



REFLECTIONS ON THE STATE, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY OF ZAMFARA PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOKOTO CALIPHATE

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Abstract

The ancient Zamfara Kingdom was rich in core traditional values, domestic craft production, cultural practices and festivals. However, the several attacks on the polity inflicted a severe setback on its political stability. The study focuses on Reflections of the State, Economy and Society of Zamfara prior to the Establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. The study also examines the history of the kingdom, the culture, the tradition and the economic activities of the people in the area, the growth, expansion, fall of the Kingdom and the triumph of the Sokoto Caliphate. The study adopted a substantial use of quantitative data through the use of primary and secondary sources.

Keywords: Reflections, State, Economy, Society, Zamfara

Introduction

The main aim of this study is to examine the history and cultural practices of the people of Zamfara Kingdom before the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. The study specifically sets to examine the condition of the kingdom prior to the Establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, to describe the nature of the society of Zamfara Kingdom as well as the economic activities of the people prior to the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate and also investigate how the economic activities of the society influenced the growth and development of the kingdom before its eventual collapse.

Zamfara was from the 15th century a vast kingdom. The Zamfara kingdom is one of the oldest kingdoms in the central Sudan. The kingdom extended from the River Rima bend in the North down to River Ka in the Southwest. By the first decade of the 16th century, the Zamfara kingdom had become a flourishing polity under the Sarauta system of Sarkin Zamfara. Its first capital was Dutsi. Many Kings and a Queen reigned at Dutsi. They included; Bakurukuru; Dakkai; Kakai-Kakai; Dudufaru; Jatau and Queen Yargoje. Queen' Yargoje ascended the throne in 1310 A.D and ruled till 1350 A.D (Investors' Guide, 2007). She relocated the kingdom's Capital City from Dutsi to a more strategic defensible area at Kuyambana in Dansadau. Queen' Yargoje was a very powerful ruler whose reign ushered in an era of peace and progress in the kingdom. The remains of that dynasty are today a tourist attraction, while her famous lamp, the Yargoje lamp is one of the



prominent artefacts in the Sokoto State History Bureau Museum and the subsequent History Bureau of the present day Zamfara State (Investors' Guide, 2007).

However, this powerful kingdom collapsed when the forces of Gobirawa in the second half of the 18th century destroyed its capital, Birnin Zamfara. This led to yet another relocation of the capital southwards. It was temporarily based at different times at Kiyawa, Morai, and Sabon-gari. It finally settled at Anka where a new permanent capital was built in the second half of the 19th century (Investors' Guide, 2007). Before the Jihad, Zamfara kingdom was a power that was reckoned with in the socio-political setting of Hausaland. When the Jihad broke out in 1804, Zamfara became the base on which the Jihadists launched campaigns against both Gobir and Kebbi. After the Jihad, some key lieutenants of Sheikh Shehu Usman Danfodio were appointed to administer parts of the kingdom and were given full authority powers. The Alibawa Clan Head (Abu Hamid) was appointed as Sarkin Zamfara. He was deployed to Zurmi; Mallam Sambo Dan Ashafa as Sarkin Katsinan Gusau; Ibrahim Dan Zundumi as Sarkin Fulanin Bungudu; Namoda as Sarkin Kiyawa based at Kaura-Namoda, while the title of Bango was conferred to Dadi, an Adar Fulani residing in Maru (Investors' Guide, 2007).

Thus, within the territory of the Zamfara Empire of that period, there were also in residence other tribes and ethnic communities. They included small groups of Fulani settlements scattered all over the Empire, especially in Zurmi, Bungudu, Jabaka (Maru district) and Jangeru (Shinkafi Local Government), Katsinawa around the Eastern border at Yandoto (Gusau district), Kotorkoshi, Kuyanbana and Burmawa in Bakura District. These ethnic groups settled alongside the zamfarawa and interacted freely and intermarried with them. Subsequently, Zamfara became one of the states created on 1st October, 1996 by the late General Sani Abacha's administration. The state got its name from Zamfarawa, the traditional appellation by which the people of Anka had been called for ages. The creation of the state ended decades of unrelenting and tortuous agitation. During the colonial era and even after independence in 1960, Zamfara was still regarded as semi-autonomous by successive governments. There were three major languages- Hausa, Fulfulde and Arabic. The state also has three religions. Islam is the dominant religion of the people with (98.7%), Christianity (0.8%) and Traditional (0.5%) (Zamfara State Handbook, 1997).

