Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.5 No.1 March, 2022; p.g. 247 – 255; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ANCIENT HAUSA TRADITIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM BEFORE THE IMPOSITION OF THE BRITISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION IN HAUSA LAND

LAWAN YUSUF FAGGE (PhD)
Department of Nigerian Languages
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri
Phone: +2348028415117;
Email: lawanyusuffagge@gmail.com

&
IDRIS IBRAHIM MUSA
Department of Nigerian Languages
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri
Phone: +2348085203344;
Email: idrisibrahimusa@gmail.com

Abstract

The focus of this paper is predicted on ancient Hausa traditional security system, before the imposition of the British colonial administration in Hausa land. Hausa people considered security as service or self help activity, brotherhood, as well as sacrifice for each and every one. The culture and traditional values of Hausa people, covered aspects of traditional occupations, mode of dressings, as well as the socio-economic lives of the people with ancient civilizations. This study aims at examining and discoursing, the Hausa traditional security system. In doing this the following were x-rayed: brief history of Hausa people and their environment, how the states were founded, Hausa traditional government, how the security system among the communities achieved successfully through ranks of Hausa political settings, Law makings, executions and adjudications. The study adopts qualitative methodology for descriptive analysis of the security system before the British colonial administration in Hausa land. The study is to reveal that, the autocratic system of Hausa traditional government (Sarauta), were successfully achieved through hereditary successions and proper use of law makings, executions and adjudications.

Keywords: Assessment, Traditional Security System, Hausa Land, Imposition, Colonial administration.

Introduction

Traditional security in Hausa land before and after the colonial period right from living in hamlets up to the time when the hamlets gradually developed into villages and then to town or cities, executed through organization and assistance among the Hausa communities in those days are realized. There were various aspects of cultures which the people relied upon for security purposes. Some of this security structures are still prevailing among the people. Such aspect of the people's livelihood that promotes sense of belonging and security are as follows:

1. Brotherhood
2. Respect for Elders
3. Discipline
4. Neighborhood
5. Respect for strangers and hostility
6. Community service
7. Obedience to Elders
8. Honesty
9. Truthfulness
10. Reliability
11. Dedication to duty
12. Bravery

All these are virtues and discipline that must be imparted on citizens by both the families and society that help to bring that emotion and sense of belonging to all, which help to promote sense of consciousness and security in the communities.

Origin of Hausa people and States

Several theories were evolved regarding the foundation of Hausa states by historians and other scholars in different fields of knowledge .The Hamifiz theory, for instance traced the idea that the Hausa people were found absent at the end of the first millennium A.D from a mixture of a nameless sub several negroes and Barbers immigrants from north Africa, that this union produced; Abba (1999).

Another theory also maintained that the origin of the Hausa people could be traced to Abyssinia (Habasha) people of the present state of Ethiopia who were said to have gradually migrated in the ancient period from the east to western part of Africa, after the reigning king of Ethiopia had been defeated in a civil war following a leadership tussle with his fellow successors. They therefore continued with their west ward movement until they reached Hausa land and finally settled permanently in the area and established communities of Hausa speakers. It is said that the gradual movement of those people to different directions led to the formations of other Hausa states; Adamu (1978).

The most popular oral tradition regarding the origin of Hausa people is that of Bayajidda legends. Even though this legend is not the origin of Hausa people but, centralized the Hausa states. The legends no doubt are attempts to explain how states arose in Hausa Land prior to the rise of the state. It seems that before the rise of states, most of the people in Hausa Land and the plains of Borno, lived in small hamlets and villages, some of which were walled for defensive purposes.

The family was the most important element in these communities. But leadership emerged were work that could not be undertaken. Thus, were large scale farming activities is involved the king of farmers (sarkinnoma) would be responsible for such task. Likewise there was a leader of hunters (sarkinmaharba) who is officially appointed due to his expertise. Other hobbies and social functions in the state like the head of fishermen, the head of butcher men, head of wrestlers, head of local boxing, head of horse riders.

