

## **The location of economic potentials of a frontier community in Nigeria: an exploit on Ilorin in the 20th. Century.**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The increasing opportunities in the global connect in advancing human opportunities, potentials and exploration has continued to propel scholars to present the outcome of their research for global benefit. Ilorin, is a community in Nigeria, where its geographical location, climate, vegetation and topography have been an advantage for its economic growth. The peaceful co existence amongst its diverse cultural population and its unlimited potentials for industrial growth is an added advantage.*

*The evolution of Ilorin economic opportunities is appraised from the historical perspectives. Whereby, the sequence of the community's development from its emergence as entity, its historical role as the economic connect between the peoples of the North and the Southwestern Nigeria and as a melting pot of culturally diverse people within and outside Nigeria will be given close focus.*

*The study will provide for economic, social and political understanding of the area and it will serve as an exploit of its potentials.*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Ilorin is located on Latitude 80 – 30 North and Longitude 40 – 35 east. It is about 300 kilometer from Lagos, the former Nigerian Capital city and the economic hub of the country. (GCA Travel 1994). It is also the last emirate to the south of Northern Nigeria, where the success of the 19 Century Jihad, led by Shehu Uthman Danfodio, had evolved an emirate political system that covers major parts of the present day Northern Nigeria. Being a frontier that is dominated by the Southwestern Nigerian culture of the Yoruba, its sustenance of the emirate political structure keep alive, its historical relations with the northern Nigeria, that is dominated by Hausa/Fulani groups.(H.O. Danmole, 1980)

The climate of Ilorin is shared between two season, winter and summer. Seasons are defined as the wet season, from April to October, and the dry season, from November to March. The dry season witnesses the prevailing influences of the dry and dusty northeast winds. The wet season is particularly noticeable on the south-eastern [coast](#), where annual rainfall reaches about 130 inches

<http://www.wordtravels.com/Travelguide/Countries/Nigeria/Climate#ixzz1syfvTjeH>

The population of Ilorin Community is mixed. It thus explains why it is earlier described as a melting pot for many Nigerian linguistic groups. In Ilorin, there are Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, Kanuri, and the Gobawas. It is these and other cultural groups that makes up the population of Ilorin to a little over a million people. (National Census Record 1989)

Within, Ilorin has a good network of roads that make easy for vehicular movement. At the national level, it perhaps, has the highest network of roads that connects different regions. To the southwest and the ports in Lagos, to all parts of Northern Nigeria, to the southeast and south south and the north central, where the federal capital is cited. [www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome) The opportunity of these net works of roads is unique to Ilorin that has been the Kwara State Capital.

Ilorin is effectively linked by Air transport. It is having an International Airport that was constructed to serve as an alternative to Lagos, when Lagos was serving as the Nigerian Capital. (Aviation Planning Record,1978). A Cargo shed and equipments for the Airport to take off, to handle international goods has been completed. (Extract from fed. and state government Projects. 2009). Added to the aviation potentials of Ilorin, is the construction of an aviation school by the State Government and which has began. (Extract from the Aviation school's record 2011).

### **II. THE HISTORICAL BEGINNING OF THE ECONOMY OF ILORIN.**

The suzerainty of Oyo Empire over Ilorin in the 17th century is generally acknowledged by scholars of both Ilorin and Yoruba history to have opened up the latter to great economic opportunities (Mustain .I). Before then, Ilorin was a scattered settlement that was not administered by a single authority. The Ojo Isekuse group, the Asaju group, the Okesuna group and the Olufadi Fulani group, existed independent of one another (Alh. Salau Magaji). The appointment of Laderin, the progenitor of *Aare Afonja*, as the first Oyo Empire *Ajele*

(Resident) in the area, certainly brought the different settlements under a single authority (Rev. Samuel, Johnson). The establishment of the Oyo provincial administrative system in the area naturally opened up Ilorin as an entity with full economic potentials (Alh. Salau Magaji).