Geographical Description

Zamfara State is located in the north-west Region of Northern Nigeria. It covers a land area of 38,418 square kilometres. It has Sokoto to the North, Kebbi and Niger States to the west, Katsina to the East and Kaduna to the South. It has fourteen (14) local governments. This included: Anka, Bakura, Birnin Magaji, Bungudu, Bukkuyum, Gummi, Gusau, Kaura-Namoda, Maradun, Maru, Shinkafi, Talata Mafara, Tsafe, and Zurmi, with Gusau as the state capital and the largest town in the state with area of 3,469 square kilometers (Zamfara State Handbook, 1997). Zamfara State is located at the extreme Northwestern part of the country between 13 °00 and 10 °30 North, latitude and East longitude 4 °30 with a total land mass of about 37,400 km². The durable land consists of upland and fadama land. The latter covers about 40,750 hectares (Zamfara State Tourism Guide, 1996).

There are four (4) major Rivers in the state namely, Ka, Bunsuru, Gagare, and Zamfara. It also has several lakes. The most important ones are: Dangulbi (Kakale), Bakura (Natu). Smaller ones include: Saru (Gummi), and Jena (Zurmi). The state also has three (3) Dams namely; Bakalori Dam, Gusau



Dam, and Kaura-Namoda Dam. It also has a population of over three (3) million people. It can be further established that agriculture is the backbone of the state's economy. Besides farming, they also engage in handcrafts (Zamfara State Handbook, 1997).

Climate

The location of Zamfara to a great extent determined the climatic condition of the area. In general, the whole area is characterised by high temperatures and marked seasonality of rainfall. The average amount of rainfall in the area fluctuates between thirty-six (36) and Eighty (80) millimeters a year.

The major seasons are the dry season (Harmattan) and Wet season (Rainy season). The dry season lasts from October to the end of May, and can be sub-divided into Harmattan and hot periods. The Harmattan last from October to February. There is a dry North-Western air Mass called '**Ikili**' which signals the coming of the Harmattan at the beginning of which the grasses, leaves and stalks of Guinea corn begin to dry. The rivers which got flooded during the heavy rainfall begin to recede. Similarly, relative humidity is dropping and gradually affecting vegetation and human activities. The Harmattan wind, a desiccating one, carrying along with its dust makes life extremely uncomfortable especially in the northern part of the country (Nadama, 1977).

By the middle of Harmattan, in addition, all the major crops are harvested and the grasses and shrubs that have blossomed during the wet season begin to dry up revealing yellowish leaves which gradually fall off in the hot period. The sky becomes cloudless and the visibility blurred by the Misty and dusty wind. The mean maximum temperature rises and reaches a peak of 90 °F and 100 °F in April, while the mean minimum is very low between December and January, in some cases characterized by periodic hazy days and nights when mist covers the sky, causing very poor visibility (Nadama, 1977).

There is the hottest phase of the dry season which last from Mid-march to May. The sky which had hitherto remained cloudless begins to show signs of very light clouds especially in the evenings. The sun is very bright and blazing especially before noon, the days becoming longer than during the Harmattan, the longest days being in April with about 13.1 hours of sunshine. The temperature increases reaching a maximum of over 100 °F in April. The wet season on the other hand is the busiest time of the year. The long dry season ends in the seventh month of the lunar calendar. The first sign of the wet season is the appearance of dark-blue clouds in the sky and the coming of the '**Shamuwa**' (Spenorphynehas abdmil) regarded as the harbingers of the Rainy season. With the signals, the preparation of the farms and the repairs of the compounds are intensified, and people who have been away from their villages either on trading expedition or visits return to their areas in readiness for the coming rains (Nadama, 1977).

As mentioned earlier, the rainfall is not evenly distributed throughout Zamfara. There is more rainfall in the south especially the part that falls beyond River Sokoto, with an average yearly rainfall of up to 40 inches. Northwards, the amount of rainfall increases to the area with less than 25 inches of rainfall even in the wet years (Nadama, 1977).