The factors that led to hamlet or village developing into a town (gari) is that when the population of a village situated in fertile land expands rapidly. A village located near iron-ore reserve would prosper and grow from trade in iron implements with neighboring villages. If a village was situated on trade routes it would likewise expand into a trading centre. Some of these towns developed into smaller towns or cities (birane) singular city (birni) surrounded by defensive walls. The reason for the growth of a town (gari) into city (birni) could vary; it's location on a trade route, access to iron –ore, the fertility of its surrounding hamlets could take refuge behind the walls of the birni, These also enclose agricultural and grazing land so that the inhabitants could cultivate crop and feed their cattle's during a siege.

According to the legends Bayajidda was the son of Abdullahi, king of Baghdad, having quarreled with his father left home and went to Borno and then to Daura. There he killed a dreaded snake, which does not allow the people from using their only well for water except on Fridays. The 'Magajiya Daurama' queen of Daura in gratitude married Bayajidda, and they had a son called Bawo later succeeded his father and had in turn six sons, they are as follows:

1. Bagaunda
2. Gazaura
3. Kumayau
4. Gungume
5. Uban-Doma
6. Zaman- Kogo

The above princes eventually became the kings of seven Hausa states as follows;

1. Daura -Gazaura
2. Kano -Bagauda
3. Zaria -Gungume
4. Katsina -Kumayau
5. Gobir -Uban-Doma
6. Rano -Zaman-Kogo,
7. Biram - Garun–Gabas.

These are the seven Hausa states and they were also called original Hausa's (Hausa bakwai) because they are descendants of 'Magajiya Daurama' queen of Daura state.

Another Hausa state called Garun–Gabas, near modern Hadejia presently known as Jigawa state of Nigeria was said to have been founded by Biram, the son of Bayajidda and daughter of a Mai of Borno i.e. another wife of Bayajidda, but some legend said is not his wife is his concubine, together another seven Hausa state, there were so called Banzabakwai (seven illegitimate sons), whose founded the seven state. They include Zamfara, Kebbi, Nupe, Gwari, Yawuri, Yoruba (Illorin) and Kwararrafa, they were called Banza because they were states which do not have direct descendant from queen Magajiya of Daura but were said to have come under Hausa or Borno influence; which result centralization of the Hausa states. This is one version of the legend describing how the Hausa states were formed, the political system through Bayajidda decedent and others still remain obscure.

Hausa Traditional Government

Birni (city) is ruled by king (Sarki) who is assisted by number of ministers. There would be minister in charge of the market (Sarkinkasuwa), minister of finance (Ma'aji), minister of customs services (Wakilinshige da fice), minister of defense (Madaki or sarkinyaƙi), prison director (Yari), police minister (Wakilindoka), and city minister (Galadima).

Most important of all kings of the cities (Birni) was also the ruler of the surrounding environments. In return for his protection, people in the cities and outside the city would pay taxes in produce. When the king/emir dies would be succeeded by a member of his family.

In the new Hausa cities (birane) a new ruling group emerged, a class of distinction is made between rulers (masusarauta) and the common people (talakawa). The development of government then, was also a class distinction among the ranks of the emirs or rulers, starting from the sultan to first class emirs then second class emirs, then district head then village head and ward head. The emir is the supreme head, religious head, as well as the military head; he is just like the president of a country.

He takes control of the tributes, taxes and rent of the people of his state. Emir is the chief judge (babban alkali) of the state. He gives order to district head (hakimi) and district heads pass it to village head (dagaci) who is the senior head of the community. He controls the community among his surrounding society. Street chairman literally known as (mai-unguwa) takes care of the small hamlets or wards, he receives authority from dagaci and he is the least order of the administrative hierarchy.

