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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE ECONOMICS ACTIVITIES OF THE ALAGO PEOPLE OF DOMA FROM 1960-2019

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## Abstract

This book examines the historical perspective of the economic activities of the Alago people in Doma Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, from 1960 to 2019, with a specific focus on rice production. The research explores the socio-economic organization of the Alago in the pre-colonial period, highlighting agriculture, trade, and crafts as central to their economy. In the post-colonial era, rice production emerged as a key economic driver, transforming livelihoods through job creation and market integration. The study analyzes labor organization, land preparation, weed management, fertilizer application, pest control, harvesting, and processing methods, emphasizing the role of communal labor and modern interventions like the Olam out-grower scheme. Despite challenges such as limited access to fertilizers, inadequate credit facilities, and infrastructural deficiencies, rice production significantly contributed to socio-economic development in Doma. The study underscores the interplay between traditional practices and modern agricultural systems, offering insights into how rice farming has shaped the Alago economy and fostered inter-group relations. Recommendations include enhancing access to credit, improving infrastructure, and promoting private sector investment to sustain rice production.

**Keywords:** Alago People, Doma, Rice Production, Economic Activities, Agriculture, Socio-Economic Development, Post-Colonial Era.

## INTRODUCTION

This study is based on historical perspective of the economic activities of the Alago people of the Doma from 1960 to 2019; the study examines rice production in

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Doma Local Government. It is true that increased economic activities in Doma Local Government Area contributed to the socioeconomic and political development of the area and the state at large within this period under review.

The precolonial economic activities of the Alago people evolve in agriculture and trade. This must have been the reason for the influx of people into the area particularly the Tiv founded around the fertile land of the Benue through, agriculture and salt extraction was the main economic activities of the Alago people. These economic activities and peaceful nature of the environment may have been responsible for the influx of the people into the area. The main focus of the research is the economic activities of the Alago people with a particular influence to rice production in Doma, it preferably and irreversibly transformed the life of people in the region. One important aspect of these transformations is the creation of job opportunities, to the timing youth in the region.

### **Socio-Economic Organization of Alago People in the Pre-Colonial Period**

In the traditional Alago society, the family formed the principal economic unit. The labour force and the wealth of a man were measured by the number of wives and children he had. As the head of the family the man had the responsibility of feeding the family, catering for their health and marries the first wife for each of the male child under his care.

The major occupation within this period was agriculture and each member of the family was expected to make his contributions in terms of production. In other words, the family constituted the major source of labour force in the area, and this was a major factor in determining the number of wives and children the man had a major yardstick for measuring his wealth and status. Production was for family consumption and whatever remained in the form of surplus was disposed by the family head.

One other source of labour among the people of Doma is the *oruma*. This is synonymous with the *gaya* which obtains in many parts of Nigeria. Farmers who share common boundary with each other would agree to work on each other's land in turns. The Alago farms are usually located far away from the town. The Alago also engage in other economic activities. There were craftsmen of different trade. Some were carvers who carved mainly farm implements. But in most cases, this was done in addition to the farm work. There were others who specialize in blacksmithing. This among the Alago was a hereditary occupation just is the case with weaving (*opa*) barbing, and traditional medicine.

Trade was a major occupation among the Alago. Right from the olden day's trade was mainly reserved for women as they do not engage in physical farm work. Their major item of trade then was salt. But salt itself was not produced in Doma but they had to travel on foot in groups to Keana where they could obtain the salt. They conveyed this on their heads using existing trade routes to as far as Keff, Panda, Wamba among other places. Also, women would travel during the dry season on foot for days and across the river Rutu to Afo land where they bought pots for onward sell to places like Migili and beyond. One thing to note here is that the existence of this trading relationship sort of strengthened other forms of relationship between the Alago people and their neighbors. This went a long way in promoting peaceful coexistence between these peoples. It also went a long way in helping to promote cultural exchange especially in aspects of language, dressing, festivals and

masquerades. Other item of trade was mainly food crops which up to the colonial and post-colonial period were carried out by women to many parts of the country. The Doma Alagowomen though not actively involved in farm work was very much economically active and quite independent of men. Fishing and hunting were not a full-time economic activity engaged by the Alago. These activities were regarded as a sport to help past time and carried out mainly in the dry season when there was less farm work to do. Similarly other craft such as mat and basket weaving were mainly part-time hobbies.

The Alago women engaged in commerce. This went a long way to foster intra and inter-group relations among the Doma and their neighbors. Compound traded with each other while towns or villages traded with each other as well. This led to intermarriages between the peoples and their neighbors. There were also craftsmen who also specialized in particular trade. This included blacksmith, cloth weaving dying etc. Memberships of these traders were circumscribed by birth and were socially and economically organized with the intention of pursuing their economic aims.

There was an elaborate division of labour within the Alago of Doma. In farm work men were known to do the major work which included clearing, digging and planting. Here women participation was restricted mainly to cooking for the men. Infact, in agricultural activities, the role of the Doma women was restricted mainly to helping in harvesting of crops and their subsequent storage. However, women engage in a lot of other activities especially pottery and cloth weaving pots of different types, sizes were made. They wove cloths of different sizes and different types. They included Opa, Oshata, Obagidi, and Otena. Men also engaged in weaving.

