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## The Railway Factor in the Economic Development of Minna Town, 1908-1960

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### Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to investigate the railway factor in the economic development of Minna town in the period 1908 – 1960. The paper explore the pre-colonial economic activities among the indigenous people of Minna town prior to the construction of the iron road in the area. The coming of the railway into Minna, the use of unpaid labour in its construction in the study area are also explained. The various polices and method employed by the British railway builders in the promotion of economic development are examined. The paper illuminates the impact of the economic development on the people of Minna town as a result of the presence of the iron road in the area. In essence, the analysis in this paper will enable us to establish whether the railway factor which occasioned the economic development is worthy legacies or rather economic expediency at the expense of the colonized people in the British Minna.

**Keywords:** Railway, Economic Development, Minna Town

### Introduction

The railway is a carrier of bulky goods and passengers. As a reliable means of communication and transportation railway has made mass movement of people and goods on distant places in Nigeria easier. The arrival of railway in Minna town in 1908 marked a turning point not only in the political and social development of Minna town but also economic development as well. Minna economy, prior to the coming of railway in the region was based on subsistence agriculture characterized by communal mode of land and labour by all social groups was distorted and disarticulated. This emerged as a result of the imposition of the new economic policies put in place by British railway builders in the area. This new economic regime began operation in 1908 and by 1960 when the colonial rule in Nigeria came to an end has subordinated the pre-colonial Minna economic formation and transformed it from rural economy to export oriented economy. This development brought not only economic growth but also economic development in Minna town which this paper intends to examine.

### The Pre-Colonial Economic Activities in Minna Town

Minna is located in the central part of modern Nigeria. The foundation of the settlement was laid under the for ceful influence of Gbagyi people (Adamu Kuta 2010:15). In the pre-colonial period, Minna settlement was situated at Paidna *Knuknu* (hills) Despite this, its inhabitants i.e. the Shako Gbagyi (the indigenous Gbagyi) were able to engage in some economic activities like *Fanubye*- farming, *Fadadabye*-hunting, *A'ebwatutubye*-craftsand *A'yakpaikpabye*-Animal husbandry which they used to satisfy their needs.

### Fanubye-Farming

The inception of sedentary life among the Gbagyi of Minna made *Fanubye*-farming to become the major occupation of the people in the pre-colonial Minna town. The plentiful of land around this hilly area for farming and growing of variety of crops, encouraged the Gbagyi in the period under examination to establish two different kinds of farms namely *Fako*-family and *Nugba*- individual farms. While *Fako*-family farm is establish to cater for the entire needs of the family as well as a source of revenue and other family needs, the *Nugba* individual farm on the other hand is purely the personal property of the individual, (Isah 1998:15).

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In the farming practices, the Gbagyi in the pre-colonial period used farm implements like *A'zugo*-hoe, *Gada*-cutlass, *Gbanji*-axe, and *Nyize*-sickle. While he used both big and small size *A'zugo*-hoes like *dagba*, *dugba*, and *Kerefor* for weeding the heaps and ridge making before planting of virtually of all crops, he also used *Nyize*-sickle, *Gbanji* and *Gada*-cutlass for harvesting of rice, felling of trees and clearing thick bush of land marked for farming. (Garba 2006:18). These farm implements are not only used by the people in the cultivation of food crops like *Awyi*-guinea corn, *Kanba*-maize, *Pwawyi*-millet, *Jhaba*-pepper, *Ashi*-melon etc. but also in the cultivation staple crops particularly different species of *Asyi*-yam like *Shindo*, *Asuba*, *Zaghi*, *Kpako*, *Mana*, *Angbaje*, *Taribe*, *Arima* etc. For the storage of the crops harvested, the Gbagyi aborigines stored *Asyi*-yam in *Nubu*- barn and *Awyi*-guinea corn, *Kpawyi*-millet, *Kanba*-maize and *Shewyi*- rice in *A'dobwu* huts. Finally, for the preservation of the grains like *Awyi*-guinea corn, *Kpawyi*-millet, *Kanba*-maize, *Ashi*-melon etc. the Gbagyi in this period sprinkled *Tunknumu*-ashes and keep the grains in *A'dobwu*-huts which was seven to eight feet high (Galadima, 2000:51). In some occasion a layer of sticks and mud on top was made and last for good four to five years, thus giving an idea of the existence of good storage system among the Gbagyi in the pre-colonial Minna town.

