

## Inter-Group Relations: Study of Gwandara, Afo and her Neighbors People of Nasarawa State

<sup>1</sup>Haruna Usman Maimako PhD, <sup>2</sup>Abdulkareem Dogara Ahmad & <sup>3</sup>Ja'afaru Yusuf Dogara PhD

<sup>1,2,&3</sup>Department of History, College of Education Akwanga,  
Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

<sup>1</sup>[maimako311@gmail.com](mailto:maimako311@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>[ahmadkareem069@gmail.com](mailto:ahmadkareem069@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>[jafaruyusufdogara@gmail.com](mailto:jafaruyusufdogara@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*This book provides a comprehensive historical and sociocultural analysis of inter-group relations among the Gwandara, Afo, and their neighboring ethnic communities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. It traces the origins, migration patterns, and settlement history of the Gwandara people from Kano, highlighting their religious transformations, cultural assimilation, and political structures from the pre-colonial to post-colonial periods. The study explores the dynamics of assimilation, intermarriage, and cultural exchanges between the Gwandara and neighboring groups such as the Toni, Afo, Eggon, Mada, Gade, Hausa, and Tiv. It also evaluates the impact of colonialism, Christian missionary activities, and Islamic expansion on local governance, education, economy, and traditional customs. Utilizing oral traditions, archival records, and field research, the book reveals how historical interactions have shaped ethnic identities, power structures, and community cohesion in Kokona and surrounding areas. Through its detailed exploration of interethnic harmony, conflict, and integration, the book contributes to the broader discourse on Nigerian inter-group relations, identity politics, and the legacy of colonial rule in shaping contemporary social realities.*

**Keywords:** Gwandara, Afo, Inter-group Relations, Ethnic Integration, Cultural Assimilation.

### **1. Introduction**

#### **The Gwandara since the Pre-Colonial Period**

This chapter will examine the origin and changes patterns of Gwandara people including their economic activities plus social setting in the pre-colonial period.

#### **Gwandara People**

The Gwandara were originally a pagan ethnic group and at the time of migration from Kano, they preferred to remain so, retaining the freedom to juju worship, hunting and rearing of dogs. Today, the majority of the Gwandara are Muslim. There are also Christians, while traditional worshipers are still found in large numbers. The traditionalists worship many deities that live in rocks, rivers, and trees. They also worship the graves of the ancestors because they believe that the spirits of the ancestor continue to live in their families as protectors. They believe that the spirits also come out in the form of masquerades to guide the affairs of people and to entertain them in dances and Geandara Toni, Gwandara Gitata and Govandara Panda Karshi in Kaduna State. All these groups speak distinct dialects of the Gandara language. This suggests that the Gwandara are not all from one stock. In every

Gwandara town or village, there are families that trace their origins to other ethnic groups like the Jukun, Eggon Mada, Koro, Gade, Hausa, Alago, and Gbagyi. These families lost their cultural identities and adopted Gwandara language and culture and also Gwandara history<sup>2</sup>. It is believed that it was at this period of religious oppression that Karshi believed to be the son of the chief, Muhammadu Rumfa, left Kano with his group of hunters and their dogs. Some sources gave the name of the leader who led the group out of Kano as Karshi and he was the founder of Karshi town. They moved westward to form the origin of the Gwandara people. The followers of Karshi were juju worshipers, remnants of the followers of Tsumburbura in the city. They kept dogs which messed up the praying grounds in the city. It is also believed that these hunters turned themselves into hyenas (Kana) to devour people's goats and sheep. A story was told that during the Ramadan, one of them was called and told to fast but he turned himself into a hyena and ran into bush. In memory of this, the Gwandara children made "Kura" and went out to beg during the month of Ramadan. This was being practiced in Toni chieftdom up to 2003. Karshi's followers were becoming a nuisance in the city. So they were called and told to convert to Islam. They adamantly refused and said "Gwanda rawa da sallah", meaning we "prefer juju dancing to sallah". The Gwandara up to today are ordered to leave the city.

Some people suggest that the Gwandara might have left Kano much earlier during the destruction of Tsumburbura by Tsamiya (1315-1352) or during the reign of Yaji (1359-1396), when he accepted the Wangarawa Fulani and the Gazargawa tribes but refused to accept the Islamic religion. The Gazargawa were a different tribe from the Habe, and in their case, there was no story of migration. The Gwandara on the other hand were Habe as their languages can show. A Gwandara language is a dialect of Hausa, not a different language like the Gade, who are likely to have come from the Gande tribe that were found from Barkum to Kera in the Kano Emirate. The stories of the Gwandara people run away during Rumfa's reign and the enforcement of the Sharia and fasting by Al-Magili. So the most likely period of Gwandara emigration from Kano was during the reign of Muhammadu Rumfa (1476-1513). He ruled for 37 years. The Gwandara moved from Kano down to Zaria and through Abuja to the plains of Keffi where they are mainly found today. On their arrival, they conquered all other smaller tribes and established their ascendancy over them.

The leader of the Gwandara on their departure from Kano was called Karshi. He founded the present day Karshi town, so called from the founder's name. One of his aides called Daranman left Gurku, and later left Gurku to found Angwan Gwandara with other surrounding villages like Yarkade and Gwandara Madaki, now in Keffi Emirate.

From Karshi chieftdom, the Gwandara people spread to other chieftdoms within and outside Nasarawa State. The Gwandara settlements are FCT Abuja where two original towns of Karshi were located. There are their settlements in Niger State, Kogi State and Kaduna State. In Nasarawa State however, there are Gwandara settlements in Karu, Nyankpa, Toni, Gwandara Koro, Gwandara Kyan-Kyara, Gwandara Toni, Gwandara Ara, Gwandara Toni, Gwandara Gitata, and Gwandara Padan Karshi in Kaduna State. All these groups speak distinctive dialects of the Gwandara language. This suggests that the Gwandara are not all from one stock. In every Gwandara town or village. There are families that trace their origin to others to other ethnic groups, like the Jukun, Eggon, Mada, Koro, Gade, Hausa, Alago and Gbagyi. These families lost their cultural identities and adopted Gwandara language and culture and also Gwandara history.