The diversion of the north-south trade network towards Ilorin, accounted for the fast rate at which migrants were encouraged into the area to become a commercial centre. The settlement of groups of Muslims at Okesuna and the Olufadi Fulani group in the area long before Ilorin became a major trade route of the fast growing commercial relations between the peoples from the north of River Niger and old Oyo empire, must have encouraged the Hausa traders from the north to stay in Ilorin to transact their businesses rather than traveling further south. The Hausa traders considered Ilorin safe for themselves and their business because of the presence of their Muslim brothers in the area. (Alfa Shehu M. Akalanbi). The core Yoruba areas such as old Oyo itself, Shaki, Osogbo and Iseyin, also preferred to operate their economic transactions from Ilorin because most their blood relations had either migrated to Ilorin for economic advantaged or for Islamic scholarship.

### **III. THE EMERGENCE OF MAJOR MARKET AND THE ROLE OF MAI GIDA OR BAALE**

As the volume of trade continued to grow, so the markets in Ilorin grew with it. This naturally encouraged a good number of migrants into the area. Gambari, the area named after the Hausa settlers, soon became a major settlement and centre of commercial activities in Ilorin (Alfa Shehu M. Akalanbi). The Hausa traders from the north of River Niger first stopped in the area before they embarked on any business deal. (Alfa Shehu M. Akalanbi). Each of the traders had an indigenous host, who they referred to as "*Mai gida*" (the host) (Alfa Shehu M. Akalanbi). It was the responsibility of the *Mai gida* to market the goods for his customer. (Alfa Shehu M. Akalanbi). For his role, the *Mai gida* was entitled to a percentage of the sales made in the trade and at the same time, entitled to another percentage of commission on the purchases made from the foreign traders. (Alfa Shehu M. Akalanbi).

The double commission due to the *Mai gida* in the business transactions between traders from the north of River Niger and those from various parts of Yoruba land, made the *Mai gida* to become professional commission agents in business transactions in Ilorin. (Alfa Shehu M. Akalanbi). On the part of the Yoruba they referred to their local hosts in Ilorin as "*Baale*". The *Baale* played the same role as the *Mai gida*. These economic benefits actually encouraged more Hausa migrants into Ilorin, to partake in the *Mai gida* business. (Alfa Shehu M. Akalanbi). It is important to note that articles of trade also played key role in the promotion of the trade. For instance, the Hausa brought articles such as cows, hides and skin and slaves among other goods, for the exchange of goods such as Kola nut, palm oil, textile materials and salt.

As the market in the Gambari area continued to expand, markets in the other parts of Ilorin were also growing in line with the products either indigenous to the unit of the community or location of the area. In the Oke Imale areas, Yoruba craftsmen and traders from various parts of Yoruba land were also concentrated. For instance, professional cloth weavers migrated in large numbers to this area to produce indigenous woven cloths that were sold to foreign traders that came into Ilorin. The products were even taken out of Ilorin to be marketed. (Alh. Baba Alaso).

Other professional migrants into Ilorin between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were porters, blacksmiths, wood carvers and rope makers. (Alh. Baba Alaso).

They were traced to have migrated into Ilorin from Iseyin, Shaki or Igboho. (Alh. Baba Alaso). all in the metropolitan area of old Oyo Empire. Markets in Ilorin and the articles sold therein, dictated the ethnic settlement pattern in the area. For instance, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, economic activities coupled with differentiation and specialization of profession and cultural affinities segmented settlements in Ilorin. For instance, the Gambari area hosted the Hausa and the non-Hausa groups from the north of River Niger. These were the groups, which engaged in the long distant trade between the peoples of the north and the southwest. (Gavin, R. J.). Added to this, was the fact that most of the people who inhabit this area were Muslims, who the northern traders regarded as brothers in Islam. (Gavin, R. J.). On the other hand, migrants in the *Oke Imale* area were professional craft men. (Alh. Baba Alaso). They specialized in various aspects of craftsmanship such as cloth weaving, pottery, blacksmithing and wood carving. (Alh. Baba Alaso).