The women traders went to as far as Keana and Awe to buy salt which they took to Madaland, Keffi area, Rindre land, and even to parts of the present-day Jos Plateau. They also went to Afo land where they purchased pots not produced in the area for onward transport to Migilan. All these items were exchange mainly for cowries, shells and other items including slaves. As by societal arrangement, women had a lot of privileges. Basket weaving which involves climbing and cutting of palm fruits were done by men. The collecting and processing of other materials for example blacksmithing were also the preserve of men. In Oruma which sometimes involved the building of a house, farm work, roofing etc. women participation was also minimal. In the building of a house for instance they provided only water to mix the red earth used for the building of the soil for the building was done by men. In other activities as mentioned above, the role of women was principally to prepare the local beer (ize) and food for the labour force. Oruma known as gaya in Hausa was possible because of the physical proximity of the Ipugole as members were found.

### **Social and Political Organization**

The political and social organization of any community or society helps to maintain the unity of the people as a group. Politics is defined to be concerned with people, governance decision making and how these decisions affect the populace. Before the advent of colonialism, the chiefs who were the traditional authorities got such authority from a wide variety of sources such as conquest and membership of a particular ruling family. The Doma chieftaincy institution was derived from the following dynasties:

The Odulogya dynasty

The Odogyo dynasty

The Asibin dynasty

From these dynasties were different ruling families such as the Ayigogah, Ayigo'Ogye, Obunshugu, Inumakwe and Inumoga. The chieftaincy was backed up by a number of traditional title holders among who were kingmakers. The traditional title holders were responsible for the general supervision of the community and maintenance of peace through the administration of justice.

When a vacancy existed in the chieftaincy as a result of death or removal from office by the king makers, any interested member of that family would be free to contest for the vacant post. The selection was done by the elders of the community and the successful candidate was submitted to the Andoma for his final approval. The functional relationship between the Andoma and his traditional title holders could be equated to that of a modern governor and his cabinet. The Andoma was the chief executive of the chieftdom. In every society there existed laws which regulated the social set up of the community and the individual within it. This social set up was related to the culture and the custom of the people. The judicial system was very similar to the present judicial system. All the traditional titleholders were members of the judiciary which used to hear not only criminal but civil cases as well. The elders of the community served as assessors and the Andoma was the final court of appeal. One of the many traditional ways of checking the excess of the Andoma was the lowest traditional titleholders could collectively turn against him by disobeying his orders.

The Doma basic unit of social structure like the Idoma was "Ole" which was a family unit. The "Ole" was made up of a family that consisted of a man, his wife/wives, children and other dependents. Two or more "Ole" made up Ipugole - the compound with which the inhabitants were identified. The Adagole was the leader of a compound and was normally the eldest male adult who had both secular and religious or spiritual authority. The Ipugole has a collection of members who belonged to the same Ipugole. This consists of groups who claimed descent from a common male ancestor. And in some cases, several compounds in an Ipugole claim the same single common male ancestor.

There were Ipugole who lived in areas separate from each other and were called Opuu. This was a political unit and was headed by the town's traditional title holders. Almost all the Ipugole and its members were related and had a common ancestor. The Adagole administered justice and had secular and spiritual authority in conjunction with the Ologwole did everything since he was the commander in Chief of the compound within a clan or lineage. He could at times delegate such powers to Adagole as a result of old age.

The Ologwole was expected to see to the welfare of the entire residents and settled disputes and his decision was respected. But if the parties involved felt dissatisfied, they could head the case to the Andoma who see decisions were final. In every Ipugole male adults set aside some days of the week to work for the Adagole on his farm as a sign of respect and recognition of his position and role as the political, economic and spiritual head of the unit. Some proceed of this labour was used in the payment of tribute to the Andoma in the precolonial era. The Adagole was charged with the responsibility of getting the first wife for each male member of the family. The labour force and the wealth of a man, among the Alago of

Doma were determined by the number of wives and children the man had. This socioeconomic unit had within it a cooperative and mutual spirit which enhanced material production. This polygamous nature of Alago exists up to date among the traditional agrarian communities in Doma. The surplus of agricultural products was exchanged for other things needed by the group. In the colonial period however, it was mainly sold out to earn the colonial currency to enable them pay.

### **Intra Group Relations amongst the Alago of Doma**

It has been stressed that Alago people of Doma are organized in clans. The clans are the social charters of identity of the Alago people of Doma and determine the nature of the relationships that exists among them. Each clan has its own greeting and this assist to identify a person as either belonging to the ruling family or not. While there are so many of such clans in Doma, only very few of them belong to the ruling families. Such clans in turn form the dynasties that reign in Doma to date. The clans that form the ruling families today in Doma have greetings that are very particular to them. The differences in the greetings stemmed from the fact that some of the brothers of Ayigo' gah continued to manipulate and dominate the position of Andoma in succession. This forced the other members of the family to leave Doma in anger to other places. Some went to Akyo and they form the Inumakwe ruling family today; identified by their greeting, adegbo. Some went to Twashi and today they form the Obushugu ruling family in Doma. Their greeting. is as well 'adegbo'.

However, the difference between them and Inumakwe is that while Inumakwe women are greeted 'tede'. the Obushugu women are greeted 'oyinze'. Ayigogye on the other hand went to Kyamberi near Akani and adopted the 'ogye greeting with their women answering 'owaji'. Some members of the Inumakwe family decided to migrate to Alapo where they met Migili people who abandoned the place for them.

The clans that migrated out abandoned their original greetings and adopted that of their maternal sides. This made for the differences in greetings of the members of the royal families in Doma today. Otherwise, all members of the royal families in Doma descended from one ancestor. Even as they abandoned Doma to form other villages around, they never abandoned their annual traditional responsibility to the town which was the annual clearing of the traditional graveyard during the Amiri festival. It was during one such festival that the people were urged to come back home to rally round their chief. This eventually led to the re-migration of most of these people back to Doma.