The Gwandara Jiju, go hunting and rear dogs. Today, the majority of the Gwandara are Muslims. There are also Christians, while traditional worshipers are still found in large

numbers. The traditionalists worship many deities that live in Rocks Rivers and trees. They also worship the graves of the ancestors because they believe thus the spirits of the ancestors continue to live in their families as protectors. They believe that the spirit also come out in the form of masquerades to guide the affairs of people and to entertain in dances and various rituals. They practice Bori or Arizeni which is a culture they brought down from Kano.

### **Gwandara and Toni intergroup Relations**

The Gwandara people who happened come from Kano where very much civilized and were able to incorporate other ethnic groups they come in contact. The Toni who were mostly found around Gurku and Dari town were able to incorporate themselves through inter-marriages until the Toni were totally diffused and acculturated into the Gwandara mainstream. They could weave and dye clothes, their old pits can still be seen in the areas where they settled. They brought with them the horn and other custom which are traceable in Hausa land today. Their music and dances were well advanced and highly entertaining. Because of this high civilization, the Toni people imitated the Gwandara in all sphere of life until they were finally assimilated. So also every civilized Toni became a Gwandara. Just as we now talk of Hausa-Fulani as one ethnic group, so also are the Toni now regarded as Gwandara-Toni.

It can be established that not all the ruling families of Toni village are Gwandara by origin. Example, the people who founded Garaku are in Agaba and the grave of the founder is still being worshiped annually. The Gwandara families of Garaku are only three and there is called Angwan a Hausa ward. The predominant names in these families are also typically Hausa, like Agwai, Mamman, Audu, Bako, etc. In other Toni villages like Angoro, Onyi, and Mandara, it is difficult to trace even ones original Gwandara family. So it can be seen that the Toni are assimilated into Gwandara.

Also the process of assimilation into the Gwandara ethnic group can be seen among the Eggon of Gudi and Made Station. The Gade of Uke, Karshi and Ara were also assimilating. So also were the Koro, like Aso Koro who are now completely Gwandarized. This process of assimilation was hastened by the coming of western education. By this time, the Toni, being a small tribe, had already been completely assimilated. With this complete assimilation, Toni and Gwandara have become synonymous. All the Gwandara living in Toni are refer to by outsiders as Toni it is now a dialect of Gwandara and not a different language of a different ethnic group.

There was noticeable assimilation of other groups into the Toni. For instance the present Abaga Toni whose headquarters in Garaku is miscegenation of Afo and Mada. His father is Afo from Agaba clan in Agwada town, while his mother is Mada from Angwan Takwa ward in Garaku. Also, Gurku the cradle of Gwandara civilization in Kokona LGA, its people being Eggon by origin. In our discussion here the aim and objective is to expose hidden cultural assimilation where some became language molantus in our society today whose origin cannot be traceable in our history. I want to say frankly that the society we are in today more especially in the area of our discussion, no ethnic group can claim any purity in his language without missing with other languages be it Gwandara, be it Afo or the Hausa-Fulani who were able to dominate every culture in terms of language in the central Nigeria.

### **Kokona**

Kokona was founded by a Gwandara man from Kano. He left Kano with his brother. They settled at Ninkoro. He left his brother at Ninkoro and went to Onda. He was a hunter. Going

to Kokona area to hunt. He took all his catch to Onda to sell. Because there were plenty fakna, he decided to stay there He said,

*“Na Kwakwana a yamu”, meaning “I want to stay here”. He brought his family to Kokona and so founded the town. He ruled Kokona for 35 years before he died. Mamman succeeded him and ruled for 33 years before he died. Ode succeeded Mai Ganga. He ruled for 27 years. Gaji was the next chief. He ruled for 32 years. Yusuf took and ruled for only two years. He embezzled tax money of 17 people. So he was deposed by the Emir of Keffi.*

There was a man that came from the East. He came to Ninkoro. From there, he came to Kokona. When he was dying, he showed where he should be buried. He also said his walking stick should be placed on his grave. That was done, but the following morning after the buried, the stick became a stone of the same length as the walking stick. At night, people saw light on the grave. People then believed that he was a well and they used to go and pray at his grave. If what they prayed for was granted, they went and tie a white cock or ram on the grave. Any person who saw any animal tied at the grave it was a sacrifice. He would then loosen the animal and take it to the chief where such was slaughtered and distributed to the poor and elderly as “sadaka”.

The people of Ninkoro wanted the miracle stone to be given to them, claiming that the man was from Ninkoro. Kokona people refused. So Ninkoro invaded Kokona and killed a lot of people. As they could not carry the stone, they broke part of it which they carried to Ninkoro. The remaining part of the stone grew back to its original size. The stone is still at grave yard and people go there to task blessings.

During the time Magaji Dan Yamusa of Keffi, Kokona uncritically accepted tradition of origin. He made his base for carrying out raids made surrounding villages from then on, all subsequent Madakin Keffi made Kokona their base for the control of the Toni District, which later became Kokona District. Madaki Keffi, Nuhu, was deposed by Emir of Keffi, Maikwoto, and Nuhu’s brother Dauda, was made Makakin Keffi. He did not want to stay where his deposed brother lived in Kokona, so he moved his base to Garaku.

Garaku then became the headquarters of Kokona District. In 1996. Kokona District became L.G.A comprising the followings villages: Kokona, Garaku, Agwada, Amba, Bassa, Dan, Ninkoro and Haderi. These villages areas became district of their own, and new village areas were created. The new Kokona District had Kokona, Pam Barau and Kufai Gwari village areas. With the creation of Agwada LGA out of Kokona LGA, Kufai Gwari was cut out to join Agwada and Kokona District was left with only two village areas: Kokona and Pam Barau.

It is believed that there was a village called Ombe near the present Dan town. This village was founded by Odania from Mandara Toni. An Eggon man, a hunter from Ginda called Oshedawa used to visit Ombe. As time to help he builds his new home. He was followed by Ogolo. Where Ogolo came from was not known. The area they settled was a thick forest. Their graves are in the forest and are worshiped by their people with the sacrifice of a goat every year.

