However, these works were done as part time jobs.

There was also the calabash making and calabash decoration industry. The calabashes were used in selling milk and also as eating utensils. Woodwork was another important local industry found in *Iware*. This is because many household furniture including wood seat, pestles and mortar, door and beds were made from wood.

⁵⁸ Interview with Alhaji Umar Bakari, aged 56, Ardo-Kola Local Government Area Taraba State 9th July 2014.

⁵⁹ Interview with Muhammed Musa, aged 62, *Iware*, 20th June 2014.

⁶⁰ Interview with Alhaji Umaru Rasha, aged 61, Uguwan Mai Gishiri, *Iware*, 6th July, 2014.

The rearing of cattle in *Iware* by the Fulbe led to the development of leather making industry in the area. The skin acquired from both domestic and wild animals provided the raw materials for the industry, but leather work was mostly the work of elder men who retired from farm work and other activities. This industry provided the market with leather goods such as bags, leather shoes swords and dagger-sheaths. The method used in dressing the skin into leather was by the use of wood ash and water, which assist in the removal of hair from the skin and then the leather was treated with acacia bark.⁶¹ Another important industry in *Iware* was iron work and pottery industry. Blacksmithing was found all over and they manufacture farming and hunting implement.

One may like to know the economic importance of these local industries. In the first place, they serve as a means of livelihood for a number of people in *Iware*, particularly the aged ones and other categories of people whose physical condition could not permit them to practice farming or trade. Secondly, it acted as an important source of revenue to the local authority as tax imposed on any kind of goods meant for selling during that period.

Conclusion

The establishment of *Iware* town and *Iware* cattle market is influenced by many factors one of which was the nature of the land. The peopling of the area is also largely influenced by the nature of the land. Fertility of the land is something of importance in bringing people to the area. *Iware* town is also located on a major trade route between Muri Emirate and Southern part of Nigeria. The area was a resting place for traders who carry out their trading through the route.

Because of the various ethnic groups that occupy the area, inter-group relations played a significant role in the development of the area. The various ethnic groups not only engage in buying and selling among themselves but also there were cases of inter-group marriages in the area, which were supported by the rulers of the Muri emirate in order to foster unity among the various ethnic groups within the Muri emirate.

Pastoral production system is a main source of livelihood for large populations in West and Central Africa, and contributes greatly to the economies of these regions. The livestock industry is a very important component of the agricultural sector of

⁶¹ Interview with Mallam Abdullahi Usman, Ardo-Kola Local Government Area, 12th June, 2014.

Nigeria's economy, contributing billions to the GDP. The cattle market in *Iware* contribute both to domestic and national development of Nigeria.

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