Methodology

Attempt to gather historical literature and materials for this study requires two major historical data sources; primary and secondary sources. The two-dimensional sources for historical reconstruction



were adopted to validate the reliability of the study. The primary source is so much alluded to in history and such require the utilisation of unstructured oral interview which was conducted in some areas of the State as well as among staff and officials of the State Emirate Council. Other areas include the Zamfara State History Bureau and the Zamfara State Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism. To validate genuiness and originality of data, the electronic recorder and other things were documented for accuracy to maintain absolute confidentiality. In fact, to debrief information, some informants were monetised to facilitate quick responses by using Hausa, Fulani and English languages through some research assistance.

Besides, the secondary sources also played fundamental role in complementing oral interviews. This constitutes the adoption of extant literature for genuine historical interpretation of facts obtained in the course of the unstructured interview. The secondary materials included text books; pamphlets, handbooks, bulletins, newspapers; magazines, theses; projects and dissertations obtained from the Department of History and International Studies, and other departments of Federal University Gusau. Other pieces of literatures obtained in the aforementioned ministries and parastatals supported the interpretation of the history of the area. History Bureau and Library were frequently consulted and the materials obtained were judiciously used. In a nutshell, published and unpublished articles such as 'Investors' Guide to Zamfara State,' considerably assisted in reconstructing and documenting the phenomenon under investigation.

Literature Review

There are quite a number of literary contributions to the early history of Zamfara, but few exist on its ancient history. On the early history of the economy and the society of Zamfara, the works of Nadama, Chafe and Usman historical contributions throw light on the practice and importance of livestock farming in the Zamfara area. Chafe; (1999) and Usman, (1977); in their contributions on the state and economic structure of the Sokoto Caliphate, which covers the Zamfara area in the 19th century, report the significant roles played by the Caliphate Authorities towards the development of pastoralism and animal husbandry. These works have revealed how this sector prospered under the Caliphate. Usman explained women's role in animal rearing and sales of dairy products. This research work further examines the state, economy and the society of Zamfara in the ancient period.

In their writing, Nadama (1977) and Garba (1985), established the dominance of trade and livestock production as one of the major economic activities of the people of Zamfara for centuries, but did not explain much about the aspects of state, and the society. Nadama traced the early history of Zamfara and the people's economic activities; these work have provided background knowledge for the furtherance of this research work. However, these works did not examine the Nadama (1979) in his contribution to urban growth under the Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th century poised, that "urbanisation and development of new towns have a very long history in Hausaland". His work centers on Kaura-Namoda and Gusau. He discussed the efforts of the leaders of the Sokoto Jihad towards accelerating urban development. He further digested the economic potentials of the area, especially cereal production and long-distance trade in livestock to Bida. The study by Nadama was limited to Gusau and Kaura – Namoda. This research work further explained the networks of these trades in livestock in Zamfara and other parts of Nigeria, especially the long-distance trade on hoof and trade in livestock from the coming of the railways to Zamfara area in 1929 as well as the transformation brought by the railway transportation system.



Gusau (2019) traced the genealogical history of the Zamfarawa and Bare-Bari people, the work also accounted for the immense contribution of Sultan Muhammad Bello to the establishment of Islamic institutions in Zamfara land. He further examined some of the economic factors that led to the firm-stronghold of the kingdom with the likes of farming, livestock production and the existence of trade routes. The work investigated the relationship between the Gobirawa, Zamfarawa and Katsinawa and the migration of the people in search of greener pastures. It shed light on the impacts of the Sokoto Jihad to the Zamfara land.

Bako (2019), examined the contributions of the Saharan -Saharan trade routes, inter-marriages, and agriculture in the establishment of the Zamfara Kingdom from its first capital Dutsi to its Second capital Birnin Zamfara. The work traced the attack on and the fall of Birnin Zamfara by the Gobir forces, the impacts of the Sokoto Jihad and Islamization of the regions of Zamfara and the subsequent political transformations that ensued

Rufai (2019) stressed that the diplomatic relations between Zamfara Kingdom and its neighboring states were characterised by war, economic and political tensions. The work traced the major trans-saharan trade routes and active participants in ancient inter-state relations in the Western Sudan. It also highlighted the role of the Sokoto Jihad and migrant communities in the establishment of the Zamfara Kingdom, while Anka (2019), traced the history of the Zamfara Kingdom to the Old Anka in the southern Magrib during the Iron Age period. The work also examined the culture and tradition of the people and the impact of the Sokoto Jihad.