Ranks in Hausa Traditional Institution

Sarkin Musulmi (sultan)
↓
Sarkimai Daraja ta Daya (first class emir)
↓
Sarkimai Daraja ta Biyu (second class emir)
↓
Hakimi (district head)
↓
Dagaci (village head)
↓
Mai-unguwa (ward head)
↓
Talakawa (masses)

Sarkin Musulmi (Sultan)

ShehuUsmanDanfodiyo was the first sultan (sarkinmusulmi) of the Hausa states. After the Fulani holy Jihad of 1804, Sokoto became the capital of the emirate system throughout Hausa land. The supreme leader Shehu divided the empire into two; eastern and western empires. He made his brother Abdullahi the emir of Gwandu to control the western empire; and his son Muhammadu Bello to control the eastern empire from Sokoto, Musa (2014).

Shehu appoints emirs to each and every conquered state during the jihad that would rule with shari'a. He distributed Islamic flag to each and every emir from capital of the empire 'Sokoto'. But some of the emirates were later created from the existed emirates, most especially after Nigerian independence during Nigerian military regimes, because of the creation of additional states, and they are all acknowledging the sultanate. Those emirs that able to get their flags before the colonial rule, have had the title of 'Sarkimaidaraja ta daya' (first class emir); while those that collected their flags after the colonial dominations and creation of additional states go with the title of 'Sarkimaidaraja ta biyu' (second class emir).

First Class Emir (Sarki Mai Daraja Ta Daya)

First class emir is emir that able to get the Islamic flag before the colonial rule. The political authority of the emirate was vested on the emir. Emir was an absolute ruler, governed with certain office holders who were assigned specific functions and were responsible to him. The emir in conducting the affairs of the state was accepted to consult his principle office holders. He had absolute control over them, the emir acts as both religious and political leader of the people. The emirate for effective administration was divided into districts. It is the responsibility of the emir to appoint the district head (hakimi) within the emirate. Appointment into the office of the emir ship is by hereditary succession.

Second Class Emir (Sarki Mai Daraja Ta Biyu)

Second class emir is emir that got the Islamic flag from sultanate after the colonial rule. The political authority of the emirate was vested on the emir, and there were not many differences between first class and second class emir; they are almost the same but the only difference was that, first class emir has the highest number of district heads and land mass more than the second class emir. According to the history of Hausa Land, There is no much difference between the first class and the second class emirs except when the colonial masters conquered Sokoto Caliphate in 1903, the colonial masters introduced competition and upgrade hardworking or best performing emirs, among northern emirates probably to upgrade those emirs who are more loyal to them.

District Head (Hakimi)

Hakimi is the executive head of his district town. It is the emir that usually appoints districts (Hakimai) serving as a governor under him. That is why district head is answerable to the emir (Sarki). It is the role of the district head to make sure that the emir's order is being maintained within his town. District head has major role to play in the appointment of village head (Dagaci) at the emir's palace. Ascendancy into the office of the district head is also based on hereditary tradition (succession).

Village Head (Dagaci)

Dagaci is the executive head of his village. He is very well answerable to the district head. It is the responsibility of the village head to make sure that his villagers abide by all the orders, which is to live in peace. Village head also has a major role to play in the appointment of ward head (mai-unguwa). Ascendancy into the office is also based on inheritance.

Ward Head (Mai-unguwa)

Mai-unguwa is the head of his area. He is the executive head of his ward. It is the village head that usually appoints ward head (mai-unguwa). So he is under the village head's (dagaci)

authority. His major role is to oversee his ward. He can settle minor issues in his ward; he would report major issues to village head (dagaci), when the village head cannot solve it he will forward it to the district head (hakimi). If the village head too cannot tackle the matter it will further be forwarded to emir (Sarki). It is the sarki who could then finalize the issue.

But in contemporary societies especially in the cities now a day, ward head (mai-unguwa) cannot solve issues on crimes. This is because it is the modern government (Nigerian constitution set aside the authorities vested to the emirs) that normally deals with such issues; that is why right from ward head (mai-unguwa), village head (dagaci), district head (hakimi) up to the emir (sarki) do not have major role to play in finalizing crime issues and governmental policies concerning crimes. Their roles in this regards is very minimal. The post of the Mai-unguwa too, is attained through hereditary succession, Musa (2014).