There was a small village outside Dan town called Ogobo. It is said that some people came from Gurgu on a hunting expedition. The people of Ongbo received them with hospitality and invited them into the forest to drink some wine. They were attacked by those hunters and all of them were killed in large number and left only one to avenge the death of their brothers. When they reached Ongbo, they found the place deserted. Not a single house or person could be seen there and their whereabouts is not known up to today. It was believed that they just

disappeared from there. Because of the frequent wars and slave raids, people of Ombe, who became very few, moved and joined the people of Dan people. They had a powerful shrine called Bnga that protected them during wars and slaves raids. There were many wars, like the wars of Jero, the wars of wars and the wars of Magaji Dan Yamusa. In all these wars, Dan were never conquered. Whenever the surrounding villages were attacked, the people would run to Darn for protection. It was believed that whenever somebody was killed in the battle field, he would return to the village alive some days. So people were not supposed to cry. If people cried, then, the dead people never return to the village. Even if he came back to life, he had to go to some other places where he could never be seen again by Dan people.

The Briga Shrine worshiped was an annual big celebration. During the celebration, all the bows and arrows of the village were brought out and blessed by sprinkling on them water from the shrine and on the people. The shrine had an arrow which was placed pointing towards Keffi from where the raids often came. Because the shrine was of Eggon origin, black dogs were sacrificed instead of goats; and female dogs were never reared in Darn. The practice of not rearing female dogs in Dan is still being observed today. It was during Onianji Me that Dan moved out of the forest to the present site.

### **Inter Group Relations between Gwandara, Afo and her Neighbors in the Colonial Period**

#### **Colonialism, its Agents and Features**

Colonialism simply refers to the practice by which a powerful nation controls another. The British colonial government adopted in Nigeria a pattern of administration in 1914 called indirect rule. This system used both military force, and Diplomatic means to promote its objectives of subjugating and exploiting the human and natural resources of its colonies. Marxists believe that progressive and meaningful change is solely a factor of class struggle, and to create classes seems to require the operation of European capitalism which in Africa, Latin America produces not development but underdevelopment. Historian drew much attention to some changes like the 19<sup>th</sup> century transformation through incorporation of societies into the caliphate during the West African jihads. Colonialism entrenched in the northern Niger is the policy of indirect rule with success. It was a partial success in the south and a woeful failure in the east because of the people's opposition to the warrant chief's imposition on them.

Colonialism used the local chiefs or appointed intermediaries and traditional laws and customs to supervise the administration. Two factors readily came to the scene namely the use of existing traditional institutions; and the colonial British officials. What can be termed the advantages of the system, like the non-disturbance of the existing traditions and cultures of the people and the modernization of local institutions unfortunately turned out to be the opposite.

It is a known fact that colonial rule errand "boys". As far as the northern region was concerned, the tradition rulers include the Muslim rulers especially from Lokoja, Minna, and Loko among others. These rulers used Islamic principles in governing their subjects while then British officials played protective roles to the Christian missionaries, whole encouraging them to establish both schools and churches where none existed. Both the Christian and Islamic religious and educational practice was constantly in absolute opposition to the traditional one. Thus, the Afo and Gwandara traditional religion and education were usually condemned alongside their adherents and customs.

Okpeh O. Okpeh Jr. While lamenting on the evils of colonial rule stated that:



*...it meant among other things that people had to take into account ideals, interest and institutions arising not only from their indigenous experiences and sanctioned by their traditions and usages but also others introduced and imposed by new rules...*

*Under effective control by the British... peaceful or war.*

From the above, it could be said that colonialism used force and other means to pacify the aggrieved people and paved the way for the missionary activities especially in the northern interior of Nigeria. Ayandele in his missionary impact on Nigeria was in accord with the above assertion when he said:

*...the Nigerian Christian found himself more divorced from his society than his Muslim counterpart set apart from his extended family and recognize only his wife and children... enticed away from the practices of his pagan" traditional society by the European missionary...*

According to Gbadamosi and Ade Ajayi in their *Islam and Christians in Nigeria* the collaborative efforts of both the British government allowed the Walter Miller mission which was closed and burnt down in 1900 to return in 1902. Moreso, Girku missions a town near Zaria where they built the mission house and a dispensary counted much on the advance of the British with favour as their military wing<sup>5</sup>. The Christian missionaries used tactics in ensuring that the message of Christianity got to the interior. Of course, places like Kano, Bida, Zaria, Wukari, among others were affected. A case in point was the one of Nigeria mission founded in 1857 under Crowther Ajayi who after a long period of patient dealing and persuasion won the confidence of the emir of Bida who was disposed to consider his missionary programme for the Nupe kingdom. He later sent letters to his subordinate provincial officers, the emirs of Nassarawa and Yola<sup>6</sup>. He was said to have given his son to Crowther to educate, and later allowed him to open a mission at his capital Bida.

The principle and practice of the test of virginity as one of the marriage customs among the Agatu indeed encouraged their people to develop and sustain good moral values and chastity which laid the best virile foundation for good family background in their society centuries before the infiltration of European and Arab cultures. This was gradually weakened as a result of introduction of foreign currency-pound sterling in 1945.

Colonialism had these features as the promotion of individualism against collectivism, neo-local residence instead of patrilocal, just to mention but a few. Suffice it to conclude that both Christian missionary and Islam waged serious war as a potent factor on the marriage customs of the Afo.Gwandara people through a number of traces. Of importance was the principle introduced by the Sudan party, a group of twelve missionaries who arrived at Lokoja under Graham Willmot Brooke in 1890 called "cultural surrender"<sup>8</sup>. The proponents of this philosophy believed that by wearing Muslim clothes including the turban, eating Hausa food and generally comporting himself like the Hausa would facilitate conversion. He advocated that all European missionaries should study Hausa at least seven hours a day.

Following the above suggestion, the Niger mission who had been built up by Ajayi Crowther in 1890 purged most of their African missionaries on the grounds that their adoption of European culture constituted an obstacle to evangelization. The arrival of the American Quakers in 1950 at Lokoja and Wukari as corollary to this, tracks of Christian religion literature for the Muslim population were produced in Arabic and Yoruba. Above all, religions introduction, must be tried out on the Muslims and Christian schools, or as he put it "our desire is to get as much as we can of our religion into Mohammadan scholars before they leave school".