In the area of supply of labour in the farming work, the Gbagyi in the pre-colonial period, employed various forms of labour like *Fadoby*-cooperative farming, *Yeifa*-a sort of labour a young men gives to girls *Zamaingo*-parents when he is seeking her hand in marriage, *Faapa*-communal labour where one invites his friends to assist him work in his uncles farm any and *Gbata*-Pawship, a system where a debtor works forth creditor until the loan was paid (Faruk 1982:52). Furthermore, farming in this period among these people was limited to male folk alone, women by tradition in this settlement do not engaged in tilling the soil but they were highly utilized during the harvest period, where they carry the harvested crops to home for storage and sale. Besides this they were also used in the harvest of *Jhagba*-pepper, *Kpami*-Okro and thrashing of grains (Mohammed 2014:206). Nevertheless, the importance of farming as an economic activity to Gbagyi in the pre-colonial period cannot be under-valued, it provides the people in the region with food stuffs, employment opportunities and above all enabled them to accumulate wealth. Apart from *Fanubye*-farming, the Gbagyi in the pre-colonial period also engaged in *Fadadabye*- hunting.

### **Fadadabye- Hunting**

Hunting was another early economic activity among the Gbagyi including those of the ancient Minna town. Prior to the arrival of railway the Gbagyi in Minna town, hunted animals, for meat and other needs. Since hunting entails movements, the Gbagyi of Minna town moved from one place to another at this *PaidnaKnuknu*(hills) and its surrounding areas in search of game who were also moving about in search of food and water. Hunting in the early period among the Gbagyi in Minna town was largely an individual practice and was done mainly for food. But with the passage of time hunting among the people in this area turned out to be more organized. This development brought about the rise of professional and communal hunting (Musa 2003:35). The professional hunting to be

noted was mainly for commercial purpose. The communal hunting on the other hand was organized into various communal hunting. In this type of hunting, young men and their leader, would assembled near an area marked out for hunting. They would set the surrounding of Minna on fire. The game would move into the area marked and saved from burning. When *A'fadadai*-hunters were satisfied (Abubakar and Ahmad 1986:12) that a large numbers of game had moved into the unburnt area, they will follow and kill as many as they could. Certain parts of the body of the animal killed in the game which included *A'gba*-leg, *bwapa*-shoulder and *A'pa*-skin were given to *Otsu* Minna (Chief of Minna) who shared them with the *A'pidagai* (house head), *A'pudari* (ward heads) and his *A'sachi* (council elders) on this *PaidnaKnuknu* (hills) (Malam Maku Shaba 3/6/2006). During the hunting expeditions the Gbagyi in this period used various tools, ranging from wooden stones, sharp sticks, club microliths, stone spear, heads stone axe, arrow heads, spears, machetes and knives in their hunting activities. In nutshell, the importance of *Fadadabye* (hunting) as an economic activity to Gbagyi in the pre- colonial Minna town cannot be underestimated, apart from provision of meat protein as food and animal skin as cloth for use by the people of Minna town, *Fadadai*-hunters in this period served as guard and military men for protecting and defending the settlement from external aggression and attack of dangerous animals including their neighbours and enemies (Shekwo, 1986:47). Besides *Fadadabye* (hunting) the Gbagyi aborigines of Minna town also engaged in *A'ebwatutu* (Crafts).