It is interesting to note that the 'Adegbo' and 'Oyinze' greetings adopted their greeting from that of Bassa from whom their fathers got their wives. The Ayigbo-gah got theirs from the Eggon among whom their mothers come from. Inumakwe got their greeting through the Afo woman they married whose greetings was 'ede'. The other group of Inumakwe which migrated to Alago adopted Ayize which was from their Migili maternity which answers 'ong' 'gba'. The Ayigogye got theirs from another Alago group in Anakani, from whence their maternity descended. When they migrated from Doma they formed the settlement of Kyambiri which site is very close to Ankani.

There are many other clans in Doma that do not form part of the royal families or dynasties. Their greetings however are the same with some other members of the royal families as a result of these clans adopting the identities of their mothers' lineage. This however did not give them royal identity. But the adoption gave them

the right to be titleholders and they constitute the kingmakers in Doma. Among these clans are the Ashama who dominate the post of Madakin Doma. Their greeting is Ashama and they are said to be originally Egbira from Okene who migrated to Doma with the Alago people. Though they have no claim to the throne they are still part and parcel of the Alago society and played the role of selecting kings in Doma. Similarly, some Gwandara people who migrated into Doma, are now part of Alago polity. They too belong to this clan of Ashama. Some of the Migili that migrated to Doma were absorbed into Alago polity and are identified by their greeting 'Ozagurusu' and their women 'Ogyegbulo'. They however do not form part of the kingmakers.

With respect to the Warizin and the Pakachin Doma both of them form part of the kingmakers in Doma are from the Ediya clan. These were descendants of Hausa hunters who migrated to the area, settled and married wives from Doma. They are identified with the greeting of 'Ayize' but have no claims to the throne. The position of Galadima is reserved to descendants of a migrant from Jos Plateau area most probably Berom who married the daughter of an Andoma of Doma. All of the kingmakers' clans have no claim to the throne of Andoma.

The position of Okuba as one of the kingmakers whose greeting is 'Owuno' is different. He was supposed to be the representative of the Aku Uka (the King of Wukari, the Kwararafa kingdom) in Doma. Formerly, all newly appointed kings or the Andoma like the Osana of Keana, must have to travel to Wukari for the traditional confirmation to their officers. But because of the risk involved in such journeys and the possibilities of treachery and usurpation by other ambitious contestants to the throne, this made the Aku Uka at the time to send his representative to stay in Doma and perform such function of confirming the newly appointed Andoma to the throne. Thus, the Okuba families are descendant of the Jukun of Wukari and the position of Okuba is reserved for them. Like the other kingmakers, they have no right to the throne of Andoma 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 clans were originally not Alago people of Doma. However, they came to have one affinity or the other with one clan or the other in Doma. They were descendants of some polities like Affo, Gbagyi, Migili, Gwandara, Bassa among others. Again, there are other clans which though are Alago, have neither claim to the Andoma stool nor are they members of the kingmakers. Most of these were originally from some other Alago villages around Doma some of which have disappeared. Many are still around but are at the verge disappearance.

Osikigu was one such village. The village itself has disappeared while the inhabitants of the village are now in Doma. They too have 'Adegbo' as their greeting but have neither claim to the traditional stool of Andoma nor any reasonable title in the town. Another one is Ataya. This is a village which today exists only in name. Most of the inhabitants have disappeared with majority of them found in Doma. They originally have affinity with the people of Alagye and their greetings 'Obande'. Though in Doma and form a strong clan, they have no stake to the Andoma stool.

The cases of Ankani, Alagye and Olonya are different. All these villages are still in existence with very strong traditions of their own. The Ankani is a village between Doma, Nasarawa Eggon and Lafia LGA. It is an Alago town but its inhabitants are in one way or the other related to the founder of Obi town. Despite Akanis' proximity to Doma the town is under Obi LGA.

It should be recalled that it is this same Ankani that provided the maternal ancestry to the Ayigogye ruling family in Doma.

Alagye on the other hand as said earlier on was settled by a younger brother of Andoma before Doma. It was from the Alagye people that the Andoma Ogoshi and his entourage sought for land to settle. Despite this Alagye still recognized the position of Andoma Ogoshi as that of the elder brother hence all Alagye chiefs to date are confirmed on appointment by the Andoma of Doma. The relationship between them has been very cordial ever since and both helped each other in times of needs.

Olonya (Amaku) is another Alago settlement, which today is in Nasarawa Local Government. It is a settlement to the southwest of Doma and close to the bank of the river Benue. This settlement was founded by a member of the Doma ruling family. It was his bid to ascend to the throne of Andoma that landed him in Olonya. Tradition has it that the stool of Andoma was vacant and opened to contestants. Being one of the contestants but a poor one he decided to embark on hunting expedition to enable him get what he would use in his contest. However, before he could return a new Andoma was appointed. When he was informed of this he asked which chieftaincy was he going to acquire hence the nomenclature of the settlement 'Olonya' meaning which will I now take? Though in Nasarawa Local Government, the people have never failed to appreciate their affinity with the people of Doma.

Finally, there was Ediya, a settlement established by two Hausa hunting brothers. They came without their wives but married from the area. One married from Inumakwe family in Doma while the other married from the Agbashi area. Both groups are found today in Doma and form two separate clans. The groups from the Inumakwe woman by virtue of their mother are among the kingmakers in Doma today. As indicated above they include the Pakachi and Wazirin Doma. The other clans however has no stake in the traditions of Doma hence are never given any title. From the forgoing it will be understood that the Alago of Doma today compose of peoples with different ethnic background. While some are Alago from the onset, others were from different ethnic groups from the immediate environment like the Afo, Migili, Bassa and as far as the Jos Plateau and Okene area in Kogi State.