It has been a well-known fact that, all over the world, the village school has ever been the hand maid of the Christian missionary efforts for the dissemination of their religious views and knowledge. In Nigeria, schools were used to acquire new tools for commercial transaction and the parents themselves might thereby be drawn later towards religious instruction. In short, the most successful aspect of the Christian challenge was in the educational field<sup>10</sup>. It must be stated here that colonialism was intertwined with Christian missions because both were foreign and they collaborated in many ways to the extent that the Afo/Gwandara people who eventually went to the schools established by both the colonial government and Christian mission underrated their own traditional customs and imbibed the total way of life of the Europeans as superior and, most suitable.

### **Gwandara, Afo and Her Neighbors Colonial Impact on Political Social and Economic**

Despite the fact that all these people lived in different geographical zones they shared many things in common. Political, economic, and socio-cultural organization.

Politically, they all belong to what is known as non-centralized or segmentary political system. Each ethnic group was divided into several villages rather than being united under one political head in the Hausa and Yoruba land, each village had its own paramount chief, who was a sacred Lina. He was assisted by council of elders and household heads, who served as checks and balances.

Socio-culturally, the people shared a number of things a common, such as traditional religion, annual festivals, marriages, architectural designs etc. All these served as unifying factors among the people. There were of conflicts such ns during annual festivals, marriage, hard ownership, etc. which sometimes resulted in bloody clashes.

Economically, the area was characterized by a communal mode of production in which land, labour and technology were communally owned. The basic units of social production were the household community. The family was the basic form of labour but extra labour include corporate, rational and farming the in-laws. Labour was offered free in most cases but the host could provide beer and food as token of appreciation.

Agriculture was the basic form of economic activity in the area. It was mainly aimed at providing food for the family though extra ones could be exchanged for essential items. However, the economy was supplemented by fishing, hunting, mining, smiting and animal husbandry.

The economy though simple, was quite well integrated hence local and long distance trade existed in essential commodities such as salt, grains, iron clothes etc. eventually, this led to the emergence of some part time traders, who began to accumulate primitive capital such as trading elites, existed among the Afo-Gwandara.

### **The Nature of Intergroup relations between Afo and Gwandara**

The nature of intra-group relations amongst the Afo people of Kokona L.G.A in the pre-colonial period has been discussed earlier on in chapter three. This includes the origin of the clans as identified by their greeting. However, there are many other ethnic groups in Kokona L.G.A today that do not form part of the indigenes or early inhabitants of the Local Government as the ethic group mentioned in chapter three. Their culture however are the same with some members of the ethnic groups, mostly as a result of this ethnic acculturation adopted through identifying with their mother's lineage. This however does not give them royal identity. But the adoption gave the right to be tittle holders and the currently kingmakers in Kokona L.G.A among these ethnic groups are the Hausa/Fulani and Mada who

dominate the post of Madaki Kokona. They are said to be originally Jukun, Eggon and Gale from Kagbu, Mada Station who migrated to Kokona they are still part and parcel of the Gwandara society and play the role of selecting kings (Abaga Toni) similarly some Gwandara people who migrated into Kokona Area are now part of Gwandara polity. They too belong to this ethnic group of Afo. Some of the Migili who migrated to Kokona were absorbed into Gwandara polity and are identified by their greetings and their women are however do not form part of the kingmakers in Kokona with respect to the Village Head and District Head Kokona, both of whom form part of the kingmakers in Kokona L.G.A, intergroup relation would not be complete where the truth has not been exposed, such truth is referred to cultural assimilation, cultural adaptation of another ethnic group into another such as Hausa into the culture of Gwandara, Alago into Gwandara, Gade into Afo and Afo into Gwandara which today are no longer identifiable with their original tribe or ethnic group. The Hausas who migrated from the extreme north into Kokona L.G.A came along with their own culture and tradition such as hunting, trading, fishing, which was infused into the Gwandara culture, these were descendants of Hausa hunters who migrated to the area, settled and married wives from Kokona Local Government Area. They identified with the greeting of Omgba but have prior claims to the throne of Kokona. All the kingmakers' clans have no claim to the throne of Toni. The position of Madaki as one of the Kingmakers whose greeting is "Tunse" is different. He was supposed to be representative of Sarki Bauchi (Emir), in Kokona formally, all newly appointed chiefs, village heads as well as district heads are mostly confirmed by the Emir of Keffi as a subordinate of the Emir of Bauchi. All the chiefs appointed have to travel to Bauchi for the traditional confirmation to their offices but because of the risk involved in such journey and the possibility of treachery and usurpation by other ambitious contestant to the throne, the Emir of Bauchi at the time decided to send his representative to stay in Kokona and perform such function of confirming the newly appointed Abaga to the throne<sup>11</sup>. They have no right to the throne of Abaga and have never and may never contest for it. As pointed out earlier on there are neither a lot of other clans that are neither kingmakers nor members of any of the ruling families. Most of these came to have one affinity or the other with one clan or the other in Kokona Local Government Area. They were descendants of some polities like Afo, Gbagyi, Migili, Gwandara, and Bassa among others. Again, there are other clans which though one Gwandara, have neither claims to the Keffi stool nor are they members of the kingmakers. Most of these were originally from some other Gwandara villages around Kokona Local Government Area some of which have disappeared. Many areas still around but at the verge of disappearance. Ninkoro was one of such villages. The village itself has disappeared as a result of the gradual migration of the people into Garaku town. They too have "Adagbo" as their greeting but have no claim to the traditional stool of Keffi no any reasonable title in the town. Another one is Atara. This is a village which today exists only in name. Most of the inhabitants have disappeared gradually over a period of time abandoning the town and majority of them are found in Garaku, Bassa, Akware, they originally have affinity with the people of Yelwa and their greeting is "Adegbo". Though Kokona formed a strong clan, they have no stake to the Keffi stool. The cases of Kofar Gwari, Bassa and Sakwato are different. All these villages are still in existence with very strong traditions of their own<sup>12</sup>. Yelwa is a village situated between Bassa, and Agwan Arume and Agwada as well as Atashiri. It is an Afo, Yeskwa town but its inhabitants are in one way or the other related to the founder of Maisauri town. Despite Riri Proximity to Kokona the town is under Obi LGA. It should be recalled that it is this same Riri that provided the maternal ancestry to the Kokona ruling family.