The Socio-Cultural Settings of Zamfara People

Zamfara State a predominantly Hausa-Fulani social setting has a rich cultural history akin to the Hausa-Fulani found in almost every area. For instance, the traditional attire is mostly a head-cap, a big-gown and Shapara and Janfa for men. The women wear wrappers, head-ties, veils and Buha-like dresses. Their traditional weddings are done with colourful celebrations. For example, after betrothal, there is the traditional Hynena decoration by the bride and their friends; this aspect signifies the culmination of events, which indicates the advent of the wedding day. The wedding day was announced by issuing out Kolanuts to friends, relations and well-wishers of both the bride groom and bride's families. On the wedding day, the bride's family collects the dowry and gives out their daughter's hand in marriage to the groom's representative or family (Investors' Guide, 2007).

As in ancient times, naming ceremonies take place on the seventh day after the baby is born. It is marked by the slaughter of a ram after announcing the name of the baby. Funeral ceremonies are also done in accordance with Islamic injunctions. For example, in the event that a person dies, he would be given the ritual death bath, he would then be dressed in simple white clothing and the funeral prayer is done. He would then be taken to the grave and buried. Three (3) days were observed for receiving condolences from relative and family friends. Thus, Islamic practices have for centuries been mixed up with Hausa Culture, so much so that predominance is being given to Islamic Culture over Hausa traditional Culture (Investors' Guide, 2007).

Furthermore, the traditional food of the Zamfara people is 'Hoce' and 'Miyar Gyada'. Hoce is made from grounded Guinea corn, while Miyar Gyada' is made from groundnuts. Tuwon-Dawa and Miyar



Kuka is also popular food varieties that Zamfara people eat. Tuwon-Dawa is made from Guinea corn while Miyar Kuka is made from Baobab leaves (Investors' Guide, 2007).

There are also traditional dances and songs traced from ancient times. Dances like 'Wasar Kalankuwa' are observed after harvest. Traditional dances are also ancient back to centuries. 'Dambe' is also traditional boxing and is very prominent in Hausa Culture. Thus, the legend, 'Shago', a boxer from Zamfara was very popular like that of Muhammad Ali. In Kiyawa for example, the cultural groups included Takkai and Makidan Manoma (farmers Drummers), 'Yan rawar kwalle, klagirewa and Tashe. In Bungudu, traditional wrestling (Kokowa), Boxing (Dambe), Baura and Kyauka games are the main cultural activities. In addition, there are prolific musicians, agile dancer and dexterous acrobats (Zamfara State Handbook, 1997).

Traditional singing also has an ancient history. Prominent musicians from Hausaland were predominantly from Zamfara. For instance, Maradun Local Government has the largest number of traditional Hausa musicians. Notable among them are Kurma, Daudu Jan kidi Janbako, Dan Zaki faru, Abu Gamagira, and Sani Kaka Gidan Dawa. Singers like Ibrahim Narambada, Dankwairo and Sa'idu Faru are all singers that have made marks in the singing profession and are still held as legendary after the great legend, Mamman Shata of Katsina. Music is very popular in Maru Local Government with such notable sons of the soil like Alhaji Abu Dankurmi, Alhaji Musa Dan Gulbi, Alhaji Sani Sabulu and Alhaji Mamman Na Mata leading (a large group) of cultural singers in the area. In Gusau Local Government, the area is blessed with Kalangu and Taushe Musicians. But the main cultural activities are Takkai and Local dancers etc. Thus, Zamfara has a cultural history of producing the best singers and no other place in Hausaland break up this record (Zamfara State Handbook, 1997).

Belief System

In some of the Hausa states such as Kano and Katsina, the influence of Islam could be traced as far back as the 14th century. In the lands of the Tuareg state to the North in the decade of the 15th century, was ruled by Muslim rulers. The immediate neighbours of Zamfara, Katsinawa had their first Muslim ruler, Muhammadu Korau, in the 14th century. In Zamfara however, the acceptance of Islam by the Zamfara rulers was probably a 17th century phenomenon. The first Zamfara ruler that bore a Muslim name was Aliyu Dan Daku (C. 1670s), (Nadama, 1979).