The specialization of the various groups that settled in Ilorin jointly combined to sustain Ilorin not only as a commercial centre, but also as a settlement of artisans. Apart from the fact that Ilorin markets were used to market goods produced from other areas, both far and near, they also marketed their own indigenous products such as *Aso Oke* (traditionally woven cloths) and pottery. (Alh. Baba Alaso).

Through the coordination and administration of the Oyo Empire's *Ajele* in Ilorin, the economic potentials of Ilorin were developed. The hitherto scattered settlements came under a single administration and the influence of Oyo Empire became fully established in the area. These developments jointly accounted for the increased rate of influx of people from different cultural backgrounds into Ilorin, between 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The security of life and property naturally encouraged cordial relations among diverse linguistic

groups that settled in Ilorin. (Alh. Baba Alaso). This accounted for why the succession process of Oyo Ajele (Resident) in Ilorin was maintained by a family, from Laderin to Pasin (his son) to Agbonyin the Aare Afonja's father. (Rev. Samuel J.)

#### **IV. THE ECONOMY OF ILORIN UNDER THE EMIRATE SYSTEM 1823 – 1897**

##### **i. The Contest for Ilorin 1823 – 1835**

The personal animosity between *Alaafin* Aole and *Aare* Afonja, the Oyo empire Generalissimo, which degenerated to the level that made *Aare* Afonja to declare Ilorin independent of old Oyo empire, opened Ilorin to a new phase of political, social and economic developments. This situation can be said to have created a foundation for changes that produced the Emirate system in the area. As an economic nerve centre of old Oyo Empire, the declaration of independence for Ilorin was in itself, an economic action which meant the closure of one of the major trade routes from which the empire generated reasonable income. (Rev. Samuel J.)

This economic consideration must have been one of the major reasons why rulers of old Oyo Empire were determined to bring back Ilorin into the empire. On the same basis, *Aare* Afonja must have been encouraged by the economic potentials of Ilorin to regard it as his base for a new polity. Given the determination of both Oyo and Afonja to keep Ilorin, it is not surprising that *Aare* Afonja recruited slave soldiers, whom he believed would give him absolute loyalty to defend Ilorin, while successive *Alaafin* of Oyo allied with various forces around Oyo to bring back Ilorin to the fold of the Empire. (Rev. Samuel J.)

The conflict of interest between *Aare* Afonja and the authority of old Oyo empire over the control of Ilorin, actually led to confusion that provided opportunities for aliens (the Fulani and their Hausa collaborators) to declare Ilorin an Emirate in about 1823. The Ilorin Emirate structure could certainly be said to have been dictated by social and economic factors. The first *Emir*, AbdulSalami, was compelled to maintain the social structure of Ilorin, which was dictated by its economy. For instance, the Hausa and the other linguistic groups, which settled around Gambari, area was merely adopted as an administrative unit of the township administration. (Rev. Samuel J.)

For the Yoruba, who were predominantly settled on the eastern and southern sides of Ilorin, another administrative unit was also given. The last of the administrative unit was that of the Fulani, which was in the western side of Ilorin Township. The economic specialties of these administrative units within Ilorin Township, certainly, must have also been a factor for the emergence of the Emirate political structure. The indigenous leaders of each of these groups or units were conferred with the title of a *Balogun*, and as the unit administrator (Gavin, R. J.).

By 1835 when Ilorin had survived the threats to its survival as an Emirate, the administration organized its economy by taking maximum advantage of its location. Being a frontier Emirate of the Sokoto caliphate, Ilorin established various forms of toll collection to boost the Emirates' income. Such a toll system did not exist during the Afonja period. For instance, tollgates were established at all the entry points to the township (Gavin, R. J.). These took control of all the goods passing through Ilorin or those brought into Ilorin markets (Omoiya SY, "The Impact of colonial Admin"). The income realized from the toll gates were managed by each of the unit linguistic administrators and war commanders, commonly referred to as *Balogun* (Omoiya SY, "The Impact of colonial Admin"). A percentage of the income generated by each of the *Balogun*'s administrative unit, was remitted to a pool account of the Emirate, while the respective *Balogun* directly expended a reasonable percentage of such income<sup>30</sup>. This was to service his administrative structures, within or outside the township (Omoiya SY, "The Impact of colonial Admin"). Such income was also used to procure armaments or other military needs (Omoiya SY, "The Impact of colonial Admin").