### **A'ebwatutu- Crafts**

*Ebwatutu* (Craft) started early among the Gbagyi of Minna town. The availability of raw material for their crafts in the environment the Gbagyi of Minna enabled him to produce various crafts like wooden tools, stone tools and iron tools. In this period the Gbagyi of Minna produced wooden hunting weapons like sharp sticks, and clubs were produced to facilitate sustenance and with passage of time the craft production became greatly expanded. This arose as a result of the numerous need of the people which emerged with *Fanubye*-farming *Jhejheba*- shelter and *ejhe*- clothing (Mohammed, op. cit., p. 207). The need for *Jhejheba*-Shelter in Minna town in the pre-colonial period made the Gbagyi to build *A'Gache*-huts and thatched the huts with *A'sa*-grass. With the passage of time, the building as *ebwatutu*-craft developed but was not enough for *ba'agajheny*-dwelling among the people in this settlement. This development necessitated the need for *Jheshana*-mats for sleeping, *Kanpwe*-basket for putting things, *Shaku*-pot for cooking and storing of water, *Ynaduya*-bowls, (Uwaya, 1981:10). *A'kori*-spoons and ladles for eating and drinking and *Ghini*-mortar and *abye*-pestles for pounding. There were also *aynalui*- weavers (ibid). These weavers produced *A'jheshana*-mats, *A'kanpwe*-baskets and others. In the production of the above, the Gbagyi of Minna town used raw materials like *A'zhifinchere*-palm tree fronds and some species of *A'sa*-grass. Besides the above there were *A'shakumai*-porters. The production of this craft were also carried out with women. (Galadima, op. cit., p. 56).

The availability of clay suitable for pot making made the Gbagyi women in Minna town in the said period to make a variety of *A'shaku*-pots which were used for putting water and cooking etc. There were also *A'egba*-wood carvers.

These carvers produced *Ghini* and *A'bwe*-pestle using different species of wood. The need for *A'jhe*-clothing among the Gbagyi including those of Minna town made the people to produce *A'ejhe*-cloths (Mohammed, op. cit., p. 207). Nevertheless, the importance of *A'ebwatutu*-crafts to the people in the pre-colonial Minna town cannot be undervalued apart from providing the people in the area with their needs it also enabled them to be self-reliant and independent. In addition as many young and adults of Minna town were engaged in farm, the *A'ebwatutu*-crafts such as *a'jheshana* (mats) and *A'Kanpwe*-baskets making are left with *Anyigbango*-elders which they used to sustain their life. Beside the *A'ebwatutu*-crafts the people i.e. Gbagyi in this settlement also engaged in *A'ynakpaikpabye*-animal husbandry,

#### **A'ynakpaikpabye-Animal Husbandry**

Animal husbandry was another economic activities of the pre-colonial people of Minna town. Like *fanu*-farming, *fadadabye*-hunting, and *ebwatutu*-craft, *Ynakpaikpabye*-animal husbandry was common among the pre-colonial people of Minna. The Gbagyi in this region like other Nigeria people began domestication of *Aynakpai*-animals as soon after they started the sedentary life. In rearing of *A'ynakpai*-animals the Gbagyi animal rearers in this period move from one place to another in search of pasture and water (Malam Barde Shigbe 10/11/2006). It was the scarcity of pasture for animals that kept the Gbagyi animal rearers on the move in the period under examination. The animals that were domesticated by the Gbagyi at Paidna *Knuknu* (hills) of the Minna in this period included, *Kninu*-sheep, *Bukhu*-goat, *Phise*-hen, *Gbangbago*-duck, *A'mu*-dog, *lukuku*-pigeon, *lugba*-guinea fowl etc (*Ibid*). The above animals and birds were not only useful but served the Gbagyi in the areas in various aspects on Paidna *Knuknu* (hills). For instance *A'mu*-dog was used by the people for security purpose and during their hunting expeditions. The importance of *Yapaikpabye*-animal husbandry to the people of Minna town cannot be undervalued, it enriched the diet of the people as well as their economic wellbeing. In essence, this is the state of affairs as regards to the economic activities among people Minna town prior to the advent of the railway in the area in 1908.