### **Doma and her Neighbors in Precolonial Period**

The success of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sokoto Jihad heralded the intrusion of Islamized and politically ambitious groups into the Benue valley. The full-scale Jihadist attack upon Bomb sent many more Beriberi to Doma area where there was comparative peace. While Keffi and Nassarawa Chiefdoms must have started with large local population as their nuclei, large scale migration during the jihad contributed immensely to their increasing population and prosperity. Having gained firm control of Zaria and Bauchi, the flag bearers set out to extend their spheres of influence towards the south. In their campaign Zaria succeeded in bringing Doma into her political and commercial orbit while Keana was brought into the Bauchi emirate. It is recounted that the reign of Andoma Ari Onyamale Osabo witnessed the formation of two forces of alliance between Doma and Zaria on one hand and Keana and Bauchi in the other. The same tradition has it that the Doma allegiance to Zaria and Keana's to Bauchi did not mean political subjugation of the Alago towns. The relationship between the non-Muslims states and Islamic states was based on *amana*, mutual economic and political understanding. The Alago formed military alliances with the Muslim states to

form a bulwark against their neighbors. The amana relation between them and the Islamic stated way established on a voluntary basis.

The establishment of the Sokoto caliphate gave the Muslims in the areas of Nasarawa. Keff and Lafia peaceful relations were maintained between them during the first half of the nineteenth century. In the 1860s when religious enthusiasm had declined, Muslim traders raided non-Muslim area under the pretext of spreading the Jihad. According to Keana tradition, Osana Eladoga established friendly relations with Bayero, a slave raider from Sokoto their friendship was mainly due to their trading in slaves for a good number of years.

On the occasion of Eladoga's death Bayero was said to have visited his successor Ozegya to condole him and his subordinate. Bayero reached Keana without paying the expected courtesy call on the then Emir of Lafia, Umar. The Emir felt slighted and infuriated by this unusual friendship between a Muslim and a 'pagan' chief. The Osana of Keana felt that it was a calculated attempts by the Emir of Lafia to sever the cordial relationship between him and Bayero. This episode culminated a war in which Bayero allied with Keana and Doma against Lafia. Doma did join war in defense of his brother Keana and to check the excesses of Lafia. According to Doma traditions, Doma joined the war because Lafia refused to continue being subordinate to her. From this standpoint it may be assumed that Doma entered the war to help her junior brother.

During the war, the Barde (war chief) of Lafia was an Alago, and he furnished his people with relevant information about Lafia war strategy. The Barde who played the role of the 'Trojan' horse' made Lafia's defeat relatively easier. According to tradition, Lafia's complete annihilation by the combined forces of Bayero and Alago is still remembered in the history of Lafia Beriberi. The door of the main gateto Lafia was removed to Keana; the relic of the gate is still in existence. The two forces of Bayero and Alago also attacked Lafia who had attempted to conquer Assakio, an Alago village. Bayero's activities were repugnant to Islamic tenets and so he was recalled to Sokoto, the seat of the caliphate. His withdrawal from the area temporarily ended the hostilities between the Alago and Lafia Beriberi.

The war in effect showed two things: first there was a change in the relationship between the Doma and their immediate Muslim neighbors of Lafia State; and secondly there was a rise in strength of the two Alago chiefdoms of Doma and Keana, due mainly to the support of Bayero. The war was the main bone of contention between Doma and Lafia and eventually culminated in further wars between them with both sides capturing and selling each other's citizens into slavery when the opportunity presented itself. This state of enmity between them continued up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The expansionist policy of Keffi emirate in the 1870s brought her into war with Doma. The emir of Keffi who was a vassal state under Zaria had called upon Doma to pay tribute to Keffi. The Andoma rejected the emir's demand on the ground that they were both of equal status before Zaria and if there was going to be a tribute; it would be to Zaria and not Keffi. According to tradition all attempts by Keffi to extract tribute from Doma was futile, and that was the cause of the war between them. In the war Lafia was quick to ally itself with Keffi against Doma. Lafia's action was based on two main reasons. The first is that it did so to take vengeance of Doma for helping Keana and Bayero. Secondly Lafia assisted a Muslim State (Keffi) against a non-Muslim Chiefdom. The war lord of Keffi was the legendary Magaji Dan Yamusa, and

that of Doma was an equally enigmatic warrior Ogiri 'Kambun Doma' (defender of Doma). It is said that Doma warriors met Magaji's warriors at Oriri. The outcome of the battle was that the Muslims were defeated and pursued as far as to Gitata in Nasarawa.

The encroachment of Doma forces under Ogiri into Nasarawa territory culminated in a war in which the Muslims of Keffi presented a united front against Doma. The Keffi and Lafia warriors allied with their Muslim brothers Makama Dogo of Nasarawa to form united forces against Doma. Doma in turn solicited support from the Tiv and Migili in the area against the Muslim. The Muslim forces could not gain an upper hand over the non-Muslim opponents. In the ensuing military operations smaller Alago villages united with the Doma. The Alago villages of Osakpoto, Iza, Okyanbiri, Okpena, Owugedu and Okpogo were absorbed into Doma town.

Malam Dogo of Nasarawa (1870) continued to organize raiding incursion against Doma. He sacked Alagye settlement and even paralyzed the political and economic activities of the Doma chiefdom. Farmers stayed within the walls of Doma town in fear of being captured by Dogo's forces. This caused famine in the area at the time. Doma chiefdom was hard pressed and wanted to stop the siege. When Dogo's forces were nearby Migili village of Jinkwe, Andoma Ari sent Akwe Ena (a title holder) to negotiate peace with Dogo: Akwe Ena presented *Otongo'ganaza* (a silk gown soaked in shea butter) to Dogo. This was an offer of peace to the invaders. Dogo accepted the gift and gave the Andoma twelve slaves in return. The exchange of gifts between the Andoma and Dogo of Nasarawa ended all wars between them.

