



## History of Some Selected Grain Markets and their Operations in Borno State

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### Abstract

The article examines the growth and operations of some grain markets in Borno state. The study examined the growth and processes of five grain markets across the state. The markets are located in urban centres whereby they get grains from the surrounding areas. The study found that congestion in the conventional markets, the rise of urban centres, and the increase in population necessitated the emergence and growth of grain markets across the state. These markets serve as distribution centres of grains to other parts of the country. The study used the qualitative research method using primary and secondary sources of data collection.

**Keywords:** Grains Market, Maiduguri Market, Grains Distribution, Borno State

### Introduction

Market means any organization where buyers and sellers of commodities interact in close touch with each other.<sup>1</sup> The genesis of the emergence of the Maiduguri Monday Market could be related to the significant role Borno played in the trans-saharan trade. One of these routes was Borno - Kavar - Tripoli trade route, the famous northern route which passed through the Bilma salt mines to the Mediterranean – the terminus markets for this route along the Chad Basin were Myo, Wudi, Garumele, etc, and from there the route branched to several other smaller markets. There was another trade route to the south of the lake, which followed along the River Shari to the Makara towns of Kamako, Logone and Afade. Another route from the the state of Wadai and Darfur. The other trade route passed through the capital Birni Ngazargamo to the market of Western Borno and thence into Hausaland. These four important trade routes met in the Lake Chad area to make the region important. Indeed the role Borno played in the trans-saharan trade also influenced the commercial activity of Borno in general and Maiduguri in particular.<sup>2</sup> The influence of Borno in trade in the region continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This led to the growth of major markets in the urban centres in Borno. Therefore, this article examines the growth of some grain markets and their operations in Borno from 1979-2019.

### Maiduguri Monday Market

The notion of building a modern market complex known as Maiduguri Monday Market was conceived in 1972 but only after the fire outbreak which burned down the market in March 1979 that the idea came into reality,<sup>3</sup> with the building of a modern market starting during the period under review. Initially, the project was to be executed by the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, but because of the substantial amount of money needed for the project, Borno State Government took

<sup>1</sup> Ohiwere, F. (1986): Problems and Prospects of Marketing in Nigeria No.16 University of Ibadan printing press 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Bala Usman and Nur Alkali, eds. Studies in the History of Pre-colonial Borno, Zaria, NNPC, p.67-68.

<sup>3</sup> Brief on Maiduguri Monday Market Company Limited, Printed by Government Printing Press, 1986.



over the project. The state ministry for Local Government and Community Development shouldered the responsibility of planning and construction of the whole work on the market.<sup>4</sup>

The construction of the company was completed in 1985. The market was commissioned on Wednesday, 14 August 1985, by the then Military Governor of Borno State Major-General Abubakar Waziri (Rtd).<sup>5</sup> The Monday Market Company was henceforth run by an authority which was established by the Borno state edict No.4 of 1984. The authority was charged with the following responsibilities: -

- (a) Run, maintain and regulate a wholesale and retail at the market.
- (b) Establish such additional markets in Maiduguri as the authority may consider necessary.
- (c) The authority is also responsible for the settlement of the ₦6,000,000 loan obtained from the First Bank of Nigeria Limited.<sup>6</sup>

Stalls and stores of various sizes were built to meet the growing demand of both wholesalers and petty traders. There are over 7,000 shops and stores in the market for that purpose. Every trader is adequately accommodated; the types of stalls and stores are as follows in the market:- (1) Simple stall (SS), (2) Cabinet type (CI), (3) Cabinet type (CII), (4) Cabinet type (CIII), (5) Traders shop (T.S), (6) Peripheral Shop (Ps), (7) Store I (SI), (8) Workshop (W), (9) Store II (S2), (10) Food Unit (FU), (11) Meat Shed (CSI), (12) Meat Shed (SS), (13) Vegetable Market (VM), and (14) Outside Wall.<sup>7</sup>

It is worth noting that the trade in grains in Borno has been in existence even before the establishment of Maiduguri Monday Market in 1979. The grain trade was first noticed in Fezzan area, particularly at Makera in 1960s, when people displayed their grains for sale in front of their houses.<sup>8</sup> It was also later noticed around the present-day Milk Dairy Shop very close to the state veterinary clinic known as the (Kasu doleye) later in the late 1960s.<sup>9</sup>

Grain traders later moved into the market after the construction of the market and settled at the Food stuff unit allocated to grain traders. After the fire outbreak in Maiduguri Monday Market in 1979, some of the grain traders moved to Gamboru vegetable market and later in 1987 to the Custom grains market and set up the grains market there.<sup>10</sup> Grains that are sold in the market are all from the various local government areas, particularly Mongono, Konduga, Bama, Kukawa, etc. Only millet, sorghum and wheat in a very limited quantity were sold before. Maize came into the market later, after the drought of 1983, when people started the cultivation of maize particularly in the Biu area of southern Borno state.<sup>11</sup>

The business of grain trade was done by only a few people and also the level of patronage initially when the business was very low due to the fact that, 1960s majority of the people engaged in subsistence farming to producing for their immediate consumption and also population

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p.3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p.4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.4-5.