#### **The Coming of the railway in Minna Town**

By 1908 the construction work of the Northern Nigeria railway from Baro to Kano had reached Minna from Baro. Since the British colonialist did not only limits its administration solely on Minna town but was also extended into Gbagyi villages such as Bosso and Paiko to the South West and Kuta village to the North west therefore in the construction work of the rail-lines in areas via Minna and within Minna town itself the labourers mobilized for this gigantic work were sourced from the above named villages. (NAK Acc. No. 405/1908). It was the *Otsus* (Chiefs) of the villages that were compelled to provide men for the construction work. When the construction work of the Baro-Kano rail-ways reached any of the above mentioned villages, via Minna town the *Otsu* (Chief) of that particular village would be made to provide not only labourers but food crops for the up keep of the labourers. Therefore, when the construction work of the rail-lines from Baro to Minna reached Paiko *Kni*-land/area via Minna town, it was the Gbagyi of Paiko *Kni*-land/area

under their able *Otsu* (Chief) Ibrahim Kwago that took over the construction work of the rail-line from Nupe of Lafiya village in Nupe Kingdom down to *Gbagy* (Chanchaga) a sub village in Bosso *Kni*-land/area. From this area the Gbagyi in that area under their able *Otsu* (Chief) Ali Gwodeyinze did the construction of the rail-lines from *Gbagy* (Chanchaga) sub-village down to Minna town. (Alhaji Abdul Azeez Dauda, 10/06/2006).

Perhaps when the construction work of Baro to Kano railways, finally reached Minna town in 1908 the British colonialist in the region established construction camps at Keteren Gwari for Gwari labourers and Makera for Nupe and other migrants railway labourers like Kanuri, Hausa, Igala, Kukuru etc. who follow the construction work of rail-lines from Baro to Minna town. It was these labourers who were coerced to provide services by political means through conspiracy between the Europeans officials and indigenous *Otsu* (Chiefs) or headmen in the construction of rail lines in Minna town (Malam Dangbe Shehu, 12/10/2006). These labourers were made to work from dawn to dusk under an unimaginable and harsh conditions. For instance, they work throughout the day and were only allowed two and half hours stops for food and some were beaten by headmen. In addition, '*We labourers were made to unload the iron rails and sleepers for eight hours condition that were not only too long but also unfavourable for men who were ill-feed, ill-clad and unused to strenuous and conditions exertion*' (Malam Baje Shaza, 10/05/2006). Beside the above harsh and unjust treatment coupled with massive extortion and exploitation of various sorts of the labourers, they were paid paltry 8/6d others received even lesser wages. The consequences of the above development was the absence of any form of labour consciousness among the labourers in the construction work (Alhaji Idris Malik, 12/06/2006). However, the cooperation of the *Ostus* (Chiefs) of Bosso, Paiko, Kuta and Minna town led to the successful completion of the rail-lines construction in Minna town.

In 1911, the construction work of the rail-lines within Minna town was completed the railway station was commission on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1911 with Captain Taylor as its first station manager while Alhaji Sule Katcha was appointed as the first indigenous deputy station manager (Alhaji Sule Katcha 12/06/2006). In 1915, another express line from Lagos through Jebba was connected to a junction in Minna town. In essence, the absence of the road network and sea port in Minna which would have opened the settlement of Minna for modern socio-economic intercourse, ease the difficulty of the natives in disposing their exportable produce and to enabled them have money to buy imported goods explains the articulation aspects of colonial infrastructure that fits the factors leading to the railway going to Minna town in 1908 (Malam Kalamu Adamu, 10/06/2006).

#### **The Objectives of Railway Construction in Minna Town**

Though, the objectives of the extension of rail-lines to Minna town by the British colonialists to this region in 1908 has been viewed variously, the most acceptable view however, in this regard was to make Minna a collection centre and to enable the British colonialist have easy access to agricultural raw materials from Northern Nigeria (Alhaji Abdul-Azeez Daudu, 10/06/2006). This view may be true because following the extension of the Lagos-Jebba express rail-

lines which passed through Zungeru and Gidan Mato village to a junction in Minna town in 1915 the study area became a major collection centre of agricultural products such as sheanuts, peanuts, cotton, groundnut, yam etc. which were shipped by rail to Lagos via Europe. In a nutshell, the presence of railway in Minna to be noted opened the settlement for modern socio-economic activities which paved the way for economic development of Minna town in the period, 1908-1960.