During the precolonial period, the Afo Gwandara relationship is just like one family affair without any barrier of any kind because an Afo man was identified as a very hard working human being producing in excess for trade by barter. Likewise the Gwandara man has been known as an industrial human being whom economic activities are attracted people from nocks and crannies of the world. Because of this type of relationship that existed for more than twenty decades intermarriage become more very common among the ethnic groups in Kokona Local Government. In fact, this kind of relationship paves way for other ethnic groups to migrate and settled permanently in Kokona Local Government, such as the Eggons. The Madas, the Jukuns, the Alagos, the Bassas, and the Hausa Fulani's who are today referred to as the closest brothers to Afo and Gwandara. To be frank and candle precolonial period of Kokona Local left an edible mark in the study of intergroup relationship in Nasaravea State.

### **Relation with Other Ethics Group**

#### **Agatu-Afo Relations**

Agatu are found to the South of Kokona chiefdom. They are found in many settlements which include Agbashi, Akponaja, Olegokpa, Rukubi, Agima, Okpata, Agwada and host of other settlement. They are also found in Benue State and Odeni in Doma LGA of Nasarawa State. These people speak a language which is a cross between the Idoma and Alago. All however belong to the same language group and Ali claim descent from the famous/Kwararafa empire. This situation immensely contributed to the good relationship that has existed between the people. These people have very high regards for Gwandara of Kokona L.GA and accord them especially the traditional stool a high respect. The colonial creation brought these people directly under the control of Doma chiefdom where they have remained until the recent creation of Development Area by Abdullahi Adamu (Governor) in 2003.

There was rare intermarriage between the people while trade and agricultural activities had no restrictions between the people. There has never been any history of serious conflicts between the Afo and Agatu of the settlement. They allied with each other, against their enemies, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century wars between Hausa Jihadist of Keffi. Also a lot of the Agatu people from different Agatu towns settled in Kokona town and became completely absorbed by the Gwandara of Kokona LGA such trecies can be found in the villages like Agwada town, Kokona, Garaku, Dari, Bassa etc. It is where these people cannot identify themselves with their original based because of cultural diffusion and adaptation.

#### **Migili-Afo Relations**

The Migili tradition has it that the two were part of the Kwararafa Empire and migrated from there even before the Afo. Indeed the Gwandara of Kokona LGA whose tradition agrees that, they came to their place of abode in Kalona, they met Magili already settled there. It was when the Migili discovered the gradual disappearance of their children, coupled with Afo numerical growth that made them to decide to abandon the area for the Afo and moved into the forest ever since the Afo-Migili relations has been very friendly.

There has never been any case of conflict between the Gwandara of Kokona and those Migili neighbours. Farm lands are freely shared by these peoples and many aspects of their culture especially.

In many circumstances these people helped each other against common enemies in the wars and conflicts between the Afo of Kalona LGA and their Hausa neighbours. The Migili contributed materially and in manpower. The same situation obtained in the wars between the

Gwandara of Kalona LGA and the combined forces of the neighbouring Islamic states of Nasarawa and Keffi though they were eventually defeated by the Migili one of the polities that supported the Gwandara till the last day of 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the coming of colonialism in the area which drastically changed the nature of relationship that exists.

### **Tiv-Gwandara Relations**

The historical origin of the Tiv people is very complex and difficult to trace. As such, there are several accounts of the original of Tiv but more seems to discuss precisely when and how the first Tiv man came into existence.

With the works of Jan Vasina and Dick Large, it recounts the Tiv originated from a hilly place called “SWEN” others maintain that they originated from South Africa (BAKA), (1991). This notwithstanding, the most popular tradition has it that there was an industrious man called in Southern Africa. This man got married has many children and the last born was TIV. The tradition continues that he was later married had children whose number is not certain. However only two seem to have survived and clearly known till date among the Tiv people. According to this tradition, the first son was called Ipusu (uncircumcised). He gave birth to Shitile, Tongou, Ukum and Kparev.

The second son is Ichango (circumcised) he gave birth to massive, Turan, Iharev and Ugundu. Is from these sons that all the Tiv people trace their origin and boast of one common ancestor.

After the death of their father, a problem emerged when the family of Bantu started multiplying. There was misunderstanding between the Tiv and the other son and Tiv who was clever decided to move from his brother and stopover in Congo with his family.

The tradition has it that while in the Congo the Tiv man invoked on Aondo (God) in prayer and all of a sudden a snake named Ikyaran appeared and formed a bridge for them and they crossed over. After crossing the River Congo the, the Tiv went through series of hardships in the forest and finally settled at “Swen” near the Cameroon.

Nonetheless, after crossing the river Congo they went to different places before coming to settle at “Swen” hills the place pilgrimage of the Tiv people. The Tiv people love the land because the land was secured from tribal wars, fertile for farming and had clean water. In addition, no ethnic group however, as time went on, a number of factors informed the Tiv decision to evacuate (swem) between early 1500 & 1600. One of such factor was the population pressure. They became too numerous to be accommodated in the hills at “swem”. They took southwards and arrived where they are found today in Benue state at the end of 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Tiv people according to their tradition migrated from swem hill located in present day Republic of Cameroon into Nigeria around the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. Their migration however across the river Benue was from around the 17<sup>th</sup> century and by the 19<sup>th</sup> century they had migrated into Gwandara land especially Kokona area in very significant number. These people are mostly farmers and it was in the search for farmland that brought them into Kokona LGA. Most of them are settled in the bush in isolated settlements. This is most conducive to them because their farmland which had been the major object of their quest is unlimited and their interaction with other people was and is still restricted mainly to market days when they come to buy goods or sell their farm products and engage in some level of city life like drinking and dancing. This isolation in life of Tiv people limited their interaction with the Afo and Gwandara. This in turn created a sort of nascent mistrust

between the peoples concerned until recently this never resulted into any conflict between them. Even the recent crisis which the Tivs person started in Doma and was mainly within the Doma LGA. Since Kokona and Keffi are both in the Northern Senatorial District of the state, sharing boundary with the disputed areas it created fear in the mind of all neighbouring towns or village areas in the district felt the impact of the crisis either directly or indirectly. Kokona is such one area that felt the impact indirectly.

Inter marriage between the Afo, Gwandara people of Kokona LGA and Tiv neighbors were and are still very rare. This reduces the chances of integration of Gwandara into Tiv society in Kokona LGA, yet the Gwandara have been supportive of the Tiv in their economic activities through buying and selling. This did not provide any reasonable ground for the integration of these people as had happened between the Afo and other politics in Kokona LGA. The Tiv are in central Nigeria by 1964 which was part and parcel of the unfortunate political crisis that engulfed the country at the time also affect though briefly the relations between the Afo, Gwandara as well as Tiv.