However, an important factor that might have hindered the acceptance and spread of Islam within the ranks of both aristocracies and the commoners was presumably the remote position of Zamfara urban centres from other major cities and trade routes of central Sudan. There was also the influence of the traditional religion. The Pre-Islam religion was based on the belief in the invisible, controllable and uncontrollable forces, that is, the spirits, which had long been deeply rooted in the Zamfara society. The belief had come to be tightly knit with the social, economic and Political institutions of the Zamfarawa. Its influence was so widespread that the cult was organised in all segments of the society. For example, every household had a Kan-Gida and a deity occupational group supposed to have been in control of important spirits which enabled them to attain perfection in their trade and also to counteract the evil charms of their enemies (Nadama, 1979).

Similarly, every ward had a host of spirits for the welfare of the people. Above all, there was the all-powerful "Iskan Gidan Daka" (the spirit of the house of Daka) which was greatly generated and



was there to maintain and safeguard the interest of the king and the whole society within the confines of the kingdom. It is interesting to note that, there was a corresponding official connected with a particular spirit for every important title. These evoked and summoned the assistance of the spirit through spirit possession (Bori). Thus, we find women officials who specialised in 'bori' attached to the aristocracies and acting as intermediaries between the state officials, their subjects and the spirits. The most important were the Asarki, Magajiyar Magaji, Asarki Ajiya, Galadunya, Mai Kiawa and a host of others under 'Yardamina (Nadama, 1979).

In fact, the belief in the Iskoki had penetrated into the groups that accepted Islam, who had Liman Asarki and Malam Alhaji as intermediaries between the Muslim community and the Iskoki. Even the different immigrant communities were integrated within the system by the existence of such Iskoki as Bagobiri, Bature, Buzu, Baubawa, Bako, and Barehaza. By the 18th century, and in some parts of Zamfara up to the present time, there remained a deep conviction that the Farfarun Aljannu (benevolent spirits) were there to safeguard the economic and social interest of the people. At the same time, the fear of the "Babbakun Aljannu" (remorseless spirits) and the position of the "Sarakunan Arna" and "Tsafi" within each settlement and their power to bring or avert misfortune, helped in sustaining the set values of the society. In addition, the persistence of activities such as "Budin-Daji" held annually was safeguard against economic hazards and Political upheavals (Nadama, 1979).

The belief system was also attached to the early settlements which formed the bases for the population concentration to such settlements and the Sarauta. That is to say, an important point worth noting about the ancient settlements of Zamfara is that, most of them evolved near the iron-ore sites and the area. The most outstanding examples are; Dutsi, Jafa, Kiyawa, Tsohuwar Banaga, and Tozali. It is probable that, besides the protection offered by these hills, they were looked upon as areas that played a very significant role people's religious lives. This religious aspect of these hills and other factors provided the bases for the population concentration and the Sarauta. It seems that, the natural defenses and the presence of the *Iskoki* (spirits) attracted the earliest settlers to this area.

For instance, in Dutsi-Zurmi Local Government, there were the several *Tumuli* which the people of Dutsi regarded as the buried place of their ancient rulers around one of the rocks known as 'Kutoli', near a rock shelter, east of the area. There was also the rock cave along the 'Fadama Mai Zuma'. There was also a stone implement known as Gatari (stone-axe) believed to have come down from the sky during a thunderstorm. The ruler of Dutsi now keep it as one of the insignias of office of Dan Bazau. There was also what is called Gangar Dutsi (a rock drum) at a place known as Dutsi Mai Ganga (Nadama, 1979). Traditions had it that, it was one of the drums used by their ancestors for summoning hunters who had lost their way during hunting expeditions. There was also the Dutsin Nasara (victory Hill), which is said that, areas around it are believed to be inhabited by *Iskoki*, (spirits) the most powerful spirit being Nasara, who is believed to have guarded the settlement from outside attacks by making it invisible to the Invaders. Nasara is also believed to be able to bring various types of ailments to those who incur its displeasure while it brings prosperity and victory to those offering appropriate sacrifices. It is consulted before going out to wars or hunting expeditions and for victory at games such as Baura and Dambe (Boxing) (Nadama, 1979).