##### **ii. The Emirate economy 1836 – 1897**

The engagement of Ilorin in wars of expansion certainly made it to dominate its environment. Having succeeded in bringing the neighboring settlements of *Ibolo* and *Igbomina* under its control, the Ilorin *Balogun* tried to establish the Emirate rule on a good number of other settlements in various parts of Yorubaland (Ann O'Hear). It was the victories recorded by the Ilorin army in most of the wars that made it to become a major power in Yoruba land. This made Ilorin to contend with supremacy of Ibadan in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Ann O'Hear). Captives from the wars became another major source of economic advantage to Ilorin (Ann O'Hear). While some of the captives were used for domestic purposes, others were made to work on the farms of the war generals (Ann O'Hear). This situation explains why the household of the *Balogun* in Ilorin used to be very large.

It was as a result of the large number of captives by the Ilorin army that a big market for slaves developed in the town. The *Eruda* market was essentially a specialist market for the sale of slaves (Ann O'Hear). Slave merchants from various parts of the coastal region patronized the Ilorin slave market (Oral Data, Malam Tunji Balogun). They brought along articles such as guns, gunpowder, mirrors and wines for the exchange of slaves from Ilorin slave market (R.J Gavin). As the Gambari market was dominated by Hausa

traders, so did the Yoruba dominated the *Eruda* market. Perhaps because the coastal traders coming to Ilorin were mostly Yoruba, they related more closely with the Yoruba speaking group than the other linguistic groups. The commonly identified groups among the Yoruba in this trade network were the Ijebu and the Egba (Ann O'Hear). The nearness of their homes to Lagos provided them the opportunity to dominate the coastal trade relations with the hinterland. With the advancement in the coastal trade network in Ilorin, those involved in Ilorin constituted a new class of economic group. More than before, the advantages of coastal trade tilted towards the Yoruba. The Hausa and other non Yoruba speaking groups were patronized on goods and services that could not be obtained from their Yoruba counterparts. For instance, the northern traders remained the main supplier of cattle for domestic meat.

It would be justifiable to allude to the concept that the geographical location of Ilorin has been a great advantage to its economic, social and political development. Indeed, it must have stimulated the interests that were attracted to it, which eventually brought about its major historical changes. For instance, its diverse economic base, both as an entrepot in the trade network between the peoples from the north of River Niger and those from the Southwest, opened up the community to influx of migrants from culturally diverse areas.

The indigenous economy of Ilorin could be said to have evolved under the Emirate system. The system accommodated both the cultural diversity of the people and the peoples' economic specialization. Each of the cultural settlements was allowed to administer it and as well manage its economy. The link between the administrative units in Ilorin was the Emirate council wherein representatives of the three main linguistic groups of Hausa, Fulani and Yoruba were and still represented. A percentage of incomes generated by each of the culturally based administrative unit were remitted to the Emirate council purse, which was used to take care of the Emirate affairs. Indeed, the functions of the Emirate council in Ilorin as the legislative council, which formulated administrative policies, and the highest decision making body for the Emirate, where the diverse interest were represented, it provided the opportunity for the knitting together the diverse ethnic groups. It also provided economic nexus and increased social and cultural integration.

## **V. COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION AND ITS ECONOMIC POLICIES**

British colonial policy in Africa can simply be said to be screwed to achieve their maximum economic advantage. Indeed, the formal proclamation of colonial rule on the colonies of Lagos and Calabar, and the protectorates of North and Southern Nigeria, was intended to create an estate of exploitation. For instance, the policy of indirect rule was adopted to ensure effective administration of the vast areas administered with comparatively few number of European officers available (Toyin Falola, Abdullahi & Others). The indigenous administrative structure in all the areas was only restructured to accommodate those who were favourably disposed to the British rule and dispensed with those who were hostile.