Masses (Talakawa)

Talakawa are the common people in the society. They are the masses who have not possessed any office in relation to royal classes. They are to obey rules and regulations of their respective leaders. Under this class talakawa, there is head of each family called 'mai-gida'. It is the role of mai-gida to take care of his family members, that is in terms of feeding, clothing, shelter, education, and to get them married (both males and females)as well as to prevent them of any misconduct with the family and the entire society. This very class (talakawa), helps to promote sense of consciousness and security within the communities.

The head of each family is responsible to teach the children discipline, brotherhood, honesty, trustworthy, self-help, respecting elders, obeying leaders, showing respect to strangers, defense and bravery, all these characteristics are learned from childhood in their family and socialization with the immediate locality.

Law Making, Execution and Judiciary of Hausa Political System

Hausa political system is highly centralized. Emejulu in Musa (2014:268) described the Hausa political organization as:*"a highly centralized political system hinged on Islamic theocracy with elements of federalism".* The legislative and executive functions as well as the judiciary are centered on the emir who acted as both religious and political leader of the people.

Law Making in Hausa Political System

Shari'a is the laws governing Islamic way of life applied throughout the emirate system (Sarauta). Qur'an, the revealed book of Muslim and Hadith (the tradition of Prophet Muhammad peace been upon him) contains all Islamic laws to Muslims and humanity entirely.

Emirs were invested with the authority to make laws which were not fully interpreted by the Shari'a, but which were not contrary to it. The emirs made laws which ensure justice, compliance and good governance. The emir also levied taxes on his subjects. He delegates the power of making local laws to districts heads, and he had the power to enforce such laws, at any time he considered them inappropriate but usually in council of Ulama known as Shura (council of Islamic scholars).

Law Execution in Hausa Political System

The Emir (Sarki) was the chief executive of the emirate (Masarauta). He was the head of state, head of government as well as the religious leader of the people. The emir works with other officials like the waziri (chief adviser), galadima (head of admin) wali (head of finance), ma'aji (treasurer), madawaki (chief defense), sallama, (head of internal affairs) e.t.c. as a powerful and autocratic ruler, the emir helped in the performance of his executive functions by his office title holders as stated above that were responsible to him.

Even though, the emir was absolute and autocratic. There was a limitation to his power. The most important limit is that he was guided by the shari'ah which was regarded as laws of God. Secondly, he was accountable to the sultan of Sokoto to whom he paid annual tributes as his over lord. Thirdly, the emir could not do certain things which might alienate him from other members of the ruling families who could over throw him. Nevertheless, the Islamic religion was a powerful force which compelled everyone both officials and non officials to obey the king without question.

With the advent of the colonial administration (1903-1960), the imperialist used the emirate system by introducing the indirect rule in the north, through which the emirs were used to control their subjects while they take directives and instructions from the imperial colonial masters by which the Europeans ruled the Africans.

The Nigerian constitution set aside the authorities vested to the emirs, but with all of this, people are still respecting the emirates system most especially in terms of religion and cultural affairs.

Judiciary in Hausa Political System

As the chief executive, the emir was also the head of the Judiciary within his emirate (masarauta). There was alkali court through which justice is dispensed based on the Shari'a. Apart from the alkali courts, there was a higher court known as the emir's court. The emir's court deals with serious crimes and land disputes cases issues, that warrant death sentences, could only be pronounced by the emir, Musa (2014:270).

Islam means total submission to the Almighty Allah (God), to be a muslim one has to belief and testifies that there is no deity of worship except to Allah alone without associating partner to Him; also to testifies that Muhammad (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) is His servant and messenger. Muslims refers to the followers of the Islamic faith, and Islam refers to Shari'a. Shari'a is laws governing Islamic way of life, and the laws governed the operations of the government and behavior of citizens within the emirates. Udechukwu (2009:219) states that:

> An official trained in Islamic laws called alkali was charge with the exclusive responsibilities of administering Islamic laws. Courts which were set up to administer the shari'a were called "Alkali courts". The number of alkali courts varied from emirate to emirate. Some emirates have only one while others have more than one.