### **The Railway Factor in the Economic Development of Minna Town**

A reliable means of communication for Techno-industrial economic revolution. The arrival of railway in Minna town in 1908 brought changes in the economic life of Minna town. One of the significant changes which accompanied the construction of railway in Minna town was the promotion of trade and commerce in the study area. After the occupation of Minna town in 1908, the British colonialist in the region devised various methods to stimulate trade and commerce. One of such methods was the establishment of market in Minna town (Bahago 1966:20). As there was no market for the exchange of good and services in Minna town prior to the arrival of railways in the study area in 1908 the idea of market however, emerged as the railway labourers, colonial employees and native Gbagyi began to meet at appointed place to exchange goods and services. The small size of this place, made the British colonialist in Minna town to establish a new meeting point for the exchange of goods and services in 1910 (Fari 1999:25). At a place called *Kasuwari Dare* (Night market) which was the heart of the town, thus giving birth to the first established market in Minna town.

With the passage of time following the opening of Baro-Kano railways (B-K-R) in 1912 and the extension of Lagos-Jebba railway lines to a junction in Minna town in 1915, the study area witnessed the arrival of Yoruba Kolanut traders from the Southern part of modern Nigeria. With the number of traders patronizing this market increase, made the market small for the exchange of goods and services. This development forced the British colonialist in Minna town to relocate the market to a new site in 1920 (Idris 2016:82). The completion of the reconstruction and expansion of this market in 1953 made the market the foremost centre of commerce and was regarded as second largest market in Niger province attracting traders, particularly, the Igbo traders from the eastern part of modern Nigeria who brought palm oil to the market (Mr. Ike Okeke, 12/6/2016). This market before the end of the colonial rule in 1960 was attended by traders both men and women from all over modern Nigeria. Though, the establishment of this market in 1910 up till the end of the colonial rule in 1960 led to the drift of young men and women into Minna town particularly from the neighbouring villages which adjoined the study area which affected the agricultural practices in the affected villages, the presence of the market in Minna town from 1910-1960 brought increase in commerce and trade, arose business enthusiasm particularly among the native Gbagyi who became wholesalers, retailers, produce buyers, stimulate trade in consumer and non-consumer goods and above all made Minna town a trading centre not only in Northern Nigeria but Nigeria as a whole (Lawal 20 1986:11). This contributed significantly in bringing economic development to Minna town.

Beside market, the British colonialist in Minna town also adopted another method to promote trade and commerce which contributed greatly in bringing economic development to Minna town. This method was the introduction of the British currency in Minna town. By 1913 and 1916, the British coins and paper currency had entered Minna town these came to replace the former currency *Woka* (Cowrie shell) (Garba, op. cit., p20). Through taxation, campaigns, wage labour, and activities of the British expatriate firms that this British legal tender was able to reach every nook and crannies of the British colonial Minna town. Though, the British only introduced the new currency to enable them collect tax in the region in a more convenient and transportable form, the presence of the British new currency in Minna town in this period enabled the people in the region to buy both European consumer and non-consumer goods such as *Kafito-umbrella*, *eje-wine*, *Kara-cake*, *yabwobwo-sweet* respectively. Besides, in 1928 when the British expatriate firms i.e UAC, GBO and MDS in Minna town discontinued the use of the old currency *Woka* (cowrie Shell) the study area witnessed the arrival of traders not only from Niger province but also Northern Nigeria as a whole. This boosted business activities and growth of commerce, which paved the way for economic development of Minna town. (this is Minna, 1999:3).

In the wake of coins and currency, was the establishment of Banks such as British West Africa and Barclay British Bank in the study area in 1918 and 1924 respectively, aimed at stimulating the trade and commerce in the region. Though these British banks promoted their legitimate trade and commerce and its operation only favoured British businessmen at the expense of Minna town entrepreneur's. These banks on the other hand and through the credit facilities granted to individuals, the study area witnessed the filtration of traders, retailers and wholesalers with these capitals some people were able to expand their businesses which brought economic development to Minna town.