The colonial administrative policy of indirect rule was consummated in Ilorin with the establishment of the Native Authority. The Authority was the administrative machinery put in place to take over most of the responsibilities of the indigenous administrative system. It was broken into departments or units with specialized responsibilities (Oral Data, Alhaji Oba Orombo). For instance, the central administrative unit was charged with the responsibility to coordinate the activities of all the other departments and report to the Colonial Resident (Oral Data, Alhaji Oba Orombo). The other departments with their respective responsibilities were; the tax office, the Native Court, Works Department and the Prisons. Others were Agric department; Vet nary, Forestry, Treasury and education Department (Oral Data, Alhaji Oba Orombo). Each of these Departments was headed by an indigene with western education (Oral Data, Alhaji Oba Orombo).

The Departments performed their respective duties with full consultation with the indigenous administrative leaders but without taking instructions from any of them (Oral Data, Alhaji Oba Orombo). The direct responsibilities of the Departments to their respective heads, who also reported to the Administrative Secretary of the Native Authority that was directly under the Colonial Resident, totally changed the course of administrative strata in Ilorin. It was through the Native Authority that the policies of colonial administration were implemented in Ilorin, as it were in the other polities under colonial administration.

The first aspect of Ilorin's economy to suffer from colonial administration was the entrepot trade. Apart from the fact that the tollgates established on all the entry points into the city were abolished, levies in form of taxes were also imposed on the people (R.J Gavin). This naturally weakened the indigenous economic base and those of the indigenous political classes, especially the *Balogun*. Their employees who engaged in the collection of the tolls were eventually made jobless. However, the diversion of the trade routes from Ilorin Township to other areas provided opportunities to the subordinate towns of the Emirate to benefit from the economic losses of Ilorin (R.J Gavin).

Efforts of the local authority in Ilorin to re-divert the course of trade through the township were frustrated by the colonial administration. The Ilorin toll stations were eventually dismantled. The lesson that the indigenous Emirate authority had nothing to do with the movement of trade was further rubbed in during the period 1904 – 1908 when the British established their own toll stations at the provincial frontier, not at the city

gates, and the Resident appointed agents for its collection (Omoiya Y.S). Ilorin was thus left largely at the mercy of the market forces and the vagaries of the colonial economy.

Added to the economic hardship imposed on the generality of Ilorin population by the abolition of the toll collection at the city gate and diversion of trade routes from Ilorin Township, was the imposition of various forms of taxes on goods and the people (Omoiya Y.S). These economic policies of the colonial administration from the inception of its rule in Ilorin became a heavy burden for the people to bear. Therefore, the economic hardships further encouraged the people's hostility against British rule and its indigenous allies.

**(a) Taxation**

The generation of internal revenue was fundamental to the sustenance of the colonial administrative structures, which were designed to achieve their economic interests. The administration of tax policy in Ilorin Emirate was achieved by the use of the indigenous administrative structure and the Native Authority's officials. Consequently, the *Emir*, the *Balogun* and the *Magaji* or the *Ajia*, joined by the Tax officials in the Native Authority were used to compile the list of taxable male adults, assess the taxable income of each person on the tax list and collect the tax for the government (Omoiya Y.S). Even though there was no standard formula approved for the assessment of the individual annual income, ten percent 10% of such assessed income was to be paid as tax (R.J Gavin). Also a minimum of £1.5/- (one pound five shillings) about N325.00 of the current naira value was fixed as tax to be paid by every taxable male adult (R.J Gavin).

At Ilorin township level, the *Emir* and the Principal Chiefs such as the *Balogun*, the *Magaji Gari* and the Compound Heads under their respective administrative units, were used in combination with the employees of the Native Authority to operate tax administration (R.J Gavin). At the District level, the *Alanguwa*, *Daudu* or *Baale* joined the tax officials of the Native Authority to administer tax in the areas.