### **Gwandara-Hausa Relation**

According to Roberts D.L., the colonial District officer in charge of Keffi division, by the beginning of the 20 century, the Gwandara people were just beginning to come down from their hill abode to the plains. While the Hausa traditions have it that even much earlier that the Gwandara people have already started migrating to Kokona land. The accounts for their provision of maternity to one of the royal families in Kokona today.

They are farmers, as farmers there should be land pressure which will result into conflicts between them and their neighbours. Far from that, the land as described in chapter one is so vast and fertile that most parts of it do not require application of fertilizer. Land therefore in abundance and therefore cannot constitute a major source of conflict between these people. Though the Gwandara settled mostly in the bush to enable them have easy access to farmlands, some settled in large communities in Kokona land. There are some that established farm houses alongside their neighbours. Interaction between the people has therefore been very free and frequenting throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods. Hence, inter marriage between them has been very common. This made proper integration between the people.

Unlike the Gwandara the Hausa have participated fully as indigenes of Kokona LG.A in all activities pertaining to the area especially politics. Some of them have even contested and have been getting elected or appointed as councilors and chairmen and deputies of the LGA. The Hausa in Kokona have been peace loving people and easily do get them involved in the activities of their hosts. In most cases, they lay claim to the lands they occupy and the Gwandara host never objected to their claim of ownership of the lands. They therefore have no history of conflicts with either the Gwandara or any other ethnic group in the area. Their major areas of settlement in Kokona include Hadari, Ajuye, Angwan Yaro, Angwan Doka, Dokan Daji, Shabu, Jaman Gayan, Akware, Bassa Yelwa, Kofar Gwari, Moroa etc. Most of these were villages that originally belonged to the Afo but have been abandoned by then. Their settling in these areas was mainly necessitated by the fact that they are predominantly farmers.

### **Afo-Hausa Relations**

The migration of Hausa to Kokona LGA was in different stages, determined by different factors and circumstances. However the history of Hausa migration into Kokona can be

studied in three different periods. The first was the pre-jihadist period. The second was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the last was the colonial period.

The pre-jihadist period witnessed the migration of Hausa of different occupation to Kokona LGA some migrated there as traders, others as Islamic Scholars, some as adventurers and yet others as hunters, these groups of people came with religion of Islam which they practiced. They, especially the scholar class are known up to date for their scholarly work especially in Islam. They produce most of the Imams and other religious leaders in Kokona LGA today. Though these people have not identified themselves with any clan in Kokona, they do not have any other identity than being Gwandara for some of these people that migrated as hunters and settle at Yelwa Bassa, Akware they decided to adopt the greetings of their mothers who were got from among the Gwandara and Afo of Kokona. To this group of people, to refer to them as any other thing as Afo is unacceptable as they have been completely integrated into the Afo polity.

The second group of Hausa migrant came after the jihadist period. These were mostly traders and other forms of trades' men who were in search of greener pasture. However, these groups like the first one has completely settle in Kokona and have no any other home town than Kokona, except for vague and casual reference to their homes origin. Unlike the first group this group and their descendants still know where they come from and occasionally refer to themselves as Hausa. In reality just like the first group this group is about losing its identity as well to the Afo identity.

The last groups of Hausa migrants to Kokona LGA are those classified as recent migrants. These people came from different parts of Hausa land and are mostly farmers, and petty traders. They have however been granted land in Kokona to which they claim ownership. This group of Hausa migrants do not call themselves Gwandara and do not in any way identify themselves with any clan. They however identify with the town as they consider themselves permanently settled in Kokona LGA they are like all other citizens of Kokona LGA and do take part in all activities of Kokona (Including politics) except the traditional and cultural activities of the people. Like their predecessors the eventual absorption of the new corner to the Gwandara polity in Kokona is just a matter of time.

### **Slave Raiding Relations with Keffi**

Finally it should be stressed that groups even in precolonial period were not living in isolation. Kokona for one had interrelated with different groups even of the Emirate of Keffi, Nasarawa and Lafia. This relationship gave birth to different situations including the absorption of different groups of people into Afo Gwandara polity. The establishment of these Islamic states disrupted the peace that existed in the region. Yet even the coming of the colonialists did not help matters as they changed the existing nature of relations in the area to suit the interest of alien rule, thereby creating a situation of mutual mistrust and conflicts.

Colonial rule in Nigeria had important implications for inter-group relations. It meant among other things that people had to take into account ideals, interests and institutions arising not only from their indigenous experiences and sanctioned by their traditions and usages, but also others introduced and imposed by new rules... BY and large, each community brought under effective control by the British learnt that it had lost the initiative to determine whether its relations with its neighbours were going to be peaceful or warlike. There was no longer any choice.

Magaji Dan Yamusa used to raid Afo Gwandara area for slaves. He used to pass through Ninkoro where he got assistance for his raids from Andnene people near Andaha. The people

were known for their treachery abilities. The slaves he collected were taken to Kelli. Some were sold; some were kept as warriors, while others were kept on the production food for their masters. These slave estates were referred to as Rumada. They sent to Villages to work on their master's farms.

Ibrahim Father, Audu, came to Nincha in Andaha. He came to Ninkoro and from there to Keffi. As he was a great warrior, he joined Magaji Dan Yamusa in his wars, he even followed Magaji when he fled from Keffi after the killing of Captain Maloney. The son of Audu was Ibrahim Mai Gunduma in Keffi. When Magaji conquered Akwanga and put his brother Bashayi to rule, slaves and Magaji kept their slaves as Burunji to rear their cattle and to farm for them. These slaves became Muslims and they lost their languages and spoke only Hausa. These were the first Mada in Keffi who are no more Mada; they have become Hausa or Rumada.

The later Mada Settlers in Keffi came after the establishment of colonial rule when slave raiding and inter-tribal wars had stopped. The first of such settlers came through Toni chiefdom. The first man Mainasara, who came in 1925 and settled at Angwn Mainasara, then came Gankuma. Others followed in great number in search of farmlands and to escape oppression in Madaland. These later settlers kept their language and culture and still identified themselves with their homes in Mada chiefdom.