<sup>7</sup> Brief on Monday Market, p.5.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Ahmed Modu Ngubdo in Maiduguri, on 10/9/2019

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Balausman Modu in Maiduguri Monday.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Ba'ausman Modu in Maiduguri Monday Market, on 12/9/2019.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Haruna Biu in Biu. 17/9/2019.



concentration in the urban centre was not much. However, grains became a very popular business and patronage went very high in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of the growth in the population of the urban centre, there was high demand for grains consumed by the majority of the people. This also led to an increase in the production and supply of the commodity by the farmers in the various local government areas across Borno State. This is in order to meet up with the demand in the urban centre. Maiduguri Monday Market happens to be the centre of all markets where grains are brought from the rural areas for sale in the urban centre.

Grains happened to be that type of business that demands large space for storing the commodity before the sale in both large and smaller quantities. Secondly, grains re used for various purposes by the majority of people. To some, it is used for immediate consumption and to others for industrial usage. The increase in the number of grain traders in Monday Market Maiduguri created the problem of space among traders. This manifested in inadequate stores for the storage of the commodities for onward sales, which led to the establishment of other grain markets across the metropolis.

#### **Custom Grains Market**

The idea of setting up a custom grains market was an alternative by the authority of the Monday Market Company Maiduguri due to the congestion in Monday Market immediately after the 1979 fire outbreak. The authorities of the market utilized one of the powers bestowed on them by the Borno state edict No.4 of 1984, which charged the company with the responsibility of “establishing other such markets in Maiduguri as the authority may consider necessary.”<sup>13</sup>

The custom grain market was purposely built by the Borno state government in collaboration with Monday Market Company in 1980. Grain traders and fish sellers were moved to the market in order to reduce the congestion in Maiduguri Monday Market. However, it took a long time before the market gained full patronage from the people.<sup>14</sup> Grains were supplied from local government areas like Kaga, Bama, Dikwa, Askira and Gwoza. Most of the grains sold in Customs Market are Millet, Maize, Rice and Maize in large quantities, while other products are not as much as the grains.<sup>15</sup>

The custom grain market is also one of the markets that is organized and headed by the union leaders in the markets. The traders always obey rules and regulations guiding the market, ranging from the payment of union dues, government revenue, taxes, etc. The market is mostly patronized by the people living around the community close to the market. The market is one of the markets that generate high revenue for the government and create a value-chain in the marketing and processing of raw grains, in that it has a complete set of grains sellers, processors and also consumption of the grains unit in the market.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the custom grains market happened to be an exception from the other grains markets due to the nature of the market that when you buy the raw grains, one can process it in the various stages and up to the consumption/cooking stage and go home with it.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Alhaji Barma in Maiduguri Monday Market. 4/9/2019.

<sup>13</sup> Brief on Maiduguri Monday Market Company Limited, printed by Government Printing Press, 1986, p.2.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Bulama Ngubdo in Custom Market Maiduguri. 7/8/2019.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Abubakar Mohammed at Custom Market. On 21/3/2018.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Ba'ausman Luntima at Custom market, Maiduguri. 21/3/2018.



### **Muna Grains Market**

The muna grains market was established on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 1987. It was purposely built to reduce the warehouse problems and overpopulation of grain traders in Maiduguri Monday Market. The state government, through the Maiduguri Monday Market, transferred some of the traders in the grains section of the market to the Muna grains market. At the initial stage of the take-off at Muna grains market, both traders and also buyers were very few. Gradually, the market picked up, and today has the highest number of buyers and sellers of grains on a daily basis.<sup>17</sup> Muna grains market got the supply of gains from the Konduga, Kukawa, Kaga and Mongono areas of Borno. Most of the grains sold in the market are millet, maize, beans and wheat. Traders in these markets buy the grains and keep them in their warehouses for sale across the state, especially in southern Nigeria.<sup>18</sup> The muna grains market is run on a daily basis. Retail sales are mostly daily and wholesale, especially those going to neighbouring states, are on a weekly basis. Although the market has no specific day for the market, it is always on the weekend. Compared to other markets, Muna market has enough parking space for loading and unloading grains and enough warehouse for storing the commodity.<sup>19</sup>

### **Baga Road Market**

Since pre-colonial times, the markets of Borno, especially the central market, had been organized in such a way that traders of similar or related items congregated together in one place. This was probably done to make it easier for the customers going to the market to choose the product displayed by individual traders. That is to say the spatial organization of the market in that way gave room for competition amongst sellers to provide good products to the customers. That was probably the best way to maintain appreciable standards and quality of products. Furthermore, it helps control prices to a certain degree from manipulating unscrupulous business people.