After Doma had recovered from the wars with Dogo, its war chiefs swore vengeance on the Hausa and all those who allied with them. The Doma warrior under the organized leadership of Ogiri, Adaloshu, Adakonya and Lambauna first turned their attention to Akun village which was the base of operations of Nasarawa forces and sacked it. According to tradition no Akun man will today welcome an Alago from Doma to his village because of the raid Ogiri and his able lieutenants' leashed on them. Next the warriors then turned eastward to raid Odugbeho, Okoklo and Odeni around the Benue.

Doma's resumption of raids Nasarawa and Keffi territories made the Muslim to form alliance against her. The three forces of Lafia, Keffi and Nasarawa attacked Doma, but the timely intervention of Zaria in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century stopped further aggression. Wars feature prominently in the history of Doma and its neighbors. But the intervention of Zaria and recognition of Doma as a vassal state turned the Muslim neighbors to begin to play increasing role in the politics of Doma and other villages around.

### Islam In Doma

It is certain that the coming of Islam to Doma predates the coming of Christianity to Doma. The coming of Islam to Doma is associated with the coming of Muslim traders into Doma, dating to as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The trade route passed through Nasarawa through Loko to Doma and ending up in Shendam. The first group of Muslim traders to visit Doma were the Nupe from Nupe land. They entirely concerned with their business and the practice of their religion with no efforts made to convert the indigenous population. Moreover, they never settled down on permanent basis at this point in time as to give attention to the conversion of the people. But the interaction of the Nupe traders with the people must have in one or the other

influenced their later acceptance of Islam as a religion. The actual, Islamization of the area started with the coming of Hausa Muslim traders and preachers from Katsina. These people actually came to Doma after the arrival of the Nupe Muslim traders.

The group was said to have been led by Abdulrahman who was said to have come along with scholars numbering eighty-four (84). Though they came as immigrant farmers the preaching of Islam and conversion of the people was also of utmost importance to them.

By the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Muslim strangers had been firmly established in Doma and had made a lot of effort in converting the people into Islam. As part of the efforts, they intermarried with the Alago people. In their effort to convert the people they contacted the traditional ruler, the Andoma of Doma, who though did not accept the religion, permitted them to preach the religion everywhere in the chieftdom. By this Islam had reached Doma and many people were converted long even before the advent of Jihad in the area? The coming of jihad only added spur to the spread of Islam in the area. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, migrants from Sokoto had started coming to Doma as well. This group was led by Bayero, the son of the ruler of Sokoto. He converted Ogiri a very famous war lord in Doma and his friend Pampani who were later known as Abubakar and Au respectively. The conversion of these prominent warlords added impetus to conversion of the people of Doma to Islam with this therefore Bayero continued with his missionary efforts and a lot of converts were got. After the departure of Bayero, (for he went back home) the preaching, teaching and conversion of people was continued under the scholars of Bayero and the Katsina Muslim migrants to the area.

## **Rice Production in Doma Post-Colonial Era from 1960-2019**

### **Introduction**

This chapter analyzes the manner of rice production in the post-colonial or independence period from 1960 – 2019 in Doma land. The chapter will analyze the labour organization for rice production in household, villages and town in Doma area. Land preparation, weed management, fertilizer application and pest control were all discussed. In addition, rice harvest, thrashing and winnowing are examined.

### **Rice Production in Doma Area 1960 – 2019**

After a series of rapid political development that took place in the year 1914, Nigeria becomes independence in the year 1960. During this period agriculture was one of the structural programme of the Nigeria economy. Henceforth, Nigeria began to witness socioeconomic transformations in the area of agriculture and economic development.

From independence period in 1960, Northern Regional Government encouraged the growth of food and cash crops production in the entire northern Nigeria area; which seems to favor rice production in Doma land. It is an attempt to develop Nigeria economy through agricultural sector, to boost food crop production in the country and export the surplus to earn foreign exchange policies formulated in the post- independence era to actualize more equitable growth of agricultural sector, the earlier surplus extraction policies were quickly translated into the pursuit of export led growth in this era. There was also an import substitution policy which saw industrialization as the best strategy to achieve economic growth. It is on this background that rice farmers in Doma land made concerted effort to search for more

available fertile marsh land for the cultivation of rice. Though, rich farmers in this area began to think on how to expand their farm land, which led them to go to interior land whereby in most cases rice planted in those areas might be lost to flood due to excess of water released from the Doma dam. During the period, rice farmers in Doma land reorganized and regrouped themselves into cooperative and communal organization to produce rice in order to get more money to pay their tax to support the consolidation of independence of Nigeria in terms of agricultural and economic development of Nigeria.

The maintenance of Dike and Irrigation Canal System was done by Communal Labour supplied by the farmers who used the system even in the pre-independence period. Though, it is understood that land owners also provided some help to the farmers to boost the production of rice in Doma area. During the Nigeria civil war year in 1967 -1970, rice and money were collected from the poor farmers in Doma land. The collection was aimed to assist the Federal Government of Nigeria in the execution of the war. The rice collected was used to feed the troops in the war front. The tax paid by the farmers rose during the war period. Energetic young men were recruited into the Nigeria army to fight side by side with the federal government troops. This however led to subsequent increase in the price of rice and fall in the production.