### **Kokona Chiefdom during the Colonial Period'**

Kokona chiefdom was conquered just as the parts of Northern Nigeria, following the trusting of Union Jack flag at Lokoja by Major Fredrick Lord Lugard in 1900. Colonial military officers were sent to all the emirates to bring them under the tutelage of British administration. The Caliph of the Sokoto Caliphate was told in no uncertain term that, just as his predecessor had conquered and rule the region, by the same token of conquest, his Caliphate was conquered and would be ruled by the British. Keffi and Kokona area was subdued about 1902.

In carrying out the injunction of the High Commissioner. Colonel Maloney left Lokoja through Koton Karfe to Keffi of Dan Yamusa in 1902 for the conquest. He was killed; Lugard reacted promptly to the murder of Colonel Maloney by dispatching a strong military expedition, which forcefully brought the emirate of Keffi, administration structures down.

The British the strongest colonial power had one major objective to achieve in their quest for colonies in Africa, i.e., maximum exploitation of resources. Thus, to achieve this goal effectively they had to set up administrative, machinery and make necessary political arrangements suitable to the achievement of such objective. The whole of the Northern Nigeria was therefore divided into Provinces, Divisions and Districts. Kokona came to find itself a division under Zazzau emirate with its chief recognized by Lord Lugard as a Third Class Chief subsequently, the third class staff of office was retrieved and Kokona, Agwada were ruled from Zazzau directly and brought it under Keffi Emirate. This was done mainly because Kokona was considered a "Pagan" Kingdom while the colonialists gave more recognition to the Muslim societies. The reaction of the people of Kokona to this action of the British was very swift when they were made a division under Zazzau. They were subjected to Ninkoro, which was their traditional enemy. Violence erupted, this was about the first and only reaction of the people to colonial administration in the area Force had to be used to bring the people of Kokona under submission and humiliation. Thus Kokona came to be a district under Keffi emirate.

### **Impact of Colonial Rule**



### **Colonial Forced/Recruited Labour**

The first form of exploitation power imposed on the societies after establishing their rule over them was the forced conscription of labour called in Hausa as “Diban Gwammna”. The colonial power depended on forced labour to execute most of the needed infrastructures for the takeoff of colonial administration. Forced labour was used in the construction of Roads. Government residential quarters, Markets abattoirs etc.

### **Taxes**

The forced labour was followed by the introduction of taxes. The introduction of currency by the British in 1911 facilitated in the payment of taxes in cash. This in turn had a lot of impact on the people of Kokona and environs. Though they were used to pay taxes to the rulers who subsequently submitted some part to the Keffi. The tax was on their produce. How that they had to paying in cash, it meant they had to find ways of acquiring the cash. With this situation people were forced to produce beniseed, which was required by the colonialists who controlled the supply of the currency. They also engaged in production of shear butter nuts and food crops that could be sold in the market to enable them acquire the required currency to pay the white man’s tax. In other words, production was no longer for self-satisfaction as it was to satisfy the colonialists.

Another impact of colonial administration on Kokona subordination of Kokona District of Keffi. District was the fact that it had its power reduced. It has been explained already that the colonialist reduced the status of Kokona. The colonialist preferred to deal directly with Keffi which was a literate Muslim State as to where the subordinated District to the administration and exploitation. Thus “Keffi has had Kokona and Agwada, Ninkoro. Baasa, Agaza, Kofan Gwari and several other places in its jurisdiction. This town (Kokona) used to pay taxes direct to Zaria and had several tributary towns, but Kokona is consequently quiet unable to control these towns (as a result of the presence of Gbagyi) or contain any tribute from them. The colonialists therefore went ahead to consequently take the Gwari town away from Kokona and gave them to Loko. This Increased Loko tribute to 500,000 while it reduced that of Kokona from 200, 000 to 100, 0002.

It has been noted however from the above analysis that the re-organization of the units embarked upon by the imperial. Britain was mainly for their convenience of Colonial Rule for easy exploitation of the area. The British noted Keffi was a commercial centre, while Loko was at the bank of the river Benue. Hence, the two were given more prominence over Kokona which trade they considered as nothing to write home about.

Another impact of colonial administration on the people was the change experienced in terms of governance. Before the introduction of colonial rule the Village Head of Kokona was the ruler of Kokona chieftdom supported by council of chiefs. Security was mainly prerogatory of the “Adakari” (Soldiers), while laws and orders were maintained in the society more as a result understanding, self-discipline and the fear of the presence of ancestors in their mist.

However, with the introduction of colonialism. British colonial administrative system was imposed on the people. The British now had colonial district office in the area from whom the village head of Kokona now had to receive instructions and pass it on to his people and the submission of same to the colonial administrator. He also ensured strict adherence to British colonial laws and order. Supply of forced labour for the construction of British roads and other demands were met by him. These and other things made the villages head colonial administration than the peoples’ traditional ruler.

The presence of colonial law enforcement agents looked at the people as if they were offender, and arrested those who failed to pay tax in time to be publicly flogged and maybe eventually imprisoned. The situation was so bad that the mere mention of the white man or any agent of colonial administration instilled a lot of fear in the people.

The whole setup had a lot of impact on inter-group relations in Kokona Local Government Area. Kokona was formally organized as a District under Keffi emirate, a colonial creation which until then had never had hostility that existed between the people of Kokona and Keffi there were series of hostilities were suppressed only by the British colonial machinery Keffi on the other hand used the situation to her own advantage and suppressed Kokona, and excessively exploited her to utmost in the colonial period. Also villages such as Bassa and Igwo that were taken away from Kokona only had to stay under the new districts in sheer fear of the colonial machinery. They never failed to look onto Kokona as their centre and the British acknowledge this fact.

It should be noted that the monetization of the economy by the British changed even the nature intra-group relations amongst the Afo, and Gwandara of Kokona. The desire to earn currency led to the gradual resolving of the communal life with which the people were known. Everybody now wanted means money by which wealth was measured, more so that all transactions were now made in pound sterling and shillings. One thing to note is that education was generally not a preference of the colonialists. The missionary body of SIM based in Keffi gave more attention to education than the colonial administration.