As regards agriculture, since the British colonial control of Northern Nigeria Minna town inclusive was to stimulate the production of raw material needed by the British to service their home industries from the onset when the basic infrastructure of the indirect rule system in Minna town was established the British colonialist in the region embarked on policies intended to stimulate the production of raw materials which were fundamental to the survival of the British textile which constituted more than one third of British manufactured export (Oyemakinde 1966:65). After the completion of rail-lines in 1911 in Minna town the British colonialist in the study area embarked on the construction of roads for lateral links particularly to the more remote villages of the Southwest and Northwest of Minna town. Similarly, motor roads linking the study area to Bida, Zungeru, and Abuja were constructed, (Min. Prof. Acc. No 1949/1953). To encourage the production of agricultural products particularly cash crops, i.e. cotton and groundnut the British colonialists in Minna town adopted various methods which includes making cash available to the peasantry, persuasion in which items like *Kafito- Umbrella*, *Bare-mirror*, *Zabuburiynapypye-European wears*, dashes and *Awo-cash* were offered to *A'Otsu-Chiefs*, *Azhidagai* (ward head) and *A'pidagai* (house heads). The British colonialist also resorted to threat and force in which peasants in Minna and its

surrounding environs were compulsorily made to cultivate cash crops (Bello 1989:30). This was witnessed in 1924 when Resident of Niger province directed the *Otsu* (Chief) of Minna Malam Abubakar Zamai to direct the male adults in his domain to clear at least one acre of land for the cultivation of cotton and groundnut this directive led to the cultivation of farmlands at Jedna, Tawali and Gurmana villages that adjoined Minna town (Malam Kalamu Adamu, 10/06/2006).

Similarly in 1953 in their bid to encourage the production of cash crops particularly cotton, the British colonialist in Minna town through Gwari Native Authority brought 285 bags containing cotton seeds, which were distributed among the peasant farmers not only in Minna town but also its surrounding villages (Mallam Nuhu Galadima, 10/05/2006). It was as a result of the prosperity and boom which was recorded in the cotton and groundnut production in the following year that led to the establishment of marketing Board in the area in 1954. This Board through its collection and dispatch of the key export crops like cotton and groundnut and its other functions boosted trade in cash crops products and it enabled some people in the area to become middle men which contributed greatly in bringing economic development to Minna town.

Besides the cash crops production, the British colonialist also established industries in Minna town which many believed have contributed greatly to the economic development of the study area. since the British colonialist economic policies were aimed at serving economic interest of the Britain and not that of Nigeria including Minna town, the British colonialist in the study area favoured extractive companies to take away Nigerians including Minna town products to Britain. With this philosophy in mind, the British colonialist established in Minna town gold mining industry. In 1920 a large quality of gold was discovered at *Gbago* (Chanchaga) area of the South West of Minna town (Idris, op. cit., p. 66). For mining of gold at the site which was discovered in Minna town, Gbagyi people were mobilized to provide cheap labour. After this rules and regulations guiding mining activities were outlined and social amenities like water, and roads were provided for the mining site at *Gbago* (Chanchaga). Despite the difficulty involved in gold mining, prosperity were recovered. Though information concerning production output is almost non-existent, however, according to one oral source between 1950-1960 the production of gold for export in Minna town was 720, 000 (Alhaji Abdulmalik Bello, 10/12/2006 no. 1049). Though mining companies like UAC and GBO in Minna town were not forced to reinvest their profit and dividends earned from mining, for the development of Minna town and its failure introduced the people to new economic activity on the other hand the mining industry provided the people in the region with employment opportunities which gave them necessary capital to meet their daily needs besides the money realized by the people through gold mining activities enable some to establish business which contributed to the economic development of Minna town.

Similarly, the British colonialist also established the Pig production industry in Minna town in 1941. For the takeoff of this industry large acre of land were cleared much closed to the railway Station in Minna town. To boost the industry, Hascoigne Gush Dent Ltd., arrived Minna town and concluded to rear 3,200 (NAK, File No.