In spite of all constraints, rice out – put in Doma land rise significantly to the early 70's compared to the population growth, it fell short of requirements because of greater demand of rice in the outside market. Despite the importance and contribution of agriculture to the overall economic development of Nigeria, there were no clear cut rational agricultural policies from 1960 – 1966 in Nigeria by both the regional and federal governments' objectives.

In line with the agenda to improve the crop yield and ensure food security across the country, Olam farms have commissioned African's largest rice facility in Rukubi, Doma, Nasarawa State.

The farm which covers a total land mass of 6,000 hectares was officially opened for production in Rukubi village, Doma Local Government Area, at the start of the week. OLAM's out-growers scheme in Nasarawa State was established in 2012 among rice farmers in in three Local Government Area (LGA) of the state and represent one of three strategies adopted by the company to generate paddy supplies for its rice milling factory located in Rukubi, Doma, Nasarawa State. Other strategies are rice cultivation in a nucleus farm located near the factory and purchase of paddies in the open market.

In the scheme, OLAM's involvement in out-growers production include subsidies of up to 77% on the cost of improved seed variety, training (knowledge transfer) on various aspects of rice production and agricultural best practice, as well as extension service. In return, out-growers are expected to sell their output to OLAM at market determined prices. These terms are included in the written agreement in the scheme.

A group of influential farmers and village leaders known as Local Buying Agents (LBSs) emerged as intermediaries between OLAM and Out-growers. They offer loans to out-growers, collect seed for distribution to "second tier" out-growers based on non-written agreements and collect rice paddies at farm gates. By participating in both the OLAM scheme and the open paddy market, the LBAs grew into a powerful force that altered the structure of the market in which OLAM buys rice

paddies. As a result, OLAM pays hug premiums (more than 5%) relative to prices paid by local millers buying paddies from out-growers and OLAM is unable to acquire sufficient paddies for its mills, despite the heavy subsidies on seeds, free training an extension services provided by OLAM.

The mechanized rice factory located in Rukubu, Doma used parboiling technology and has capacity to process 6000 Metric Tons (MT) of paddies annually. Paddy supplies to the mill are obtained from three sources i) a nucleus rice farm that is about 10,000 hectares located near the factory, ii) purchases from the open market in the area and beyond and 3) an out-grower scheme network of about 650 smallholder farmers in rice farming communities in Nasarawa State. The company provides its preferred seed variety to its out-growers and expects out-growers to sell their entire harvest to the mill through a buy back clause in the out-grower agreement.

### **Labour Organization and Rice Production in Doma**

Majority of Doma people were Alago, Agatu, Eggon, Koro, Hausa, Igbo. The total population of people within the study area is about 275,320 people. About 29% of the people did not attend any formal education, 20% attended Quranic Schools, Basic School, preprimary and primary education, 23% secondary schooling, 22% while tertiary or higher schooling 6%. Alago people, constituted about 90% of the total population of the people that engaged in rice production, 10% constitute the remaining ethnic groups like Agatu, Eggon, Igbo, Hausa etc.,.

The average household is made up of 9 – 10 individuals. These individuals constituted the family labour force of the rice farms. Family labour were also implemented with the other forms of labour. In all surveyed village hired labour was available. Labour exchanged i.e., non-monetarized, in kind of exchange is relatively common in Doma land. Other source of labour is communal labour and this is done by cultivation.

Nearly 98% of rice producing households supplement their family labour with non-family labour. Most commonly use labour is hired labour “Oruma” or “Alki gaya” which accounted for about 91% and to a much lesser degree labour exchange is 23%. The clear emphasis on hired labour is likely related to the market orientation of the rice production at the same time in a surveyed rice farm plot, vice producing households reported to have household members working as hired labour elsewhere. Hiring out of labour can be seen as indicator of limited household resources. Thereby, reiterating that rice production is relatively small scale.

Rice producers in Doma area were small holders of land and the average land for cultivation is 5 – 6 hectares of land per year. There is a significant variation of land over the various surveyed villages. The household typically owned or have a strong right over the cropped land. The household as the head is regarded as the plot manager from most cropped land.

The capital base for the rice farmers in Doma area could be seen from the rice farm survey communities. For instance, about 83% of the households owns no significant agricultural equipment i.e., other than agricultural tools such as hoes, machete, cutlass, sickle, knife, axes etc. whereas, 14% owns application equipment such as backpack sprayers herbicide application were commonly used during the preparation of the farmland. Tractors is been hired for harrowing and plogging were relatively used by few households who have larger areas for the crop.



Mean of transportation and communication used in these surveyed communities were commonly motorcycle, accounted about 56%, bicycle 23% and motorcar 11% about 9% of the households did not own any of these transportation categories.

Credits potentiality that will help to alleviate capital constraints was not available for the farmers. Most credits were reportedly short terms, it is just one year and it involved small amounts of money, mainly for crop expense. Two – fifths of households reported being recipients of credits. Women traders were most providers of this credit. The providers of this credit were seen as wealthy people.

Rice production enterprise open up the need to credit to cover crop expenses, but also opens the possibility of providing credit in view of substantial cash revenues upon output of credit usually be in kind for instance a credit of N1,000 now will pay at least one bag of paddy after the harvest.

Although, credit uses is significant, it should be noted that the majority of rice producing household did not receive any credit at formal means i.e., bank loans or any other formal credit facilities. These most common reason for non – use of formal credits was that it was either not available locally or difficult to determine. The most common use credit was formal credit which comes from local savings group i.e., local money lenders or relations of rice producing households.