Missionary body established a primary school in Kokona. However towards the end of their administration, the British also decided to establish primary Schools. This generally had impact on the area. The initial reaction of the people was to refuse to send their children to these schools to become the futures elites of Kalona.

### **Christianity**

When the missionaries set their feet on African soil, their main aim was to save the souls of African for Christ. The first set of missionary activity in Nigeria was by the Portuguese in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century at the palace of the Oba of Benin where they established a school and got some converts. However the success here was very limited. Proper missionary activities in Nigeria started from the period of the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Ex-slaves like Samuel Ajayi Crowther and other white missionaries undertook role of spreading the other white missionaries undertook the role of spreading the gospel in the country starting from the coast. The decision to extend the spread of the gospel into interior of Nigeria was determined by the desire to win the Muslim as well as traditionalists to Christianity.

The first missionary activity on Kokona was by the Roman Catholic Mission (R.C.M) led by the Lion Fathers in 1929. They first settled at Garaku before latter proceeding to Kokona. They could not settle at Keffi because of the influence of Islam in the area. This was encouraged by Lugard's policy of "non-interference" in the Muslim affairs. The attempt in Kokona however yielded little fruit. It only paved the way for further Missionary adventures in the area. Subsequent missionary attempt in Kokona again in 1932 when father Michael D. Flint opened a mission station at Laminga through Makurdi. He first opened a station at Keffi and later at Kokona. They were received by the Ahmadu Maikwato who took them to his house. One major reason for their constant shifting was that, to visitor in one's house especially a white visitor and from the chief was a matter of prestige. Attention was given to the whites as royal visitors from England when father first came to Kokona, he came with three Igbo men and Mr. John Njoku who hailed from Owerri, Vincent Nwanko from Ihiala and Fredrick. John and Vincent were teachers, while Fredrick was both messenger and

cleaner. They started their mission work first by preaching to individuals and later from house to house to house, they eventually combined with public preaching. When they realized the other two methods were not actually yielding much fruits a school was set up which served to win converts. The first Mission primary school in Kokona was established in 1937. Njoku and Nwankwo served as teachers in the school this school trained children who were later baptized. As to the church the school was an important avenue to gaining converts. The first set of regarded by their parents as unfit for agricultural work.

The next sets of missionary to set foot in Kokona were the Sudan Interior Mission (Now Evangelical Church of West Africa) which was established in Karu in 1904. The base of the organization was at Karu, Jos and Kagoro. It was from there that the missionaries embarked on missionary journeys to other parts of the Benue valley as late as 1959. The SIM then spread to other led by people. This was UNLIKE the Roman Catholic Mission; this group had no much problems of getting converts. They used Hausa Language and won converts.

### References

- Adejumobi, said. Ethnic Militia Groups and the National Question in Nigeria (An abridged Version of paper Presented to the Conference on Urban Violence, Ethnic Militia and Challenge of Democracy consolidation in Nigeria, April 23-26, Lagos Nigeria.).
- Adejumobi, said: Ethnic Militia Groups and the National Question in Nigeria (An abridged Version of paper Presented to the Conference on Urban Violence, Ethnic Militia and Challenge of Democracy consolidation in Nigeria, April 23-26, Lagos Nigeria.)
- Adejumobi, said: Ethnic Militia Groups and the National Question, in Nigeria (An abridged Version of paper Presented to the Conference on Urban Violence, Ethnic Militia and Challenge of Democracy consolidation in Nigeria, April 23-26, Lagos Nigeria.).
- Audi, A. A (1999). Inter group Relation in Nigeria in the Nineteenth Century: The Ajiri And their Neighbours. (Unpublished project). The WHO of chapter one of the Project Discussed their Relation between the Ajiri and their Neighbours.
- Distinguished Lecture and Award Ceremony, 2005.
- Distinguished Lecture and Award Ceremony. 2005.
- Dr. Gambo, A.N. Peace: Indigeneship/Citizenship Question in Nigeria. This was a text of paper presented at the Newsgate/ Newscrest. Annual.
- Dr. Gambo, A.N. Peace: Indigeneship/Citizenship Question in Nigeria. This was a text of paper presented at the Newsgate Newscrest Annual.
- Dr. Gambo, A.N. Peace: Indigeneship/Citizenship Question in Nigeria. This was a text of paper presented at the Newsgate Newscrest Annual.
- East. R. M. (1932). Labarin Hausawa da Makwabtansu (Vol. 1) Zaria, The Buck of the Book Discussed the Relations between the Hausa and other peoples especially the different wars fought.
- East. R. M. (1932). Labarin Hausawa da Makwahtansu (Vol. 1) Zaria. The Huck of the Book Discussed the Relations between the Hausa and other peoples especially the different wars fought
- Ikime Obaro. (1995). In search of Nigeria's Changing patterns of inter Group Relations in Africa impact Publishers.

- Ikime, Obaro (1995). In search of Nigeria's Changing patterns of inter Group Relations in Africa impact Publishers.
- Ikime, Obaro (1995). In search of Nigeria's Changing patterns of inter Group Relations in Africa impact Publishers.
- Mohammed, S. B., Khalifa, M. M., & Abubakar, A. (2024). Effect of petrol subsidy removal on government income, cost of living, consumption patterns, savings and investment, and SMEs performance. Journal of Social Economics Research, 11(3), 290-308.  
<https://ideas.repec.org/a/pkp/josere/v11y2024i3p290-308id3774.html>
- S.O Ayi Nasarawa State past and present.
- S.O Ayi Nasarawa State past and present.
- S.O Ayi Nasarawa State past and present.
- S.O Ayi Nasarawa State past and present.
- Suleiman, M. (2011). Poverty reduction as a panacea for violence free elections in Nigeria.  
[https://scholar.google.com/citations?view\\_op=view\\_citation&hl=en&user=7VZ4PGMAAAAJ&citationforview=7VZ4PGMAAAAJ:tzM49s52ZIMC](https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=7VZ4PGMAAAAJ&citationforview=7VZ4PGMAAAAJ:tzM49s52ZIMC)
- Umase, D (1999). Inter Group Relation between the Tiv and Alago's: A case study of Obi L.G.A. of Nasarawa State (Unpublished project) p. 37.
- Umase. D (1999). Inter Group Relation between the Tiv and Alago's: A case study of Obi L.G.A. of Nasarawa State (Unpublished project) p. 37.