The District administration was allowed to charge additional rate of (2/- 6p) two shillings six pence per male taxable adult as development levy (Oral Data, Alh. Sule Idiario). Consequently, the minimum tax due to be paid by every taxable male adult in Ilorin Emirate was One pound, seven shillings, six pence £1.7/- 6p (NAK.ILO PROF/155/ Ilorin Township Reforms 1907) about (N348.00) of current naira value. Out of the total amount collected as tax from every District and remitted to the Native Authority's Treasury, twelve and half percent of it was returned to the District administration also for the maintenance of its services (NAK.ILO PROF/155/ Ilorin Township Reforms 1907). However, no District administration was allowed to expend more than fifty pounds £50 (N12,500.00) on any project (NAK.ILO PROF/155/ Ilorin Township Reforms 1907). Any project embarked upon by the District administration beyond £50 (N12,500.00) must have passed to the Native Authority, where a council made up of members of the *Emirate* council and the secretary to the Native Authority will consider such project and approved it for the District (NAK.ILO PROF/155/ Ilorin Township Reforms 1907).

With the use of the combined personnel of the indigenous administration and the Native Authority, the implementation of the colonial tax policy in Ilorin Emirate could be said to be successful. But for the latitude of discretion granted those involved in tax administration, to assess the annual income of every taxable male adult and allowed the use of force to collect the tax, which put the masses at the mercy of the tax administrators, negative incidents would not have been recorded. The disaffection generated from tax administration often resulted into open revolts.

**(b) Public Works**

It was a necessity for the colonial administration to provide basic infrastructures to achieve its economic goals in different parts of Nigeria including Ilorin *Emirate*. The provision of these facilities in Ilorin can be discussed under two headings. The first, were the major projects of the colonial administration such as the construction of telegraph lines, construction of inter regional roads and the construction of railway line. The second was the provision of infrastructures that were undertaken by the Works Department under the Native Authority.

On the projects that were inter regional; the first of them to get to Ilorin was the construction of the telegraph line. It began in Lagos at the tail end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was to be constructed to cover all the major commercial towns in the interior of the country. Indeed, the construction had just got to Ilorin 1900 when formal colonial rule was proclaimed on Nigeria. It was this project that the *Balogun* in Ilorin who led resistance against colonial rule, tried to frustrate by instructing Ilorin indigenes not to be engaged in. The *Balogun* believed that by non cooperation of Ilorin people, the colonial administration will be discouraged to remain in Ilorin (NAK/SNP/15/P. Dwyer to Lord Lugard, July 1900). However, this did not happen.

The second of the major colonial projects to get to Ilorin was the railway. The construction got to Ilorin in 1908 (R.J. Gavin). Even though a major railway station was designed to be located in Ilorin, the experience of Ilorin people from the telegraphs workers who abducted peoples' wives and female children, made the people of Ilorin to mobilize to resist the sitting of the major railway station in the town (Oral Data, Alh. Jimoh Aluko). The railway station was eventually shifted to Offa. However, the station sited in Ilorin was a mere stop over station, where rail engines coming from opposite direction change their lines.

The last of these major projects was the road construction to link various parts of northern Nigeria to the coast in Lagos. The construction also began shortly before 1900. The importance of these projects to Ilorin was that it opened up the area to easy transport system and communication network, which in itself helped its commercial activities.

On the projects handled by the Works Department of Ilorin Native Authority, each of the District was encouraged to embark on projects that did not cost beyond £50 (N12,500.00), while the Native Authority undertook projects such as road construction, construction of buildings to be used for various purposes that naturally cost more. Buildings such as court rooms, basic health centers and schools were directly constructed by the Works Department of the Native Authority (Oral Data, Alh. Jimoh Aluko).

The implementation of the colonial policy on public works, actually transformed the social and economic lives of the people. The provision of amenities such as major and feeder roads, railway transport and telegraph lines encouraged easy linkage between the peoples of Ilorin and other parts of Nigeria. It also improved the provision of social services such as the Health Centres, schools, court rooms and public library in Ilorin Emirate.

#### **IV. ACTIVITIES OF PRIVATE FOREIGN COMPANIES**

The cardinal objectives of the British was to provide maximum advantage for the growth of their home industries, in terms of opening up the colonial areas to market goods produced by the industries and obtain raw materials for their running. The establishment of merchandise stations by different British Companies in Ilorin was therefore expected.