### **Land Preparation for Rice Farming in Doma**

Land preparation is the clearing and burning of ruminant's grasses on the piece of land before cultivation. It begins in February/March of every year. Land preparation generally comprises of a combination of land clearing, tillage or the use of herbicides. In Doma rice production areas, land clearing is always manual and primarily comprises clearing with cutlass and removal of organic debris, pre-plant burning of grasses were found in rice farms. Tillage is done manually with hoe, only few farmers used tractors and animal traction. Manual hoe tillage tends to be prevalent tillage practice across the rice ecology in Doma area.

It was also reported that many factious of the rice farmers used herbicides (gramoxone – paravat), at the time of land preparation. Planting is carried out after the first rain, which usually comes up by March ending or early April. The sowing process involves the use of cutlass or sharp head knife and painted stick to dig soil for up to 3cm – 4cm deep. Then between 6 and 8 seeds are sown per hole. Holes are dug close to each other and not more than 6cm apart.

### **Method of Weeding of Rice Production in Doma**

Weeding is a universal practice. Some farmer reported that they did not weed at all due to herbicide applied at the time of land preparation and in most cases rice fields visited gave depth water. Weeding tends to be some manual by the removal of weed grasses using hand or the uses of hoes. Herbicides application is used with backpack sprayers. Most frequently used herbicides are gramoxone 2 – 4D Ronster, roundup and touch down etc. farmers tend to apply two weeding operations across this rice ecology. Weeding is necessary to ensure that rice plant is not stifled or deprived of necessary nutrient during the growing periods. An oral interview conducted from the study area through Omadefu Oname has it that weeding may be more than three times depending on the type of soil and amount of rainfall for that

particular year weed respond respectively to having rainfall. This dictates the number of times weeding is carried out.

Application of soil enriching fertilizer is necessary to increase yield for rice plant. It was reported that fertilization increase yield in rice production and that low yielding may be as a result of lack of inadequate use of fertilizer.

### **Application of Fertilizer and Pest Control on Rice Production in Doma**

Fertilizer application to rice is relatively widespread in the rice fields visited. Fertilizer is being used universally in all the rice fields while supply of fertilizer to those communities by the government was relatively low. Only few farmers in the area have access to fertilizer application to their rice farms due to lack of availability of it. In fact, it's only those farmers who have the means of purchasing the fertilizers that could apply it to their farms. The price of fertilizer is very high which low-income farmers could not afford to purchase. Some could not get it due to the scarcity.

However, fertilizer is being applied manually, typically in a single dose and by broadcasting. Most frequently used fertilizers are NPIC which is amounted to 40% of farmland surveyed, Urea 24% with 5% of an average of 150kg per hectare for those that applied NPIC, 69kg per hectare for Urea and 10kg per hectare for unspecified fertilizer type. In controlling pest in rice farm the use of cassette/video tapes. The manual bird scaring involved the use of children and young women in the scaring of birds in the rice farms. Birds cause more damage to the flowering paddy especially at early stage of flowering.

Control of other pest and diseases was reportedly rare, in Doma, pest control is also done by setting local types and fencing fields with physical barricades commonly made of palm fronds.

### **Rice Harvest, Thrashing and Winnowing in Doma**

The harvest and post-harvest operation are manual. Harvesting is commonly done by sickles or knife. The harvest is subsequently thrashed and winnowed manually typically in the field or at the compound.

Rice is ready for harvest when the grains are hard and are turning yellow (about thirty or forty days after flowering). The stems of the rice grains are cut with sickle or knife. It is cut about ten to fifteen centimeters above the ground. In the large farms "Oruma" a collective work is organized for a fast harvest. The harvested rice crop is tied and laid in an upright position for drying before thrashing; they are normally cut in bundles.

It is thrashed on hard surfaces by beating the grains out from the ears. This work is normally done by Alago men through invitation. In the pre-colonial and colonial period, the hard surfaces were cleaned and the thrashings done with heavy sticks, but in recent time people have resorted to the use of steel drum.

Winnowing has been the work of women in Alago land. It is done to separate the chaff and empty ears from the well filled material grains. Winnowing of the harvested rice is carried out by the wives and other female relative of the farmer after which some portion will be allocated to them as a reward of hardworking. The freshly harvested paddy is out to dry for easy storage. Drying is sometime done on concrete floors or on mats and this takes place for a few days so as to reduce breakage during milling.

All the varieties of rice production in Alago land are parboiled. Parboiling involves soaking the paddy in a hot water at specified term specified that vary with the varieties. The paddy is later subjected to steaming for a short time, five to ten minutes until the husks open.

The parboiled rice is normally stored in dry clean sacks until the demand for it is required or when the price in the market is reasonable for commercial disposers. Parboiled rice had better storage and cooking qualities. This explains, why it is richer in food value, devoid of unpleasant odours and breaks less during boiling. The parboiling is done mostly by the women in earthen pots or drums depending on the quantity. Empty drums contain more paddy rice to be parboiled than the earthen pots.

### Method of Rice Processing in Doma

It is observed that three methods of rice processing have been identified. These are the traditional or hand pounding method, the small mill processing and the large mill processing enterprise method. The hand pounding traditional method of processing rice paddy is still used by some villagers across Doma. This system involves soaking of the paddy for about 24 hours, after the paddy is boiled in hot water for about 20 minutes; the boiled paddy is then spread in the sun to dry. After drying, the paddy is pounded in a mortar to separate husks from the inner grain. The last stage of this process is winnowing that you blow it from the wind to separate the grains from the husks. A major feature of the traditional system is that it is very slow and labour intensive. Furthermore, the application of this system is that the grains are broken into smaller pieces and it hardly separate stone with the grain. This method is gradually dying away with the availability of milling machine.