104/1941), heads a year. The select Pig Ltd., Company of Saffork Ltd., was to provide hybrid stock of 200 sows. These companies and colonial authorities in Minna town embarked on intensive campaigns not only in Minna town but also in villages that bounded the study area, such as Bosso, Maikunkele, Paiko, Kaffin-Koro, Kuta etc. aimed at enlightening the people in the region, the importance of pig breeding. During the campaigns the British colonialist would give every member of a family or household a gilt, or a young sow or boar for breeding. The above method or policy with the passage of time made the Pig breeding among the people in Minna town and its neighboring villages popular (Alhaji Audu). As a result of this, prosperity were recorded in the production of Pigs in large scale in Minna town. Though the actual production figure and population of Pigs ready for export to Southern Nigeria via Britain was non-existent however, it is said that between 1953-1957 the total number of Pigs in Minna railway station ready for shipment to Southern Nigeria via Britain was 65, 000. While between 1958-1960 the number of Pigs in Minna railway ready for shipment to Southern Nigeria enroute to Britain was given to be 176, 231 pigs (Idris, op. cit., p. 66). This development led to the arrival of Pig buyers and traders from Southern Nigeria into Minna town. Their arrival led to the frequent evacuation of Pigs from Minna railway station to Southern Nigeria. This development made the British colonialist in Kaduna to remark thus: *'Pigs are the gifts of railway and that it could only stand climatic residence in the North but for the reason of religion it could be consumed in the South* (Francis 1997:30). Though the British colonialist established the Pig industry in response to the shortage of meat which Britain faced during the second world war, period. Notwithstanding, the presence of Pig industry in the period under examination, in Minna provides the study area not only with employment opportunities, source of income, Pig meat such as bacon and sausage, fat/oil for cooking and manure for maintaining of soil fertility. But, the arrival of Pig buyers and traders from the Southern Nigeria into the study area in this period boosted the trade in Pig business which contributed to the economic development of Minna town. It is worthy of note that the economic development of Minna town which was occasioned by the presence of the railway in the area is bound to impact on the people in the region.

### **The Impact of Economic Development on the People of Minna Town**

The economic development which emerged with the railway in Minna town has a far reaching impact on the people in the study area in many ways. These impact include, first, the economic development brought about placement of certain economic structure in Minna town. These colonial economic institutions which included, trading companies, tax administration and trade monopoly were not only designed to legitimize the colonial rule but also to prepare the ground for the full integration of the pre-capitalist economic formation of Minna into capitalist one. The impact of the above development on the people of Minna town was the witness by the people in the study area, the struggle for supremacy between the old forces and the new (Dr. Muhammad Musa, Bawa, 10/7/2006).

Second, the commodization, the introduction of a money and taxation which accompanied economic development of Minna was another impact on the people of Minna

town. This impact led to the emergence of a new social groups and creation of a new leadership positions in the clans and district heads. The impact of this development on Minna town and its people was that, besides the unleashing of forces of destruction of the study area the new social groups and new leadership supplanted the traditional authority and used their positions to accumulate wealth through bribery and exhortation of the masses which brought hardship on the people in the area. (Malam Nuhu Galadima, 10/5/2006).

Third, the emergence of new class structure in Minna town, represents another impact of economic development of Minna town on the people of Minna. These class structures who were Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa traders, wholesalers, and retailers, opened retail shops, dominated the transport system and trade in foodstuffs. They were highly organized and alienated the native Gbagyi from participating in the economy of the area. Because of the support they received from the expatriate companies they were able to establish retail business dealing in house hold products and cloths in Minna and its surrounding areas. The impact of this on the people of Minna town was that the people in the study area were introduced to European manufactured goods as well as food stuffs which influenced their eating habit at the expense of the indigenous one (*Ibid*).