Furthermore, there was also the earth mould, Tumuli east of Dutsin Nasara in Fadamar Gyada, which is said to have been seventy (70) in number, but only six (6) of them could still be seen. These are regarded as the burial places of the ancient stock of Samudawa or Thamud (giants) who inhabited the rocks of Dutsi. Some of the Tumuli are called the name of the giants said to have been the first-six (6) rulers. These included Kabarin Dakka, Dafai, Aljiji, Kokai-kikai, Doragayya, and Jimir Dakka. Indeed, in one of these legends, the giants of Dutsi are said to have had contact with Durbi ta Kusheyi in the Katsina area. Therefore, the folklore about ancient races of giants is to be found in Kano, Zazzau, and Borno like in Zamfara and Katsina. There was also the Iron Ring known as Zobban Bazau, which is said to have been worn by the first-five (5) Zamfara rulers at Dutsi. These are still regarded as objects of reference believed to make a miraculous noise on certain days of the week (Nadama, 1979).

Although the settlement of Dutsi lost some of its political dominance, it however remained an important religious centre, a source of an ancient belief, festivities and customs. It remained a focus toward which the Zamfarawa from all sections of Zamfara turned their attention especially in connection with the worship of the Iskoki that inhabits the rocks of the area. The settlement is to this day regarded as the main centre for Budin Daji (annual forecasting ceremony). The Budin- Daji portrays the importance attached to agriculture from the earliest times. Despite the preponderance of the traditional beliefs within all sectors of the Zamfarawa, Islam had by the 18th century started to make some headway at least in the major towns of Zamfara, but minimal because, the traditional belief in the power of the *Iskoki* (spirits) had for long been so deeply rooted in the social milieu that the gradual and peaceful penetration of Islam did not by this period greatly alter the status quo (Nadama, 1979).

Indigenous Festivals among Communities

Zamfara State as a cultured area is characterized by different communities with diverse Cultural exhibitions that cover the social, economic, political and religious aspects of their lives, which are conducted periodically, occasionally and annually. These are the cultural Festivals some of which have been abandoned due to the prevailing impact of Islam while others still exist. These included Budin-Daji, Baura, Kalankuwa, Daukin Maiki, Bukin-sarauta, Bukin Haihuwa, Bukin Sauka etc.

Budin-Daji: One of the measures taken by the Zamfarawa and other farmers and hunting communities within the Eastern part of the Rima- basin to ensure that, the rainy season was to be prosperous or whether there would be drought during the coming year, was through the Budin-daji (opening of the bush or yearly forecasting ceremony). The main centre for this event was Dutsi, Zurmi Local Government, one of the most important ancient settlements connected with the early history of the Zamfara kingdom (Nadama, 1977).

The Budin-daji was held annually in the 5th month of the lunar calendar. The occasion drew a large number of participants, mainly the farmers and hunters, every section of Zamfara, the neighbouring areas of Maradi, the Konnawa from Konni in Niger Republic, and the Katsinawa from Katsinar Laka area of Kwatarkwashi. Among all these communities, similar events but local in scope were held after the Budin-daji at Dutsi. The chief priest who officiated the forecasting ceremony was the Basare. On the other hand, among the Manzumawa of Maradi area, the priest was known as Kyaure, and among the Katsinawa of Garewa, the official was known as Sarkin -daji. Information about the



time of Budin-daji was passed around in the market by the farmers and the ' Yan Tauri (Nadama, 1977).

Thus, after a long process followed by the Basare himself such as collecting suitable chickens and different types of food grains seven (7) days before the appointed date, feeding the chickens with the grains, mixed up and stored in sacred ground, all during a week, burying the chickens alive at the foot of Tsamiya (Tamarind trees) two days before the events, canning with the things for the opening of the bush or yearly forecasting ceremony before the mammoth crowd of participants like a small hoe with a wooden handle, a ground, bow and seven (7) small arrows on the date of Budin-daji; the final result would be out about the story of the coming year. For instance, among the remains, whichever of the food grains predominated was believed to determine the next year's harvest. If overall the food grains fed to the sacrificed chickens, millet was found to predominate among the remains, it was believed by the people that millet would be abundant during the next farming season and the harvest. If on the other hand, all the grains shriveled or were digested by the birds; this was believed to be a sign of droughts and food shortage (Nadama, 1977).

Also, if small stones and pieces of bones were found, this was regarded as a signal for a troubled year, a year that would be characterised by inter-village disputes, murders and wars (Nadama, 1977).