The rice mill are the most predominant of the three rice processing methods, presidential initiative 2002, estimates indicates that there are about 3500 small/medium scale rice mills scattered all over Nigeria but most are concentrated in Bida (Niger State), Lafia (Nasarawa State) Abakaliki (Ebonyi State), about 85% of Nigeria rice is processed through the small rice mills. This method of processing involves the use of mechanized milling units often operating the old wind disc technology with a maximum and minimum capacity of 600 and 200 – 300 ton per day respectively. The use of the rubber roller technology a modernized technology is not common among the rice millers. At the moment, most small rice mills operate below their installed capacity in Nigeria due to the unavailability of sufficient paddy for processing.

The capacity utilization of small mills in the other parts of the country was less than 40% in 2001. Two system of milling are usually practiced, the custom milling where the farmers or traders pay a fee per unit quantity of rice and bulk processing by mill owners who also source the rice from producers, process and marketing.

In Nigeria few large mills exist and government or quasi-government parastatals own most of these mills. The Badeggi Uzo – Uwani and the Agbede rice mills are typical examples of large mills in Nigeria. These mills continue milling with rice polishing and in most cases they possess separate parboiling equipment. Large mills are not popular with the Nigeria entrepreneur. It is important to note that in recent years that the existing large mills have broken down as a result of lack of spare parts and the general poor maintenance culture of government assets.

The large mills required substantial amount of capital investment to rehabilitate them. It may be necessary to encourage private sector acquisition and managements of such large rice mill in Nigeria. However, investors are put off by concerns of insecurity, policy inconsistency and infrastructural deficiencies. But with an estimated two to three million young Nigeria badly need jobs creating investment. The competitiveness of domestic rice, in the international market, rice is graded by quality, usually in the percentage of broken rice, sortexed or non- sortexed, long grains or short grains. For instance, the better in the quality of grains, the higher the price in the international markets, quality determines prices.

### Marketing of Rice Product

Rice business is a lucrative business today in the eye of rice farmers and traders. In Doma about 80% of paddy rice are sold on weekly basis, mostly on market days, it mostly on weekly basis because rice farmers goes to farm a do their work against every market days which occurred five days interval. Paddy rice is also stored for a period of time before finally sold to the consumers at a period of need.

Rice farmers, traders and consumer perform the function of distribution at this commodity to the society. Different varieties of paddy rice were brought to the market for sales, well processed rice by the millers attracts market price, and the type of paddy they process bear the risks of selling and responses in the market. A bag of paddy rice is sold between 12,000 to 12,800 respectively, while, milled rice are sold or 550 to 600 naira per measure (mudu). The price varies base on the cleanness, whitening and smoothness of the rice. The marketing of rice in Doma goes in circulation, the farmers sold to the traders, the traders' sales to the millers, the miller sales to the final consumer. The traders or buyers are mostly people from outside the environment or state through the indigenous agent most of these people who are involved in this trade are either Igbo people, the Hausa or the Yoruba. The period of this rice transaction is from December to March when harvests are mostly done.

Rice buyers brought rice directly from the farmers but this resulted to the formation of rice famers association who in turn stop direct selling of rice to the buyer. A middle man who must be an indigene of Doma has to buy rice form the farmers and resale to the marketers; furthermore, the union controls the price of the commodity.

### Rice Storage

Almost all rice producing household (99%) store rice in some form and for various purposes. Most common purpose for storage was seed for the subsequent season as farmers nearly universally (98%) reported retaining seed from the previous harvest. Second most concern is storage for consumption i.e., the storage of the part o the produce retained for subsequent consumption by the household. About three – quarters of the rice producing households reportedly stored rice for sale purposes.

The duration of storage varies and depends on the storage purpose. Rice storage for seed and consumption last approximately seven (7) months on average. For seed this typically corresponds with the start of the next production cycle. Rice storage for sale last approximately 5 months on average.



The principal means of storage is in bags irrespective of storage purpose e.g., storage in bags is reported for 76% of storage for sale 84% of storage for consumption, 88% of storage for seed.

Storage is principally on the compound in the household home. The purpose of storage for seed and consumption is self – explanatory. Storage for sale can have different rationales for instance, of season sales can fetch substantially higher prices. Also stored rice can serve as a potential revalue of cash – whereby rice is sold when need arise. Despite the potentials benefits of storage rice producing household typically sell a significant share if not most of their produce serve after harvest time so as to liquidate debts and replenish cash reserves. Storage for sale thereby implies that rice producers do not market all of the produce they intend to market at harvest time and store a share for late sales.

### **Impact of Rice Production on the People of Doma**

Rice production has become an important food item in Nigeria and other West African countries. Rice food in Doma is called “Onaki ikpo ki kyashi” the food that has much value, its grain is called; “Ikpoki Kyashi”. Before the 1970’s rice was mainly consumed by city dwellers and the middle- and higher-income groups. Recently, rice becomes the staple food to almost all the social classes in Nigeria. Rice is still the reach of commoners except during festivals.

Rice production in Doma serves as a source of employment both male and women are fully engaged in the production. At least rice producing household produce 4.6 metric ton of paddies per year from annual crop of 3.3 hectares, this average however marked significant difference amongst the various rice field visited. Women played some significant role in the production and availability of rice in Doma area, these roles range from planting of seeds, thrashing and marketing of the product. Women assist their men folk with capital during planting season as loans. In this regard, successful women traders give out loans in terms of money with which the men folk procure inputs such as seeding, herbicides and fertilizers and also hired farm machinery such as; tractors. The loans were usually interest free but on the agreement that the far farmers return to the lenders farm products equivalent to the amount of loan given.

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