Fourth, another impact the economic development of Minna town was emergence of an ill-educated. People who were white washed by the school system looked down on manual labour. The graduates of this wrapped school system preferred employment of whatever form in the colonial service. As a result of this people who were opportune to acquire the western education in the neighboring villages that bounded the study area migrated enmass into Minna town where opportunities for such existed. The consequences of this was the swell in the population of Minna town where colonial activities are concentrated i.e. by 1944 the population of Minna town rose to 7, 057 people and by the end of the colonial rule in 1960, the population of Minna has risen to 18, 453 people (Niger State Statistical year Book, 1978:12). The impact of this development on the people of Minna town was that the settlement began to experience social integration and increased criminal and immoral activities such as stealing, burglary, harloting and prostitution.

Fifth, the commercialization of land is another impact of the economic development on the people of Minna town. Land in Gbagyi traditional Minna society was not a commodity to be sold in the market, neither was individually owned. With commercialization of land the individual and family groups began to assert more and more individualistic claims to what was communal land. The *A'nyigbango*—elders who were custodians of land as part of their leadership obligations began to convert them to their private use for cash crops, thus, the birth of new idea of land holding in Minna town. The impact of the above development on the people of Minna town was the emergence of land disputes among the Gbagyi in the region. The individual Gbagyi who could not convincingly push their claim of land forward began to migrate out of Minna town to neighboring villages that bounded the study area where land was easily available. This land disputes and migration trends become a permanent feature among the Gbagyi in the British colonial Minna town (Sabo 1987:30) in the period, 1908 – 1960.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have seen how the people i.e. Gbagyi in the study areas in the pre-colonial period made good use of the opportunities provided in their attempt to sustaining themselves. They were engaged in *Fanubye* farming, *Fadadabye*-hunting, *Ebwatutu*-Crafts making, *A'ynakpaikpabye*- animal husbandry and other economic activities in order to satisfy their needs out of the resources available to them prior to the arrival of the railways in the area. The coming of the railway in Minna town on the other hand, saw some monumental changes in the economic life of the town which led to the appearance in the study area, market, British currencies, Banks, Cash crops, and above all gold mining and Pig industries. By 1950s and 60s these colonial economic institutions have transformed Minna town economy from food production to dynamic, industrial and export economy. Finally, this paper has demonstrates that in the process of planting the colonial economy in Minna town resulted in the emergence of new social groups, increase urbanization in Minna, land alienation, commercialization and commercialization of agricultural system. Though the above led to economic redirection of Minna town, exploitation, oppression and domination on the other hand, but it also an undeniable fact that railway remain a factor that laid the foundation for the economic development of Minna town in the period, 1908-1960.

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10. Interview with Malam Maku Shaba (Ex hunter), Tayi, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2006.
  11. Interview with Malam Najenu Dangbe, (Gbagyi Traditional Historian) Minna, Niger State, Nigeria on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2006.
  12. Interview with Malam Nuhu Galadima (retired civil servant), Maitumbi, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria 10<sup>th</sup> May 2006.
  13. Interview with Mr. Ike Okeke (Igbo trader), Minna, Niger State, Nigeria on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.

### Interviews

1. Interview with Alhaji Abdul Azeez Daudu (Dangaladiman Minna), Minna, Niger State Nigeria on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2006.
2. Interview with Alhaji Abdullahi Malik Bello (a retired employee with Niger State, Ministry of Agriculture), Minna, Niger State, Nigeria on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2006.
3. Interview with Alhaji Idris Abdul Malik (former Railway District Station Manager, 1976 – 1995) Minna, Niger State on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2006.
4. Interview with Alhaji Sule Katcha (former) first indigenous deputy Minna railway station manager), Minna, Niger State, Nigeria on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2006.
5. Interview with Dr. Musa Muhammad Bawa (a History teacher Niger State College of Education), Minna, Niger State, Nigeria on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006.
6. Interview with Malam Baje Shaza (Ex-railway worker), Paiko, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2006.
7. Interview with Mallam Barde Shigbe (a farmer) Sayako, Minna, Niger State, and Nigerian 10<sup>th</sup> November. 2006.
8. Interview with Mallam Dangbe Shehu Exrailway worker, Bosso, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006.
9. Interview with Malam Kalamu Adamu (employee with NOA), Minna, Niger State, Nigeria on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2006.