British merchandise stations were not established in Ilorin until full colonial administration was established there. For instance, during the period before 1900, Ilorin was mainly used as a route for the passage of goods to the hinterland, where the Royal Niger Company had established its stations (Oral Data, Alh. Oba Orombo). The spirit of understanding between the leadership of the British Companies and the indigenous rulers of Ilorin were based on mutual respect (Oral Data, Alh. Oba Orombo). This situation explains why the indigenous authority in Ilorin was determined to resist formal establishment of colonial rule by 1900.

The full establishment of colonial administrative structure in Ilorin, coupled with a number of other colonial projects such as the construction of roads from the coast to the hinterland, the construction of railway and the construction of Telegraph communication, all of which passed through Ilorin, attracted the foreign companies to the area. For a long time, the appointed agents of many of these Companies in Lagos and in the other parts of the Southwest, especially Oshogbo and Ibadan, used to cover Ilorin as parts of the areas where British goods were sold and where cash crops were obtained for export to Britain (Oral Data, Alh. Oba Orombo).. Certainly, the effective coverage of Ilorin by these agents must have discouraged the early establishment of stations by the British commercial companies.

However within the first decade of the establishment of British rule in Ilorin some of the British chartered companies began to establish stations in the area. It was from that same time that Ilorin indigenes were also appointed agents of the British Companies. Some of these Companies that established in Ilorin were the U. A. C. Limited, the G. B. Olivant Limited and the PZ Limited (Oral Data, Alh. Oba Orombo). The first set of Ilorin indigenes to benefit from direct patronage of these British Companies as agents, were Alhaji Yahaya Kola Alikinla of Ita Ogunbo, Alhaji Yahaya Eleesu of Galadima Gegele's Compound and Alhaji Musa Sule of Idiagbede (Oral Data, Alh. Oba Orombo).. Others were Alhaji Iliasu Aluko of Ile Oni Kanwun, Audu Baki of Isale Aluko, Alhaji Woli Baruba and Alhaji Ahmadu Kanneke (Oral Data, Alh. Oba Orombo)..

The credit facilities granted these agents naturally provided them an economic lifeline, to emerge as a new class of economic stakeholders in Ilorin (Adeyinka O. Banwo "The Colonial State and Ilorin Emirate Economy: 1900-1960"). For those who were engaged in the sales of British products, credit facilities were granted to them in form of deferred payment of goods supplied (Adeyinka O. Banwo "The Colonial State and Ilorin Emirate Economy: 1900-1960"). For those engaged in the procurement of produce, cash grants were given to them to procure different cash crops, such as coffee, cocoa, tobacco and others that could be obtained from the area (Adeyinka O. Banwo "The Colonial State and Ilorin Emirate Economy: 1900-1960").

By the end of the Second World War in 1945, these agents of British commercial companies in Ilorin had formed a class of another influential group in the community. Apart from the fact that they enjoyed public respect, they formed good links between the company, colonial administration and indigenous population.

#### **Reactions to colonial taxation**

The military conquest of Ilorin in 1897 and the subsequent subjugation of the *Balogun* who led resistance against the colonial rule, actually provided the initial relief to the British to implement its tax policies unchallenged. The effects of the deposition and deportation of *Balogun* Inakoju Ali, the *Balogun* Agba, in 1902 clearly had its negative effects on the peoples' morale and power to organize resistance against the hardships consequent on the implementation of tax policies of colonial administration.

Poll tax was the first to be introduced as noted earlier. The amount ranged between £1.5 (N375.00) and £1.756 (N439.00). Its payment was indeed seen as a heavy burden on the people but because they had no means to refuse the payment, the people continued to groan in pains to meet their obligation. This eventually became a common source of disenchantment between the people and their indigenous rulers. For instance, those who failed to pay the poll tax were formally reported to the colonial administration. The Native police was used to arrest and even in prison such persons (Omoiya Y.S).