Baga road market Maiduguri was also established to reduce the congestion of buyers and sellers in the main market in 1987. The market is shared among grain traders and smoke fish sellers, i.e., wholesalers, retailers, and other traders.<sup>20</sup> The market operates daily, from morning to evening, and has majority of grain traders, i.e., retail and wholesalers from within the community. Traders in the Baga road market get the supply of grains from the local governments of Biu, Dikwa, Kaga, Gubio, Magumeri, etc., for upward sales in Maiduguri and beyond.<sup>21</sup>

### **Biu Grains Market**

Biu grains market was established in 1980 as a result of the increase in the population of the Biu main market and also to ease the problem of loading and off loading commodities hence, the separation of the grain market from the main market.<sup>22</sup> Biu grains market is the largest market in southern Borno, with almost all the neighbouring local governments of Uba, Shani, Askira, Damboa, Kwaya Kusar and neighbouring states of Gombe, Yobe and Adamawa state patron sing it. It is a very big market with enough space and stores for the storage of grains and is located in a strategic area on the outskirts of Biu.<sup>23</sup> Biu grains markets at the initial stage sold grains like maize, millet, and

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Babakar Mala in Muna grains market Maiduguri. 2/2/2018.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Mustapha Mala in Muna grains markets Maiduguri. 21/3/2018, 7/9/2019 and 20/9/2019.,

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Ba'ausman Luntima in Customs market Maiduguri. 2/2/2018.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Baba Bukar Marte at Baga Road Maiduguri. 1/4/2018.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Ahmed Ngubdo at Baga road in Maiduguri. 23/3/2019.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Garba Mai Hatsi in Biu town. 2/5/2017.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Baba Kadafir in Biu grains market. 17/9/2019

beans daily in the 1980s in large quantities daily. The market is run on a daily basis for retail sellers and twice a week i.e., Mondays and Thursdays for wholesalers. About twenty to thirty trucks of grains are being sold out daily in the market, and more than eighty trucks per week, transactions of about eighty million naira daily.<sup>24</sup>

Biu grains market has maize in most of its production and marketing. After the 1979 drought, farmers engaged in large-scale production of maize. However, massive production of maize started in Biu in 1982, when the farmers realized the high demand for maize in the Biu area and beyond. Grains from the Biu market are said to be sold in three different processing stages, i.e. immediately after harvesting, milling, and grinded into flour, depending on the buyers' demand.<sup>25</sup>

### Conclusion

Markets are very important to Borno's grain distribution and marketing during the period under review. At the markets, people bought the various staple foods they needed. Among the major grains markets in Borno in these periods were: Maiduguri Monday Market, Biu grains Market, Baga road market, Custom market and Muna grains market. All the grains markets in Borno are held on a daily basis and visited every day by many people, both wholesalers and retailers. It is also important to note that all the grains markets are being shared with other traders or foodstuff sellers. Muna market has the highest number of grains sellers with enough warehouses, and high patronage, especially the wholesale. There is always tremendous crowding and jostling in the market. The other three markets were also big, but the section of the grain sellers is not as big as that of Muna grains markets, though there is always high patronage, especially in the retail market. Biu grains markets also happened to be one of the largest grains markets in Borno. Grains produced in Biu and neighbouring local governments of Askira Uba, Kwaya-Kusa, Shani, Uba and Damboa are all taken to Biu grains market for sales, especially wholesale to neighbouring state of Yobe and some parts of Adamawa state.

### APPENDIX



A plate of Maiduguri Monday market grains section



Bowls of maize displayed by a marketer for retailing

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Sarkin Kasuwa Bukar Zalfada. 17/9/2019.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Haruna Biu, from Biu. 18/9/2019.





Uploading of grains at Gaboru grains market for retailing



Bowl of maize and bags of wheat at Baga road market



Assembled bags of grain at Gaboru market



A plate of Biu grains market



Uploading of grains at Muna Market



Assembled bags of maize in Biu grains market