Baura: There were also the Baura wristlets of various sizes and ages, that is, during exploits by infantry soldiers. This can still be seen in different parts of Zamfara. Two huge Baura bracelets formed part of the insignias of the office of Sarkin Zamfara (Zamfara State Handbook, 1997). This game also featured prominently in the social life of the Zamfarawa of Kiyawa. The first group of people who were said to have established the settlement are also regarded as the Samudawa using huge wristlets that could slash the shoulders of a full grown man. Among the Zamfara and Katsinawa of the Katsinar laka area of Kwatarkwashi the rather dangerous game of Baura persists to this century. A Baura wristlet at the Sokoto museum sent from Kwatarkwashi was said to have been in use during the second half of the 16th century. Today, it however remains exclusively a game for non-Muslim Zamfarawa and Katsinawa who regarded the wristlets made at Dutsi with great esteem. The donor of the Baura wristlets is Kwatarkwashi Ahmadu (Nadama, 1979).

Kalankuwa: Kalankuwa is a communal farming assistance for the District Head/community leader by youths (Boys/Girls) of adolescence age. The girls bring food to feed their intended (Zamfara State Handbook, 1997). The Kalankuwa was only undertaken on the farms of the Sarakuna which seems to suggest that it emerged later when a proper political control covering various settlements was established. Besides the work done, it was a festive occasion when the Sarki summoned the various Sarakunan Noma (Heads of Farmers) of the area. On the day of the Kalankuwa, a lot of food was prepared and young men under their respective Sarakunan Noma with their Drummers retired to the Gandu very early in the morning. It was an occasion for the Sarakunan Noma to display their charms in connection with farming. Before the work started, various charms were buried in different parts of the farm. Rival village groups did their best to see that the sections allotted to the others were not completed (Nadama, 1979).

In the evening therefore, the Drummers followed the Manoma home spending the night singing and drumming. In Zamfara, all the lesser chiefs attended Kalankuwa riding with all their courtiers, slaves and wives. This was the case in Mafara, Zoma and Gummi. And only Sarkin Zamfara was represented by his Galadima (Nadama, 1979).



Bukin-Dubu: With the rapid development of agriculture in this fertile area of Zamfara, an institutionalised mode of achieving maximum production, Bukin-Dubu (a ceremony after cultivating 1,000 bundles of food grains) evolved from ancient times. It came to be connected in some ways with the legendary hoe, Bagabda. Up to the present time, in some parts of Zamfara, in areas like Zurmi, Isa, and Maradun, a person who cultivated one thousand (1,000) bundles of millet or Guinea corn is looked upon with great esteem. Because of the importance attached to agriculture presumably with the introduction of iron, the offices of the Sarkin Noma came to be connected with both the legendary hoe, Bagabda and Bukin-Dubu. An interesting point about this farming ceremony, a point which suggests its antiquity is that it came to be associated with Masu Wutar Bauta, known as Arnan-dubu and who regarded themselves as the autochthones of the area (Nadama, 1979).

It is not certain when Bukin-Dubu became widespread in Zamfara. But looking at the ceremony from the economic point of view of the zamfarawa, it was not regarded as mere ceremony but as a mode of achieving maximum production which also portrayed the agricultural prosperity of the area. The Kaka is the time for this festive occasion when the great Manoma show the wealth produced in their farms. Anybody intending to call up the Bukin-Dubu had to spend some years preparing for it. Not only for himself but the entire members of his family had to gear up the production of crops such as cotton to be distributed to the Weavers for the gifts to be distributed at the ceremony. The Bukin-Dubu can be seen as an expression of prosperous agriculture that stimulated other economic activities. Bukin-Dubu was only one feature of the many ways of enhancing production (Nadama, 1979).

In Zamfara, even the women are not left out. The Bukin-Dubu organised by the women folk of Zamfara was based on cotton production and spinning. All women of social standing aspired to spin one thousand (1,000) Matari (master piece spools). This was preceded by a great deal of preparation of cotton plots and sleepless nights of spinning (Nadama, 1979).

Gayya: Besides the production unit based on Gandu, another method which accounted for a great proportion of the annual product was the Gayya (work party system). In Zamfara, this took various forms. There were Kalankuwa, which was just explained, Gayyar Sarakkuta, and in a more localised way, the Gayya organised between friends and relatives. The latter form was mainly to help cultivating an unfinished plot or help those affected by illnesses such as Kurkunu (Guinea worm). In general, the Gayya was, in a way, the unifying factor of the society which helped in integration of the immigrants with the indigenous Zamfarawa (Nadama, 1979).