The lowest judge in the emirates judicial system was the village head and ward head, who settled various minor cases and punished minor offenders against the emir's rule and orders.

The alkali courts are presently called shari'a courts. These courts are currently in existence within Muslim states in northern Nigeria. The courts deliver justice based on shari'a, but with limitations to the provisions of the federal constitution of Nigeria.

Most important point to note is that although the emir's court is the highest court at the emirate level. There was also the sultan court at Sokoto which serve as the Supreme Court and were all appeals are addressed to ensure justice and fairness.

Conclusion

Hausa political setting was authoritarian in style. All decision of making power is centralized; the autocratic management has been successful as it provides strong motivation to the leaders. It permits quick decision making. It is organizational management and group in context. The emir who was absolute and autocratic, there is limit to his power, the most important limit was that he was guided by the shari'a which was regarded as laws of God, written in the glorious Quran and Hadith. The political system was highly centralized and hinged in Islamic theocracy with element of federalism. This was the fact that emirate enjoyed a large degree of political stability. That is the facts that emirates were successfully achieved peace in the traditional security system, before the imposition of the British colonial administration in Hausa land; through hereditary successions (which has to do with experiences and charisma) and proper use of law makings, executions and adjudications.

References

Abba M. J. (1999). *Kano City, Fagge; a Historical Perspective.* Triumph Publishing Company Kano State, P.2

Adamu M. *(1978). The Hausa Factor in West African History* (Zaria, Ahmadu Bello Univeristy Press. p14.

Bichi, A.Y. (2004). Bayajidda Legend in the 21st century; A reassessment.In *The Studies in Hausa Language, Literature and Culture (the six Hausa International Conference)*.C.S.N.L. Bayero University Kano. A.B.U Zaria Press.

Emejulu I.H. (2009). Enduring democratic government in Nigeria, An exploration of indigenous political institution.In the *Journal of Humanities and Democracy in the 21st Century.*Faculty of Arts, NAU, Awka. Charls and Patrick, P.216.

Fagge L. Y. and Musa, I.I. (2018). Pragmatic language of Hausa Wedding Discourse and Ceremony.In *Banchi Nasarawa Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, Vol. 5.No. 1 Febuary, Pp. 191-206.

Fagge L.Y. (2011). *Language and Western Education in Northern Nigeria" (Sokoto Caliphate Example):* M.A theses, department of linguistics and Igbo. Imo State University, Owerri., P.46.

Fidelis, A. and Chibuzo, A. (2009). *Readings in African Thought and Culture.* Edited by Aghamelu F. and Asomugha C. Enugu, power Tower Books.

Hodgetts R.M. and Hegar K.W. (2005). *Modern Human Relations at Work.*South-Western Part of Thomson Corporation, pp. 263-266.

Ibrahim Madauci, YahyaIsah and Bello Daura (1968). *Hausa Customs.* Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation.

Marcus, F. (1986).*"Succession to Ezeship/Kinship Throne in Igbo Societies".* In Igbo Jurisprudence: Law and Order in Traditional Igbo Society. Owerri: ministry for information and cultures.

Michael Crowder (1966). *The Story of Nigeria.* Ibadan, P.35

Musa, I.I. (2014).*"Comparative Study of Hausa and Igbo Traditional Leadership"*.In Himma Journal of Contemporarary Hausa Studies; Volume 5, number 1, October, Pp 264-281.

Udechukwu G.I. (2009).*"Igbo traditional political leadership tool for sustainable democracy in Nigeria"*. In the journal of humanities and democracy in the 21st century.faculty of Arts, NAU, Awka Charles and Patrick, P.162.