### **The hunters' revolt of 1907**

However introduction of taxes on firearms in 1907 broke the people's silence. This started when hunters gathered at Olofingaga to deliberate on what their reaction should be to the newly introduced taxes. The colonial administration saw this as an assembly to challenge its authority(Omoiya Y.S). The *Emir* was quickly directed to address the issue. The *Emir* responded by sending his head messenger to stop the hunters' meeting (Omoiya Y.S). Merely sighting the *Emir's* head messenger, the peaceful meeting of the hunters turned riotous (Omoiya Y.S). The *Emir's* head messenger was arrested and summarily killed by the hunters (Omoiya Y.S). The British quickly responded to the incident by drafting their forces to confront the local hunters, killed most of them and arrested their leaders (Omoiya Y.S). *Balogun* Biala, the *Balogun* Ajikobi who was considered to be in charge of the administration of the area, where the incident took place was summarily deposed and deported from Ilorin (Omoiya Y.S). He became the second *Balogun* to be so treated by the colonial government. The hunters were eventually forced to accept paying the new tax on firearms. For a reasonable period of time, the common people of Ilorin could not muster enough courage to organize another revolt; they had to wait for more auspicious time to show their grievances against the burden of taxation.

### **Poll tax revolt of 1913**

By 1912 the British had somehow succeeded in restructuring the indigenous administrative system in Ilorin Emirate. The indigenous administrative structure, which was based on the ethnic diversity of the people and the economic interdependence of the units, was forced to accept the domination of the *Emir*. The *Emir* had assumed the role of the Chief agent of the British and the *Balogun* had been made to comply with the colonial instructions through the *Emir* (NAK/ILO PROF/227/ Ilorin Township Recovt,1912). However, the disharmony in their relations was palpable. By 1913, when the people recorded bad harvests as a result of bad weather, which seriously affected market sales, a delegation was raised by the tax payers to the *Emir* to help them plead with the colonial authority to spare them on paying the poll tax for the year (NAK/ILO PROF/227/ Ilorin Township Recovt,1912). The *Emir* immediately reported the incident to the Colonial Resident but in a distorted manner. He merely told the Colonial Resident that the people had refused to pay the poll tax (NAK/ILO PROF/227/ Ilorin Township Recovt,1912). The British authority immediately swung into action by arresting the people's delegates and sent them to Prison (NAK/ILO PROF/227/ Ilorin Township Recovt,1912). Seeing the turn of events, the people gathered themselves together to mount a protest against the arrest of their representative (NAK/ILO PROF/227/ Ilorin Township Recovt,1912). The revolt was so massive that the colonial authority could not take it for granted. The Resident therefore appointed a commission to look into the plight of the people and make necessary recommendation, which would assist in finding lasting solution to the recurring incident of violence in the administration of Ilorin.

From the findings of the Commission, colonial administration realized the need to accommodate the ethnic diversity of Ilorin in its tax policy. Added to the political reasons, was the need to diversify tax administration by involving more Yoruba leaders in tax collection. This was intended to balance the representation of linguistic groups in the Emirate administration in Ilorin. This explains the recommendations that both the Aare and the Baba Isale, direct descendants of *Aare* Afonja, be co opted into the Emirate council and allocated spheres of authority (NAK/ILO PROF/227/ Ilorin Township Recovt,1912). The implementation of the recommendations, improved both the tax collection in Ilorin and British relations with a larger section of Ilorin population. Consequently there were no tax agitations or protests during the remaining part of the colonial period.

## **VII. THE DYNAMICS OF DEMOCRATIC DISPENSATION**

The eventual implementation of the Richard Constitution of 1945 which extended democratic culture to the northern region opened the path of changes to the people. In Ilorin for instance, the accumulation of oppressive policies of the British which the indigenous administrative classes were made to implement, soon face challenges from the people. Leading the already mobilized masses were the new economic class. Range of transformation witnessed in the economy of Ilorin as its political system changed, actually did not affect the advantage of her geopolitical location to her economy. The emergence of Ilorin a unique political entity, as an hybrid of emirate and Yoruba political system has continued to open the community and the people to economic

advantages from two of the major blocs in the present day Nigeria. The Yoruba of the Southwest on one hand and the Hausa Fulani of the North on the other.

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