Gayyar Sarakkuta: Similar but less attended, was the Gayyar Sarakkuta. An intending bridegroom organized this to demonstrate his popularity and working capacity to his would-be in-laws. In Zamfara, the Gayyar Sarakkuta signalled the final selection among the various suitors of a girl, perhaps since the days when there were no other means of expression of the wealth of an individual except through his ability in crop production. The initiative usually came from the mother of the would-be bride. Some baskets of groundnuts or cotton seeds were given to the suitor, and a field was shown to him. It was then up to him to mobilise enough work party to cultivate the land. It is like the proceeds from Gayyar Sarakkuta were the ancient dowry paid to the bride's family in Zamfara. The fact that, it has persisted among the Arnan dubu to the present time seems to confirm this assumption (Nadama, 1979).



Daukar Maiki: This was another annual ceremony or festival (Capture of live Eagle or catching of the Eagle). A live Eagle was presented as a gift to the leader like the District Head of a town. Kwatarkwashi was, during the Pre-Islamic period, considered the site of Iskoki (Spirit) worship. A wonderful spirit was said to have resided on it. As a result, some hunters settled around the foot of the rock and founded Kwatarkwashi town. Apart from hunting and agriculture, these settlers performed an annual ceremony, Daukar Maiki, in which a live Eagle was caught annually from the top of the rock and presented to their leader. The catching of Eagle Culture has been banned, because of the influence of Islam. The majority of the people in the area are now Muslims. There is also “Dutsin Karo” at Kanoma, a place where an annual festivity was staged to mark the arrival of the new harvest. Karo was banned in 1962 (Investors’ Guide, 2007).

Furthermore, annual religious Festivals performed are; EID-AL-ADHA (a sacrificial festival to Mark the end of the Islamic year) on tenth of Dhul-hijja, where animals are being slaughtered after the performing of two (2) Raka'at at the mosque, usually after the Imam and king or ruler of that particular area slaughtered their own Rams. EID-AL-FITR, a festival to Mark the end of Ramadan fasting. Other ceremonial activities in Zamfara State included: Marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies, Turbaning ceremonies, and a ceremony in completion of Qur'anic recitation (Bukin-Sauka) as well as the Durbar (Horse/camel climbing), usually on the Sallah day and in the rulers's houses (Gusau and Gusau, 1984). There was also an annual fishing festival in Natu Lake at Bakura Local Government on the farm of the Late Sir Ahmadu Bello the Sardauna of Sokoto. Bakura is blessed with a natural Lake called “Natu”. The lake measures 2km and is about 90 metres deep, with many species of fish in commercial quantities. Natu Lake serves dual purposes of irrigation and fishing activities. If Natu Lake, is properly utilised, it would enhance tourism for Zamfara State. It could also compete favourably with other international fishing Festivals across the globe (N.U.J, 1998).

Conclusion

This paper traced the history of the Zamfara kingdom with the view to identify some of the ancient and rich cultural practices in the area, some of which still provide a basis for the Socio-Cultural pride of the present day Zamfara State. This situation justifies the establishment of the Zamfara State Council for Arts and Culture. It also raised issues on the role of traditional beliefs and Islam’s coming which eventually transformed society and changed their attitudes. It also shows that, despite the Islamic influence, some Pre-Islamic practices are still found among some Zamfara communities in Zamfara State.

Also important, was the socio-cultural settings of the state, which made it rich in its cultural history. Things like a head-cap, big-gown, shapara and janfa, for men, women also wear wrappers, head-tie, veil and buha-like dresses were some of the peculiar features of the cultural pattern of the area. Attached to these, were wedding and naming ceremonies and many more.

It is also said that, the pre-Islamic religion based on the belief in the invisible, controllable and uncontrollable forces, and the spirits, had long been deeply rooted in the Zamfara society. The belief had come to be tightly knit with the social, economic and Political institutions of the Zamfarawa.

It is worthy to note that the state communities performed several indigenous festivals, which are organised periodically, occasionally, and annually, and which in one way or another helped in



integrating various communities both locals and immigrants together. This included Budin-Daji, Baura, Kalankuwa, Daukin Maiki, Bukin-Dubu, Gayya, Bukin-Sallah, Bukin-Aure, Bukin-sarauta, Bukin-haihuwa, Bukin-Sauka, to mention but a few.

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